

EMPLOYER PERSPECTIVES: THE ROLE OF THE RURAL COMMUNITY
COLLEGE IN PREPARING A GLOBAL WORKFORCE

by

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study examined employers' perspectives when asked to articulate the importance of a globally competent workforce, and to identify *global competencies* needed for their workers. The role of the rural community college in preparing that workforce was of equal interest. The eight participants were located in a rural region in the Midwest, with a community college in their service area.

The results of this study can be valuable to leaders in community colleges as they develop curriculum and programming designed to prepare students to be competitive and successful in the global economy and society.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

*“Education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world.”
—Nelson Mandela*

Introduction

The multidimensional nature of globalization impacts citizens of the world in many ways. This study will focus specifically on the effects of globalization on employers in predominantly rural areas and the role of the community college in helping them meet their workforce needs.

Globalization is not a new concept in higher education; however, the impact of globalization and its effect on rural communities is becoming more apparent: “The impact of globalization, both in terms of the opportunities it affords and the challenges it presents, is now a well-established feature of economic development. Due to increased openness in markets, economies can no longer depend on protection from global competition” (Munnich, L. et al., 2003, p. 9.). Community colleges are generally viewed as essential contributors to the economic growth of America due to their role in preparing a qualified workforce. According to Sunderman (2007), community colleges are known for their comprehensive mission and commitment to open access while offering a wide variety of courses and training opportunities focusing primarily on the local community. What we are seeing is a shift in that mission, with leaders from education, government, and professional organizations calling for the preparation of American workers to

compete in a global economy and society (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). To heed that call, educational leaders have developed curricula, educational programming, and services to help students gain knowledge, skills, and attitudes to be successful in this global economy and society. However, the role of the community college in advancing these globalization efforts, and, in particular, the role of the medium sized, rural community college, is less defined and has not been researched to the extent that it has at the university and K-12 levels.

This chapter begins by providing the background and context of globalization as a workplace issue, followed by the problem statement, purpose of the study, and research questions that the study is striving to address. Concluding the chapter are common terminology definitions used throughout the study.

Background and Context

Americans are entering a workforce that is changing at a rapid pace. Global competition affecting businesses/organizations and workers, labor shortages, and the documented skills gap are all factors that have led to a rapidly changing work environment. Due to these changes, workers are expected to change and adapt to this global environment: “The education necessary to prepare college graduates to be globally competent lacks clarity, uniformity, and direction” (Hunter, 2004, p. 11). Dellow (2007) goes on to say that globalization has and will continue to affect our nation’s labor market. Worker training and retraining due to off-shoring and outsourcing of American jobs, along with the creation of new jobs, will require workers to be able to adjust and adapt to these changes within their communities. To keep pace and to prepare individuals for these changes, communities may need not only to focus on existing businesses, but they

may need to attract new companies to their region, as part of their economic development plan. Educational researchers and professionals have identified aspects of globalization and how they affect our world. These aspects focus particularly on the increased interaction, interconnectedness, and interdependence of individuals, organizations, and nations across the globe. Developing global initiatives within higher education is a response to several of these changes and challenges taking place economically, socially, and politically. The blurring of geo-political borders and service areas, coupled with the transition from the industrial economy to the knowledge economy, defines global competition. This competition has resulted in the need for increased global cooperation, and a workforce with global skills (ACE, 2011; U.S. Department of Education, 2012).

According to Global Teacher Education (2009), “Nearly 22 percent of jobs in the United States were tied to international trade, illustrating that the economy is highly interconnected with the rest of the world. Employers in business, government, community, and non-profit organizations recognize that it is foolhardy, if not impossible, to work in isolation from the rest of the world, and take this into consideration in hiring practices” (p. 2). Community colleges are in a position to be an important driver to positively impact that economic recovery that is desperately needed in the United States (White House Summit on Community Colleges, 2010). Partnerships between industry and education will be critical if the community college can be that economic driver. Soares and Steigleder (2012) focus on the differences in mission, student body, and closer partnerships with local business than four-year institutions: “The community college system sits at the crossroads of higher education and the professional world. Community colleges serve a more diverse student body than four-year colleges, and they

also have experience working directly with private sector employers to design and adapt programs to address specific labor market needs” (p. 1). The Jobs Council (2012) identified the importance of building partnerships with local business and industry representatives as a way to ensure that colleges are meeting the workforce demands identified by employers. When employers and college leaders work together, there will be implications for rural community colleges with respect to future programming and curriculum development.

Since the first community college opened its doors in 1901, the focus and mission has been on serving local communities by providing access to higher education for millions of Americans (Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Brint & Karabel, 1989). Government organizations — such as the Office of Adult and Vocational Education and White House Summit on Community Colleges — and professional organizations, including the American Association of Community Colleges and the American Association of Colleges & Universities, demand that community colleges be responsive to local communities amidst the dynamic economic, global, and technological changes occurring in the world. To keep pace with the current global innovations, community colleges have had to remain flexible, innovative, and most importantly to act as the catalyst for economic development within their communities (White House Summit on Community Colleges, 2010).

These changes call for colleges to forge better and long-lasting relationships with local employers for the purpose of educating students who are prepared to compete in a globally interconnected world. The ramifications of colleges preparing students to compete in a global society are complex, especially in light of the fact that institutional

funding sources are decreasing at the same time as college missions are expanding in response to these global changes.

To understand the impact of globalization on the community college, it is helpful to review the history of the community college and its evolving purpose. According to Cohen & Brawer (2008), the two major goals of the earliest community colleges were to 1) provide access to educational opportunities for millions of students who would not otherwise have that opportunity, and 2) serve the local communities in which they were located. In Vaughan's (1985) historical review of the American community college and in Cohen & Brawer (2008), multiple missions and historical factors have affected the evolution of the American community college system:

1901. The first community college opened its doors in Joliet, Illinois, in 1901. In those early years, colleges were focused mainly on the general liberal arts curriculum.

1930-1940. In the 1930s and 40s there were enrollment increases due to the development of job training programs designed to address unemployment caused by the Great Depression. In 1944, the GI Bill became the impetus of the economic boom that lasted through the late 1940s. This federal program provided free tuition to members of the armed services after they returned home from World War II. In 1947, the Truman Commission Report suggested the establishment of a network of colleges that would charge students little or no tuition, serve as cultural centers in their community, provide comprehensive program offerings with emphasis on civic responsibilities, and serve the area in which they were located.

1950-1960. In the 1950s and 60s, transfer education became an important factor and was the focus for those students who could not go to a university directly from high

school. The 1960s witnessed social movements and the fundamental change that higher education was seen as a *right*, and not a *privilege*. The 1960s witnessed the evolution from the transfer mission to the vocational / technical education mission (Brint & Karabel, 1989).

1970-1980. Over these two decades, there were changes in student demographics: more women than men attended the community college, and the proportion of part-time enrollments was at an all-time high.

1990-2000. Workforce development and worker training and skill acquisition were considered critical to the mission of the community college during this period. While the focus on local community needs, particularly vocational in nature, and access to education have been continuous drivers of the community college missions throughout the decades, community colleges are now challenged to expand that focus to include the global needs impacting the workplace and its workers. The societal and economic concerns that led to organizational changes in the 1970s and 1980s gave way to the focus on the community college as an economic driver in the community.

This brings us to the present; globalization has added yet another dimension to the existing multiple missions of the community college (Levin, 2001), and the rural community college, in particular.

Rural Community Colleges

Rural community colleges face different challenges than their urban and suburban counterparts (Hardy & Katsinas, 2007). Not only do rural colleges receive less funding (Howley, Chavis & Kester, 2013; Harder, 2010; Hardy & Katsinas, 2007; Roessler, 2006), there is evidence of the disparity between rural colleges and their urban and

suburban counterparts when looking at enrollment demographics, student degree attainment, and the availability of programs and services offered to students. Rural colleges are also less likely to be considered when discussing and developing higher education policy. The community college mission is identified by Cohen & Brawer (2008) as “academic transfer, vocational-technical education, continuing education, developmental education, and community service.” Yet many (Soares & Steigleder, 2012; AACC, 2012; White House Summit on Community Colleges, 2010) have identified the community college as a driver for much of the economic and workforce development efforts within their communities. While small businesses play an increasingly vital role in economic growth and job creation, community colleges are at the center of a number of important efforts to provide comprehensive supports to assist small business growth and development of new sources of jobs and revenue within their communities. These efforts are changing the face of community colleges, resulting in increased visibility, credibility, and impact.

The challenge of meeting the multiple missions of the community college has been complicated by the increased economic development role within their communities. According to the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, there were 952 community college districts in the United States in 2009, serving nearly 2.5 million students. Community college enrollments were evenly distributed between the urban, suburban, and rural institutions. However, of the total number of districts, 60 percent, or 570 institutions are identified as rural, whereas they only account for 35 percent of the enrollment (see Table 1). These college enrollments are significant, and given the dearth of research on the effects of globalization within rural America, it is hoped that by

starting discussions with rural business/organization leaders, they will provide insight and directed focus on worker preparation within the global economy and society. Community colleges will play an important role in educating a workforce that can compete in the local, national, as well as global markets.

Table 1: 2009 Public Community College Enrollment

Classification	Districts	Enrollment
Rural	570	2,467,341
Suburban	213	2,300,010
Urban	169	2,337,723

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Educational Statistics. Carnegie Classification: IPEDS Fall Enrollment (2009).

Employer Focus

Globalization has transformed and integrated our communities and the society in which we live: “Having a skilled and globally focused workforce is perhaps the most important ingredient to any organization’s competitiveness in a world where competitors can come from next door or around the world” (Wood, 2007, p. 1). Despite the call for workers with global competencies, the learning opportunities vary greatly on our college campuses. As globalization became a common catchword in education in the 1990s, institutions investigated ways in which to educate their students to be competent in the globalized world. Programs and curricula have been developed in the academic and student services areas with the goal of promoting global competencies and cultural awareness to their students.

Research abounds describing university models, initiatives, and programs based on the evolving effects of globalization within our interconnected world. Studies conducted have focused on international program development on four-year college

campuses; the effects of United States student study abroad programs; the effects of international students in the United States; student, administrator, and faculty perceptions of the importance of internationalization efforts on college campuses; and the effects of globalization on the community college mission.

Yet, the community college, predicated on the historical stages of its development, and its more localized focus, has been slower to engage in preparing students for employment in a globalized society and economy. The acceptance of and infrastructure needed to provide systematic globalization efforts on community college campuses has yet to take a foothold and for those that do exist, these initiatives vary greatly: "Overall, internationalization doesn't permeate the fabric of most institutions. It [globalization] is not sufficiently deep, nor as widespread as it should be to prepare students to meet the challenges they will face once they graduate" (Green, et al., 2008, n.p.).

Problem Statement

Living in an interdependent world, dramatic changes in all areas of business and industry now require a workforce that is globally competent. Rural communities may seem somewhat removed from the effects of globalization; however, due to increased technology and increased mobility, rural communities and businesses are no longer isolated. Both employers and educational institutions in a rural location may require even more attention and focus on the effects of our global society because of this. Equally important is to acknowledge how our communities are affected by this increased globalization. Boggs and Irwin (2007) discuss the importance of providing students with relevant global skills; however, the mission of the college should also align with this

goal: “Community colleges have a responsibility to acknowledge global understanding and communication as integral to their mission... and must not only embrace global education but also challenge their communities to understand its importance” (p. 26).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to 1) assess local employers’ perspectives of the importance of a globally competent workforce, and 2) identify the role of the rural community college in preparing that workforce.

Guiding Questions

This research will be guided by the following questions:

Research Question 1. How has globalization affected local businesses and industries in this predominantly rural area?

Research Question 2. What global competencies do these employers look for in their employees?

Research Question 3. To what extent should the local community colleges engage in global education of the rural workforce?

Significance of the Study

Many suggest there is a necessity to increase the global competence of individuals in the United States (AACC, n.d.; Kanter, 2011; Reimers, 2009; Boggs & Irwin, 2007). And, many key public voices claim that there is evidence of a gap between workforce preparation and business/industry needs (Global Agenda Council, 2010). As workforce preparation is an important mission of the community college, it would only make sense that employers and educators collaborate to develop an understanding of those critical competencies, requisite skills, and knowledge necessary for a globally aware workforce.

Hence, regardless of the location, the community college must provide its students with the requisite skills and knowledge to succeed in a global economy, which will have a positive effect on the nation's economic recovery.

Four constituencies related to the rural community college may benefit from this research: 1) Community college administrators who are considering planning to adopt globalization efforts on their own campuses; 2) community college faculty responsible for developing and revising curriculum; 3) student services staff responsible for developing and delivering student programming and activities; and 4) employers who hire community college students / graduates.

Definitions

The following terms are provided as a basis for consistency and a common understanding of concepts presented throughout the study.

Economic Development – “A process by which a community creates, retains, and reinvests wealth and improves the quality of life” (Dodson, n.d.).

Globalization – “...a concept that refers to the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole” (Robertson, 1992, p. 8).

Global Competence – “Having an open mind while actively seeking to understand cultural norms and expectations of others, leveraging this gained knowledge to interact, communicate and work effectively outside one's environment. (Hunter, White, & Godbey, 2006).

Rural Institution – The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (2012) identifies a rural institution based on full-year unduplicated credit headcount, where small rural is defined as less than 2,500; medium rural as 2,500 through 7,500; and large rural as greater than 7,500. Enrollment size is based on Integrated Postsecondary Education Data Systems (IPEDS) data.

Rural Geographic Classification – Characteristics include low population density with limited access to large city centers and economic resources.

Workforce Development – “The education and training programs for participants or those who wish to participate in the workforce, delivered through formal and informal means that are designed to enhance the skills of people to gain or maintain socio-economic status” (Katsinas, 1994).

Summary

Green et al. (2008) posits that institutional leaders and community members may not understand nor value the importance of preparing globally competent workers. In addition, the United States educational agenda has been affected by the realities of living in a globalized world. Community colleges are in a position to positively affect the economic development within their communities, and the greatest success will come to those rural community colleges that are clear about what they are addressing and how they align their programs and services with local business needs.

Rural areas of our nation are less isolated due to globalization; yet the question remains whether rural businesses and organizations are likely to understand the global phenomenon and how globalization affects them personally and professionally, within the context of the communities in which they live.

While this study focuses on businesses and industries located in the northwest corner of Michigan's Lower Peninsula, other rural community colleges may also find benefit in the results. The study will compare global competencies identified in two key research studies to those competencies identified as important to rural businesses and organizations. One thing is true: Globalization is affecting the world we know. This study may help us understand the impact on the rural community and the increasing interconnectedness that arises from globalization, and to identify what the rural community college should and can do that may positively influence the situation.

Organization of Dissertation

This study consists of five chapters:

In Chapter 1, the researcher has presented an introduction to the study, key concepts, research questions, and significance of the study. Chapter 2 provides a thorough literature review of globalization in the context of higher education, economic factors related to globalization and business/industry, and global competencies. In Chapter 3, the research design, participants, and research methods are defined. The research findings are presented in Chapter 4, and conclusions and implications for the community college, business and industry/organizations, as well as further research recommendations are presented in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

“Now more than ever, education should prepare students for global civility and peace. So what in the world are we waiting for?” —Fernando Reimers (2009), International Education Policy Program, Harvard University

Introduction

Globalization is the opening of the U.S. economy to the pressures of worldwide competition. Preparing the American workforce to compete in a global society and economy is a critical premise in developing this body of work. Three inherent stakeholders are important to this discussion: the workforce, the employers, and the educational institutions, and in this case, community colleges. This qualitative research study seeks to understand the employers’ perspectives on competencies considered critical for the global workforce and the role of the community college in preparing that workforce.

This chapter reviews global competencies and organizational frameworks identified by various organizations; the community college and its role in workforce development; and the collaboration between and among business and industry, the workforce, and education. Based on local employer perspectives, this research will add to the body of knowledge and help to bridge the gaps in literature regarding globalization efforts particularly with business and industry and the community college. This research aims to provide educational leaders with an understanding of local, rural employers’ perspectives on hiring a workforce with global competencies. With this information, the

rural community college can better prepare students and prospective employees for success in our global economy and society.

Definitions/global competencies

The holistic nature of a “global competency” references the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that an individual needs to be competitive and successful in the 21st century world of work. Within the last two decades, global skills and the call to prepare students for the interconnected world have driven educational leaders to investigate ways to educate individuals to gain competencies that will lead to success in a global economy and society. According to experts (deWit, 2010; Knight, 2004; Green & Olson, 2003), the confusion between globalization, global skills, and international competencies has confounded the work of those in academe, policy makers, and the workforce. The following table provides examples of the differences as well as the common threads of various groups’ stated global or 21st century characteristics.

Table 2: Organizational Framework for Global Competencies

Organization	Competencies
Asia Society & CCSSO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate the world • Recognize perspectives • Communicate ideas • Take action
Partnership for 21st Century Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical thinking • Problem solving • Global awareness • Technology skills

Organization	Competencies
National Education Association (NEA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International awareness • Knowledge and understanding of world history, socioeconomic and political systems, and global events • Appreciation of cultural diversity • Ability to know, understand and relate to people from other cultures and other points of view • Ability to understand, read, write and speak in more than one language • Competitive skills • Critical thinking skills that enhance creativity and innovation.
AAC&U	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broad Learning • Intellectual skills • Personal and social responsibility • Integrative and adaptive learning
ACIIE & The Stanley Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empowered by the experience of global education to help make a difference in society • Committed to global, lifelong learning • Aware of diversity, commonalities, and interdependence • Recognizes the geopolitical and economic interdependence of our world • Appreciates the impact of other cultures on American life • Accepts the importance of all peoples • Capable of working in diverse teams • Understands the non-universality of culture, religion, and values • Accepts responsibility for global citizenship

Asia Society

Asia Society (2015) is a non-profit organization committed to providing teacher training and resources as well as encouragement for engagement of policymakers and educational leaders in support of “student readiness for college, career and citizenship along the entire continuum of learning” (p. 1).

Mapping the Nation is an interactive map available on the Asia Society website that helps to visualize the progress the U.S. has made in becoming a global nation: "Global competence is a crucial shift in our understanding of the purpose of education in a changing world. Students everywhere deserve the opportunity to succeed in the global economy and

contribute as global citizens. We must fashion a more creative and visionary educational response to the interconnected world of the 21st century, starting now" (p. 1). At the elementary and secondary levels, the Council of Chief State School Officers in cooperation with the Asia Society Partnership for Global Learning prepared the following table that identifies characteristics of a globally competent student.

Table 3: Asia Society-Global Competency Matrix

Investigate the World	Recognize Perspectives	Communicate Ideas	Take Action
Students investigate the world beyond their immediate environment.	Students recognize their own and others' perspective.	Students communicate their ideas effectively with diverse audiences.	Students translate their ideas and findings into appropriate actions to improve conditions.
Students can:	Students can:	Students can:	Students can:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generate and explain the significance of locally, regionally or globally focused researchable questions. • Identify, collect and analyze the knowledge and evidence required to answer questions using a variety of international sources, media and languages. • Weigh, integrate and synthesize evidence collected to construct coherent responses that is appropriate to the context of issues or problems. • Develop an argument based on compelling evidence that considers multiple perspectives and draws defensible conclusions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize and articulate one's own perspective on situations, events, issues or phenomena and identify the influences on that perspective. • Articulate and explain perspectives of other people, groups or schools of thought and identify the influences on those perspectives. • Explain how the interaction of ideas across cultures influences the development of knowledge and situations, events, issues or phenomena. • Articulate how the consequences of differential access to knowledge, technology and resources affect the quality of life and influences perspectives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize that diverse audiences may perceive different meanings from the same information. • Use appropriate language, behavior and strategies to effectively communicate, both verbally and non-verbally, with diverse audiences. • Explain how effective communication impacts understanding and collaboration in an interdependent world. • Select and effectively use appropriate technology and media to communicate with diverse audiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize one's capacity to advocate for and contribute to improvement locally, regionally, or globally. • Identify opportunities for personal and collaborative action to address situations, events, issues or phenomena in ways which can make a difference. • Assess options for action based on evidence and the potential for impact, taking into account varied perspectives and potential consequences for others. • Act creatively and innovatively to contribute to improvement locally, regionally or globally both personally and collaboratively.

Source: V. Mansilla & A. Jackson, 2011.

In *Becoming Citizens of the World* (2007), Vivien Stewart, former Vice President for Education at the Asia Society, outlines the importance of creating more globally competent citizens:

Every major issue that people face—from environmental degradation and global warming, to pandemic diseases, to energy and water shortages, to terrorism and weapons proliferation—has an international dimension. Solving these problems will require international cooperation among governments, professional organizations, and corporations. Also, as the line between domestic and international affairs blurs, U.S. citizens will increasingly vote and act on issues—such as alternative energy sources or security measures linked to terrorism—that require a greater knowledge of the world. (p. 8)

The Asia Society has most recently joined the Partnership for a 21st Century (P21), a national organization that advocates for 21st century readiness for every student.

P21: Partnership for the 21st Century

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills was founded in 2002, bringing together educators along with business, community, and government leaders dedicated in identifying core skills that all students need to acquire to be successful in college and in the workforce. Of the six skills identified, the organization defines one of these skills as the ability to understand global issues; learn from and work with people from diverse cultures; and understand the cultures of other nations, including the use of non-English languages. The key elements of 21st century learning are represented in the graphic and description below. Figure 1 graphically represents both 21st century student outcomes (as represented by the arches of the rainbow) and 21st century learning support systems (as represented by the pools at the bottom). The graphic identifies the importance of balance between the various skills: life and career, learning and innovation, and information, media, and technology that are overarching the core subjects.

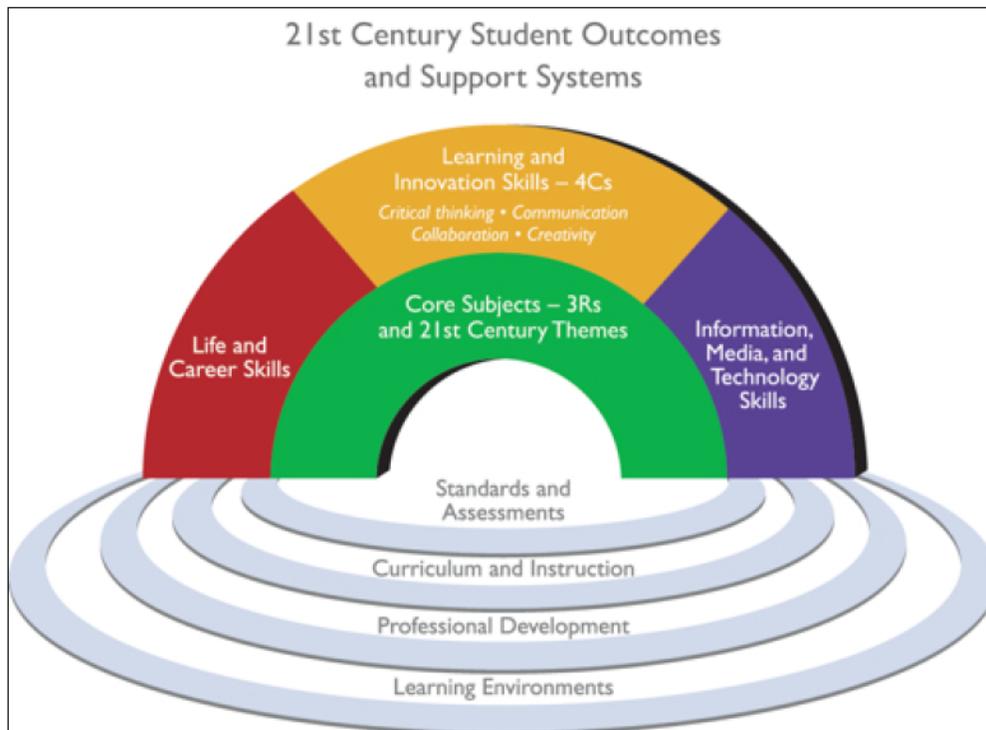


Figure 1: 21st Century Student Outcomes and Support Systems
 Source: *Partnership for the 21st Century*, 2013 (p. 1)

Since the development of the skills and outcomes, the P21 organization recently changed their name from P21: Partnership for 21st Century Skills to P21: Partnership for 21st Century Learning. This small change in their name emphasizes the recognition that the organization has moved from one of defining the outcomes, to advancing the framework and stressing the importance to that of learning; that all students, K-12 through postsecondary, receive these skills throughout their education.

National Education Association (NEA)

Global competency is a 21st century imperative for the National Education Association (NEA). Global competencies defined by the NEA (2010) are the following:

- International awareness
- Appreciation of cultural diversity
- Proficiency in foreign languages
- Competitive skills (p. 1)

According to the NEA, “It is important that American students — pre-school through college — begin developing a deeper understanding of the world’s economic, social, and political issues” (p. 2). As cited by the NEA in their 2010 policy brief, *U.S. Global Competence: A 21st Century Imperative*, they caution that “global competence in the 21st century is not a luxury, but a necessity. Whether engaging the world, or our culturally diverse homeland, the United States’ future success will rely on the global competence of our people. Global competence must become part of the core mission of education — from K-12 through graduate school” (p. 2).

American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U)

The AAC&U is a national leadership council of educators, policymakers, and business and civic leaders who have together developed a set of principles of excellence for 21st century college learning. As a result of their work, the Liberal Education & America’s Promise, or LEAP initiative, was launched in 2005. LEAP supports a strong liberal arts education that prepares college students for the changing demands of the workforce. In their 2007 report, *College Learning for the New Global Century*, it is reported that this work crosses all educational levels: “The essential learning outcomes provide a new framework to guide students’ cumulative progress from school through college” (p. 27). These essential outcomes are identified:

- Knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world
- Intellectual and practical skills (critical and creative thinking, information literacy, communication skills, teamwork)
- Personal and social responsibility (civic knowledge and engagement—local and global, intercultural knowledge, ethical reasoning, lifelong learning)

- Integrative learning (application and synthesis of knowledge, skills, and responsibilities to new settings and complex problems)

In addition to identifying outcomes for students, their work continues by bringing together employers and educators, building partnerships, and supporting a strong liberal education in a global economy and society.

American Council on International and Intercultural Education (ACIIE) and the Stanley Foundation

In 1994, under the Clinton Administration, ACIIE and the Stanley Foundation convened a group of 24 persons representing key areas within the field of international education and the federal government. This conference, *Building the Global Community: The Next Step*, was designed to accomplish the following objectives:

- Clarify community college goals in international and intercultural education
- Articulate a clear mission statement
- Determine strategies
- Construct a recommended plan of action to implement international and intercultural education in all US community colleges

As reported in the conference proceedings, the most important outcome was the adoption of their mission statement: “To ensure the survival and well-being of our communities, it is imperative that community colleges develop a globally and multi-culturally competent citizenry” (p. i).

In 1996, two years after the conclusion of the first conference, a second group of community college leaders and government agency representatives convened for the second conference: *Educating for the Global Community: A Framework for Community Colleges*. Their objectives for this conference were to answer two key questions: “1) what

does it mean to be a globally competent learner; and, 2) what is required institutionally for community colleges to produce globally competent learners?” (p. 1). The results of that discussion identified areas for which educational institutions should focus to prepare globally educated citizens:

- Partnerships – with business and industry, other educational institutions
- Faculty Development – training opportunities for educators
- Curricular Enhancements – reaching students regardless of academic major
- Diversity – college mission statements should reflect the importance of diversity

They also identified four developmental stages toward creating a globally competent person in a global society:

- Recognition of global systems and their connectedness, including personal awareness and openness to other cultures, values, and attitudes at home and abroad
- Intercultural skills and direct experiences
- General knowledge of history and world events—politics, economics, geography
- Detailed area studies specialization: expertise in another language, culture, country (p. 3)

The ACIIE and the Stanley Foundation concluded in their 1996 study: “Global competency exists when a learner is able to understand the interconnectedness of peoples and systems to have a general knowledge of history and world events, to accept and cope with the existence of different cultural values and attitudes and, indeed, to celebrate the richness and benefits of this diversity” (p. 4). Having been written in 1996, the necessity to remain competitive was noted in the report, yet in 2012, an American Council on Education (ACE) survey of internationalization efforts on college campuses identified

community colleges as not making sufficient progress in building that competitiveness in light of a globalized world.

Each of these organizations calls for competencies that prepare our students for success in the globally interconnected and ever-changing work environment. There are inherent challenges in re-creating and incorporating substantive changes within organizations and institutions. While it may not be important to agree on every characteristic or competency, educators, employers, and policymakers must come to consensus on how these will be incorporated into the system. The organizations represented in this section share similar definitions of what a globally competent individual needs in order to be successful. These organizations also share a vision of global leadership from within the educational institutions.

Leadership Competencies

American Association of Community Colleges (AACC)

Another aspect of global competence addresses how college leaders support this important work within their own institutions. The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) first published its Leadership Competencies in 2005. AACC identified six broad competency categories, specifically defined for community college leaders:

- Organizational Strategy
- Resources Management
- Communication
- Collaboration
- Community College Advocacy
- Professionalism

Within the ‘Collaboration’ competency, globalization is specifically addressed as an important leadership issue. In the first edition (2005), AACC stresses that leaders should, “demonstrate cultural competence relative to a global society” (p. 5). This competency looks beyond the basic needs of the local market, and asks leaders to also look at the interconnectedness and responsibility beyond their own geographic region, suggesting there is a level of urgency in creating an environment that embraces this interconnectedness. The second edition, released in September 2013, significantly expands the competency descriptions, identifying progressive competencies for the emerging, new, and experienced leader. Also in this edition, the reference to global competence moved from the ‘Collaboration’ competency into the ‘Communication’ competency. This signals that not only must community colleges look at how students, workers, and employers are affected by globalization but they must also address future leaders’ ability to communicate this importance to their institutions.

The literature following the initial publication of the AACC competencies shows clear agreement that the competencies must be re-evaluated and that globalization is one of the areas that has community college leaders reconsidering the importance of this competency (AACC, 2005, 2013). The following table presents the three levels of global competencies expected of community college leaders. At the first emerging leader level, the AACC differentiates between familiarities of global competencies and engaging in internationalization efforts. The second level builds on that level one awareness, and brings into the conversation the board and its support of global issues at the college level. The next level is for seasoned CEOs, and addresses the recognition and importance of global competence while providing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to students.

Table 4: American Association of Community Colleges Competencies for Community College Leaders

Communication Competency: An effective community college leader uses clear listening, speaking, and writing skills to engage in honest, open dialogue at all levels of the college and its surrounding community; promotes the success of all students; ensures the safety and security of students and the surrounding college community; and sustains the community college mission (p. 9).

Competencies for Emerging Leaders	Competencies for New CEOs within the First 3 Years on the Job	Competencies for New CEOs who have been in their positions for 3 or more years
Become familiar with what it means to be globally competent. While this does not necessarily reflect engaging in international education, it does focus on students understanding the societal complexities that encompass other points of view, and new ways of thinking and acting.	Understand global competence, and strive to provide students with opportunities to become exposed to different points of view and their role within the global society. Ensure that your board of trustees supports global programming before aggressively pursuing this as an offering for the college.	Understand that people live and interact in an increasingly globalized world. Give learners the opportunity and competencies to reflect and share their own points of view and roles within a global, interconnected society, as well as to understand and discuss complex relationships of common social, ecological, political, and economic issues to derive new ways of thinking and acting.

Excerpt from: AACC Leadership Competencies, 2013 (p 9).

American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) / Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT)

Following a period of increased discussion about their commitment to building the global community, the AACC and ACCT (2006) issued Building the Global Community: A Joint Statement on the Role of Community Colleges in International Education. This statement offers suggestions on how to promote global competency, as well as advocating for study abroad and recruitment of international students. In addition to these international activities, they call for colleges to promote global competence for their students:

- Expand programs and initiatives to promote global awareness, training and economic development
- Encourage inclusiveness relating to race, ethnicity and religion
- Broaden the study of foreign languages and cultures
- Enhance international study and exchange for students and faculty

- Promote the U.S. community college model and recruit international students worldwide (p. 1)

These two community college organizations collaborated and jointly published their competency goals for community college leaders. Within those competencies, there is a broadened and explicit need to build leaders who can promote and articulate the importance of global and cultural perspectives for students and within their institutions.

Business and Education Partnerships: Meeting the Skills Gap

Building a competent workforce relies on strong partnerships between local educational institutions and business and industry (Soares & Steigleder, 2012). McKinsey Global Institute (2009) emphasizes the relationships between these business and education are the foundation of building a structured and strong workforce and that educational programming and curricula are the strongest when informed by those who can benefit from those relationships. The Jobs Council (2012) and Corporate Voices for Working Families (2012) stress that the alignment of employer needs and the education and training by our colleges are critical components in building a strong economic society. They stress that these partnerships are viewed as beneficial to communities, employers, and students, alike.

According to The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education (2008), higher education has two fundamental responsibilities to ensure the nation's continued wellbeing: 1) provide graduates with skills necessary to be effective in a global, increasingly competitive economy; and 2) close the achievement gap between students who are advantaged and those who are not, whether academic, cultural, or economic.

Specifically related to the work of the community college, Soares (2010) discusses the importance of community college and industry partnerships (CCIP) for the purpose of

preparing individuals for high wage and high skill jobs as a response to globalization and rapid technological changes in the world.

A Community College and Industry Partnership is a collaboration between a community college and an individual business, group of firms, chamber of commerce, industry association or sector partnership with the purpose of using the resources of all partners to create alternative college education programs for non-traditional students (both younger workforce entrants and older ones in need of skills and education upgrades) that are tightly linked to regional economic development and labor force needs. Partners can contribute human resources, finances, facilities and equipment and leadership to accomplishing the partnerships agreed upon goals and outcomes (p. 8).

Other groups have articulated their priority to invest in and build strong business and educational partnerships. The McKinsey Global Institute (2013) highlights this importance: “Employers who see a skills gap, for example, are reaching out to local educators to build degree programs and short-term training programs that create their own talent pipeline while also giving workers the credentials and skills they need” (p. 20). The Aspen Institute, Skills for America’s Future (2013) inspires businesses to partner with their local community colleges, specifically to develop future workers, and up-skill the existing workforce. These partnerships benefit business, the community, the community college, and its students, and the community college is seen as a “reliable source of trained workers” (p. 8).

A key international organization, The World Economic Forum (2008), committed to improving the state of the world through public-private cooperation, convened over 1000 members to discuss key global challenges facing our world. The global skills gap was cited as a “highly relevant issue” and is described as, “the imbalance between employers’ skills

needs and labour's available skills. The way to address the skills gap is through the following dimensions: education and training, the migration of workers, the movement of jobs, full inclusion and diversity" (p. 284). As part of the World Economic Forum, the Global Agenda Council on the Skills Gap proposed to establish stronger link between business leaders and educational institutions. In additional literature related to the skills gap, several key sources (College Board, 2008; Lumina Foundation, 2014; Boggs, 2010) stress that our nation's workers must be able to compete in a global economy, and the citizens must be educated about the world in which they now live.

IBM, one of the technology sector's leading global employers, joined the conversation in their report, *Working Beyond Borders* (2010), where they expressed concern over the shortage of engineers and scientists with the global skill set necessary for today's workforce. This study was conducted with input from over 700 chief human resource officers worldwide. The report states, "Finding people with the skills to compete in an increasingly borderless marketplace and sustain innovation is difficult enough. Managing people from different cultures, across different locations and time zones, is, arguably, even harder" (p. 34).

A more recent survey of 318 employers with 25 or more employees, conducted by Hart Research Associates (2013) for the AAC&U recognized innovation as a key hiring priority. Ninety-five percent of the survey respondents said: "They will give preference to college graduates with skills that enable them to contribute to innovation in the workplace" (p. 1). And 93 percent of those surveyed agree, "A candidate's demonstrated capacity to think critically, communicate clearly, and solve complex problems is more important than their undergraduate major" (p. 4). Of note is that these employers placed a

great degree of importance on ethics (96 percent); intercultural skills (96 percent); and the capacity for professional development and continued new learning (94 percent). It is interesting to learn that these employers reported that collaborative efforts between their organization and a nearby college are less common: “Partnering with colleges in the area to better align the curriculum and learning outcomes they teach to the skills and knowledge our company looks for in new hires (22 percent do this; 54 percent do not currently do this, but would have a high/medium level of interest in doing so in the future” (p. 12).

As the literature describes, there is not only a national gap, but a world-wide skills gap. Employers are focusing on employees with more cross-cutting skills — skills that are not dependent on your field of study — that will help to position their organizations and businesses to be successful in a global economy and society.

Community Colleges: Workforce and Economic Developers

As introduced in Chapter 1, the literature stresses the critical role of community colleges to be an important driver to positively impact the economic recovery that is desperately needed in the United States. Several sources, including the White House Summit on Community Colleges (2010) emphasize the continued need for community colleges to fulfill their workforce development mission (Jacobs, 2014; Wood, 2007; AACC, 2000). McKinsey Global Institute (2013) notes that as the nation looks to regain economic prosperity, the greatest impact will be in the form of talent development. AACC, in the 2000 Knowledge Net report, discussed the need and ongoing commitment of the community college to continue to build on its communities and provides insight into the role of the community college in developing the global workforce:

Critical thinking, interpersonal competence, and computer literacy have joined reading, writing, and computing as basic skills. Intercultural and international understandings are fast becoming part of that required skill set. (p. 7)

In the 2012 ACE report, *Mapping Internationalization on U.S. Campuses*, campus leaders indicated there is continued need to develop strategies that focus on international/global advocacy, research collection, dissemination and analysis, and increased international ties for colleges and universities.

Rural Community College Roles

While the literature provides a strong foundation stressing the importance of the community college in preparing a globally prepared workforce (Treat & Hagadorn, 2013 and Nickoli, 2013), few discussions explore the effect of the community college's location on these efforts. In her comparison study, Harder (2010) found that rural colleges fared considerably worse than their suburban and urban counterparts when addressing the state of their internationalization efforts. Internationalization, in this study, was focused on the institution and its support of academic programming, student activities, and international student enrollments.

The Community Colleges for International Development, Inc. (n.d.) is an international organization that provides member institutions with links and networks to further their international efforts with a focus on the global workforce. Within their mission there is no reference to institutional location. The Rural Community College Alliance (RCCA) is a national organization that has worked to build a network of rural institutions, cognizant of the differences between rural and their suburban and urban counterparts. While the global (international) aspect is not a focus of the RCCA, it does

advocate the need for American workers to gain “learning how to learn” skills to compete in a global workforce.

Conclusion

Globalization plays a key role in local, regional, and national economic and workforce development initiatives (Munnich et al., 2003; AACCC, 2000). Higher education in general, and community colleges specifically play an important role in educating individuals for the workforce, which leads to strong and thriving communities (ACE, 2011). The literature calls for the cooperation and partnership between business and education leaders that will position these organizations in a rapidly changing global economy and society. The organizations reviewed in this chapter agree that educational institutions have to continue to prepare individuals for the rapidly changing world in which we live.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

“Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself.” —John Dewey

Introduction

This chapter presents the research questions, the research design, the research process, data collection, and the process for data analysis that will support examination of employer perspectives regarding the hiring of a globally competent workforce, as well as employer perceptions as to what the local community college should contribute in that regard. This will be accomplished through the utilization of a qualitative study as the basis for interpretative analysis.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following questions:

Research Question 1. How has globalization affected local businesses and industries in this predominantly rural area?

Research Question 2. What global competencies do these employers look for in their employees?

Research Question 3. To what extent should the local community colleges engage in global education of the rural workforce?

During the interviews, these main research questions were further defined for clarity and to allow the researcher to gather more in-depth information.

1. How has globalization affected your organization?

Understanding how employers felt about globalization was the first step in understanding their individual perspectives and beliefs: What is the effect of the organization's goals and customer base on their needs in a workforce prepared for the global society and economy.

2. What *competencies* do employers look for in their employees?

As identified in Chapter 2, a variety of definitions, skills, attitudes, and particular knowledge are attributed to “global competence” and the significance in preparing the workforce for a global society and economy. This question was included so that the researcher could understand the perspectives of rural employers and how they defined the global competencies they expect to see in their employees. In addition, understanding the consistencies and differences between and among the industry sector participants' perspectives (health care, value added agriculture, and manufacturing) was of interest to the researcher.

3. To what extent should *community colleges* engage in development of these global competencies in the local workforce?

The community college is integral in training the local workforce, and by doing so, building relationships with local employers. This training prepares students for specific job and skill attainment, job re-training, as well as to provide lifelong educational opportunities to individuals within the community. As colleges build programs and offer programming based on state and national educators and policymakers, it was important to understand the perspectives of the rural employers related to the specific “global competencies” expected within their local workforce.

Qualitative Research Design

The qualitative study seeks to understand participants' perspectives of an event or area of study, within the “field” or “natural setting” (Creswell, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Merriam, 2009). Denzin & Lincoln (2005) discuss further the importance of qualitative research focusing on thick, rich description; the researcher as the primary data collection instrument; inductive data analysis; and purposeful sample selection. To facilitate understanding of participant perceptions, a qualitative or interpretive research approach was employed. The qualitative research methodology was selected to explore the meaning that participants hold about global competencies in the workforce. According to Merriam (2009), “in applied fields of practice such as education...the most common type of qualitative research is a basic, interpretive study” (p. 22). Further explaining the qualitative paradigm, Denzin and Lincoln (2000) state that “qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, materialistic approach to the world...attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (p. 3).

The analysis of the data will entail the identification of recurring patterns. These themes should indicate broadly held employer perspectives regarding global competencies that the workforce and the community college's potential involvement in their preparation. The experiences of participants were also of interest to the researcher, which are also accessible through the qualitative interview structure.

In the qualitative paradigm, specific characteristics must be met (Merriam, 2009): 1) the researcher seeks to understand how participants perceive a situation; 2) the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection; and 3) the study is descriptive.

Qualitative studies are based on a purposeful design. According to Miles & Huberman (1994) “the main tasks of qualitative studies are to explicate the ways people in particular settings come to understand, account for, take action, and otherwise manage their day-to-day situations” (p. 7). The researcher employed a purposeful selection process for selecting participants based on: 1) location of the businesses and organizations, and 2) industry sector of the business and organization. Maxwell (2013) states, "The value of a qualitative study may depend on its *lack* of generalizability in the sense of being representative of a larger population; it may provide an account of a setting or population that is illuminating as an extreme case or ideal type" (p. 137). Myers (2000) notes that while small qualitative research studies are not generalizable, they do have “redeeming qualities that set them above that requirement” (p. 1). She goes on to state:

In many situations, a small sample size may be more useful in examining a situation in depth from various perspectives, whereas a large sample would be inconsequential. The goal of a study may be to focus on a selected contemporary phenomenon ... where in-depth descriptions would be an essential component of the process. In such situations, small qualitative studies can gain a more personal understanding of the phenomenon and the results can potentially contribute valuable knowledge to the community. (p. 3)

The researcher’s main interest in conducting this study was the idea that the participants would help inform the work of the community college, particularly in understanding how local employers described global competencies. The local community college was in the midst of developing a “global endorsement” for students meeting a set of criteria that focused on global awareness: attending international events; enrolling in courses with a cultural awareness characteristic; taking part in study abroad travel opportunities; etc. The intent of college officials was to emphasize this learning by including on the student transcript an endorsement that verified the extra- and co-

curricular global nature of their learning. The timeliness of this initiative, and the interest in better understanding how best to engage employers in this endeavor, was a main focus for the researcher.

Industry and Participant Selection

The local community college serves a six-county region. The region's local economy is driven by manufacturing, retail and tourism, value added agriculture, and health care. Three of the four industry sectors are represented in this research. Of the twelve organizations selected for interviews, eight individuals from seven organizations and three industry sectors (health care, manufacturing, and value added agriculture) agreed to participate in this study.

Selection Criteria

Prior to sending out requests for interviews, the researcher met with the college's unit responsible for industry and customized training. A customer relationship management database, *Salesforce*, was used to extract company data identifying the organizations within the targeted six-county region, based on their identified industry sector. Once the organizational sample was selected, two secondary criteria were used to select individual participants for the study: 1) serving in key administrative positions responsible for hiring, and 2) having been employed with the organization for at least two years. These secondary criteria were considered to maximize the prospect that these interviewees would have specific knowledge of the company, insight into the culture of the organization, and could articulate the hiring practices of the organizations.

Selection of participants was based on their responsibilities within the organization. A mix of senior level administrators, chief executive officers, and directors from both human resources and finance and administration provided knowledgeable input and a breadth of perspectives. It was anticipated that the former would provide insight into corporate vision; the latter, into explicit policies and needs and expectations associated with hiring and training.

Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Throughout this document, the participants will be referred to with a combination of their industry and their participant number. Thus, Health Care participants are HC1, HC2, and HC3; Manufacturing participants are M1, M2, and M3; and Value Added Agriculture are VA1 and VA2. Table 5, below, identifies the participants by position and industry sector. Table 6 provides a breakdown of the participants’ roles by industry sector. Additional demographic descriptions of these participants are included in the tables that follow.

Table 5: Employer/Participant Information

Company	Position	Industry Sector
HC 1	Human Resources	Health Care
HC 2	Controller	Health Care
HC 3	Human Resources	Health Care
M 1	Human Resources	Manufacturing
M 2	CEO	Manufacturing
M 3	Human Resources	Manufacturing
VA 1	Human Resources	Value-Added Agriculture
VA 2	CEO	Value-Added Agriculture

Table 6: Participants' Positions

Position Title	Health Care N=3	Manufacturing N=3	Value-Added Agr. N=2
CEO		1	1
Finance	1		
Human Resources	2	2	1

The tenure of participants in their current positions is evenly split with half employed in their current positions from 1-10 years; and half with more than 10 years of employment in their current position. Tables 7 and 8 describe the participants' years of experience, and their gender.

Table 7: Participants' Years of Experience

Years in Current Position	Health Care N=3	Manufacturing N=3	Value-Added Agr. N=2
1-5	2	1	
6-10			1
11-19		1	
20+	1	1	1

Males represented 75 percent of participants in the study (6 of 8). Of the two female participants, both were HR directors, one in health care and one in manufacturing.

Table 8: Participants' Gender

Years in Current Position	Health Care N=3	Manufacturing N=3	Value-Added Agr. N=2
Female	1	1	
Male	2	2	2

Participants were asked to relate their personal and business non-U.S. travel experiences over the past five years.

Table 9: Participants' Travel Experience

Travel	Health Care N=3	Manufacturing N=3	Value-Added Agr. N=2
Extensive (3-5)	1	1	1
Moderate (1-2)	2	1	1
None		1	

Research Participants by Industry Sector

A brief description of the study's participants and their respective industry sector is provided.

Industry Sector #1: Health Care

The largest single employer in this region, by far, is the health care industry sector. The region has one large medical center and eight community hospitals, as well as a surgical center. With over 5,000 employees at one of these organizations alone, engaging with these employers was of interest for this study. Three participants from two organizations were interviewed. The human resources director and a finance executive from the largest health care employer in the region were interviewed; as well as the human resources director from another organization where they recruit and retain quality health care professionals and provide customized solutions for emergency and hospitalist staffing and management. Though, as previously noted, these firms were of the belief that their focus was solely local, this seemed inconsistent with situational realities. Increasingly, medical staffing is multi-cultural, and, in an area of tourism, the patient mix may be, as well. Hence, while not as evident as in the other sectors, global competence can be of potential value.

Industry Sector #2: Manufacturing

The manufacturing industry in this region until recently was dominated by the automotive industry; however, the decline of the Detroit auto industry in the mid-2000s directly affected manufacturing plants within this region, and many of these companies went out of business. Some of these companies were flexible and retooled their plants and found other markets and built different products, and many of those companies have survived, with some expanding into the medical, aerospace, mining, and oil and gas industries. For this study, three manufacturing companies agreed to participate. One chief executive officer and two human resources directors were interviewed for this research study. Of the companies visited, all three have global ties through exporting and importing, with one company having plants in France and Ireland.

Industry Sector #3: Value-Added Agriculture

The influence of the Great Lakes on the climate allows for a variety of agricultural production in the region. Two companies within this industry sector agreed to participate in this study; one chief executive officer and one human resources director were interviewed. The first agriculture participant is an exporter of dried fruits, while the other company focuses on importing a variety of food products to the U.S. market.

Interviews

Initially, the study was designed to examine the four target industry sectors — health care, manufacturing, value added agriculture, and tourism/resort industry — and a representative sample of four participants from each sector were identified. The researcher sent an email to these 12 business and organizational leaders, introducing the researcher, the purpose of the study, and the intent to conduct individual face-to-face

interviews with senior administrators within each of their organizations (Appendix A). In that communication, they were asked to reply to the email indicating their interest in participating in the study. They were also asked to contact the researcher with any questions and to schedule an interview time, date, and location that was convenient. Seven readily accepted the invitation to participate in the study by responding directly to the researcher's email, as requested. One of the health care managers selected was unable to meet and referred the researcher to the Human Resources director at that organization. A request was sent to that employee, and she did accept. Follow-up phone calls were initiated by the researcher with the other four invited participants, to which they did not respond.

This region is well known for tourism and is the largest industry sector in the region: lodging, restaurants, and retail. Three employers within the tourism sector were invited to participate; however, none of those individuals responded to the researcher, regardless of repeated attempts to contact them. After the introductory email, phone calls were made to each of the organizations; three follow up calls were made and messages left for the CEOs, as well as other key personnel, preferably those responsible for recruiting and hiring within their organizations. When those calls and emails were not returned, the researcher pursued a discussion with their respective administrative staff. It is suspected that the time of year in which the research was conducted (summer and fall) was an important factor in their not responding to emails or phone calls.

During each of the interviews, the researcher was respectful of the participant and her/his time, and assumed a nonjudgmental demeanor. It was important to portray a sense of objectivity during the face-to-face interviews, and the researcher attempted to refrain

from scrupulous note taking, verbal agreements or disagreements with the participant responses, and asking leading questions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The interviewer sought to invoke Seidman's (1991) suggestion that it is preferable to “maintain enough distance to enable them to ask real questions and to explore, not share, assumptions” (p. 77).

Structure of Interviews

Interviews consisted of a prepared set of semi-structured, open-ended questions, based on the researcher’s primary research questions (Appendix D). The semi-structured format allowed for an informal, relaxed, and conversational atmosphere. The interview questions were used as a guide, with the ability to seek clarification and ask additional questions, if deemed necessary. The interview questions were not sent to the participants prior to their interview, and the researcher did not provide a definition of “global competency” prior to the interviews. At the beginning of each interview, the researcher introduced the subject with this description:

As an employee of the local community college, I am interested in talking with local employers to hear their perspectives about educating a global workforce. In order to do that, it’s my goal to better understand what you believe are the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that come to mind when I talk about being “globally competent.” Please share your perspectives of the characteristics that reflect a globally competent worker in your organization.

Conducting in-depth interviews as part of a qualitative study call for observation of the participants in their natural setting (Creswell, 2009). In this study, all interviews were conducted in or near the participant office. The interviews lasted between 40-50 minutes, and the basic structure of the interview consisted of these features:

1. Introductions

2. Purpose of the Study
3. Signed Informed Consent
4. Open ended questions
5. Clarifying Questions
6. Completion of demographic survey

Interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed by the researcher. The digital records are maintained on an electronic data storage device, and transcripts are secured in the researcher's home. The interviews were of sufficient depth that it was deemed unnecessary for follow-up requests for clarification.

Post Interview Demographic Survey

A demographic survey was administered to interviewees after the completion of the interview question and answer period. Interviewee age group, educational experience, as well individual travel experiences were solicited. This short survey provided the researcher insight regarding factors that might confound, or at least influence, the interview responses. For example, the participants' role and length of tenure with the current organization was of interest to the researcher; their travel experience may show a relationship to their views and perspectives when identifying competencies they seek in their employees.

Ethical Considerations

Bogdan and Biklen (2007) identify two guiding principles for ethical research: 1) participants enter into the research process voluntarily, and 2) participants are not exposed to undue risks. Approval to conduct this study was secured through the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Ferris State University in Big Rapids, Michigan

(Appendix B). As described in the IRB documents, the participants were presented with an Informed Consent Form (Appendix C) prior to the start of the face-to-face interview. This consent provided the participants with details regarding the study, contact information for the researcher, and how to contact the researcher with further questions. Participants were informed of the anonymous and confidential nature of the interviews and the withdrawal process and no one exercised that right. The participant and researcher each signed two copies of the consent form; one copy was given to the participant, and the researcher retained one copy. These consent forms are now maintained with the researcher in a locked file cabinet along with all other related documents from the interviews.

Immediately following the interviews, the researcher transcribed the audio files from each interview. The confidentiality and anonymity of the participants was never a concern as only the researcher has had continuous access to the data. The audio files and typed transcripts are encrypted and secured on an external data storage device. All research data will be retained by the researcher for five years and will be destroyed after that time period.

It is assumed that there is adversity to bias while conducting any type of research. Malterud (2001) states: "Preconceptions are not the same as bias, unless the researcher fails to mention them" (p. 484). It is critical for the reader to be aware of the researcher's employment at a local community college. All participants were familiar with the local college and most had some level of experience with, either as a student, or through family members, having attended the college. The researcher disclosed her employment status in both the email request and during the interview.

Validity

According to Maxwell (2005), “Validity is a goal rather than a product: it is never something that can be proven or taken for granted” (p. 105). The abstract nature of participant perceptions and the researcher’s interpretation of those perceptions are constructed based on the interviews for this research. The issue of validity has been discussed at great length by scholars and researchers. Validity is compatible with quantitative research, yet an effort should be made to assure validity, as described by Merriam (2009).

Internal Validity

Internal validity focuses on how the research findings are based on reality and the credibility of the findings as construed by the researcher. According to Merriam (2009), four common strategies are used to ensure internal validity of findings in qualitative research: 1) Triangulation (or convergence), 2) member checks, 3) adequate engagement in data collection, and 4) peer examination. Based on the nature of the interview structure and qualitative analysis approach, three of the four strategies were used to address the internal validity of the study: triangulation, adequate engagement, and peer examination.

Triangulation is based on developing the research findings using multiple sourcing methods. In this study, 1) interviews, 2) participant observation, and 3) document analysis were the three methods of data collection. Notes taken during the interviews were reviewed at the time the researcher transcribed the data. Observations such as body language, tone, and participant engagement were noted by the researcher. The method of adequate engagement was the second means of ensuring internal validity. The researcher conducted each interview as well as transcribed the interview recordings,

maintaining adequate engagement in the research process. This provided the researcher with the opportunity and ability to synthesize the interview information a number of times: during the interview, transcribing the digital recordings, and re-reading the transcripts for coding and analysis. Lastly, peer examination was the third method used by the researcher. Once the interview audio recordings were transcribed, and the researcher conducted the initial coding process, two work colleagues, familiar with the work of the researcher and the topic, were each given non-identifiable excerpts from two different transcripts. They were asked to review the transcript excerpts and provide feedback on the participant tone, perceived engagement, and a coding sample. In only three instances their sample coding revealed another topic that was not consistent with the researcher's coding and/or theme identification. These instances are discussed in Chapter 4.

External Validity

Creswell (2008) notes that external validity is concerned with the transferability of the study results to other situations: "The qualitative research is not to generalize findings, but to form a unique interpretation of events" (p. 173). Merriam (2009) identifies two methods to assure external validity: 1) maximum variation, and 2) thick, rich description. This study incorporated the thick, rich description to ensure external validation of the study.

Data Analysis

The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and that information was organized and refined by making notes in the margins of the interview transcripts. This process was

used for each of the interview documents. Comparisons were made between the responses until themes emerged (Creswell, 2009). These categories and themes were then reviewed and organized, which helped further define the qualitative data.

Bogdan & Biklen (1992) identify these steps in the process of data analysis: 1) identify regularities and patterns, 2) document words and phrases to present patterns, 3) sort the emerging patterns. Identifying and sorting patterns of words and phrases are what Bogdan & Biklen (1992) call “coding categories.” Identifying these coding categories is a critical step in analyzing the research data. Wolcott (1994) recommends sorting in the broadest categories. For this study, the researcher reviewed the transcripts, noted the high level themes in each transcript, and created a matrix to visually identify these coded themes. Coding categories typically come from three sources: the researcher, the participant, and other sources such as literature and previously conducted research. The researcher used the participants’ interview data to identify categories based on the questions to be answered in the research study. Merriam (2009) identifies four criteria for coding the data:

1. Be as sensitive to the data as possible
2. Be exhaustive (enough categories to encompass all relevant data)
3. Be mutually exclusive (a relevant unit of data can be placed in only one category)
4. Be conceptually congruent (all categories are at the same conceptual level)

All data deemed relevant by the researcher was categorized in a way that others who review the criteria will understand the meaning and contents of that category. Exhaustive coding was employed so that all relevant data was placed into one of the

categories, and only one category. If the researcher determines that the data can be placed into more than one category, Merriam (2009) recommends a further refining of the categories. Recurring concepts were visually represented in a table format. This strategy allowed the researcher to visualize the concepts to assure that the categories answered the research questions.

Researcher Bias

According to Merriam (2009), qualitative research lends itself to researcher bias for some of the same reasons that it is a valuable research methodology: 1) the researcher is the primary data collector, 2) the researcher is the primary data analyst, and 3) the research is grounded in the participants', as well as the researcher's, perspectives and experiences. To minimize negative researcher bias, however, consistent questions were asked of each of the interview participants. In addition, participants provided their perspectives based on their own experiences and opinions; the researcher did not provide any type of definitions or examples of competencies, attributes, and knowledge related to global competencies prior to participant interviews.

Delimitations

This study was delimited to a medium sized, public rural community college using Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education (2009) categories. The information may be of use to other similar sized rural community colleges or other community college systems serving a rural community. Participants from three industry sectors (manufacturing, health care, and value added agriculture) were interviewed for this study.

Limitations

This research and analysis were conducted based on face-to-face interviews with business and organizational administrators. While this research may be important to the rural region in which it was conducted, these results are not generalizable to other rural regions. However, this research could inform other institutions as they engage in the preparation of current and prospective workers competing in the global economy and society.

Summary

This chapter outlined the rationale for selecting the qualitative research method as well as the purposeful sampling strategy in selecting participants for the study. The qualitative research methodology provided the researcher with an understanding of rural business/organization employers' perceptions related to hiring a globally competent workforce, and how the community college can help build that workforce.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

“The world is one big family. Time and distance have been annihilated. National isolation is a thing of the past.” —W.N. Ferris, 1926

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study is to 1) assess rural employers’ perspectives of the importance of hiring a globally competent workforce, and 2) identify the role of the community college in preparing that workforce. With a better understanding of rural employers’ perspectives, the local community college could assess current globally related programs, as well as implement new programs and services that could serve local employers. Three industry sectors, key to the region, were included in this study: health care, manufacturing, and value-added agriculture. Of the eight study participants, two are chief executive officers, five hold the position of HR director, and one is a finance director. Data were collected through interviews, analyzed individually, and then compared across these three industry sectors.

Discussion of the Research Questions

To best understand participant perceptions of “global competencies” and how these competencies affect rural businesses / organizations, the following questions were developed to guide the research:

Research Question 1. How has globalization affected local businesses and industries in this predominantly rural area?

Research Question 2. What global competencies do these employers look for in their employees?

Research Question 3. To what extent should the local community colleges engage in global education of the rural workforce?

Data Analysis and Findings

The eight participant interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded for analysis. The first question focuses on the organizational characteristics and how globalization affects their work. The second question is geared toward the student/employee: participants were asked to identify competencies they look for in their workers to ensure that they are globally competent. The second set of questions focuses on the educational institution and how the information gleaned in Research Questions 1 and 2 affect their employees' educational background, and more specifically for this study, the role of the local community college. As defined in Chapter 3, throughout this discussion and analysis, the participants are identified first by their industry sector: Health Care (HC), Manufacturing (M), and Value-added Agriculture (VA). Secondly, each participant is numbered within that sector: HC1, HC2, HC3; M1, M2, M3; and VA1, VA2.

There appeared to be one 'stand out' participant in each of the industry sectors. In the Health Care sector, HC2 was clearly more outspoken and aware of the global impact on the industry. Among the Manufacturing sector participants, M2 spoke very clearly and in great detail about the world as a 'single platform' and the importance of being open minded with a willingness to engage in the unknown. And, in the Value Added Agriculture sector, VA1 provided thoughtful reflections of the global competitiveness.

During the remaining Analysis sections, specific attention may be focused on these participant responses, especially when they reflect the dominant beliefs.

Figure 2 depicts the connectedness of the three stakeholders: the employers and their particular organizational needs; the workforce and related competencies that are driven from those organizational needs, and the role of education in addressing those needs.

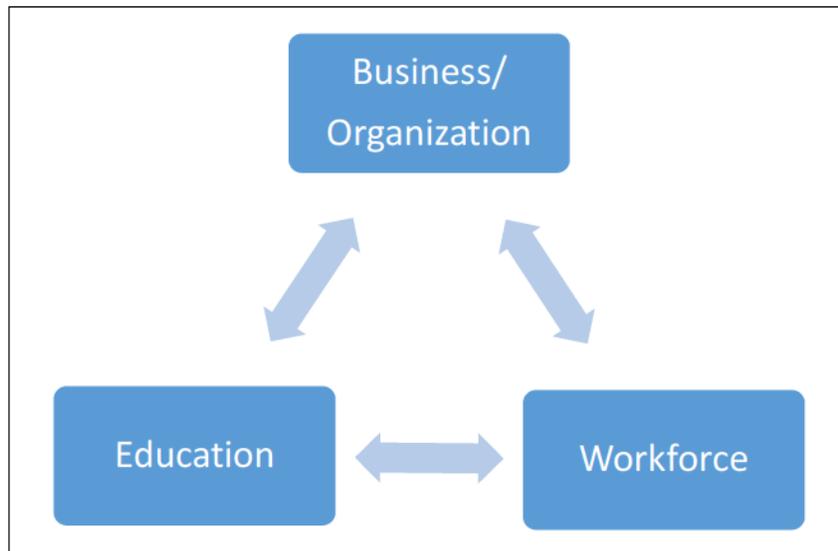


Figure 2: Stakeholder Partnerships and Collaboration

Business and Organization Needs

Research Question 1: How has globalization affected the organization / business?

The first research topic focuses on the effect of globalization related to the organization. The interview question asked participants to talk about how they felt a global society and economy affected their business/organization.

Results

During the interviews, the participants were asked about the global nature of their organization. Specifically of interest were how these companies and organizations are affected by the growing globalization in all aspects of our lives. Table 10 lists the themes that emerged from this question.

Table 10: Effects of Globalization on Participant Businesses/Organizations

Themes	HC1	HC2	HC3	M1	M2	M3	VA1	VA2
Share Information		X		X	X	X	X	X
Compete Globally		X		X	X	X	X	X
Foreign-Based Operations						X		
Import /Export				X	X	X	X	X
Recruit/Hire Globally		X				X		

The themes used to categorize the participants' responses are described:

- *Share information* – Whether it was attending meetings using some type of web conferencing tool, travel to other countries to meet with customers, owners, and suppliers, participants indicated how they went about the work of sharing information.
- *Compete globally* – Participants indicated the need as well as current practice of engaging with other countries for the purpose of growing and maintaining their business.
- *Foreign-Based Operations* – Indicative of which organizations have employees, offices, and/or holdings in other countries.
- *Import/Export* – These companies either exported or imported their products and services.
- *Recruit/Hire Globally* – Employer indication of how far reaching the applicant search, when hiring and filling positions within their organizations.

Industry Sector #1: Health Care

As noted in Chapter 3, prior to the interviews, two of the health care sector participants responded that they did not believe their particular organization was affected by globalization. Because they did not believe their industry was affected by the global economy, these two participants conveyed their reluctance to participate in an interview, feeling they did not have anything to offer the researcher, and would unlikely be able to contribute to the discussion. The researcher assured each of these health care participants that regardless of their reluctance, their perspectives were of importance for the researcher to understand the differences between the industry sector representatives taking part in this research. One participant offered this comment:

So even though we haven't historically thought about the fact that we have to be globally competitive, our patients are shopping that. So we actually have to have the highest quality of services even if we're not really in a mindset of saying that we need to hire somebody whose competent, who could be equally competent here as they are in Kuala Lumpur, or New York City, for instance. So we haven't really thought about [global competition] — the question is a great question — thinking about it in a new way. (HC1)

One of the health care participants noted that her organization does, in fact, have a global connection because many of their physicians are either foreign born or many of the U.S. citizens are seeking foreign medical education. Much of this is due to the fact that students cannot get into medical programs here in the States, not to mention that the cost of many foreign medical schools is cheaper than in the U.S. This same health care organization recruits many foreign physicians, and just recently started a new division, Telehelp. As described by the participant, Telehelp is a service that allows the physicians to consult with patients via a web conferencing system when treating minor injuries or illnesses. With any type of communication, these interactions require a heightened need

for clarity and sensitivity. As cited by HC2, “That is going beyond anything entirely clinical. The reason that I think about that globally is that we are now going to be working with companies who have employees all over the world, so even though our physician is in Ft. Wayne, Indiana, they may be treating a patient who is in Mumbai, India.”

Industry Sector #2: Manufacturing

Global competition within the manufacturing industry sector was clearly a factor for all three participants. One participant expressed how their industry views the global competition:

Now we’re forced to look at manufacturing and distribution in a global manner, whether you want to or not because it used to be that we might be competing against a company in Detroit or Cleveland, now we’re competing against countries (M2).

As a continuation on that thought, M3 added, “Every company that I come in contact with now in northern Michigan looks at their business in a global manner. Whereas before, 10-15 years ago, we were just worried about what we can sell in Michigan and the Midwest.”

In the three interviews in this sector, the global factors related to their future, as well as in their current work. The participants emphasized the effects of competition and how technology played a role in the global competitiveness of their industry: “If we didn’t have the technology we have now, we could not compete” (M1). The participants have been faced with global engagement due to the global nature of their work — and they are thriving because of this global competition. The types of technology range from automation within the manufacturing sector to meeting with their customers through

web-based conferencing software such as Skype: “Embracing certain software and becoming truly skillful in those skill sets is important. It’s important because those do cross the language barriers, they cross the world” (M2).

Not only is there global competition affecting the purchase and sale of products and goods, but it is also true when recruiting employees. M3 recruits their workforce from around the country. With operations throughout the United States and in other countries (Canada, Mexico, Ireland, and France) they face hiring challenges that other participants in this study do not face. "Yes, we are a global company. But for our U.S. operations, we're competing for people in New York, Denver, Florida, Philadelphia, all these other [organizations] that are in operation and we have to base it through northern Michigan, which is tough."

Industry Sector #3: Value Added Agriculture

The Value Added Agriculture participants offered similar comments to those from manufacturing. They are importers and exporters of food products; VA1 exports around the world and VA2 imports from around the world. From the CEO of VA2:

We have suppliers in different countries. Across the board, we find them in a variety of different ways; through trade shows, online, or they contact us for a variety of reasons.... We all travel, but the travel isn’t as heavy as it used to be. When we first started, computers were not used. There are international trade shows that we attend. There’s a big show coming up in Germany; it’s an every other year show and we will usually go to that show because we can see a lot of people from all over the world at that show. There are people from Thailand, the Philippines, Turkey, China, South America. We see everybody there.

In agreement with the global nature of his industry, VA1 shared that more than 40 percent of their sales are to international markets: “of what we produce, about half stays here and half goes somewhere else in the world.” A large part of those sales are to

countries in Asia, and they also have a presence in the Middle East, Europe, and were investigating the Indian and Australia markets. The use of technology to share information was also consistent with this industry sector. VAI has three new board members from Japan. Conferencing software is used to conduct board meetings, and in fact he noted, “We have a board meeting going on right now and we have three new board members that are Japanese that are sitting in Japan right now. It’s 10:00 at night there, but we’re all having a meeting together.” It was also noted that while most of the board meetings are conducted virtually, the new board members plan to travel to VAI headquarters in Michigan once a year.

Analysis

As Table 10 indicates (page 53), the two most common areas of similarity for these sectors were in the areas of sharing information and global competition. The majority of respondents share information, electronically or face to face, with people in other parts of the world. Whether they are suppliers, buyers, or patients, the need to share information crossed all industry sectors in a variety of ways. In addition, both the manufacturing and agricultural industries are feeling the impact of easier movement of products across countries and continents with increased competition with their global sister companies and organizations. Based on their own admission, two of the Health Care participants had not typically thought of global perspectives as important in their industry. After the interviews, they felt that they had a new level of awareness regarding their role in a global environment. Another point of interest in the Health Care sector was one participant’s comment about the effect of globalization on her organization’s employee recruiting and hiring strategies.

Research Question 2: What competencies does this workforce need to be successful in a global economy and society?

The second research topic focuses on the effect of globalization related to the organization and from the employers' perspective of the skills they expect to see in their employees. The interview question asked them to identify competencies that their employees need to have to succeed as part of a global workforce.

Results

Table 11 lists the competencies specifically identified during the interview process. Participants mentioned these specific words during their individual interview, and those stated competencies are documented in the following table.

Table 11: Stated Competencies (ordered by frequency)

Competency	H1	H2	H3	M1	M2	M3	VA1	VA2
Technology	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Global awareness	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Communication		X	X		X	X	X	X
Attitude	X			X	X	X		
Foreign language				X	X	X		
Social Responsibility			X		X	X		
Big picture view				X			X	
Work Ethic				X		X		
Character				X		X		
Adaptability	X				X			
Teamwork				X				
Creativity					X			
Resourcefulness					X			
Critical thinking							X	

Note: These terms were not clustered or grouped for this analysis.

The themes used to categorize the participants' responses in the table above are described:

- *Technology* – Described in many ways – used in production (manufacturing / value added agriculture), as a means of digital communication (videoconferencing, Internet, email), and includes productivity software (graphic design, word processing).
- *Global awareness* – Having an interest in other peoples of the world.
- *Communication* – Written, oral, non-verbal.
- *Attitude* – Positive, energetic.
- *Foreign (world) language* – Not necessarily required, but could include an understanding of the importance of another language.
- *Social Responsibility* – The role we play within our communities; giving back to others.
- *Big picture view* – What we do in our region affects consumers in other parts of the world.
- *Work Ethic* – Timely and dependable.
- *Character* – Honesty, empathy, and compassion. Personality, sense of humor.
- *Adaptability* – Open to new ideas.
- *Teamwork* – Works well with others.
- *Creative* – Looks for new ways to accomplish tasks.
- *Resourcefulness* – Commitment and sustained ability to overcome obstacles.
- *Critical thinking* – Ability to think clearly, and with reason.

Industry Sector #1: Health Care

All of the health care participants offered comments relating to workers' technical competencies, personality ("character"), and communication skills. One health care

participant discussed the need for workers to have what he described as having “energy” around technology: “Any more, it’s not really good enough to embrace technology. It’s really about being energized and having an energy around that” (HC1). Employee engagement and desire to learn new technologies along with an ability and willingness to adapt to new technologies are two characteristics identified within the technology skill theme. The use of software applications (apps) within the health care sector was also discussed by two of the three participants. One participant noted:

Now when you think about things like robotics surgery, and as you start to think about web based services – if you lived in Alaska, your primary care provider would be over Skype. You wouldn’t typically be visiting your physician. So there’s more and more of that when you think about the current health care models and some of the things that are happening with iPhone apps and being able to monitor all the things that people had to drive hundreds of miles to have monitored. There’s so much that creates this smallness and it just kind of folds the map. (HC1)

HC2 talked about dealing with people who are of different cultures: “Our globalness [sic] is just dealing with the people who are of different cultures. We don’t necessarily have hospitals in different countries, but our billing and coding department has to hire Spanish speaking service workers.” Understanding cultural differences when working with patients from different cultures, or with foreign physicians, calls for a greater need for sensitivity and patience: “You have to have patience when communicating. It can sometimes be very stressful when they’re not understanding you and you’re not understanding them and again because you can’t see facial expressions over the phone and keeping yourself calm when trying to communicate — it’s been a bigger struggle than I would ever have imagined.”

The concept of technical skills was important to this sector; however, there was a great deal of discussion on attitude and character. HC1: “We think a lot more now about attitude than we think about skills. We’re doing a lot of work around hiring for attitude.” HC3 also addressed attitude: “I like somebody with good social skills and who can appear to be able to develop good relationships with their co-workers and people in other departments.” When hiring, HC3 also stressed the importance and desire to hire individuals who have experience interacting with outside clients.

Industry Sector #2: Manufacturing

The three manufacturing participants described similar, overlapping competencies, including technology skills, attitude, communication skills, and ethics. In addition, all three noted the importance in acquiring a second language. One participant noted that as new markets open up language could be a barrier in the future: “In today’s world, a good understanding of English, and a second language or at least an appreciation of a second language is important (M2). Communication, according to M2, “is basically 75 percent of the challenge. If employees have taken the initiative to enroll in the community college, that’s very important to me. That also assures, or at least gives us pretty good assurance that these people have the basics of communication: they can read and they can write.”

All three manufacturing employers identified global awareness and global views as important competencies. The importance of workers’ ability to develop an understanding of how the products and services created by their companies affects people in other parts of the world. M2: “The people we need are the people who are wide open to — they’re really willing to listen to broken English from a different culture; they’re

willing to be patient and they're willing to be in just a really positive frame of mind in that situation." M2 added: "I think that a big global view is an important — at least an understanding and appreciation that this world is growing toward a single economy. In the world of business, it's a single platform today. Far more than it was years ago." When talking about the opportunities for individuals in a rural community, M1 spoke about the global mentality of workers: "Somebody who has that global mentality and has been other places, rather than somebody who has only been in the U.S. — it gives them a broader understanding [of the world]."

M1 talked about attitude, and how they look for someone who is team oriented: "We could ask about their past experiences and how they felt about working in a team environment, but it's hard to ask about attitude, but it's a good thing to try to see how they will fit in organizationally."

Industry Sector #3: Value-Added Agriculture

The participants from the Value-Added Agriculture sector, similar to those participants in the Health Care and Manufacturing sectors, emphasized technology skills and communication. One participant commented about the dramatic changes in technology at all levels that affect his company and their day-to-day business:

There are different levels of technology. Internet, email, phone, and then there are manufacturing technologies. We use a lot of technology in the manufacturing environment. We have computers on the floor that we use to run a lot of the machinery. (VA1)

Both VA participants identified various modes of technology required at all levels of their organizations; and many of the requirements vary by position and job. VA2 discussed the need for individuals to have good computer skills: "Everyone is on the

computer. We used to be on the phone 90 percent of the time and I'm not on the phone at all anymore. Skype is a great tool, but I'm not sure everyone believes in it. I wish more people internationally would use it. You cannot get away from technology. The expectation has changed, everyone is computer-friendly and you have to answer emails.”

Global awareness, for VA1, was focused on the workers in his company: “When we put in programs like safety, we need them to understand that someone is eating this, and not just here, but way over there. Do they need to know the markets and the economy over there, and some of those things? Maybe not as much as our VP of sales does, but they need to understand that people around the world are eating these things and what they do is very important. There's a whole chain of things that happens and they're really the first link in that chain.”

Analysis

Because all of the terms included in Table 11 were offered by the participants in response to the researcher's question, the pattern of similarity is especially interesting and significant. Of the competencies identified by the participants, the two most commonly identified were technology / technical competence and global awareness. All eight respondents from all three sectors, in fact, discussed at length the importance of technology (e.g., embracing technology, technology skill attainment, particular software skills) within their own industry sector. Clearly, the foci on specific job skills, as linked to the technologies that drive their industry, are essential when hiring and developing employees.

Competencies such as innovation, creativity, and resourcefulness have been inextricably linked to having an entrepreneurial mindset. Only one participant identified

those three competencies (M2). He talked about the importance of that skill set, and how he, as a business owner, looks for those skills in the workers he hires within his organization. He shared with the researcher a recent article he read, paraphrasing Peter Drucker, educator and business management scholar:

Drucker made a really interesting point: When asked about the social responsibility of entrepreneurs in today's world, you know, if you really want to make a big impact on society, go back to your communities, to your rural communities, and do what only you do, and that is to create jobs and create meaningful employment for people (M2).

While only one of the manufacturing participants' companies has operations outside of the U.S., the manufacturing and agricultural organizations noted that their companies are locally owned and operated. VA2, as a family-owned business partner, spoke about his concern of the business carrying on after he and his brother retire: "It will be interesting to see when we're ready to retire what happens. We've talked about that for years. I don't think my kids are interested in this work." Another aspect of family owned businesses is after years and years of hard work and building up a business or continuing a business their families might have started years ago, there is a concern of how and if the business will continue when they decide to exit. This was not a concern for any of the health care participants.

Educational Perspective

Research Question 3. How can the community colleges respond to local community needs related to preparing a globally competent workforce?

The third research topic addresses the role of the community college. The interview question was looking for ways in which the local college could help prepare the workforce.

Results

Participants were asked to share their perceptions and ideas of ways in which the community college could help prepare workers for a global economy and society. This question was the last question asked at the end of each interview. Table 12 identifies the themes used to categorize the participant responses.

Table 12 Participants' expectations of college involvement

Theme	HC1	HC2	HC3	M1	M2	M3	VA1	VA2
Collaboration	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Content/Programming	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Currency/Relevancy				X	X	X		

The themes used to categorize the participants' responses are described:

- *Collaboration* – Business/organization and education work together to understand the educational, economic, and community needs.
- *Content/Programming* – Course and/or program offerings.
- *Currency/Relevancy* – Faculty have updated skills and use current equipment and technology.

Industry Sector #1: Health Care

The local hospital is the major health care employer in the region, providing clinical sites and employment for many of the region's nursing and allied health graduates. The consistent and collaborative working relationship with the college was emphasized by the three participants in this industry sector. HC1 spoke about the positive relationship with the college and said, "Quite frankly, whenever we've asked for something it's been delivered — or over delivered." As a larger organization, HC1 has made a concerted and intentional effort to build and maintain a relationship with the college. Since many organizations are not in the business of formally educating their workforce, it is typical that they rely on their local college to help them with training and

workforce development. HC1 further describes the collaboration with the college: “[The College] has done a great job of collaborating with us over the years -- creating quality programs and outcomes. It’s not so much that those programs need to be addressed, it’s that those people are coming out with great skills, and those people are a great fit with [our organization].”

When asked what the community college could do for her organization, HC2 spoke about the need to offer more business training in non-business programs, using this example: “Both my brother and sister-in-law are physicians. They’re very intelligent, but they don’t know the first thing about how to interview, how to write a resume or cover letter. I always thought why isn’t that focused on? It’s because they focused all their time on pre-med and science; it never was a requirement in their curriculum.” Along that same line of thinking, HC3 noted, “Regardless of your career choice, I think it’s important for people in whatever industry to understand the mechanics of how that industry functions throughout the world. It doesn’t function anywhere else like it does here [in the United States].”

Not only is access to educational opportunities a plus for the region, the opportunity for business people to teach and bring their practical experiences and knowledge into the classroom is another form of collaboration. As HC3 stressed, “One of the things that community colleges bring — it’s pretty easy to learn through a textbook, but you need to have somebody that can relate that to practical experience.”

Industry Sector #2: Manufacturing

The local college, and colleges in general, are respected for their ability to keep abreast of technologies, teaching with current ideas and content. The local community

college curricula were compared to some university curricula. M3 said of the local college: “[It keeps] up with what the large universities are doing, technology wise, and that includes CAD design, CNC design, all of the IT skills.”

Regarding specific curriculum and program offerings, M1 talked about individuals having “an exposure to” a foreign language: “It should be a requirement that you have to have some type of foreign language. Or maybe study geography to learn about other countries. I just think we need to expand people’s horizons; just the way things are changing and how the economies are different.” Also of importance to M1 is the need for cultural diversity training or provide options within the curriculum based on the relationships with people from other cultures.

When asked about course content and curricula, M2 felt students/employees need a better understanding of international trade and currencies along with knowledge of basic international customs:

At least an understanding of — put it this way, the course might be called The Business Climate, or The Business Temperature Across the World. You have Argentina today is a mess; it’s a total mess. They’ve closed their society, there’s a massive taxation. We’re struggling right now because we want to do business in Brazil. Everybody and their brother wants to do business in Brazil because of the World Cup and the Olympics, it’s all happening in Brazil. But Brazil happens to have very interesting taxation and regulation and tariff and other things.

Industry Sector #3: Value-Added Agriculture

Content and programming were discussed by both VA1 and VA2. VA1 briefly mentioned their need for workers with manufacturing technology skills: “We have computers on the floor that we use to run a lot of the machinery. We run that to gather data for us to make sure that everything is within spec.” As manufacturing technologies continue to play a role in their business processes, there will be a continued need to hire

individuals capable of running that equipment. VA2 discussed only briefly the college's role in providing courses to keep students/individuals "technology savvy."

Analysis

As Table 12 indicates, three themes were identified as a result of the participant responses to this question. Overall, access to the community college was seen as a benefit to the community. The two most common areas discussed by the participants were *Content/programming* and *Collaboration*. While all of the participants made reference to content/programming, the six Health Care and Manufacturing sector participants referenced experiences with the local community college and shared their views on how the college factored into their ability, on some level, to collaborate in educating a global workforce. This collaboration also led to the discussion of course content and programs offered at the college. Manufacturing also made clear connections with the value of offering relevant programs, with a focus on currently trained faculty who receive sufficient professional development in the areas they teach. The Value Added Agriculture participants were the least vocal for this particular question. Their lack of engagement might be an area for the college to focus on in the future, which could tease out additional thoughts from this particular group of employers.

Summary

Since their beginning, community colleges have focused on the "community" aspect of their mission. With the dramatic changes in our social structure, many involved with community colleges have questioned if 'global' should be incorporated into the institution's mission, vision, and values. The responsibility to engage beyond our

communities and understand what it means to be “globally competent,” independent of location, has been deemed important by educators and researchers. As a result of this study, the participants in this rural area also clarified their positions and agree that they are, indeed, affected by globalization. As the researcher identified earlier, there were two participants who initially did not believe their industry was affected, and yet they were able to see connections as they discussed the topic. The researcher will focus on what can be done to improve others’ awareness of these workplace changes, and how they can accept and relate regardless of their respective industry sector.

Beyond the overwhelming identification of the technology theme, the participants identified two other competencies they look for in their employees: *Global Awareness* and *Communication*.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

“It is the obligation of colleges and universities to prepare people for a globalized world, including developing the ability to compete economically, to operate effectively in other cultures and settings, to use knowledge to improve their own lives and their communities, and to better comprehend the realities of the contemporary world so that they can better meet their responsibilities as citizens.”

— *Strength Through Global Leadership and Engagement: U.S. Higher Education in the 21st Century. A report of the American Council on Education (ACE) Blue Ribbon Panel on Global Engagement, 2011*

Introduction

Globalization is a relatively new concept within the community college. As described in Chapter 2, numerous studies have been published by professional organizations in which a globally competent individual is defined. What has been less researched is the needs of a particular region and what employers believe their workers need, and if these needs vary based on regional demographics. Findings presented in Chapter 4 bring to the forefront an awareness and understanding of specific organizational and business leaders’ perceptions in a rural area. This chapter focuses on the conclusions, implications, and recommendations as inferred by the researcher.

Global awareness and competence have increasingly become critical concepts as the world becomes increasingly interconnected. However, making sense of the various definitions, beliefs, and constructs is complicated by the points of view of various researchers. Definitions of global citizenship, global competence, globalization, and internationalization have added to the basic discussions of how we prepare a workforce

for the interconnected world. This study was conducted to understand the perspectives of rural businesses and organizational representatives with respect to hiring a globally competent workforce.

Research Findings, Implications, and Recommendations

Research Question 1: How has globalization affected local businesses and organizations in this predominantly rural area?

Research Question 1: Findings

This question focuses on the businesses and organizations as seen through the lens of globalization, with interest in participants' belief that they are affected by (or if they were immune to) globalization. The study found that regardless of their industry sector, globalization has affected these businesses and organizations. The eight participants at some level described their acknowledgement and awareness of globalization; two noting lesser effects, and six noting more direct effects.

Two of the health care sector participants initially felt they were not affected by global influences, and were the least aware of how the workforce in this industry sector was influenced by globalization. However, the interviews disputed their earlier perspective. During those two interviews, they acknowledged the necessity and awareness of having an open mind culturally and the importance of understanding how an industry works across borders. The one other health care participant, along with the five participants in the manufacturing and value added agriculture sectors agreed that their industries were inherently affected by globalization. HC1: "We don't have a lot of competition, per se. We think a lot more locally than we do globally. It's not to say that our workforce doesn't have world class skills, or skills that would be marketable on a

much more global stage, but we don't think a great deal about global competencies." It was also noted that this participant was unsure of the researcher's definition of globally competence. During the interview, he asked the researcher: "When I look at your project, it talks about being globally competent. So do you have a definition of that in your mind?" It was at this point that the researcher reassured him that his views were important as they relate to his particular perspective and experience in the health care sector. VA2 discounted the rural location as a factor affecting their organization: "In the workplace, anymore, generally, I'm not sure there's a big difference in rural and the city, I guess, at least in the business we are in." He goes on to say that there is less need for business travel because you can interact with anyone in the world using various methods of technology.

Research Question 1: Implications and Recommendations

This appears to be an opportunity to introduce the perspective that part of the community college's responsibility might be to help existing employers expand their understanding of the global environment. Effective engagement can be accomplished by continuing the dialogue between employers and the college. Currently, employers serve on academic program advisory committees, but these committees may only meet once or twice a year. That is not enough to build the relationships that are necessary and lead to meaningful strategic partnerships. It is recommended that employer involvement is supported at various levels throughout the institution: hold mutually-beneficial meetings for the purpose of addressing current and ongoing workforce issues; develop and/or revise programs and courses; provide work-based learning opportunities for students; and

teach a class or come into classes as a guest speaker. Again, college and employer engagement should be frequent and consistent.

In the context of healthcare as described by H1: “When you can go to India for service and have a med travel experience where you pay 10 percent of what you pay in the States for a service, and if we’re not better and if we don’t feel better from a customer care standpoint, then we, over time, I think we will feel that impact.”

And in the case of the value added agriculture sector, VA1 has taken the lead and has even built into their work culture the understanding that what happens in their community (in this case, products are grown, processed, and transported) affects people in other parts of the world — to the locations where that product is exported. The understanding that we are all part of a bigger system (world) will continue to play an important role in what employers, educators, and students see as a responsibility of being a global citizen. The manufacturing sector participants understand the global imperative and the challenges related to business competition, workforce competition, and in some cases, the language barriers associated with global competition: “Understanding how our products affect other companies, other markets, other countries because we do have product that is, in fact, in other countries. It would be nice if they had that understanding how that’s going to impact the bigger picture” (M1).

Research Question 2: What are the global competencies that these employers look for in their employees?

Research Question 2: Findings

First, talent management and workforce development are critical to the mission of the community college. A talented and competent workforce is a component of a strong and vibrant economy. The definition as well as a lack of shared understanding of “global

competencies” initially precluded some of the participants from understanding their engagement in a global environment. Participants were asked to identify the *global competencies* they think of and look for in their workforce. The study found that the most important were basic employability skills. It is those transferable, non-cognitive skills that are important for any person, in any position. Technology, communication, and global awareness round out the top three competencies as defined by the employers in this study, as depicted in Table 13.

Table 13: Top Three Competencies

Competency	H1	H2	H3	M1	M2	M3	VA1	VA2
Technology	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Global awareness	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Communication		X	X		X	X	X	X

These stated competencies are consistent with the professional organization definitions as described in Chapter 2. To those groups, specific skills were not considered as important as the “soft skills,” which are also consistent with the definition of basic employability skills. Possessing these skills is an expectation of an educated workforce, regardless of the location, career choice, or industry sector. Foreign language skills and acquisition are cited as important skills for businesses in urban areas (Olney, 2008); however, while some of this study’s participants did see that as important, the majority of these participants did not identify that as an important factor in this region. It was noted that some type of cultural awareness, whether it was formal or informal, would benefit their employees.

Research Question 2: Implications and Recommendations

Often, the local community college has relevant programs, enhanced curricula, and specific training available to its communities. Several of these participants noted, however, that they did not know about these programs and services, for a number of reasons, and therefore did not engage with their local community college colleagues and liaisons. The same can be said for college staff and faculty, if they are not directly affected by the programs and services that are new and/or being developed, they may not be aware of all the college has to offer its students and the community at large. Colleges may focus on informing the community (internal and external) of cultural programming and events available to students and the general public. Many times, these community events are free or available at a reduced cost to the communities that support their community colleges.

College officials should continue to have further and consistent discussions with business owners and organizational leaders in their region. Due to the rapidly changing business environment, organizations and educational institutions will need to be flexible and agile when developing workforce solutions. As businesses and organizations become more interdependent and engaged on a global level, the college may want to conduct a type of assessment or inventory, whereby employers can highlight the changing needs of their organization or changes within their industry sector. College officials would then incorporate systematic reviews and inventory updates which would provide the means for ongoing collaboration and engagement with the local employers. It is also important to build these partnerships as we realize that the workplace is constantly evolving, and they must strive to stay informed and relevant in a rapidly changing and competitive business climate. A competent workforce will also mean that individuals hold in high regard the

concept of lifelong learning, and they partake in industry credentialing as it becomes available, as well as take advantage of skill and competency upgrades throughout their careers. These opportunities have been and will continue to be made available, in part, at the local community college.

Research Question 3: To what extent should the local community colleges engage in global education of the rural workforce?

Research Question 3: Findings

This question focuses on the role of the community college and what can be gleaned from interviewing the participants. The researcher sought to understand their perspectives and the ways in which the community college could respond to employer needs. Also discussed was the current level of interaction and engagement with the college and its representatives.

All participants were aware of the college, and it was apparent that a few of the employers engage with the local community college on a regular basis, specifically related to addressing workforce issues. While a few are highly engaged (HC1 and M2) and have contracted with the college to provide customized training for their workers, they also hire their local community college graduates. M2 noted that half of his 200 employees are graduates or have taken courses at the college. The others are less engaged as it relates to workforce development issues. However, they all had experience and were able to provide some level of input to the researcher. What was noted was the awareness or lack thereof, even with those highly engaged employers, as to some programs and services offered at the college.

HC1 recognizes the relatively small numbers of job openings that they require for their organization in some departments. For instance, “There are positions, like coders,

that our business may not need enough to warrant a program, but using programs that we can tap into that are needed — even the mid-career folks — that makes a lot of sense to me because that will continue, especially with the Affordable Care Act, or through ICD 10 [medical coding], or pick any one of the number of imperatives. We will continue to have a need for a small group, but we won't need 50 people every year, like a nurse's aide or nursing assistants." It is in these cases that the college can act as an educational broker, of sorts. Working within their regions to assess common needs and convene those affected by globalization and the changing work environment, and provide education and training as effectively and efficiently as possible.

Research Question 3: Implications and Recommendations

The community college is a critical component of the higher education system in our nation. And, the workforce development mission is indeed important to local, state, and national economic development initiatives. The majority of the participants recognize the importance of globalization and how it affects their organization/business, and it is therefore recognized that the employees within those organizations are also affected by globalization. Having employers discuss their perspectives is the best way to begin the work of understanding the employer needs on a local level, while preparing the future workforce for the global economy and society. At the very least, institutions can generate widespread discussions among their institutional representatives, business and industry representatives, and students, creating a community of learners and building interest in global awareness and engagement. M2: "Community colleges could use entrepreneurs, owners of companies, to hopefully inspire students, or at least give an awareness or self-awareness of what we're looking for."

Community colleges are working with employers to plan for appropriate long-term approaches that will enhance the preparation of the workforce. While some institutions and definitions of global competency focus on short-term study abroad and the acquisition of a foreign language as the means of developing the cultural awareness within the student, only one employer spoke of the importance of international travel as a means of global competence. A small number of students who are able to take advantage of travel abroad opportunities may be required to enroll in courses that focus on cultural differences, diversity of peoples and cultures, and the value of a diverse society.

The commitment to internationalization and/or cultural awareness varies by institution and it is typically dependent on the support of the institution's senior leadership (AACC, 2013). Defining ways to include "global competencies" for students should not be limited to the large, urban universities and colleges. Rural regions are challenged to find not only opportunities, but individuals willing to look beyond their own communities and agree on what it means to think as a global citizen. The literature review found that rural colleges face challenges and are different than urban and suburban colleges. Financial challenges, student demographics, lack of diversity, economies of scale, and trying to do more with less support (staffing, funding, conflicting priorities) are typical for a rural community college. As a rural comprehensive community college, the mission demands that a variety of programs and services be offered by qualified faculty using updated technology and curricula. Leveraging local partnerships is an important way in meeting that mission while being fiscally and socially responsible.

How curricula and services are enhanced to build this awareness locally is of interest to the researcher. Developing new globally-specific courses is another means to provide this level of support; but not one that is recommended. There are few students who take advantage of enrolling in elective courses, and for many students, having to take one more course can be the difference between graduating or not. What is recommended is incorporating cultural awareness and global competencies into the existing curricula. This is the most economical solution and depending on the breadth of courses selected, would have a greater impact and would affect the most students. Just as colleges have incorporated writing across the curriculum into the disciplines within the college, it is also true that by infusing global awareness / cultural diversity strategies across the curriculum, this will reach a broader range and number of students. The influence will be greater and courses can be designed with respect to global awareness within a students' field of study, as well as across the general liberal arts courses required for the academic degree.

A coordinated and systemic effort between and among faculty who are responsible for course and program development, staff who support and provide co-curricular and extra-curricular opportunities to students and who support and engage with local employers, and the administrators who support the concept throughout the institution and community, must be developed in order to make this a sustainable endeavor and one that is rich and rewarding for all of the stakeholders. Depending on the community, there are ways to partner with organizations that have committed to cultural awareness. These will include local cultural groups, museum exhibits, and schools with a

significant population from outside the United States, and who may have large international student enrollments.

The community college is seen as an asset and leader within the communities it serves. Organizations have also reported that higher level skills are required for existing and future jobs in the United States. It is within reason, therefore, that college officials take steps to incorporate global competencies at multiple levels of the learning process:

1) Organizational: focused on faculty, staff, administrators, and boards — Institutions must readily prepare for and accept that their students need to be prepared for a global environment. Senior administrators can advocate for an institutional commitment to enhance global competence and work with their boards to increase the institutional commitment at the broadest level. These goals can be accomplished by stating explicitly how the college supports these initiatives in the institution's strategic plan, mission and statements. This level of support and commitment by the president, board, and executive-level staff strengthens the overall institutional commitment.

Another important aspect of organizational commitment is to support the preparation and development of its faculty. Creating meaningful learning experiences both on campus and within their courses, faculty expertise and innovation can be enhanced by offering and encouraging professional development opportunities. These opportunities could include faculty study abroad, attending professional workshops or teaching and learning conferences with a focus on global citizenry and competencies.

2) Academically: student focused — Beyond institutional level support, include appropriate references to global outcomes and learning at the academic program and course levels. By incorporating global outcomes at the program and course levels, it will

have a direct impact on students, regardless of their program or course of study. If done correctly, *all* students will be positively impacted and will reap the benefits that are now an option for only a small number of students. As discussed in Chapter 2, study abroad opportunities are the most recognizable opportunity for students to gain global skills and knowledge. However, the realization that few community college students are able to participate in study abroad activities necessitates additional ways for the rest of the student population to gain these important skills and competencies. Support for institutions who wish to develop global initiatives and outcomes at the course and program levels is available from national organizations such as the Community Colleges for International Development-CCID; American Association of Colleges & Universities-AAC&U; and the American Council on Education-ACE).

3) Regionally: business and industry, community-wide focus — Offer special programming and non-credit opportunities that focus on increasing the awareness of global issues. Programming might include international speakers, faculty, and student presentations in the community who have experience and expertise in global issues. Lastly, provide local businesses, organizations, and talent managers with short- and long-term training opportunities and learning options that help them build a competitive workforce.

Regardless of the approach taken, the community college is obligated to prepare individuals for a global economy and society (ACE, 2011). Colleges should take an active role in building awareness and instilling a sense of urgency to both internal and external stakeholders. The importance and value of an educated workforce cannot be

underestimated, and students who are prepared to engage in the interconnected world will benefit both socially and economically.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study focused on three stakeholders: 1) employers, 2) employees/future employees (students), and 3) educational institutions. Additionally, the connection between these three entities is clear and critical as reviewed in the literature. Employers, regardless of their geographic location, are engaged on a global level; the workforce is constantly evolving, along with technology, impacting employees throughout their careers; and the mission of the community college has moved beyond the traditionally local foci. The findings, as presented in Chapter 4, would suggest the following future research:

1. This study was limited to a rural region in Michigan, with eight participants from three industry sectors. Employers from different geographic regions could be studied, focusing on a larger multi-state region, with specific industry sector representatives within that region.
2. As global services and programming become further defined and accepted within the realm of the community college, researchers may be interested in conducting a study that focuses on the effectiveness in developing and assessing programs and services.
3. While this current research study focused on business and industry leaders in a rural community, the importance of understanding how the community college student connects to the global workforce should be considered. Future research is recommended that focuses on their perspectives, and how they envision their changing job roles and methods of lifelong learning, relative to globalized work environments.
4. Further research on the attitudes and perspectives of the faculty in the medium sized, rural community college, as they relate to global competence, and how they envision enhancing the connection with employers, as well as their role in developing and revising curricula.

Summary

This study focused on employer perspectives relative to a globally competent workforce and the role of the rural community college in preparing individuals for a global economy and society. Eight employers from three industry sectors were interviewed and provided the researcher with clearly articulated descriptions of those competencies, relevant to their particular industries. Generally speaking, the broad, general workplace skills, also known as employability skills, continue to rank as important, and are identified as necessary to compete in a competitive, global environment. Technology, global awareness, and communication are the three competencies most frequently identified by the 8 participants in this study, followed by attitude, acquisition of a foreign language, and social responsibility. It is our responsibility as citizens of the world to build the

Community colleges, regardless of their rural, suburban, or urban location, must prepare the workforce for the changes taking place in our local and world economy and society. Oftentimes, community college leaders work together with local employers to identify immediate workplace needs, and in doing so develop and respond to the training, curricular, and programmatic options to meet those needs. This level of cooperation can be augmented with the goal to enhance the basic discussion and engage each other in a broader conversation about the need to look to the future and how a global economy and society has changed those basic needs. Extend the current focus of delivering short-term workforce training to further discussions that address the long term and lifelong learning opportunities that will benefit workers throughout their lives. As we learn from our business and industry partners about the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they look for in

their workforce, educational leaders can also take the lead and develop processes whereby they engage systematically and methodically with their local business partners.

In addition to the business and industry partners, the college also has the responsibility to provide adequate professional development and learning opportunities for its faculty, staff, senior administrators, and boards of trustees. In order to support the work of the institution, internal stakeholders need this same understanding of global competence, as well as the awareness that globalization does, in fact, have an impact on our rural communities. The mission and values that govern the institution should address the value of a global education for students and the community, as a whole. The goal to prepare students for a globally interconnected world is ambitious and will require constant collaboration and cooperation from both the stakeholders and benefactors. It is important to note that the question is not *if* we need to make a change; it's *when*.

The importance of modeling behaviors and helping workers understand their role in a global society is also addressed. At the end of his interview, M2 concluded: "Here's an idea: what if [the community college] said that every graduate had a passport? If we are going to have global competencies, then we would promote the process of them getting their passport. I could see a press release that said we just graduated 500 and we are proud to announce that 500 out of 500 graduated with their diploma, and they also have their passport because [the local community college] believes the world is a big place and we want to make sure that every single graduate has a passport. At least they would have the base ticket. I'm going to do that here. I'm going to make sure that every employee in my company has a passport. Why not?"

Why not, indeed! Not only are colleges preparing employees to be successful in a dynamic work environment, they are preparing them to be citizens of the world – community colleges are preparing individuals for life.

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APPENDIX A: EMAIL INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

[Date]

Dear [Organization Representative Name]:

My name is Susan DeCamillis and I am a doctoral student in the Ed.D. in Community College Leadership program at Ferris State University. My dissertation research is titled: Employer Perspectives: The Rural Community College Role in Preparing a Globally Competent Workforce. The purpose of my study is to identify rural employers' perceptions of global competencies necessary for the rural workforce, and how the local community college can help prepare your workers.

Your participation in this research as a representative of a business/organization located in the rural geographic area served by Northwestern Michigan College (NMC) will bring a rich perspective to my study. Your perceptions of local business/organizations' workforce needs will guide curriculum and programming offerings for which I have responsibility as the business academic chair at NMC.

I will conduct individual interviews as the basis for this research. Interviews will last approximately 60 minutes, and will consist of 6-7 interview questions and a brief demographic questionnaire. This will also allow time for follow up questions, if necessary. I anticipate the data collection portion of the research will be complete by June 30.

If you choose to participate in this study, you can simply reply to this email. I will follow up with a telephone call to schedule an interview time and answer any questions you have regarding the process and the research. I look forward to meeting with you, and thank you for considering my request.

Susan DeCamillis
Doctoral Student
Ferris State University
sdecamillis@nmc.edu
231 995 1014 (day)
231 668 2946 (cell)

APPENDIX B: IRB APPROVAL

To: Dr. David Nicol and Ms. DeCamillis

From: Dr. John Pole, Interim IRB Chair

Re: IRB Application #130404 (Title: *Employer Perspectives: The Rural Community College Role in Preparing a Global Workforce*)

Date: May 14, 2013

The Ferris State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application for using human subjects in the study, "*Employer Perspectives: The Rural Community College Role in Preparing a Global Workforce*" (#130404) and approved it as expedited – 2F from Full Committee Review. This approval has an expiration date of one year from the date of this letter. As such, you may collect data according to procedures in your application until *May 14, 2014*. It is your obligation to inform the IRB of any changes in your research protocol that would substantially alter the methods and procedures reviewed and approved by the IRB in this application. Your application has been assigned a project number (#130404) which you should refer to in future applications involving the same research procedure.

We also wish to inform researchers that the IRB requires follow-up reports for all research protocols as mandated by Title 45 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 46 (45 CFR 46) for using human subjects in research. We will send a one-year reminder to complete the final report or note the continuation of this study. The final-report form is available on the [IRB homepage](#). Thank you for your compliance with these guidelines and best wishes for a successful research endeavor. Please let us know if the IRB can be of any future assistance.

APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the study that will take place from April to June 2013. This form outlines the purposes of the study and provides a description of your involvement and rights as a participant.

By signing this document, I understand the following:

- I am being interviewed as part of a qualitative study titled: Employer Perspectives: The Rural Community College Role in Preparing a Global Workforce. The purpose of this study is to identify rural employers' perceptions of the global competencies necessary for the local workforce. And, what steps the local community college can take to respond to those needs.
- My interview will be recorded and transcribed in the form of a typed transcript intended to capture an accurate record of the discussion. I understand that I will receive a copy of my transcribed interview at which time I may clarify information within that document. Audio recordings, typed transcripts, and field notes will be securely maintained by the researcher and password protected.
- This research study is to be submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Ferris State University, Big Rapids, Michigan. My responses will be included in the researcher's dissertation defense to a committee in the summer of 2013 and may be used in future published articles and professional presentations.
- I understand there are no anticipated risks or benefits to me, no greater than that encountered in daily life. In an effort to protect my individual identity, my personal name will not be used but rather coded and referred to as "Company = Alpha Letter; Participant = Number."
- My participation in this study is voluntary. I have the right to refuse to answer any questions or stop the interview and withdraw my consent at any time during the course of the interview.
- I am not receiving any compensation for my participation in this study.
- This research plan has undergone the scrutiny of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Protection of Human Subjects - Ferris State University. The researcher has received approval to proceed with this interview research. I have viewed the approval document. I may contact the IRB at Ferris State University should I have concerns. The contact information is as follows:

Dr. Connie Meinholdt, Chair, IRB

ACS-2072, Ferris State University
Big Rapids, MI 49307
IRB@ferris.edu
(231) 591-2759

- I understand that in the event I have questions or require additional information, I may contact the researcher:

Susan DeCamillis
Northwestern Michigan College
1701 E. Front Street
Traverse City, MI 49686
sdecamillis@nmc.edu
[\(231\) 995-1014](tel:(231)995-1014) or cell: [\(231\) 668-2946](tel:(231)668-2946)

Participant Signature

Date

Participant Printed Name

Researcher Signature

Date

Researcher Printed Name

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND PROTOCOL

Date of Interview _____ Time of Interview _____

Location _____

Script: Thank you for consenting to participate in this study. As we discussed, I would like your permission to record this interview for purposes of accuracy and data analysis. At any point during the interview, you may request that I stop recording the interview.

[Note: I will provide a definition of ‘global competence’ at the start of the interview. This will help the participant understand the lens through which the interview questions will focus.]

1. How does your organization engage in a global society/economy?
2. What do you immediately think of when I talk about global competence? And how does it impact your organization?
3. Does your organization’s mission, vision, or values statement reflect a ‘global’ strategy (either explicitly or implicitly)? [Get copy of these statements if not available on their website.
4. In education, there is a lot of talk (nationally) about the need to prepare students to be ‘globally competent.’ When you look at *your* employees, what are the specific skills and knowledge you think would best serve both your organization and the employee?
5. What can NMC do to provide our community and your organization with workers that will allow you to be successful and competitive in a global market?
6. Is there anything else about globalization or global competencies that you would like to share with me that I did not ask?