Chapter 13
An International E-Community Engagement Initiative Exploring College and Career Pathways:
A Literature Review

Audrey Faye Falk
Merrimack College, USA

Sameerah Tawfeeq Saeed
 https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7021-5195
English Language Teaching Department, Tishk International University, Erbil, Iraq

Martina Jordaan
 https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0110-6600
University of Pretoria, South Africa

Madasu Bhaskara Rao
 https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9268-2250
ICFAI Foundation for Higher Education, India

Nour El Houda Chaoui
Ibn Tofail University, Morocco

ABSTRACT

This chapter provides a literature review and conceptual framework for a current international e-community-engagement project which is taking place from January through March 2024. Through the initiative, students from five higher education institutions are placed on international teams and are tasked with developing interactive presentations on careers which are delivered remotely to youth in South Africa. The chapter explores the literature on e-community-engagement; first-generation college students; students learning about college majors and careers; near-peer mentoring; international, e-community-engagement; internationalization; global teamwork; and global citizenship. The chapter contributes to the discussion surrounding the impact of e-service-learning in higher education, particularly in remote and international settings. In addition, it aims to stimulate innovative research and programs that prepare youth for the workforce of the future.

INTRODUCTION

Despite having the most educated population in the history of the world, young people continue to face employment challenges and societies continue to struggle with misalignment between the job market and the labor market (Mann et al., 2020). With discrepancies between the career aspirations of young people and the labor market (Hoff et al., 2022), it is critical that young people are prepared for jobs of the future (Mann et al., 2020). Career preparation and career guidance programs can help young people understand the labor market and have realistic expectations for what their future careers might look like (Mann et al., 2020). Service-learning and e-service-learning initiatives can serve the community and become an integral part of this process.

This project is the second initiative of a group of international scholars who are exploring the opportunities and limits of international e-community-engagement. The five scholars are affiliated with higher education institutions in South Africa, Iraq, India, Morocco, and the United States of America. We are an interdisciplinary group who became connected with one another through our involvement in the International Higher Education Teaching and Learning Association. We represent the disciplines of linguistics, business, computer science, education, and community engagement.

The first initiative involved small teams of higher education students from our five institutions in preparing and delivering interactive Zoom-based presentations on topics pertinent to culture (i.e. food, culture, holidays, etc.) to youth in South Africa (Falk et al., 2023). This second initiative draws on the same overall framework of international e-community-engagement, with some modifications to the approach and with a new focus on college degrees and careers rather than culture.

Thus, in early 2024, five students from each of our five colleges and universities participated in an orientation session and were divided into diverse international teams. Presently, February 2024, they are planning and delivering career orientation presentations and will participate in a final reflection session in March 2024. Presentations are delivered to youth in middle school and high school who are part of the University of Pretoria's Pre-University Academy and to a small group of students from the University of Pretoria's Extended Curriculum Program who are not yet fully matriculated into their degree programs. We will be examining the potential value of this initiative in regard to career exploration, professional networking, and bridging cultural divides. Moreover, this project pushes the boundaries of service learning and community engagement work. We seek to understand how service learning and community engagement can be applied remotely and internationally for career exploration for pre-university students.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a literature review and conceptual framework to ground the proposed initiative. This review includes literature on international, e-community-engagement; first-generation college students; students learning about college majors and careers; near-peer mentoring; internationalization; global teamwork; and global citizenship.

The theme of this edited volume is the application of service learning in higher education. This chapter will expand the reader's thinking on the application of service learning in a remote, international context. It will also expand the reader's imagination in regard to the application of higher education service learning to career guidance. This chapter will be of interest to higher education faculty and staff and middle and high school teachers and administrators. It will be of particular interest to those involved in career advising, service learning, and community engagement as well as those interested in exploring alternatives to traditional study abroad and foreign exchange programs.

BACKGROUND

Higher education has increasingly embraced service-learning in recent decades, with institutions of higher education elevating their civic missions. Rooted in the philosophical work of individuals such as John Dewey and the practical fieldwork of individuals like Jane Addams, service-learning provides opportunities for students to apply their classroom learning in real-world contexts. Best practices include student preparation and reflection, reciprocity and mutual benefit among students and communities, and sustainability through ongoing communication, relationships, and trust. A diversity and social justice lens highlights the importance of community members as partners and collaborators, as well as the opportunity for unpacking biases and dismantling oppressive systems.

The term service-learning is often used to apply specifically to course-based experiences, although the term is used differently in different countries and contexts. Since our project was not tied to specific courses, we have opted to primarily use the terms community engagement or e-community-engagement. Community engagement is a more expansive term which is intended to include the varied ways that higher education institutions engage and interact with their communities. This includes, for example, research partnerships and technical assistance.

In this project, higher education students are tasked with working in international teams to conduct research and develop interactive presentations to be delivered to youth in South Africa. This is based upon the identification of the need for career guidance for young people in the Pretoria region. There is a service element and a learning element, as well as benefits for both higher education students and youth participants. Although we have not framed this experience in the context of academic courses, it could be possible to do so.

Our pilot project has demonstrated the potential value of international e-community-engagement for expanding cultural exposure (Falk et al., 2023). We found that students valued the opportunity to connect across geographic divides. They enjoyed learning about one another's cultures and meeting peers and near-peers from different parts of the world. It was a deeply humanizing experience.

We now seek to explore the use of international e-community-engagement for career exploration. Five diverse teams of college students are currently delivering interactive, Zoom-based sessions on career pathways to middle school students, high school students, and non-matriculated, beginning college students connected with programs at the University of Pretoria in South Africa. As with the culturally-based initiative we offered in the past (see Falk et al., 2023), we believe that the opportunity for college students from a wide range of disciplines to be exposed to information about different career pathways can be meaningful and productive, as can professional networking across disciplines. Furthermore, we believe that it can be particularly helpful for young people who are not yet in college or just entering college to hear about careers from the perspective of near-peers.

The global nature of this approach may also be beneficial for participants. With the capacity for international travel dramatically reduced in the context of COVID-19, international work relied more heavily on remote technologies (Lazarova et al., 2023). Thus, remote international work is commonplace now. Our project is consistent with the nature of remote international work.

Career pathways are changing in the context of rapidly advancing technologies (Li, 2022). There is a need for constant upskilling in order to have the skill sets relevant to industry. Young people today need to be thinking about their careers with an eye toward the future. According to Li (2022), career preparation may become a lifelong endeavor if trends continue to require increased education to keep pace with technological advances.

Career guidance is particularly imperative for the young people of South Africa, who are the focus of this e-community-engagement initiative. Pillay (2020) stated that career guidance must be prioritized in South Africa, given its history of apartheid, where persons of color were viewed as commodities for manual labor. In South Africa today, there is a high overall unemployment rate of about 32.9%, with higher unemployment rates among young people (Department: Statistics South Africa, 2023). While career advising is available in South Africa, it is limited to the elite (Pillay, 2020). Persons of color have neither had access to formal career counseling nor informal advising through family members, who have lacked the same resources and opportunities. Career guidance is a necessary tool for providing options for young people in South Africa that are realistic, achievable, and empowering.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The review of the literature that is the focus of this chapter is important for grounding our initiative and others who might wish to launch a similar project. We examine the literature on first-generation college students because the population of young people who are receiving the career guidance presentations in our project are first-generation college students. We seek to identify literature that expresses how students acquire knowledge of college majors and careers and we are particularly interested in the literature on career-focused community engagement and near-peer mentoring. For those considering similar projects, a foundational understanding of international e-service-learning and e-community-engagement is essential. It is also important to consider the research on internationalization, global teamwork, and global citizenship since these are important to understanding the context and rational for a global approach to career advising.

International, E-Community-Engagement

International e-community-engagement uses electronic platforms to facilitate communication, collaboration and engagement among individuals and groups across international borders. The modes of engagement can vary, including online forums, social media groups, video conferencing, and virtual exchange programs (Waldner et al., 2012; Chen et al., 2011). Since the COVID-19 outbreak, different types of e-community-engaged projects have gained in popularity (Wong & Lau, 2022). In recent years, this has led several higher education institutions to roll out initiatives to promote international e-community-engagement (Ngai et al., 2023; Falk et al., 2023).

International e-community-engagement aims to promote cross-cultural understanding, build partnerships, and facilitate knowledge sharing and learning among individuals and communities worldwide. By leveraging the power of technology, international e-community-engagement can help bridge gaps in language, geography, and cultural differences, thus promoting greater understanding and appreciation of diverse perspectives and ways of life (Falk et al., 2023).

Research provides evidence of positive experiences and outcomes for learning and service performance in e-community-engagement projects similar to face-to-face experiences. Students have achieved similar learning outcomes from an e-community-engagement or service-learning project as from a traditional community engagement or service-learning project (Figuccio, 2020; Gasper-Hulvat, 2018; Lin & Shek, 2021; Marcus et al., 2019; Schwehm et al., 2017; Soria & Weiner, 2013; Waldner et al., 2012). Particu-

larly in the context of the COVID pandemic, remote alternatives may reduce the stress and anxiety of face-to-face interaction (Dapena et al., 2022; Figuccio, 2020; Schmidt, 2021).

By eliminating geographical barriers, e-service-learning or e-community-engagement projects enable students to extend their projects to diverse communities and countries, thus enriching their global citizenship (Bharath, 2020; Chan et al., 2020, 2021; Faulconer, 2021; Marcus et al., 2019; Soria & Weiner, 2013). E-service-learning allows students to connect with others with similar interests and ideas globally (Chan et al., 2020, 2021; Ngai et al., 2021; Schwehm et al., 2017).

International e-community-engagement includes inherent practical challenges such as time zones and Internet bandwidth (Falk et al., 2023). However, international e-community-engagement projects are valuable due to their ability to connect people worldwide, promoting collaboration and understanding. These projects leverage technology and the internet to provide a platform for individuals to exchange ideas, learn from one another, and work towards shared goals. They can facilitate cross-cultural communication and help break down barriers between individuals or communities. In addition, these projects can generate concrete benefits such as enhancing access to education and healthcare, promoting economic development, and addressing social and environmental issues. While remote service learning and community engagement have their limitations, the capacity to extend access to individuals who might otherwise not have the opportunity to travel or connect internationally is unparalleled. As a whole, international e-community-engagement projects can potentially create a positive global impact (Falk et al., 2023).

In today's interconnected world, international e-community-engagement effectively fosters global understanding and cooperation. Technology enables individuals and communities to collaborate, share knowledge, build partnerships and appreciate diverse perspectives. The resulting exchange of ideas can lead to greater understanding and appreciation of different cultures, ultimately promoting global harmony.

First-Generation College Students

First-generation college students are students whose parents have not acquired a four-year undergraduate degree anywhere in the world. If a student is being raised by a single parent who does not have a bachelor's credential, and this student is the first in their family to attend an institution of higher education, they are considered a first-generation college student (Carrera et al., 2023, Covarrubias et al., 2020; DiGuiseppi et al., 2020; Ortega, 2018). First-generation college students may have siblings who are also in college or who have already obtained a college degree. On the other hand, the term "continuing-generations college students" describes higher education students who have at least one parent who has obtained a college degree (Jones & Schreier, 2022).

Approximately a third of full-time four-year undergraduate students are first-generation students globally, although the percentage may vary from country to country. First-generation college students encompass a wide range of individuals, and by enhancing their presence in higher education, there is the possibility of expanding access and opportunity in higher education and society at large (Carrera et al., 2023).

First-generation students include racial/ethnic minorities and individuals from low-income families or experiencing financial barriers to higher education (Fei et al., 2023). First-generation college students encompass a heterogeneous cohort with overlapping identities related to gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status (Mason et al., 2022). In recent years, higher education institutions have placed greater emphasis on the recruitment and retention of first-generation college students and

research on the experiences of these students (King, 2021). Conversations centered around first-generation college students and their challenges and accomplishments have become widespread on college campuses.

The number of first-generation students attending college will undoubtedly continue to rise. Research on the experiences of first-generation college students helps colleges and universities to better serve these students. Factors that impact the recruitment and retention of first-generation college graduates include academic support; addressing systemic barriers; career development resources; cultural sensitivity and inclusivity; data tracking and analysis; family involvement; financial support; mentoring and support services; outreach programs; peer support networks; policy changes; and retention programs.

Soria and Stebleton (2012) found that first-generation students reported a lower frequency of teacher interactions in the classroom and a reduced level of participation in class discussions. In addition, first-generation students demonstrated a lower frequency of making connections across courses, reporting fewer instances of weaving content from various courses into class discussions. First-generation students indicated that they were less inclined to ask questions during class. Therefore, providing tutoring, academic counseling, and tools for skill enhancement can assist in closing gaps in preparation and facilitating success in college.

Peer support is another area of need. It has been shown that a lack of peer support and motivation for both one's career and personal goals are significant determinants of college GPA, adjustment, and potentially college commitment (Dennis et al., 2005) for first-generation college students. Retention of first-generation and underrepresented students can be enhanced by building communities or peer networks where they can interact, exchange experiences, and lend support to one another.

First-generation students bear pressure from themselves and their families to be successful in college (Robledo de la Torre, 2020). By tailoring career guidance, internships, and networking opportunities to the unique requirements of these students, it is possible to enhance their prospects after graduation.

Cultural incongruity contributes to social class gaps in academic and social benefits, such as grade point average and social status score, among first-generation college students. This effect extends beyond the period of transitioning to college and persists until graduation. The presence of a cultural mismatch has an impact on students' sense of belonging in their collegiate setting (Phillips et al., 2020). Establishing an inclusive atmosphere by colleges that honors and acknowledges many cultural backgrounds helps cultivate a sense of acceptance, thereby mitigating sentiments of exclusion.

For many first-generation students, the cost is a significant barrier to persistence. Capacity to cover academic expenses moderates the effects of other variables on recruitment and retention (Cabrera et al., 1992). Recruitment and retention of first-generation college students depends largely on scholarships, grants, and customized financial aid packages.

First-generation students emphasized the significance of their families as a crucial support system in their decision to enroll and continue attending college. Research has shown that receiving emotional support from their families has positive effects on their academic performance, psychological well-being, and level of involvement in student activities (LeBouef & Dworkin, 2021). Family emotional support pushes first-generation students through college (Nichols & Islas, 2016). The families of first-generation college students impact their enrollment, completion, success, and well-being in college, regardless of whether they cause stress or provide support (LeBouef & Dworkin, 2021). Engaging families in these students' college experience can provide crucial support, as they might lack prior knowledge of higher education systems.

According to Engstrom and Tinto (2008), higher education access demands corresponding support for first-generation learners. It is essential for students and those educators who work with them to be

aware of their real or perceived barriers to academic success (Stebleton & Soria, 2012). Sustainable change requires recognizing and actively addressing systemic issues such as admissions biases, inadequate support systems, and cultural insensitivity.

Enrolling first-generation students is merely the initial phase in facilitating their success. Institutions should prioritize the implementation of comprehensive support programs for first-generation students throughout their college experience. This entails fostering a feeling of belonging and camaraderie, offering mentorship opportunities, and equipping them with the necessary skills to accomplish their elevated academic goals. By valuing the experiences of first-generation college students, universities may enhance college retention and facilitate comprehensive personal and professional growth (Schelbe, 2019). It is crucial to implement retention programs that explicitly target the difficulties experienced by these students, such as feelings of belonging, imposter syndrome, or financial hardship.

The experiences of first-generation students were first hindered by the lack of access to family members who have the implicit knowledge of navigating a college experience that they could acquire from. These students believed that they struggled more in handling their academic obligations, socializing with other students, participating in extracurricular activities, and navigating the administrative tasks and offices of the university. The first-generation students perceived themselves as less competent than their colleagues from continuing generations, which contributed to their diminished self-efficacy (Kim, 2018). Colleges providing access to mentors, advisors, and support groups can help students navigate the academic landscape, providing guidance and emotional support.

Outreach initiatives foster a sense of inclusion for first-generation students inside a college setting. These students cultivate practical expectations of college, disrupt the cycle of fear, and bolster their strong feelings of self-efficacy through outreach initiatives (Ghazzawi & Jagannathan, 2011). Outreach programs aimed at reaching college students by giving them a taste of college life and stay, providing information about financial aid, and mentorship opportunities can increase awareness and interest and thus contribute to retention.

Higher education policies must be tailored to the unique needs of first-generation college students. Nevertheless, there has been limited investigation of these issues both in terms of academic efforts and policy evaluations (Annadurai & Sahoo, 2023). It is crucial to advocate for legislative reforms supporting first-generation college graduates that eliminate systemic obstacles and foster diversity in higher education to achieve lasting improvement.

Institutions can bolster their ability to attract and, importantly, retain first-generation and minority students by addressing these complex variables, thereby fostering a more varied and inclusive educational setting.

Students Learning about College Majors and Careers

The process of exploring college majors and careers is a crucial part of students' academic and professional development. It is also an important part of the college experience and a critical part of the transition from high school to college (Lomperis, 2014; Shatkin, 2011). The purpose of this exploration is not limited to making academic choices. It is an opportunity to gain a better understanding of oneself, to identify interests, and to prepare for the dynamic challenges of the professional world.

Exploring career options and college majors is an important part of high school education in that it lays the foundation for making informed decisions and establishing a successful academic plan. When students begin exploring their educational options early on, they are able to align their skills, interests,

and values with potential fields of study, allowing them to make educated decisions about their futures (Minor, 2017). Furthermore, it is crucial to understand the relationship between academic interests and future careers in order to set clear goals and ensure success in college and beyond. Early preparation and planning also help navigate the competitive landscape of certain majors, which may require specific entry requirements or limited capacities (Shatkin, 2011).

Also, early exploration can facilitate better college selection, as a student will be able to identify institutions that specialize in their intended major, offer a diverse set of resources, feature experienced instructors, and maintain strong connections with potential employers. This exploration allows students to gain insights into their strengths and weaknesses, fostering self-awareness and adaptability (Shatkin, 2011). By exploring college majors and careers early, high school students become equipped with the knowledge and foresight necessary to embark on a purposeful and fulfilling educational and professional journey.

Minor (2017) states that career planning is crucial in today's fast-changing world of evolving careers and technological advancements. Due to technology and global business trends, occupational skills and educational requirements are constantly changing. Having a well-thought-out plan can help individuals avoid being mere victims of economic and job market changes, embracing change to grow professionally and accurately meet their career goals (Phifer, 2009).

There are many factors students may consider when selecting a college major and career. According to Shatkin (2011), students must consider their personality type, favorite high school courses, and skills. Holland's (1997) persoanlity types include realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional. Holland's classification system helps to identify areas of strength for individuals and helps them find the right career path by choosing the most suitable major.

Study requirements, intellectual interests, career outcomes, study expenses, market demand, leisure activities associated with each major, and salary considerations are additional considerations (Mullen, 2010; Phifer, 2009). Students' social class, gender, race, and ethnicity can also influence academic and occupational outcomes (Mullen, 2014). As an example, low-income students typically select majors that match their future professional careers, while middle-class students typically choose majors that match their interests. Major selection differs between men and women, with women selecting more flexible majors and men choosing more rigorous majors (Chambliss & Takacs, 2014; Mullen, 2014).

Finally, a variety of resources and methods are available to assist students in making informed choices regarding their career and educational pursuits. Among these resources are career counselors, career centers, libraries, workshops, books and publications, and online platforms (Gashi, Bërxulli, Konjufca & Cakolli, 2023; Phifer, 2009). For advice on their decision-making process, students should also consult family, friends, and mentors (Hall et al., 2011; Whiston & Keller, 2004). It is also recommended that they take advantage of resources such as career fairs and networking events to contact potential employers (Gashi et al., 2023).

Although little research was identified specifically on career-focused community engagement initiatives connecting college students and high school student, the limited literature identified was promising. Renée (2023) found that a high school career guidance program, led by college students, yielded significant individual advantages on average. The result was a rise in the enrollment and completion rates of economically disadvantaged students at four-year universities, a decline in the attrition rate of affluent students, and an expansion in the earnings of individuals during their adulthood.

Structured discussions can facilitate students in taking part in productive engagement and ensuring that group members are both attentive and capable of attaining common objectives (Lam, 2019). Estab-

lishing robust, cooperative alliances between K-12 and postsecondary institutions can be arduous, but they seem to provide benefits in developing initiatives to address deficiencies in students' preparedness for college (Barnett et al., 2012).

Near-Peer Mentoring

Mentoring can be classified into three categories: career-related, psychosocial functions, and role modeling (Akinla et al., 2018). Mentoring has been demonstrated to produce numerous benefits, such as improved academic performance, positive attitudes toward a subject, and increased self-confidence and a sense of belonging. Strong mentoring relationships require social and cognitive compatibilities or similarities (Cate & Durnig, 2007; Garcia-Melgar & Meyers, 2020; Naughton, 2019; Rhodes et al., 2005; Zaniewski & Reinholz, 2016). Relatedly, based on their study of a youth mentoring initiative, Goldner and Mayseless (2009) highlighted the importance of the quality of the relationship between the mentor and mentee.

A near-peer mentoring relationship is one where a mentor is slightly more advanced in training or experience than the mentee (Akinla et al., 2018). Young people tend to emulate those they perceive as similar to them, and middle school students tend to have a stronger connection with near-peer mentors who are only a few years older than them (Lee, 2019).

Near-peer mentoring initiatives aim to promote students' personal development. Near-peer mentoring emphasizes the advancement of personal growth and interpersonal skills by encouraging mentees to pursue their interests (Tenenbaum et al., 2014). Research has shown that near-peer mentoring is highly effective in the context of college student mentoring (Wilson & Grigorian, 2019). Near-peer mentors bring their knowledge, skills, abilities, and similar or recent life experiences into their relationships with their mentees (Taylor et al., 2023).

This approach has been linked with numerous educational benefits and outcomes for mentees. Near-peer mentors' proximity of skills and experiences fosters a deep understanding and connection with mentee needs, enabling mentors to offer practical learning strategies (Rayford et al., 2022). This peer-to-peer approach provides mentees with individualized support that faculty could not replicate in a classroom setting or large group context.

Research demonstrates that peer mentoring contributes to mentees feeling more supported and confident in their academic learning (Flott et al., 2022). Near-peer mentoring has also significantly impacted students' educational and career goals (Taylor et al., 2023). Another study found that near-peer mentoring positively affected retention rates, with mentored students more likely to remain in school and graduate on time (Crisp et al., 2017). Near-peer mentorship has been shown to benefit students from underrepresented backgrounds (Trujillo et al., 2015). It allows for a more personal and authentic relationship between the mentor and mentee, leading to greater trust and engagement. Additionally, near-peer mentors can serve as role models and provide valuable insights into the academic and career paths that their mentees are considering.

Near-peer learning strategies enable students to develop technical, cognitive, and affective competencies, as well as improve skills in public speaking, communication, and basic teaching, with mentees reporting the experience to be more rewarding than expected (Flott et al., 2022; Rayford et al., 2022). It is effectively used for exposing students to computer science (e.g., Khoja et al., 2012; Lee, 2019; Pollock et al., 2004; Sabin et al., 2017; Sun & Clarke-Midura, 2022) as well as other areas in STEM (Garcia-Melgar & Meyers, 2020; Zaniewski & Reinholz, 2016) and STEM careers (Anderson et al., 2019). Near-peer mentoring prepares high school learners for university (Qua et al., 2020). High school

students can benefit from technology-mediated mentoring, which overcomes geographic barriers to support underrepresented students (Garcia-Melgar & Meters, 2020).

Mentoring modality includes face-to-face, online (Al-Thani et al., 2023), or a combination of both, and can involve one-on-one, one-to-many, or many-to-many interactions (Topping & Ehly, 2001). The frequency of contact and emotional connection influence the mentoring relationship's success. Near-peer mentoring is believed to be a valuable tool for helping college students navigate the challenges of college life. Near-peer mentors can help their mentees achieve their academic and career goals by providing guidance, support, and resources.

Internationalization of Careers

The interconnectedness of today's world is evident in terms of trade, migration, higher education, product development, and many other aspects of our lives. Thus, internationalization has become a critical aspect on a global scale (see, e.g. Auer et al., 2006; Mayrhofer et al., 2020; Ravasi, 2015; Teichler & Cummings, 2015).

Internationalization has been defined in a variety of ways owing to its connections to different aspects, including education, economic development, business, and culture (see, e.g., De Wit et al., 2017; Flander et al., 2023; Huzdik, 2011; Knight, 2007; Melin, 2003; Miozzo & Miles, 2003; Reischauer, 2011). Internationalization mainly focuses on operations in international and global settings (Arabkheradmand et al., 2015) and connecting institutions in one country to those in another (Kertz-Welzel, 2018). Increasingly, communities and societies are becoming more interdependent, and they strive to improve their economic, educational, and social status through policies that connect them with other societies (Arabkheradmand et al., 2015).

Increasing internationalization has provided professionals and students with a wide range of opportunities, allowing them to study, work, and live in different countries (Griffin, 2020; Teichler, 2017) and enhancing university reform (Arunachalam et al., 2016). Internationalization has also enabled companies and industries to access new global markets and resources, attract diverse talents, and increase profitability, competitiveness and cultural awareness (SMU Academy, 2023). Consequently, companies, industries and organizations apply different strategies to expand their business and action plans beyond their domestic context (Luo & Tung, 2007).

Competitiveness for global careers depends upon cultural expertise, practical skills, and hands-on experience (Henthorne et al., 2001). Karpova et al. (2011) point to the need for general and industry-specific knowledge, professional skills, and personal attributes. Self- and cultural-awareness, career counseling, career-exploration modules and programs are also useful in this regard, especially when it comes to exploring the merits and challenges associated with specific careers abroad (Dunlap & Mapp, 2017; Fontaine, 1997).

Internationalization is increasingly gaining more significance in today's career landscape. Industries and business sectors seek to hire employers across the nation's borders to meet their global needs and secure a talented workforce. However, there are challenges and drawbacks associated with such international hiring strategies and processes. Moreover, preparation for an international career requires acquiring specific skills and developing knowledge for success.

Global Teamwork

Global teamwork emerges from the growing need for international collaboration, facilitated by the globalization of markets, technological advancements, and cultural diversification (Audra et al., 2018; GL et al., 2009). Globalization and advanced communication technologies are altering the context of teams, prompting the need to assemble diverse teams faced with complex challenges to enhance their effectiveness (Webber et al., 2019). Over the past few decades, there has been a substantial increase in the utilization of teams, driven by heightened global competition, consolidation, and innovation (Davaei & Gunkel, 2023; Kozlowski & Bell, 2013).

In the evolving landscape of organizational dynamics, a significant paradigm shift has occurred as organizations worldwide move away from traditional, individual-centric tasks towards a more collaborative approach through teamwork initiatives (Lawler et al., 1995). Teams have demonstrated their pivotal role in organizational success within a global, competitive, and dynamic economy (Mathieu et al., 2006). Teamwork with collaborative effort is crucial for an organization to achieve its objectives, and creating platforms for sharing ideas enhances a sense of belonging among individuals. This reinforces the notion that any organization's foundation lies in its members' collective behaviour, guided by the organizational culture (Irfan et al., 2022; Pandey et al., 2022).

Developing competitive strategies, multinational corporations are increasingly utilizing global teams to organize their work (Gluesing & Gibson, 2004; Groves & Feyerherm, 2011), marked by diversity in terms of national, cultural, and linguistic aspects (Zander et al., 2012). Studies suggest that incorporating individuals who excel in cross-cultural communication into the workforce adds tangible business value and should also be a deliberate consideration in human resources development strategies (Caligiuri & Tarique, 2012).

In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the shift towards virtual collaboration, making it imperative for students to navigate professional environments where cultural diversity and global cooperation are not only commonplace but also shaped by the challenges posed by the ongoing global health crisis (Hikamah et al., 2021; Mok et al., 2021). This new paradigm not only equips students with essential skills for the post-pandemic world but also reflects the evolving nature of the global workforce (Armstrong, Nixon & Hojilla, 2021; Mate & Weidenhofer, 2021; Singh et al., 2021; Swart & Meda, 2021).

With an increasing number of companies expanding their activities beyond national boundaries, there is an escalating demand for individuals capable of excelling in dynamic multicultural organizational environments (Alvarez, 2019). This underscores the importance of cultivating a skill set that not only embraces diverse perspectives but also fosters effective collaboration and success on a global scale (Schworm et al., 2017; Taras et al., 2013). Collaborating across borders and cultures is a crucial skill for success in college and careers. Global teamwork enhances the educational experience and prepares students for the challenges of a rapidly evolving global job market (Davaei, & Gunkel, 2023; Morrison-Smith & Ruiz, 2020). Research suggests that providing ongoing training to all team members positively impacts the overall performance, cohesion, and trust within the team. It also enhances teamwork and strengthens team members' dedication to achieving common goals (Kaiser et al., 2000; Powell et al., 2004; Tan et al., 2000).

Therefore, promoting global teamwork has become necessary for university students to prepare for their future careers (Davaei & Gunkel, 2023). Developing international skills and the ability to collaborate effectively within global virtual teams have emerged as fundamental competencies in the contemporary professional landscape (Scott, 2015). To prepare students for these challenges and foster their global

engagement, it is crucial to seamlessly incorporate experiences of collaborating within virtual project teams alongside their university program (Dincă et al., 2023).

Students must be ready to navigate professional environments where cultural diversity and global collaboration are commonplace. Students acquire essential skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and interdisciplinary collaboration, reinforcing their employability in a competitive professional world (Børte, Nesje & Lillejord, 2020; González, 2022; Paul, 2019). Collaborations within virtual project teams allow students to build an international network, expand their professional horizons, and create opportunities for future collaborations (Sari et al., 2017).

The emphasis lies in cultivating mutual responsibility and commitment, especially in examining tensions arising from conflicting perspectives on teamwork and collaboration within diverse institutions. Instead of outright endorsing or rejecting these concepts, the objective is to redefine them, providing the rationale for individual students to decide whether and how to incorporate these notions into their career planning. This has also sparked a renewed interest in fast and Fordist economic model alternatives. Understanding and confronting this point of convergence requires a reexamination of the meaning of what we and our students need to learn to evaluate critically and pragmatically, as well as the direction in which we collectively need to steer our course (Beck, 2018).

In higher education, composition pedagogy addresses diverse student needs, emphasizing individualized instruction and technology integration. Critiques categorize composition pedagogies into pragmatic approaches focused on career considerations and critical pedagogies aiming for global equity. Composing in a global-local context involves recognizing global interconnectedness and local nuances, emphasizing cultural sensitivity and advanced virtual tools in teamwork. College education integrates global perspectives and exchange programs to prepare students for a global job market. Career development prioritizes global networking, cross-cultural leadership, and mobility programs for cultural readiness. Skill acquisition focuses on adaptability and technology proficiency for success in a global work environment. Proficiency in international skills is a fundamental necessity in the contemporary globalized landscape and is applicable across various industries, professions, and geographical contexts (Rauer, 2021). The key is a holistic approach integrating global perspectives into local practices, fostering cultural awareness, and leveraging technology. An integrated pedagogical approach is recommended in teaching composition, addressing both immediate and global concerns while navigating economic challenges (Lu & Horner, 2009; Sennett, 1998).

In summary, global teamwork in college and careers is about fostering collaboration across borders, embracing diversity, and developing the skills necessary to thrive in an increasingly interconnected and globalized professional environment. It offers valuable learning experiences that contribute to personal and professional growth.

Global Citizenship

Global citizenship emerges in response to globalization, encouraging individuals to adopt a perspective that transcends national borders. It involves active engagement with global issues such as climate change, poverty, human rights, and social justice (Torres et al., 2020). Moving from a national to a global citizenship framework often involves developing a deeper understanding of diverse cultures, appreciating the interdependence of economies, and actively participating in efforts to promote global cooperation, sustainability, and social justice. This transition underscores the importance of cultivating a mindset and

set of values that transcend national boundaries, emphasizing a sense of interconnectedness and shared responsibility for addressing global issues (Bowden, 2003; Goren et al., 2017; Lilley et al., 2015a).

Citizens of the world see humanity as a unified community that values linguistic diversity, adopts an external perspective and treats all its members with dignity and respect (Nussbaum, 1997). Global citizens exhibit social responsibility, possess global competence, and actively engage in global civic responsibilities (Massaro, 2022; Morais et Ogden, 2011).

Many countries actively promote the cultivation of global citizenship among students, incorporating specific program elements to foster the adoption of a global perspective (Dill, 2013; Massaro, 2022). They advocate for higher education to promote attitudes of global citizenship while developing specific dispositions, including pro-social values like diversity, intercultural skills and social engagement. These principles aim to shape individuals who are aware, responsible and globally engaged (Chang, 2016; Cho & Chi, 2015; Eisenhardt & Sittason, 2009; Lilley et al., 2015a; Lilley et al., 2017; Shiel & Mann, 2006).

Global Citizenship Education (GCE) is the integration of globally oriented content into educational curricula with the aim of fostering a global perspective among students (Davies, 2005). It goes beyond the acquisition of factual knowledge to develop skills such as critical thinking, intercultural communication, and social awareness. This approach equips students with the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes to understand and address global challenges, including topics such as intercultural understanding, human rights, sustainability, and social justice. By incorporating these elements, GCE seeks to prepare students for active and positive engagement in an interconnected and diverse world (Andreotti, 2006).

In June 2018, a systematic literature review was conducted within higher education institutions to deepen understanding of how global citizenship is studied, measured, and implemented (Massaro, 2022). Several empirical studies have been conducted to understand how institutions seek to foster global citizenship among students, (Horey, 2018). While many positive benefits for the development of global citizenship among students have been highlighted, gaps in studies from the Global South and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic underscore the need for further research and more work in the future, including in languages other than English (Santamaría et al. 2021).

In summary, globalization creates a context where global citizenship becomes a necessity, and GCE is the vehicle that enables individuals to develop the skills, knowledge, and values necessary to thrive and contribute positively in this globalized context.

PROPOSED INITIATIVE AND RATIONALE

The literature review provides conceptual grounding for an international, e-community-engagement initiative. Through this initiative, international teams of students from five higher education institutions in different parts of the world are presently developing and delivering interactive presentations focused on a variety of careers. These presentations are being presented via Zoom to high school students and emerging college students connected with programming at the University of Pretoria in South Africa.

The youth who are the focus of this e-community-engagement initiative are primarily, if not exclusively, first-generation college students. As discussed, first-generation college students are a growing student population. First-generation college students frequently come from underrepresented backgrounds and this is certainly the case in our initiative, which includes youth from a South African Township.

While we are still in the middle of implementation, we are already seeing great appreciation and seriousness on the part of all participants. Youth are asking many thoughtful questions about careers and

the higher education students are coming well-prepared with a great deal of information about careers, educational pathways, and salaries. Globally, it is necessary to educate young people about career pathways and opportunities and this is especially important in the context of marginalized populations which may be limited in their knowledge of career pathways to which they have had minimal or no exposure.

E-community-engagement initiatives are the focus of this team of scholars. We seek to explore and understand the opportunities and challenges of e-community-engagement from the perspective of participants. This project also affords the opportunity to consider how all participants, including the youth and higher education students, might develop a greater appreciation of global career opportunities and pathways and the importance of both global teamwork and global citizenship.

INSIGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Preparation of this manuscript has highlighted for us the potential value and opportunity of the proposed initiative. We have already seen the possibilities of a similar e-community-engagement initiative focused on culture to extend participants' cultural exposure, which is a building block toward global understanding. This new project empowers participants with knowledge about jobs, careers, training, education, income, and related information that can help inform young people's decision-making. Furthermore, it prepares student participants for global teamwork by practicing these skills in a real-world context.

It is clear from the review of the literature that there is a need for more targeted initiatives to expand youth awareness of college majors, jobs and career pathways, especially first-generation students and students from underrepresented groups.

This initiative involves career-focused community engagement, which the literature does not explore deeply. However, near-peer mentoring is extensively explored, but mostly with respect to college and graduate students and less so in the context of youth. Mentoring is widely valued for individuals of all ages and greater attention needs to be given to best practices in mentoring youth for college and career.

It is critical that this work align with known best practices, including strengths-based approaches that affirm the dignity and capacity of all individuals and communities. All participants are learners and have the capacity to gain from these kinds of experiences.

While we have framed our project outside of academic courses, it is possible to do a similar project that is more clearly tied to academic coursework. With a careers emphasis, this could be done with career-related coursework in any discipline and it could also involve students in courses pertinent to social work or career counseling, for example. One consideration is how many students are involved in the project. It would be difficult to involve large groups of students from multiple countries without a more significant resource and support infrastructure in place.

We see this as an exciting area for research, collaboration, and innovation, and we hope that readers will be inspired to develop initiatives that connect students across the globe and by doing so, expose young people to information and resources. We hope that funders will see the value of these types of initiatives and that institutions will also provide time and resources to support partnerships of this nature.

CONCLUSION

This review of the literature pertinent to an international, e-community-engagement initiative focused on career guidance demonstrates great need and opportunity. It is apparent that the global economy requires global workers who are prepared to work internationally and remotely. Global citizens are needed to address social needs across the world. Career guidance is required to strengthen young people's understanding of their options and to inform decisions about education and training. Mentoring and support will help first-generation students and other marginalized students acquire the resources and information that they need to succeed in school and career. E-community-engagement can be an important piece of the puzzle, allowing students and youth across the globe to connect with one another virtually, whether or not they have the means to travel globally. Today's technological advances offer new opportunities for creativity and innovation to address community needs.

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