

Traversing Metaphoric Boundaries between Schools and their Communities: An Ethnographic Study of a Rural School

ThamsanqaThulani Bhengu¹ and Phumlani Erasmus Myende²

School of Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal, P Bag X03, Ashwood 3605, South Africa
E-mail: ¹<bhengutt@ukzn.ac.za>, ²<myendep@ukzn.ac.za>

KEYWORDS Rural School. School-community. Boundary-spanning Leadership. Quality Education

ABSTRACT Literature shows that spanning metaphoric boundaries between schools and their communities benefits both the schools and the communities. Improved learner performance and community development have been argued to be key benefits of bridging the gap between schools and their communities. However, it is believed that in the rural areas of South Africa, establishing a school-community partnership is not easy. For this reason, literature on successful school-community relations within the rural context remains at the periphery. Therefore, this paper reports and discusses the findings of an ethnographic study research conducted in one rural secondary school in the KwaZulu-Natal province. Semi-structured interviews with the school principal, heads of departments, teachers and a group of parents were conducted. The findings reveal that leadership that is boundary spanning and guided by a clear vision is critical in the attempts to traverse boundaries between schools and their communities.