

SUPPORTING POST-SECONDARY TRANSITIONS

A conceptual image of a concrete bridge with a significant gap between its two main sections. A person is standing on the left side of the bridge, looking across the gap. The bridge has a series of arches and a metal railing. The background is a clear blue sky with a light blue gradient.

*An Instrumental Case Study Exploring College & Career
Readiness Through the Lens of Educational Stakeholders*

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Research Problem Selection



Study Significance

The College & Career Readiness Dilemma

Not prepared for college level work or the workforce

Not demonstrating readiness on college entrance exams

2/3 of jobs in 2017 required post-secondary education/training

College students that will not complete a certificate or degree

Need supportive structures or viable alternatives

50-70%

(McClenney, 2009)

72%

(Morgan, 2018)

2/3

(Institute for Higher Education, 2007)

43%

(Fleming, 2016)

93%

(Fleming, 2016)

RQ1

What gaps in CCR traits exist in the currently applied curriculum at the secondary level?

RQ2

How has Covid-19 impacted the required skills of first or second-year college students and employees who have entered the workforce in the last 1-2 years?



Research Questions

From the lens of



Conceptual Framework

Themes in CCR throughout Decades of Education

| | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| CCR | College Attrition | Experiential Learning | Career Readiness |
| Conley | Tinto | Kolb | Fleming |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Work Readiness2. Job Readiness3. Career Readiness4. College Readiness | <p>Student retention correlated with:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Academic Environment2. Economics3. Cultural Background4. Institutional Involvement | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self-Directed Learning (SDL)• Life-Long Learning (LLL)• Applicability | <p>Chasm between high school & post-secondary life</p> <p>College retention rates dropped</p> |
| (2008, 2016) | (1988, 2006) | (1984) | (2016) |

Key Concepts of Literature Review



01

Need for Highly Skilled Workers

What skills will be the most valuable?

(Bissel, 2017; Evans et al., 2017; Fleming, 2016; Clark, 2010)

02

Curricular & Instructional Frameworks Not Preparing Students

How are the needed skills embedded within curriculum?

(Daniel, 2020; Morgan, 2018; James, 2016)

03

Shift from Content Knowledge to Technical & Soft Skills

How is the attainment of content knowledge and soft skills balanced?

(Dymnicki 2013; McDonald & Ferrell, 2012; Stone, 2013))

Methodology

4Ws

What

Qualitative Case Study

Instrumental Approach

(Yazan, 2015; Baxter & Jack, 2008)



In-Depth Interviews

Semi-structured

Audio and Visual Recordings

Who

Educational Stakeholders

19 Participants

Where

High School & Outer Community

Why

Understanding Individual Perspective



Constructivist Grounded Theory

Authentic Representation of Experiences Regarding CCR

Participants



4 Business Leaders

- Chamber of Commerce
- Various Professions
- Insight into the Needs of Case Study Community



4 College Professors

- Singular Community College
- High Rate of Matriculation for High School
- Range of Practice & Experience



5 Teachers

- Core Subject Areas
- General Education Classes
- Variety of Work Experiences & Levels of Tenure



6 Students

- General Education Program
- Current High School Seniors
- Intensive Reading or Regular English Classes

Findings

Research Question Connection

Themes

- 1) The needs of colleges and the workforce are centered on social-emotional/soft skills.
- 2) Current curriculum and learning structures in high school fail to align with the needs of post-secondary expectations.
- 3) Structural changes in high school are needed to provide post-secondary supports for college and workforce transitions.
- 4) The Covid-19 pandemic has provided specific challenges to college and workforce preparation.

Balancing tech usage, communication, collaboration, instability, stress coping mechanisms

Research Question 1

What CCR gaps exist in currently applied curriculum at the secondary level?

Research Question 2

How has Covid-19 impacted the required skills of new college students or workers?

Conclusive Recommendations



Enhance Soft Skills & Emotional Intelligence

Reevaluating the classical knowledge currently needed in the workforce



Expand Experiential Learning Opportunities

Implement programs with on-the-job training, internships, and community involvement.



Implement Supportive CCR Structures

Foster programs which support students in resume building, college prep, and application process.

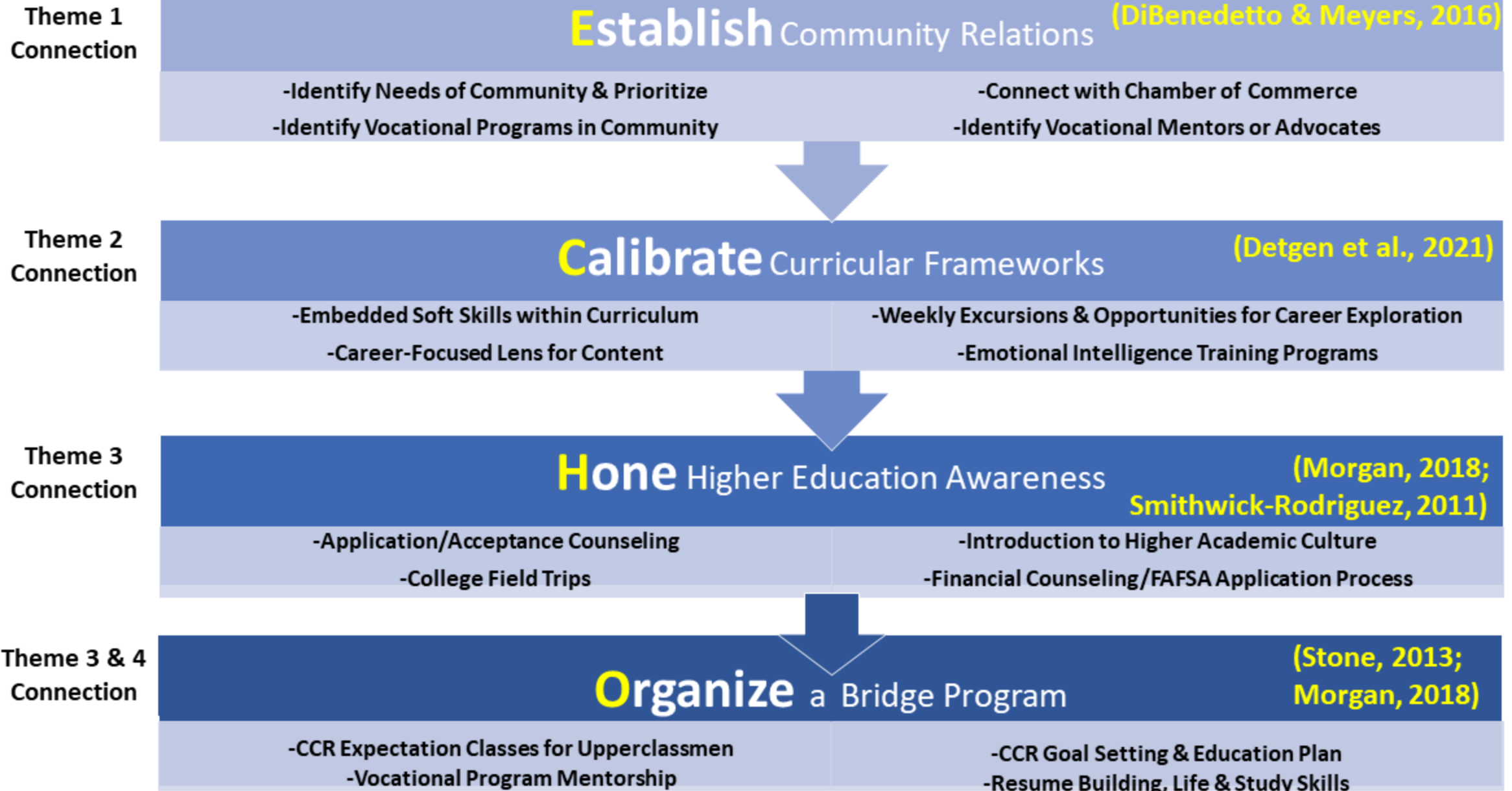


Increase Community Partnerships

Bridge relations between community, businesses, colleges, and secondary schools.

ECHO Model

CCR Support which Echoes Post-Secondary Expectations





Recommendations for Further Research

Expand

- Expand this study to different case study locations to see if similar results are discovered
- Include current and graduated students from general education programs

Explore

- Explore the efficacy of bridge-to-college/career programs
- Monitor student participation and the effects of the program on their 1st and 2nd year