CAREER CHANGE: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF

FORMER MILITARY MEMBERS

AND THEIR TRANSITION

INTO TEACHING

by

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my beautiful, loving, and supportive wife of 43 years, Aurora Ledezma Rubalcaba. Every letter I typed in this document was symbolic of me saying one more "I love you" to you. Thank you for always being there for me, supporting me when the chips were down, and for patting me on the back when I needed it. We *have* come a long way since we met when we were teenagers.

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ground by people who did not want to see Mexican-Americans go to school. She was a

tough old lady who didn't back down from too many people. If she was still here, I

would say to her, "Mafeliz, enséñeles esto."

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the experiences of former active duty personnel who transitioned to the civilian workforce as school-teachers after a career in the military. The qualitative methodology employed was a phenomenological approach. Six former U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force participants, were interviewed using purposive sampling procedures. Data collection included in-depth, face-to-face semi-structured interviews, as well as written responses by the participants using a Preliminary Survey. This study answered four research questions: 1. What factors motivate former military members to enter teaching?; 2. What support systems currently exist to assist former military members' transition into teaching?; 3. What are the life experiences of former military members that may impact the transition to teaching as a second career?; and 4. What keeps former military members in the teaching profession? Data was transcribed and analyzed using the MAXQDA qualitative software and a manual cross-cutting theme procedure. The research in this area contribute to the gap in the body of knowledge on the challenges that career-changers face. This study focuses on the difficulties encountered by military retirees in their first year or two as school teachers.

I. INTRODUCTION

Upon graduating from college in 1978, I taught during the spring semester of 1979 in a high school in one of the poorest school districts in Texas. At first, I was happy to work with high-school-aged students, but it did not take long for me to realize that, although I had learned about the mechanics of teaching, I had not been prepared to deal with the emotional aspects of working with young students.

That semester was physically and emotionally hard on me. Teachers did not speak with me. The break room was very small, and I did not feel welcomed, so I stayed away. I taught English as a Second Language (ESL), a course in which I had no formal training or experience. That job is the most challenging teaching position I ever had because the vast majority of my ESL students spoke English extremely well. I wondered why they were in an ESL class, until someone explained that many teachers had used the opportunity of a new course (ESL) to rid themselves of troublesome students and sent them to my ESL class. Many students smoked marijuana and came to class under the influence. Frequently, there were fights in the hallways and outside of the buildings. On the last day of that semester I went out to my car and found that someone had stabbed two of my car tires, making the tires unusable. After I had them repaired, I spoke to the principal and told her that I was not returning for the next school year. She told me that she was going to put a hold on my teaching certificates and I responded that she could do whatever she wanted with my certificates because I was *never* returning to teach in any school for any reason.

Shortly thereafter, I went on active duty in the USAF and after 23 ½ year in the military, I felt that I was finally mature enough and therefore ready to teach. When I

reentered teaching, I did not have to participate in an alternative certification program because I already possessed a Texas teaching certification in English and Government. All I had to do is take a computer-administered examination in the new subject I was hired to teach. That is not the case for many veterans who have to enroll in a certification program which could take up to two years to finish.

In December 2004, I applied to teach in a large school district in South Texas. After I was hired in January 2005, the principal told me that the teacher who was retiring had suggested she hire me because of my military background, age, and comportment. He told her that he felt the "kids would simply eat the other applicant alive." At that moment, I felt that my military background and training, which had made me very physically fit, organized, and adaptable, would serve me well as a teacher. That feeling lasted until the first hour of my first day.

During the first period of the first school day, I had to quickly learn to manage a class whose students had grown accustomed to sit in small groups and do very little class work. There were several tardy students and when I told them to get a tardy pass, they balked and said the previous teacher did not have a problem with them being tardy. As I assessed what I needed to do to break them of these habits, I grabbed my coffee cup and was about to take a sip when a student warned me not to do so. He pointed at a female student and told me that she had spit in my cup when my back was turned.

As the memories of my horrendous experiences in 1979 came back to me, I called my wife during the passing period and told her that I did not think I was going to make it as a teacher and was thinking of coming home at lunch. I told her that the 23 ½ years in the military had done nothing to prepare me for a classroom full of disrespectful students.

She encouraged me to stay for the day. At the end of the day, I again expressed to her my doubts about returning for the next day. She encouraged me to stay for the week and at the end of the week, she asked me stay for at least one month. At the end of the first month, she made it a semester, and I have been a teacher ever since.

Although my experience as a teacher in 1979 has some bearing on how I feel about teaching, my experiences as a teacher after retiring from the military drove my desire to study other veterans' transition from the military into education. I have often wondered how many veterans had similar experiences to mine. If they did, how did they deal with them? Have they been asked to describe what war they were in, or if they killed someone in that war? Did their fellow teachers accept them? What role did any of those experiences have in keeping them in or driving them out of teaching? What can we do to help veterans who want to become teachers to adapt to a different culture than the one they experienced in the military?

Over the years, I met military veterans who expressed an interest in becoming a teacher but were not sure where to start. I always spend time discussing what my experiences have been but also add that teaching has been very rewarding. I always caution them to remember that they are working with very young people, and not rush to judgement, either of the students or of their own decision to teach. Regardless of the method or program these individuals ultimately used to become teachers, sharing their experiences may help inform others seeking to become teachers. 2

Background of the Study

Very little is known about military retirees who transition from a military career to a second career in public school teaching or about the various difficulties they

encounter in that new career. Although job and career are sometimes used synonymously in popular discourse, vocational psychologists often use the term *career* to refer to a sequence or collection of jobs one has held over the course of one's work life (Brown & Lent, 2013). Brown and Lent state that *career* is sometimes used in a more limited sense to refer to one's involvement in a particular job family (e.g. military service) which may include multiple jobs. It is in this sense that one can speak of a career change, a shift from one job family to another (e.g., from a job in the military to a job as a teacher).

Those veterans that do choose to go into teaching have motivations which are complex and personal, including altruism, benefits to self, practical considerations, and even a lack of alternatives. Regardless of their motivation, they are likely to have a positive impact on their students' success in class (Chambers, 2002). At the same time, teaching is one of the only careers where there is an expectation that a newly appointed individual must assume all the roles and responsibilities of the experienced practitioner from day one on the job, with no allowances made for their inexperience (Manuel, 2003).

When assessing an individual in transition it is helpful to understand the transition process, which takes place over time and includes phases of assimilation and continuous appraisal as a person moves into and through the changes occurring in their lives (Anderson & Goodman, 2014). Answers to questions regarding why former military members become teachers, where they teach, their satisfaction as teachers, and whether they are accepted by their teaching peers may impact other military retirees' decision to become teachers. Ferfolja (2008) believes that an examination of the speed and success with which teachers who have made the transition to teaching from another career adapt to the classroom and school environment is necessary to assist efforts towards

recruitment and retention. It is also important to look at the impact on the roles, routines, and relationships of people changing careers to understand how career transitions affect their lives and those of their family members (Transition Guide, 2017).

Statement of the Problem

Former members of the military services who retire and go into a second career in teaching are required to make many life, economic, and vocational changes upon exiting the cloistered world of the military (Gaither, 2014). Adjustment issues can potentially foster feelings of separateness when veterans transition to civilian life if their circumstances are such that they lack a support system, or if they lack a shared experience with those systems (Pease, Billera, & Gerard, 2015). During the post-911 era, seven-in-ten veterans (72 percent) report they had an easy time readjusting to civilian life, 27 percent say re-entry was difficult for them, a proportion that swells to 44 percent among veterans who served in the years since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks (Morin, 2011).

Koenig, Maguen, Monroy, Mayott, and Seal (2014) believe that former military members subtly articulate tensions between military and civilian cultures and their associated social identities during readjustment. These issues occur as veterans move through a unique life/career transition which requires coping, adapting, and making decisions across many areas of their lives (Anderson & Goodman, 2014). Morton, Williams, and Brindley (2006) believe that a considerable number of unspoken and assumed rules can cause confusion for people bringing different mental frameworks into this environment, even though they are more mature, experienced, and believed to be more responsible than traditional preservice teaching interns.

There is a lack of relevant knowledge concerning the difficulties that former military members face as they transition to teaching after a career in the military. Although many models are used to study the phenomenon of job transitions in general, few have been used to study the specific problems encountered by former military members when they transition into teaching.

Purpose of the Study

This study attempted to capture the phenomenological experiences of former military members who chose teaching as a second career. The research focused on the reasons these individuals became teachers, the support systems that existed for them as they transitioned into teaching, their life experiences as new teachers, and reasons they remain in teaching. Additional goals of this study were to determine if the participants were able to adapt fluidly to teaching and to document issues related to such things as job satisfaction and their acceptance by their fellow teachers, administrators, and others in their school district.

Many career transition resources are available to help military members choose a new career path after they retire from the military. However, these programs usually focus on helping veterans find employment in the fastest growing and highest paying jobs (Military Advantage, 2017). When working with returning veterans, military transition counselors and school leaders need to be mindful of how veterans view the transition taking place and the need to establish methods to explore their perceptions and experiences related to that transition (Robertson & Brott, 2013). This research was intended to provide information that transition counselors and school leaders can use to assist military retirees seeking employment in and transitioning to teaching. Information

showing how the job transition affects former military members may help these

professionals provide better services for veterans experiencing career and life transitions.

Additionally, a study of what military retirees who choose teaching as a second career

encounter as they begin their new jobs as teachers may help to strengthen policies

concerning their preparation and induction support.

Research Questions

1. What factors motivate former military members to enter teaching?

2. What support systems currently exist to assist former military members'

    transition into teaching?

3. What are the life experiences of former military members that may impact

    the transition to teaching as a second career?

4. What keeps former military members in the teaching profession?

Conceptual Framework: Schlossberg's 4S Theory

To understand the life experiences of former military members who go into

teaching, a lens from which to approach the subject was established. Berman and Smyth

(2015) recommend developing a conceptual framework based on relational thinking

about core concepts. Maxwell (2013) refers to the conceptual framework as a group of

ideas and beliefs the researcher has about the phenomena studied. Lyons and Doueck

(2010) also stress the importance of having a conceptual framework to provide a structure

to research.

The basis of any conceptual framework comes from the study of available

literature which pertains to the subject. The literature included numerous theories

which have been proposed to explain career transitions. One such theory is

Schlossberg's 4S theory of transition (2012), which offers effective techniques for helping adults understand, and successfully navigate, normal life transitions. Schlossberg's work provides a systematic framework (Anderson, Goodman, & Schlossberg, 2012) to organize a study of how job transitions might affect people, such as military retirees, who enter teaching.

Schlossberg's transition theory recognizes internal factors (e.g., characteristics of the individual) and external forces (e.g., characteristics of the environment) that may affect transitions (Robertson & Brott, 2013) but the application of Schlossberg's theory to the transition from the military to teaching is rare. Schlossberg's model consists of four principal areas: (a) transition as a process, (b) characteristics of the transition environment and the individual, (c) examination of resources and deficits, and (d) successful adaptation to transition (Anderson, et al., 2012). Anderson et al. place the four perspectives on a continuum according to the degree to which they encompass predictability or variability in the life course. As military retirees move through a unique life/career transition, they must cope, adapt, and make decisions across many areas of their lives (Anderson & Goodman, 2014).

This study used Schlossberg's 4S model, which is derived from her broader transition theory, as its conceptual framework. Schlossberg's model for assessment and interventions applies across the inter-related areas of situation, self, support, and strategies (the 4S's) (Anderson, et al., 2012). For each of these areas, the 4S model provides effective strategies to assist adults moving through some of life's most difficult and enduring transitions (Miller, 2010).

In her paper on Schlossberg's Transition Theory, Meyer (n.d.) states that

the first of the 4S factors, a person's *situation*, will vary according to what

triggered the transition, the timing, the amount of control the person has over the

transition, the new roles the individual is taking on, the duration of the transition,

one's previous experience with a similar transition, how the individual assesses the

transition, and other stresses the individual is experiencing.

Meyer describes the second of the 4S factors, *self*, as the personal and

demographic characteristics and psychological resources an individual has.

Personal and demographic characteristics affect how an individual views life and

include socioeconomic status, gender, ethnicity/culture, age, stage of life, and stage

of health. Psychological resources include ego development, outlook, personal

values, spirituality, and resiliency.

The third factor is the *support* that an individual receives that impacts

his/her ability to adapt to a transition. People receive support from family, friends,

intimate relationships, institutions and/or communities. Functions of support

include affection, affirmation, aid, and honest feedback. The support that military

retirees find is related to their satisfaction as teachers and often dictates whether

they will remain in teaching.

Meyer describes the final 4S factor, *strategies*, as methods individuals use

to cope with a transition. Individuals who want to change their situation or reduce

their stress can choose among four coping modes: information seeking, direct

action, inhibition of action, and intrapsychic behavior. For example, military

retirees who become teachers may seek more knowledge about subject matter and

classroom management techniques or attempt to transfer the skills they learned in the military into the classroom.

Linking the 4S model to the practical experiences of former military retirees new to teaching represents an extension of the model. Much of the early work on Schlossberg's 4S theory was concerned with general transitioning from one career to another. When Schlossberg's 4S theory was applied to former military members, the focus was on their transitioning into higher education or civilian life rather than teaching. This study addressed contemporary experiences that exacerbate the lives of veterans transitioning into teaching. *Figure 1* depicts the four factors in Schlossberg's theory.
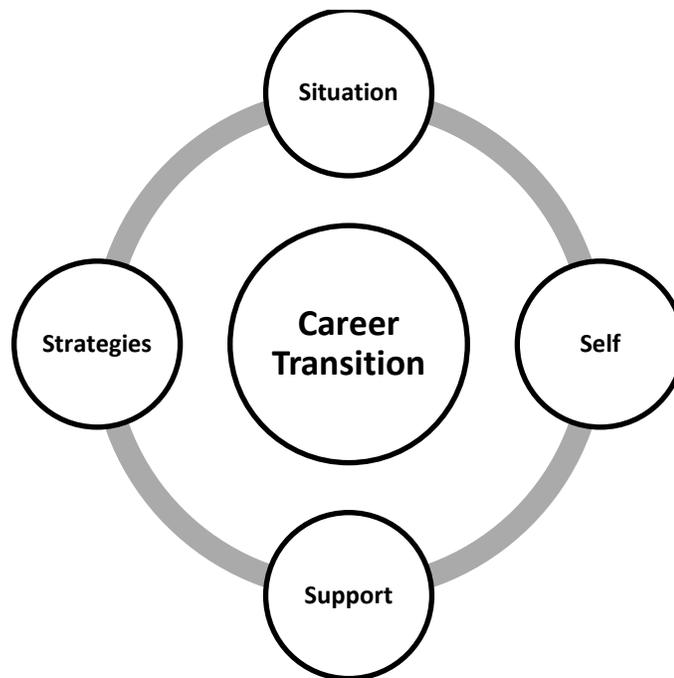
Figure 1. Schlossberg's 4S Model.0

Overview of Phenomenology and Research Design

Phenomenology is the study of the lived experiences of persons; the view that these experiences are conscious ones (van Manen, 2014), and the identification of the

essences of these experiences (Moustakas, 1994). Biemel and Spiegelberg (2016) describe phenomenology as a philosophical movement originating in the 20th century, the primary objective of which is the direct investigation and description of phenomena as consciously experienced, without theories about their causal explanation and as free as possible from unexamined pre-conceptions and presuppositions. For Cerbone (2012), phenomenology is primarily concerned with how best to capture the details of an individual's episodes of experience. Sokoloski (2000) describes phenomenology as the study of human experience and of the way things present themselves to us through such experience.

Edmund Gustav Albrecht Husserl is generally credited with establishing the concept of phenomenology. Husserl believed that the main object of phenomenology was to provide a rigorous science in its own right, one with apodictic knowledge. Husserl suggested that only by suspending or bracketing away one's natural attitude could philosophy become its own distinctive and rigorous science, and he insisted that phenomenology is a science of consciousness rather than of empirical things (Kaufer & Chemero, 2015). Stewart and Mickunas (1974) tell us that the purpose of bracketing is to open up experience of the world by discarding all limiting theories and presuppositions.

A phenomenological approach was used for this research because it is an appropriate methodology for researching the lived experiences of individuals (Glesne, 2016), specifically those who have chosen to become teachers after a career in the military. The phenomenological approach is an in-depth inquiry into a topic with a small number of homogeneous participants to seek understanding of the experiences and

perceptions of each participant, and to examine similarities and differences across cases (Glesne, 2016).

This study borrowed from what Morgan (2011) refers to as research based on real-world experiences: existential-hermeneutic-phenomenology. Hermeneutics is an attempt to show the pre-philosophical understanding of man in the world that is basic to various disciplines so that this understanding can become the basis of philosophical reflection (Stewart & Mickunas, 1974). Hermeneutic phenomenology, as a methodology, provides glimpses of the meanings that reside within human experience and intends to illuminate essential, yet often ignored, dimensions of human experience in ways that compel attention and provoke further thinking (Crowther, Ironside, Spence, & Smythe, 2017). Lim (2015) argues that hermeneutic phenomenology is a theoretical perspective that is both descriptive and interpretive. It is descriptive because it focuses on exploring the essence of a phenomenon with the belief that there are essential structures within it that make it unique from other phenomena. At the same time, it is interpretive because it holds that all phenomena are meaningfully interpreted. The recollections and descriptions of military veterans' transition to teaching provided an insight to their world as they went through real-world experiences, attempted to give them meaning, and allowed us to interpret them. A more detailed discussion of phenomenology is provided in Chapter 3.

I used a preliminary survey to assist in the selection of participants. I conducted the survey within several school districts in the state to identify campuses at which military retirees worked as teachers. According to Priest (2002), the most usual data source for phenomenological study is verbatim transcripts of audio-taped interviews. I

also conducted and audio-taped two interviews with each of my participants at a place and time of their choosing. My phenomenological research eschewed explanations or opinions about participants' experiences, and instead focused on the lived meaning of those experiences, as suggested by Adams and van Manen (2017).   Specific research procedures will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

Delimitations

To constrain the scope of the study and make it more manageable, researchers should outline the factors, constructs, and/or variables that were intentionally left out of the study (Ellis & Levy, 2009). Delimiting factors include the choice of objectives, the research questions, variables of interest, theoretical perspectives that a researcher adopts, and the population chosen to be investigated (Simon, 2011). Delimitations of this study included:

- The participants were selected from a broad range of school districts.

- The participants were selected only from public and charter schools.

- Only teachers who retired from the military within five years of this research and entered teaching as a second career were interviewed.

- The presumption of fitness of military retirees as teachers was not examined in this study.

Significance of the Study

There is a dearth of research on how former military personnel who transition into teaching are assisted during their out-processing from the service and their induction into teaching. This study will help inform military transition counselors, teacher preparation

programs and school leaders to assist retiring military in their transition to public education.

Little information exists on how military retirees adjust to a position in a culture vastly different than the one from which they come. Many experience difficulties coping with the school culture, in part because they have not fully transitioned from the military culture. The generic culture of America's schools as well as the unique well-established social mores of a particular school were discussed by Anderson, Fry, and Hourcade (2014) as things that most second-career teachers initially struggle with. This study will help fill the gap in existing research on the support that military retirees need to make their adjustment to a teaching position, and the study's findings may contribute to a smoother transition from the military to teaching despite what Wilkins and Comber (2015) refer to as the significantly different cultural contexts of these two careers.

Definition of Terms

Alternative Certification Program (ACP) – A broad range of ACPs exist nationwide. Humphrey and Weschler (2007) state that little evidence exists about what form alternative teacher preparation should assume because some states deem any post-baccalaureate teacher education program an alternative program, whereas others consider a post-baccalaureate program the traditional route.

Bracketing – Bracketing is the cognitive process of putting aside one's own beliefs, not making judgments about what one has observed or heard and remaining open to data as they are revealed. Specifically, in descriptive phenomenology, this activity is carried out before the beginning of the study and is repeated throughout data collection and analysis (Streubert, 2011).

Dasein – The term emphasizes the situation of human reality in the world and stresses the fact that human existence is always existence in the world (Stewart & Mickunas, 1974).

Discharge (or release) – Includes retirement from active military service.

Former active duty personnel – An individual who is identified as "active duty" is considered such when he/she has worked full time on active duty in the military. However, this individual may not have served enough time to be considered a military veteran.

Midcareer professional – Refers to a Troops to Teachers participant who is transitioning from a previous career to teaching (including military retirees and excluding paraprofessionals) (DOE, 2007).

Military Retiree – A military retiree is any former member of the uniformed services who is entitled, under statute, to retired, retirement, or retainer pay. Examples include, but are not limited to, spending 20 or more years in the military or permanent retirement by reasons of physical disability (Veterans Resources, 2014).

Military Veteran – The general definition of what constitutes a veteran varies depending on the era of service (Veterans' Services, 2016). Generally, the word veteran means a person who served in the active land, naval, or air service and who was discharged or released under honorable conditions. The number of days required to be considered a veteran during peacetime is 180 days or more on active duty (Veterans Administration, 2017).

Second-career teacher – An individual who has left a first career and entered teaching as a second career.

Troops to Teachers – A program that is part of the Department of Education but

managed by the Pentagon and intended to assist eligible military personnel to begin new

careers as educators in underserved public schools where their skills, knowledge and

experience are most needed (Bank, 2007b).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this literature review was to examine the unique challenges that former military personnel experienced when they became teachers. The review explored why former military personnel entered teaching. An examination of the reasons why former military members chose a career in education follows, including specific characteristics by which these individuals were identified. After exploring these factors, programs such as ACPs, which were specifically designed to attract military members to teaching are discussed, with an emphasis on Troops to Teachers. A review of alternative teacher certification programs and their advantages and disadvantages is also provided. Challenges faced by former military members who are new to teaching are then explored, with an ensuing section on the type of support that is available to them, including mentorship, support groups, and stress reduction programs. Finally, the need for the current study is addressed.

Why Former Military Members Pursue Teaching as a Second Career

Literature on the pre-transition phase includes different reasons military retirees become teachers. Many decisions are made during a prospective teacher's pre-service period after they have been accepted into an accredited teacher preparation program and begin to work towards graduation and teacher certification (Vespia, McGann, & Gibbons, 2016). Extensive research on beginning teachers who made a decision to enter the teaching profession has identified a number of issues around their motives for becoming a teacher (Watters & Diezmann, 2015). In Nias' (1984) research on why his participants became teachers, almost all of them claimed they had *chosen* to teach, and several had

overcome resistance from parents, spouses, or university tutors in making the decision to prepare for teaching.

Research showed that some of the reasons former military personnel became teachers were personal. Howes and Goodman-Delahunty (2015) studied career decision-making considerations of an intergenerational cross-section of teachers in their study and found that reasons for choosing a teaching career varied widely across individuals. However, they established five themes concerning reasons for choosing teaching: personal fulfillment, practical considerations, desire to contribute, lack of alternatives, and influence from others.   Howes and Goodman-Delahunty determined that the first three made up 84 percent of the five reasons.

Anthony and Ord (2008) reinforced the concept that many people choose teaching for altruistic reasons. A wide range of push-pull factors that help provide momentum towards choosing teaching were included in their study**.** Priyadharshini and Robinson-Pant (2003) tell us that push factors are those that make people leave a previous career while the pull elements are those considered to make another career field, such as teaching, an attractive profession. Among the reasons for switching careers is dissatisfaction with the nature of one's previous career, which led some into teaching because they believed that teaching would offer a more sociable environment; not just in terms of dealing with children, but also in terms of working as part of a team with other teachers.

For former military people choosing to become teachers, many pull factors were evident. Anthony and Ord (2008) describe pull factors as those that seemed to draw people to a career such as teaching and include factors such as looking for a challenge

and perceiving a career fit both on a personal ability level and a prior experiential level. Anthony and Ord add that an antecedent factor may be a life-long desire to be a teacher and may be the only reason required in some cases. Watters and Diezmann (2015) identified multifaceted, complex, and at times emotionally charged and even contradictory reasons why individuals choose to become teachers, including what Bullough and Hall-Kenyon (2011) refer to as a *calling*. Bullough and Hall-Kenyon found that regardless of gender, individuals who possessed a strong sense of calling and described themselves as a teacher, said they do more than teach; literally, for these individuals, teaching is a way of life, of finding oneself, and involved experiences that were deeply spiritual and life affirming. Many military members fall under this category. Sometimes, however, former military persons need assistance to discover their calling and then to weigh the risks and rewards of attempting to achieve their new goals (Huebner & Royal, 2013).

Other pull factors included a desire to work with young students and to contribute to society (Anthony & Ord, 2008). For some career-change teachers, teaching offers an opportunity to belong to a community and a chance to make a difference in that community (Priyadharshini & Robinson-Pant, 2003). Yet another reason why military retirees choose teaching is a desire to feel good about their work. Research has found that people who have their psychological needs met at work report higher self-esteem and less anxiety (Huebner & Royal, 2013). Chambers (2002) found that second-career teachers who are motivated by altruism and perceived personal satisfaction benefit tremendously after they have found a way to express their love of children and a desire to help young people.

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Howes and Goodman-Delahunty (2015) conducted research on practical considerations as reasons people choose to teach in a second career. They found that when deciding to become a teacher, personal fulfillment, in terms of meaning and enjoyment, was a particularly important consideration. Another practical consideration is the ability to earn a stable and satisfactory income. Stable employment is seen as important to overcoming adverse circumstances, primarily because in recent years the unemployment rate for veterans is higher than the national unemployment rate (Robertson & Brott, 2013).

Sometimes, people decide to enter into teaching because of ideological reasons. A desire to contribute to society by serving again was expressed during the transition phase of many military retirees desiring to become teachers. Watters and Diezmann (2015) showed that career-changers wanted to make a difference by repaying benefits that they acquired through education. Manuel and Hughes (2006) discuss the quest for fulfilment and purpose, a desire to sustain an engagement with one's chosen subject(s), and the opportunity to work with young people as motivating factors. Robertson and Brott (2013) add that some veterans indicate that focusing on their new career or helping and serving others provides them with more life satisfaction. Usually, military retirees are older and thus employment for them might fall under the term bridge employment. At the individual level, bridge employment allows older workers to match their desired and actual levels of workforce participation (Adams & Rau, 2004).

What Makes Former Military Members Suitable for a Career in Teaching?

Experiences and Skills

There are many advantages of hiring veterans as teachers (Parham & Gordon, 2016). Frequently, service members have worked and lived with individuals from other cultures, quickly adapt to changing conditions, are resilient, and able to collaborate with others to achieve a common mission. Considered as a group, post career military veterans have a proven work record and a documented ability to function under adverse conditions (McCree, 1993).   Lee and Lampfort (2011) praise the advantages a mature, non-traditional, career-changing teaching applicant has over the recent college-aged graduate who enters the profession. The leadership skills, breadth of experience, dedication, commitment and maturity that our former marines, sailors, soldiers and airmen bring to the classroom are attributes that are sought by public school administrators and parents (Troops to Teachers, 2015). McCree (1993) states that the career military veteran has years of direct and indirect teaching experience, has had meaningful exposure to multi-culturalism, possesses a strong sense of dedication to community, and exhibits pride and self-confidence as well as a strong desire to excel. Military career changers who choose to become teachers offer exceptional promise because of their combination of content expertise, professional experience, and maturity (Anderson, Fry, & Hourcade, 2014). Priyadharshini and Robinson-Pant (2003) believe that career changers are changing the profile of newly qualified teachers, and bring with them a variety of skills, including management or organizational expertise. These career changers, as discipline experts, can relate subject matter knowledge in various contexts and applications and are able to supplement the subject matter with their own experiences

(Diezmann & Watters, 2012). McCree (1993) states that the days when the soldier was an instrument for applying violence have been superseded by technology, and that change has created a unique and valuable alternative source of teacher candidates.

Career-changers often bring a lifetime of knowledge and work experience that may have a profound effect on themselves, their colleagues, and their students (Lee & Lampfort, 2011). The veteran's experience, both personal and professional can add to that effect (McCree, 1993). Encouraging those kinds of highly qualified people into teaching is an important strategy in many countries, and numerous initiatives are implemented to persuade professionals and high performing graduates into teaching (Diezmann & Watters, 2015).

Some second-career teachers perceive they have an advantage over traditional teachers (Chambers, 2002). One such advantage is the introduction of expert knowledge into the classroom. Chambers found that some participants felt that they brought certain patterns of thinking acquired in their first career to their efforts to develop as successful teachers, thus their transfer of skills applied not only to the content they taught but also to how they approached the task of teaching.

Many Former Military Members Who Enter Teaching are Racial Minorities and Men

Troops to Teachers is a federal program that provides stipends to veterans seeking teacher certification and bonuses to former military members who commit to remaining in teaching at least three years (Troops to Teachers, 2015). Feistritzer (2011) reported that Troops to Teachers completers reported numerous aspects of their military career as very valuable to them as they make the transition to a career in teaching. However,

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Anthony and Ord (2008) found some cases where schools assumed the teachers would contribute in certain areas related to their previous work experiences even when they had not studied those areas during their training.

Programs such as Troops to Teachers are providing educators for America's classrooms who are more likely than traditionally certified teachers to be a person of color (Parham & Gordon, 2016). Compared with only 10 percent of the general teaching force that is from a minority or ethnic group, nearly three out of ten Troops to Teachers completers are from minority or ethnic groups. Compared with 74 percent of the overall teaching force that is female, nine out of 10 people coming into teaching through Troops to Teachers are male (Willett, 2002). In another study by Bank (2007b), four out of five Troops to Teachers completers were men and more than a quarter were African-Americans. Of the Troops to Teachers completers in a study by Owings, Kaplan, Khrabrova, and Chappell (2014), 56 percent were male and 12 percent were female, 18.8 percent were African American, 5.8 percent were Latino, and 40.8 percent were White. See *Table 1* to view a demographic comparison between Troops to Teachers completers and other public-school teachers.

Former Military Members Who Enter Teaching Are More Likely to Teach Minority Students and High-Need Subjects

According to Shaw (2008), alternative-route teachers are teaching in shortage fields in greater percentages than traditionally prepared teachers. Troops to Teachers completers are also more likely to work in high-poverty, high-minority schools (Owings et al., 2014) and help increase the pool of effective male and minority teachers available in U.S. schools (Owings, Kaplan, Nunnery, Marzano, Myran, & Blackburn, 2006).

Owings et al. (2014) defined high-needs schools as high-poverty and/or schools

with a high-minority student population who responded with an ethnicity other than

Table 1.

Demographic Profile of Troops to Teachers and Public-School Teachers in the United States.

	Troops to Teachers 1998	Public School Teachers 1996
Total Respondents	(n=1,171)	(n=1,018)
	Percent	Percent
Gender		
Male	90	26
Female	10	74
Race/Ethnicity		
Amer. Indian/Alaskan	1	1
Asian/Pacific Islander	1	1
Black	16	7
White	71	89
Hispanic	8	2
Other	3	*
Age		
Average (in years)	41	41
<24	*	3
25-34	5	18
35-44	36	31
45-54	55	39
55-64	5	9
65+	0	0
Community Where Teaching		
Inner city	24	36
Small town, non-rural	24	30
Suburban	27	31
Rural	24	23
Grade Level Taught		
Elementary	20	47
Middle/Junior High	35	26
Senior High	45	27

*< .5 percent

White. In 2005, Owings, Kaplan, Nunnery, Marzano, Myron, and Blackburn found that the majority of Troops to Teachers completers taught in high-poverty, high-minority teaching assignments were in the same type of schools. Overall, over 50 percent of Troops to Teachers completers are certified in a critical shortage area (Feistritzer, 2011).

Owings et al., (2006) found that the majority of Troops to Teachers completers not only teach in high-poverty schools, but that one fifth of them teach in schools where 51 to 75 percent of students are eligible for a free or reduced-price lunch, and about one third teach in schools where more than 75 percent of students are eligible for a free or reduced-price lunch. In order to encourage Troops to Teachers completers to consider these types of schools, the program provides additional incentives to those who agree to teach for a specific period of time in areas that are designated as high need (McMurray, 2008).

Concerns about Suitability

Some researchers express concern regarding the emotional well-being, or suitability, of military retirees who enter into the world of teaching. The current combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan have involved U.S. military personnel in major ground combat and hazardous security duty (Hoge, Castro, Messer, McGurk, Cotting, & Koffman, 2004). Hoge and associates (2004) argue that studies are required to assess the mental health of members of the armed services who have participated in these operations and to inform policy with regard to the optimal delivery of mental health care to returning veterans. Just as important, these studies may be used to inform human resources offices nationwide on the emotional well-being of veterans who have mental health issues and yet want to teach in schools. This may help us answer questions about

why veterans, who say they had a clear understanding of their missions while serving, also experienced fewer difficulties transitioning into civilian life than those who did not fully understand their duties or assignments (Morin, 2011). Yet another question is whether it is the transition itself that causes readjustment difficulties, or if the individual with readjustment problems also had difficulties understanding duties or assignments while on active duty. Teacher preparation programs need to assist candidates who lack the proper disposition to teach and transition to other career pipelines that are better suited for them (Vespia, et al., 2016).

Effectiveness and Longevity of Former Military Members Who Become Teachers

Effectiveness

In their 2005 study, Owings et al. concluded that, although many alternatively certified teachers, including Troops to Teachers completers, were entering America's K-12 classrooms, research had yet to affirm that students were gaining as much or more from these teaching professionals as from traditionally prepared teachers. In a later study, Owings et al. (2014) found that teachers who have used Troops to Teachers funding to pay for their teacher preparation programs make a quantifiable positive impact on student achievement as teachers.

In a separate study on how alternatively certified teachers affect student achievement, Owings et al. (2006) found that about 90 percent of supervisors agreed or strongly agreed that Troops to Teachers completers are superior to other teachers with similar teaching experience regarding having a positive effect on student achievement, working well with other teachers and staff, independently handling student discipline problems, following school policies and regulations, and keeping parents informed about

their child's academic and behavioral progress. Additionally, Owing et al. found that principals expressed confidence in Troops to Teachers completers' use of specific teaching strategies that help increase student achievement.

Longevity

Research indicates that Troops to Teachers completers are more likely to remain in the education profession than teachers in general (Feistritzer, 2011). In their study of over 1,200 Troops to Teachers completers, Owings et al. (2006) found that almost 25 percent would remain in teaching until retirement. A little more than 1 percent indicated they planned to leave education, almost 12 percent were undecided, and about 4 percent said they would continue teaching unless they had a better career opportunity. Bank (2007a) found that, among Troops to Teachers completers who started their teaching careers in high-need schools, 90 percent continued for a second year, 75 percent for a third and 85 percent said they expect to be employed in education in five years, compared to 71 percent of all teachers.

In their 2014 study, Owings et al. found that:

A total of 2,788 (67 percent) Troops teachers responded to the initial teacher questionnaire item that asked how long they plan to remain in the education field as a teacher. Most respondents stated that they planned to remain in the teaching profession for more than 10 years (40.5 percent, $n = 1,129$), with the remaining respondents split about evenly between 1 and 5 years (20.2 percent, $n = 563$), 6 and 10 years (20.5 percent, $n = 572$), and undecided (18.8 percent, $n = 523$). This is similar to responses in the 2005 study when 55.6 percent indicated they would remain in teaching as long as they were able, 24.9 percent said they would remain

until eligible for retirement, and 11.7 percent were undecided about remaining in the profession (pp. 63-64).

In her 2011 profile of the Troops to Teachers program, Feistritzer found that, when asked if they would still be teaching in five years, 78 percent of Troops teachers responded that they expect to be employed in education; 61 percent expect to be teaching in K–12 schools, and 17 percent expect to be employed in an occupation in education other than teaching. Significantly fewer (10 percent) of Troops to Teacher completers expect to be retired from teaching in five years than all teachers (22 percent).

Recruitment of Military and Former Military Members to Teaching

The most significant effort over the past twenty years to recruit experienced, non-traditional entrants from the military into teaching has been the aforementioned Troops to Teachers initiative, a U. S. government sponsored program that provides stipends to veterans entering the teaching profession (Lee & Lampfort, 2011) and was created at the same time as a massive exodus from the military by people in the early 1990s. Stipends help cover the costs of obtaining teaching certificates, then bonuses are used to encourage them to stay in teaching for at least three years (Bank, 2007b).

Financial aid may be provided to qualified service members as a stipend or bonus for teacher certification expenses in exchange for a commitment to teach for three years. Teachers receiving a $5,000 stipend must teach in a school where at least 20 percent of students are from families living below the poverty level, or in a school where at least 50 percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch programs or where a high percentage of students have disabilities. In place of a stipend, participants may accept a $10,000 bonus if they are employed as a teacher in a school district that has at least 10

percent of students from families living below the poverty level and are teaching in a school where at least 50 percent of the student population is eligible to receive the free or reduced lunch program or in a school with a high percentage of students with disabilities (Military Times, 2016).

Troops to Teachers was initiated in 1986 by William Bennett, then Secretary of Education, and Casper Weinberger, then Secretary of Defense, who signed a formal agreement intended to encourage military veterans to enter teaching as a second career (McCree, 1993). Agreements such as these are an important strategy in many countries where numerous initiatives have been implemented to persuade professionals such as former military members to become teachers (Diezmann & Watters, 2015). Troops to Teachers was formally established in 1994 as a Department of Defense program. The National Defense Authorization Act for FY2000 transferred responsibility for program oversight and funding to the U.S. Department of Education but continued its operation by the Department of Defense. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 provided for the continuation of the program; however, the National Defense Authorization Act for FY2013 transferred the responsibility for the program oversight and funding back to the U.S. Department of Defense.

Troops to Teachers is open to applicants with a bachelor's or advanced degree who separated with six or more years of service on or after Oct. 1, 1990, or current Selected Reserve members with six or more years of creditable service toward retirement (Military Times, 2016). Eligible candidates include military retirees, members of the active duty armed forces with an approved retirement date within one year of applying to the program, or honorably discharged service members with six or more years of service

and willing to obligate in the Selected Reserves for three years (Owings et al., 2006). Candidates must meet state requirements for vocational/technical teacher referral. To participate in the program for counseling and referral services, teaching candidates must be current members or former members of the U.S. Armed Forces whose last period of service was characterized as honorable.

Since the program's inception, 8,875 Troops to Teacher candidates have been placed in classrooms in 2,887 school districts (Shaw, 2008). Of these, over half stated that without an alternative certification route, they would never have pursued a teaching career (Feistritzer, 2011). Troops to Teacher completers report numerous aspects of their military career as very valuable to them as they make the transition to a career in teaching. At the very top of the list are: Life experience (93 percent very valuable); discipline (92 percent); problem solving (88 percent); leadership opportunities (88 percent); and professionalism required of everyone (87 percent). In a study by Owings et al. (2006), teachers were asked to rate the extent to which they believed their preparation programs equipped them to use research-based instructional practices associated with increased student achievement and four effective classroom management strategies. Six summary statements of their findings offer confirmation that Troops to Teacher completers do provide advantages to students that traditionally-gained teachers do not. These are,

1. Principals (over 90 percent) overwhelmingly reported that Troops to Teacher completers are more effective in classroom instruction and classroom management/student discipline than are traditionally prepared teachers with similar years of teaching experience;

2. Principals (89.5 percent) stated that Troops to Teacher completers have a positive impact on student achievement to a greater degree than traditionally prepared teachers with similar years of teaching experience;

3. Troops to Teacher completers strongly agreed or agreed that their preparation program equipped them to use research-based instructional practices associated with increased student achievement and effective classroom management behaviors;

4. School administrators overwhelmingly strongly agreed or agreed that Troops to Teacher completers exhibited research-based instructional behaviors to a greater degree than traditionally prepared teachers with comparable years of teaching experience;

5. Troops to Teacher completers teach in high poverty schools, teach high-demand subjects (special education, math, science), plan to remain in teaching as a career, and increase the teaching pool's diversity; and,

6. Troops to Teacher completers wrote in answers to open-ended questions how their military experiences prepared them to be successful classroom teachers and school leaders in terms of organization and time management, personal and student discipline, working with diverse populations, and leadership and motivational skills.

Alternative Certification Programs

Examples of Typical Alternative Certification Programs

A study by Heiten (2011) showed that four out of 10 new public-school teachers hired since 2005 came through alternative teacher-preparation programs. Smith-Ross

(2016) believes ACPs are primarily designed for bachelor-degreed individuals who desire

to teach. Smith-Ross notes that, as a non-traditional approach to teacher certification, the

ACP model's intent is to attract the second-career professional who has retired or is

seeking a career change. The last 20 years have seen the range of pathways substantially

and purposefully expanded, and a shorthand distinction between traditional and

alternative pathways and programs has come into common usage (Grimmett & Young,

2012). There are three types of alternative certification programs currently available.

These include national, state, and district-run programs (Shaw, 2008). ACPs typically

involve a period of intensive, condensed academic work, and an interval of supervised,

on-the-job training in which new teachers apply teaching skills in the classroom (Owings

et al., 2006). In some states, such as Texas, the candidates are normally eligible for a

regular teaching license after a one-year probationary period.

  Maloy (1999) found that roughly 10 percent of future educators sought alternative

routes to certification that were school-district based. In 2010 (the most recent year with

available data), 45 states plus Washington, D.C. approved some type of alternate route,

resulting in 21 percent of teacher graduates being from an ACP (Brown & Lent, 2013).

In many states, ACPs play a central role in the production of new teachers (Humphrey &

Weschler, 2007). In recent years, the path to licensure for many soldiers turned teachers

is likely be through the completion of an ACP (McMurray, 2008).

  Viadero (2005) estimates that as many as 600 such programs exist and are

managed by school districts, states, universities, private organizations, or some

combination thereof. Additionally, the U. S. Department of Education (2004) says that

ACPs tend to be created by a local partnership for the express purpose of preparing

teachers to meet the needs of the local school district(s). Grimmett and Young (2012)

note that ACP growth has been uneven across the country and has tended to be

emphasized in states facing the greatest challenges in recruiting qualified teachers.

Humphrey and Weschler (2007) offer program summaries for seven programs, including

the type of person who participates in these programs, as well as what learning

opportunities the various programs provide (See *Table 2*, below).

Table 2.

Seven Examples of ACPs. Source: Humphrey and Weschler, 2007

	Stated Purpose(s)	Entrance Requirements	Primary Program Components	Number of Partici-pants
New Jersey's Provisional Teacher Program	• To allow career changers and other talented individuals streamlined access to the teaching profession • To eliminate the need to hire emergency teachers	•2.75 minimum GPA •Major in subject •Passing score on the Praxis II subject assessment test or National Teacher Examination specialty area test	Preservice: • Individuals obtain a certificate of eligibility authorizing them to seek a teaching position • Once individual accepts an offer with a school, the state issues a provisional license • Pilot program offers 40 hours of preservice training Inservice: • 200 hours of training offered at regional centers • Evaluation by district three times, the last of which includes a recommendation for standard licensure • Full-time mentor for initial 20-day period; continued mentor support for next 30 weeks	2,800

Table 2, cont'd.

Texas Region XIII Education Service Center's Educator Certification Program	• To recruit mid-career professional and recent college graduates in high-need subject areas	• 2.5 overall GPA or 2.75 in last 60 semester hours • Competency in reading, writing, and math shown through test records, college coursework, or master's degree • Required coursework and semester hours in desired area • Online interview • Professional references • Daily computer access	Preservice: • Courses offered online and at the Region XIII training center in the spring • 2-week field experience Inservice: • Continued coursework • School-based mentors who are trained by Region XIII • Program-based field supporters	300
Milwaukee's Metropolitan Multicultural Teacher Education Program	• To provide urban children living in poverty with effective teachers • To recruit and prepare minority teachers • To prepare teachers who will remain in the Milwaukee system	• At least one year as a Milwaukee paraprofessional or teacher's aide • Interviews by Milwaukee Public Schools and University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee • Admissible as post-baccalaureate student in university's School of Education	Preservice: • Six weeks of coursework and summer school teaching • Must receive positive evaluation to continue in program • University classes Inservice: • Weekly university classes • Minimum of weekly visits by full-time mentors • Regular evaluations by supervisors	20

Table 2, cont'd.

New York City Teaching Fellows Program	• To fill vacancies in New York City's lowest performing schools	• 3.0 minimum GPA • Interview event comprised of a sample lesson, discussions of education articles, responses to classroom issues, and one-on-one interview	Preservice: • 8 weeks of master's degree coursework provided by local public and private colleges and universities, field placement, and meetings with an advisor Inservice: • Master's degree coursework • Mentor provided by schools • Monthly mentor provided by university	2,600
NC TEACH	• To support mid-career professionals who want to switch to a career in education	• 2.5 minimum cumulative GPA • Degree with a major in, or relevant to, desired licensure area • At least 3 years of full-time work experience	Preservice: • Orientation • Five-week summer institute of full- time coursework offered at 13 University of North Carolina campuses In-service: • Continued coursework, advisement, and support • Mentor assigned by local education agency	452

Table 2, cont'd.

Teach for America (TFA)	• To close the achievement gap by providing teachers to under-resourced schools and producing future leaders committed to closing the achievement gap	• 2.5 cumulative grade point average • Exhibit certain characteristics (have records of achievement and commitment to TFA mission, accept responsibility for outcomes, demonstrate organizational ability, show respect for others, possess critical thinking skills)	Preservice: • Assigned readings, structured teacher observations, follow-up conversations with observed teachers • 5-week summer training • 1–2 week orientation in placement region In-service: • Participants attend a certification program offered by a local university or other credentialing program • Ongoing support from the TFA regional office (learning teams, observations with feedback, workshops, discussion groups, "all corps" meetings)	1,800
Teacher Education Institute—Elk Grove (CA)	• To meet the growing district's need for credentialed teachers • To increase teacher quality by training teachers in the district's curriculum and practices	• 2.5 minimum GPA	Preservice: • 80 hours of coursework • Classroom observations In-service: • Coursework • Internship in classroom of a "master teacher coach" for 16 hours per week during Fall, • 4 days per week in Spring	100

Beyond Humphrey and Weschler's (2007) seven programs, other ACPs are

Spouses to Teachers (STT), and International Business Machine's Transition to

Teaching. Spouses to Teachers is a Department of Defense pilot project designed to

assist spouses of active duty and reserve military members to become public school

teachers (U. S. Department of the Army, 2009). The STT program is operational in California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Kansas, Louisiana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia, and Utah. STT provides limited funding (the maximum financial assistance is $600 per person) to eligible spouses to reimburse the cost of tests required for state teacher licensing and certification. Additionally, STT provides information on state certification requirements, counseling on certification options, assistance in transferring certification from one state to another, financial aid resource help, and state employment guidance.

IBM's Transition to Teaching (T2T), which started in 2006 with over 100 IBM employees, addresses the need to support employees as they transition from IBM employment into fulfilling careers as science and math teachers (IBM, 2008). T2T has become a flexible, hybrid teacher recruitment and preparation model, featuring both traditional training (emphasizing pre-service pedagogical theory and field experiences) and alternative preparation (supporting on-the job professional development) (Berry & Montgomery, 2012). According to the center, IBM funds up to $15,000 for tuition reimbursement or stipends for up to four months of field experience when the participants need a leave of absence.

Another model is the residency model, which Guha, Hyler, and Darling-Hammond (2016) say creates a vehicle to recruit teachers for high-needs fields and locations, offers recruits strong content and clinical preparation specifically for the kinds of schools in which they will teach. The residency model connects new teachers to early career mentoring that will keep them in the profession and provides financial incentives that will keep teachers in the districts that have invested in them.

The goal of ACPs is to increase the supply of teachers by drawing from a different and sometimes larger pool of candidates than the traditional brick-and-mortar university. Of the 2,075 Troops to Teachers completers who responded to Owings et al.'s (2014) study, 10 percent stated that they attended a non-specified bachelor's degree program, a provisional licensure program, or a state-approved alternative certification program.

Advantages of Alternative Certification in General

ACPs differ from traditional teacher education programs because they are inexpensive, are short-term, and allow teachers to move directly into the classroom (Owings et al., 2005). Regardless of how alternative teacher training programs are managed, Paredes-Scribner and Heinen (2009) note the policy rhetoric suggests that these programs help address teacher shortages, improve teacher quality, increase diversity of the teacher pool, and increase retention rates.

ACPs are known to augment teacher shortages in many school districts across the country (Smith-Ross, 2016) by allowing adults who have completed their undergraduate degrees to enter the teaching profession via non-traditional, alternative routes (Shaw, 2008). The majority of alternatively certified teachers enter the classroom immediately, compared with only 40 percent of traditionally prepared teachers who are teaching the year following graduation from an education preparation program (Owings et al., 2005). Many states have resorted to ACPs because they offer a way to expand the pool of qualified teachers by attracting individuals who might otherwise not have become teachers (Tigchelaar, Vermunt, & Brouwer, 2014).

Besides the advantages listed above, ACPs have been approved by states across

the nation for a number of other reasons, including augmenting the areas of science,

mathematics, and special education (Parham & Gordon, 2013). Research results

demonstrate that alternative certification programs are an effective method of recruiting

teachers in hard-to fill subject areas, particularly those content areas with the most critical

shortages such as special education, math, science, and foreign language courses (Shaw,

2008). Shaw argues that because many non-traditional candidates come to teaching

following a successful first career, these teachers bring a wealth of knowledge in subjects

like science and math. In a study about ACPs in Missouri, Paredes-Scribner and Heinen

(2009) outlined the various requirements for prospective teachers in that state as an

example for other statues to emulate. To enter an ACP in Missouri, for example,

prospective teachers must meet the following requirements:

> …a bachelor's degree relevant to the subject area in which they will teach and a
>
> minimum 2.5 GPA. Upon completion of initial coursework, teachers receive a
>
> two-year provisional teaching certificate. State guidelines also stipulate that
>
> alternatively certified teachers will (1) be assigned a mentor from the same
>
> subject area and approximately the same grade level during the teacher's first two
>
> years, (2) receive ongoing professional education from their Alternative Teacher
>
> Certification Program (ATCPs) during the first years, (3) participate in the
>
> district's professional ATCP 182 development program, and (4) participate in the
>
> Missouri Performance-Based Teacher Evaluation program (pp. 181-182).

Another advantage of ACPs is that novice educators can begin teaching and

earning a salary and benefits, thus some are drawn to these programs because of financial

need (United States Department of Education, 2004). McMurray (2008) believes it is advantageous to design ACPs specifically for Troops to Teachers participants because their demographic makeup is unlike other populations, and because the mobility that is common to the military leads to questions regarding licensure and reciprocity that are unique to them.

Disadvantages of Alternative Certification

Although ACPs have become increasingly popular as a strategy for addressing teacher quality and teacher shortages, there is little agreement about what constitutes alternative certification (Humphrey & Wechsler, 2007). The term "alternative route" has been used for everything from unstructured help for individuals on emergency permits to sophisticated, well-designed programs (United States Department of Education, 2004). Accordingly, the National Education Association (NEA), the nation's largest professional employee organization, whose 3 million members work at every level of education, is concerned about the unchecked proliferation and dizzying array of ACPs (Van Roekel, 2009). Humphrey, Wechsler, Bosetti, Wayne, and Adelman (2002) believe that the technical and practical barriers to measuring the effect that ACPs have on student learning are daunting.

One argument against ACPs is what McKibbin (1988) refers to as the practicality ethic, which leads to the use of inadequate training systems in the delivery of instruction. Most participating rural districts, he says, are unable to provide adequate training facilities and simply do not have the ability to provide adequate resources to prepare these teachers. Citing an absence of clinical practice that may negatively affect students' academic achievement, Humphrey and Wechsler (2007) decry the placement of ACP

teachers in classrooms before completing their training, leaving them without student teaching experience. Albina (2012) recounts that as a Teach for America recruit she designed units with the end in mind and aligned learning activities and assessments with measurable, student-centered learning goals, but she found that time management was her biggest challenge, and that her preparation did not allow for true mastery of the craft of teaching. In a study designed to take a look at the specific needs of novice special education teachers from an ACP, Casey, Dunlap, Brister, and Davidson (2011), also determined that time management was an issue for over 51 percent of these teachers. Additionally, approximately 75 percent of the novice teachers identified not knowing what to teach as being the area giving them the most problems, and over 60 percent of them said they had problems writing lesson plans during their novice years. Casey et al. attribute the expedited nature of ACPs to lower levels of preparation or background knowledge for curriculum preparation.

Although some data on the characteristics of alternative certification has existed since the 1990s, the debate over alternative versus traditional certification has done more to obscure the facts than advance the research (Humphrey & Weschler, 2007). Humphrey and Weschler found that many of the popular assumptions about the characteristics of ACPs are inaccurate, and they offer information on seven assumptions. First, on average, they say that participants in the seven programs are just slightly older than traditionally prepared new teachers; however, a more precise way to describe ACP participants is as a diverse group of young and older adults. Second, overall, the seven programs do not attract more men into teaching than the national averages. Third, ACP participants are more likely to be from minority groups than national averages show, but

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they are not necessarily more racially diverse than the general teacher population in the same districts where they teach. Fourth, despite the expectation that alternative-route teachers can fill shortages in mathematics and science, only a fraction of participants in their programs left careers in these areas for teaching. Fifth, the majority of participants enjoyed salary increases compared with their previous job as a result of their participation in their program. Sixth, large numbers of ACP teachers have prior experience as classroom teachers or have significant experience working in schools. Finally, for the participants in various programs there is a wide range of motivations for becoming teachers.

Identifying problems or obstacles that ACP teachers face can lead to effective guidelines for developing programs that can benefit schools (Casey et al., 2011). Paredes-Scribner and Heinen (2009) believe the true structure and function of ACPs remains inferred and underexplored among practitioners, and in large part in extant research. As an example, Shaw (2008) says, programs such as Troops to Teachers and Teach for America are helping to recruit teachers, but to call these programs alternative certification programs is a misnomer because neither of them can issue a state teaching certificate. Instead, these programs serve as recruitment programs for new teachers who seek alternative certification via an approved state route. Darling-Hammond (1994) believes that TFA teachers are inadequately trained because TFA fosters simplistic approaches to teaching that have little or no grounding in knowledge about how students learn or what teaching strategies may be effective. Grimmet and Young (2012) state that little has been done to clarify or resolve competing claims and critiques associated with different approaches and their relative effectiveness on student achievement, despite

extensive research on those differences. They add that, although no substantial

differences in achievement scores have been found for students of teachers with

traditional certification compared to students of teachers with alternative certification,

perhaps what is truly needed is a better definition of teacher effectiveness.

Challenges Faced by Former Military Members New to Teaching

Challenges Faced by Beginning Teachers in General

The challenges that new teachers endure have been well-documented. He and

Cooper (2011) identified three major themes of concerns for novice teachers: classroom

management, student motivation, and parent involvement. In a study of all first-year

teachers in a school district serving almost sixty thousand students, Quinn and Andrews

(2004) found that those teachers reflected primarily on a lack of or inconsistent

mentoring, personal and emotional support, information about school district procedures

and policies, classroom management and discipline, and assistance with instruction and

curriculum. An additional theme in the literature is the overwhelming sense of a lack of

enough time to accomplish one's teaching duties. Darling-Hammond (2001) found that a

sink-or-swim mentality on the part of administrators and experienced teachers often finds

new teachers with the most difficult teaching assignments and burdensome administrative

tasks. Wilcox and Samaras (2009) found three major themes concerning difficulties

experienced by first year teachers: meeting time demands, managing student behavior

and needs, and mentorships.

During their entry year, new teachers often endure a range of other challenges,

including feelings of isolation, a sense that there is a mismatch between what they

expected and the reality in the classroom, as well as a general feeling that there is a lack

of support (Flores & Day, 2006). Mader (2016) adds that many first-year teachers are so traumatized with these concerns they do not return to teaching after their first year.

      Lack of mentoring support. Many new teachers feel that among the more serious challenges they face is a lack of support from staff members because the mentoring they receive is either superficial or inconsistent (Zepeda & Ponticell, 1997; He & Cooper, 2011; Mahmood, 2013). Successful mentoring programs provide a new teacher with numerous and varied opportunities for open and honest communication with an experienced colleague (Callahan, 2016). However, several new teachers in Zepeda and Ponticell's study indicated they had trouble trying to get mentors to give them a definitive answer when they asked questions. Others in the same study had difficulty locating and consulting with teachers within their own department. In He and Cooper's (2011) study, some new teachers felt they were not being supported in several areas. These findings continue despite the fact that districts commonly assign mentors to assist early career teachers to situate themselves within the school community and cope with the demands of their new position (Kemmis, Heikkinen, Fransson, Aspfors & Edwards-Groves, 2014). Most states have adopted some policies which set general requirements and rules of mentoring and induction support to be met by local school districts (Zembytska, 2016). Unfortunately, not every district offers new teachers this critically important support (Moir, 2013). Moreover, in many districts, assigned mentors do not provide adequate support for their mentees (Zepeda & Ponticell, 1997). Zepeda and Ponticell believe that induction programs that ignore the integrative relationships between the classroom and the school organization do so to the disadvantage of beginning teachers and, ultimately, their students.

Darling-Hammond (2001) considers a lack of mentoring a leading contributor to teacher attrition, and says that those who receive little mentoring leave the most quickly. Haggarty, Postlethwaite, Diment, and Ellins (2011) found that not all assigned mentors feel the need to provide specific support targeted at the newly qualified teacher, and fail to identify specific learning needs for them. Mentors often share beliefs about what they feel should be a requirement for the newly qualified teacher: to try to fit in, focus attention on behavior management, and confine discussions to practical advice. Long (1994) found that the majority of stakeholders in her study feel that mentoring is time consuming for all concerned and can become overwhelming.

Zembytska (2016) acknowledges the importance and growing complexity of mentoring and states that many programs offer some incentives to encourage mentors to provide ongoing assistance designed specifically to help new teachers assume their new roles. Kemmis et al. (2014) believe that there are contested purposes in mentoring, including assisting newly qualified teachers to pass through the formal requirements of probation, supporting new teachers in the development of their professional practices, and assisting new teachers collectively to develop their professional identities.

The existing research on mentoring beginning teachers has limitations, most often relating to the fact that the research is based predominantly on the mentees' and mentors' perceptions and accounts (Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009). Consequently, little is known about which mentoring approaches best support teachers' development in the first years of practice (Richter, Kunter, Ludkte, Klusmann, Anders, & Baumert, 2013).

Inadequate personal and emotional support. There is a growing body of literature which points to emotion as a significant and ongoing part of being a teacher (Flores & Day, 2006). Gallant and Riley (2014) found that the presence or absence of emotional support for new teachers appears to have a powerful and lasting impact on them and their decision to stay in teaching. Long (1994) believes that mentoring should include emotional and psychological support and that a lack of support in those areas can become detrimental to new teachers. In Israel, Kamman, McCray, and Sindelar's study (2014), mentors reported providing only limited emotional support. In fact, the average amount of time they reported providing only emotional support for new educators ranged between three and 15 percent of their time with the beginner. Rodgers and Skelton (2014) believe that emotional support is critical for first-year teachers' personal sense of well-being and self-esteem, and that they may be negatively affected if they perceive that lack of support is due to a lack of trust and empathy on the part of school leaders.

Inadequate information about school district procedures and policies. First year teachers are often required to navigate complex but subtle negotiations concerning rules, procedures, and norms of their schools (Zepeda & Ponticell, 1997). The lack of information regarding procedures and policies is a major concern for new teachers, as is the lack of adequate information concerning where materials and resources are located at their schools. New teachers often feel their school districts and schools assume they know more than they do and feel lost about mundane things, such as how phones work, the locations of parts of the school's campus and the rules governing them, the protocol for setting up parent conferences, contact information, and procedures for grades and attendance. Romano and Gibson (2006) found that the largest category of struggles for

their participants dealt with policy issues, which persisted throughout the new teachers'

first year. Finally, Shoffner (2011) concluded that policy concerning evaluation and

grading was a major concern for the new teachers in her study.

Classroom management and discipline. Veenman (1984) found that classroom

management and discipline are two critical problems perceived by beginning teachers.

Beginning teachers have more difficulty with control and seem to allow much disorder to

go unnoticed. According to Smeaton and Waters (2013), classroom management is the

area in which new teachers feel least prepared. Romano and Gibson (2006) define

classroom management as encompassing those issues related to overall student behavior

in the classroom and techniques used to gain participation in classroom activities and

instruction. Many beginning teachers use proven strategies they learned in their training

programs (use of student names, positive reinforcement, humor, and pacing) to prevent

off-task behaviors (Smeaton & Waters, 2013). When these strategies do not succeed,

Smeaton and Waters claim, beginning educators alter instructional strategies, change

seating arrangements, and sometimes teach over background noise.

Classroom management is made more difficult for new teachers because between

12 percent and 22 percent of students have problems that are related to a diagnosable

mental, emotional, or behavioral disorders (Fisher, 2012). Flores and Day (2006) found

that new teachers continued to emphasize the difficulty in dealing with students

effectively and acknowledged that disciplinary problems persisted into their second year

of teaching. He and Cooper (2011) found that some of their new-teacher participants

express a desire for more consistency in administrative support for disciplinary issues.

The fact that classroom discipline is a real problem for beginning teachers may be

explained in part by different patterns in their thinking or decision-making processes (Veenman, 1984). Dustova and Cotton (2015) believe first-year teachers should manage, not discipline their students, and feel that they should be helped to establish procedures to yield longer-term positive results.

Inadequate instructional and curriculum support. New teachers also face challenges in curriculum planning and implementation (Lew & Nelson, 2016). When it comes to assessment, new teachers usually do not apply their assessment knowledge to practice, which Lew and Nelson argue is indicated by their lesson plans. Despite receiving the same pedagogical training and professional development from their school districts, new teachers often develop their own unique conceptual understanding of lesson assessments. Shoffner (2011) found that inadequate knowledge of subject/curriculum was a primary concern for some beginning teachers, who questioned the focus of their instruction, the importance of certain subject matter over others, and the framework guiding their development of curriculum. Similarly, interdisciplinary planning was cited as often being problematic for beginning teachers in Zepeda and Ponticell's study (1997).

Overwhelming time demands. Upon assuming the complex task of teaching, many new teachers feel the beginning of their first year is challenging (Flores & Day, 2006) partly because of inordinate time demands. This corresponds with new teachers' realization that teaching is more demanding than they were expecting and that they lack the knowledge to undertake all the tasks and duties required of them. Moir (2013) adds that, after an initial period of idealism and confidence, new teachers are bombarded with a variety of problems and situations they had not anticipated. They find themselves totally unprepared for leading their own classroom and quickly become consumed with

keeping up with the day-to-day routine of teaching. Many participants in He and Cooper's (2011) study found the first year of teaching exhausting, and they had to stay late at school or take work home with them. Participants in Mahmood's (2013) study found that, as new teachers, they had yet to find satisfactory ways to manage the demands of their profession and often felt inadequate in meeting the responsibilities of their new jobs. New teachers in Shoffner's (2011) study also struggled with the workload of teaching and the time required to complete that workload. Some felt they had little time to deal with things like planning, grading, and extra-curricular activities. Finally, Unruh and Holt (2010) found that new teachers in their study felt the number of hours worked each week were more than they expected.

Challenges Specific to Former Military Members New to Teaching

Many returning veterans experience other acute challenges, stressors, and anxieties that make transitioning to a career in teaching uniquely difficult (Anderson et al., 2014). Because military-to-teaching career changers experience these unique challenges, Morin (2011) believes it is important to learn more about veterans' return to civilian life, particularly if they have had emotionally traumatic experiences or suffered a serious service-related injury. More than half (56 percent) of all veterans who experienced such a traumatic event say they have had flashbacks or repeated distressing memories of the experience, and nearly half of those experiencing such events (46 percent) say they have suffered from post-traumatic stress. According to Rieg, Paquette, and Chen (2007), these individuals are significantly more likely to have problems with the transition to the civilian world, in general, and to teaching in particular.

Another challenge to former service persons entering teaching is the

unsubstantiated fear held by many in the public and by some school administrators that a

large percentage of veterans suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and thus

would be a threat to students and colleagues (Parham & Gordon, 2016). According to

Pease et al. (2015), veterans who have mental health issues such as PTSD may have a

more difficult time reintegrating than those without those problems. PTSD emanates in

response to a traumatic event and describes a constellation of symptoms and behaviors

that includes persistent re-experiencing of the trauma, avoidance of reminders of the

trauma, numbing of positive emotions and social withdrawal, and symptoms of increased

autonomic arousal. Additionally, epidemiological studies of PTSD in the U.S. have

estimated the lifetime prevalence to be between eight and 12 percent, indicating that

some of the retirees that end up in teaching may re-experience some symptoms of PTSD

(Benda & House, 2003).   The results of Walter's (2015) research indicate that we should

use self-efficacy as one of the indicators for acceptance into teacher training and as a

predictor of suitability for the teaching profession.

Parham and Gordon (2016) found that an overarching problem faced by former

service members in their first year of teaching is the stark difference between military and

school culture. In another study of first-year teachers with military experience, Parham

and Gordon (2013), found that their participants missed the clear policies and procedures,

professionalism, and teamwork of the military. Tigchelaar, Brouwer, and Vermunt,

(2010) also found challenges to autonomy and adaptation in their research, pointing out

that for their participants there appeared to be a struggle to become accustomed to the

school culture. Johnston, Fletcher, Ginn and Stein (2010) found that their participants

perceived leaving the military culture as a challenge, primarily because of the structure

the military offers. Johnston and associates concluded that some individuals see the

military as not just an organization but as a profession that is self-regulating and has

extremely high standards that members have adopted. Individuals who change careers to

assume teaching roles in secondary schools are more likely to struggle in the classroom

than those without military backgrounds (Anderson et al., 2014), primarily because of a

requirement to adjust to an entirely different culture than the one they came from.

Second-career teachers adapt more quickly to some activities, such as participating in

school improvement initiatives. They also are experienced with work routines and are

familiar with the pressure and expectations of the workplace in general (Tigchelaar,

Brouwer, & Korthagen, 2008). However, veterans may have difficulty adapting to other

aspects of school culture such as its hidden or unspoken norms, including how to interact

with different members of the school community, how to request certain types of

assistance, how to deal with student discipline problems, and parent concerns (Parham &

Gordon, 2016).

Former military people expect that there will be a mentor or a supporter of some

kind that will offer assistance with expectations about student behavior to help them

avoid student-teacher conflicts that sometimes characterize school culture (Chambers,

2002), and are at a disadvantage when such support is not provided. For a career changer

coming from situations where he or she experienced significant personal and professional

autonomy, the position in the school hierarchy may feel like a career demotion (Anderson

et al., 2014). Some see additional duties as problematic. For example, Feistritzer (2011)

found that one in five Troops to Teachers completers view extra duties, paperwork, and

meetings as a very serious problem facing them as teachers. However, in her 2011

Profile of Troops to Teachers report, Feistritzer presents additional data indicating that

these career-changers are not "complainers." She reports:

- 83 percent of teachers think extra duties, paperwork, meetings are serious

  problems; 47 percent of Troops to Teachers completers say they are not

  serious problems for them;

- 82 percent of teachers think too much testing is a serious problem; 47 percent

  of Troops to Teachers completers do not see too much testing as a serious

  problem;

- 80 percent of teachers consider dealing with the school bureaucracies a

  serious problem; 44 percent of Troops to Teachers completers do not see it

  as a serious problem;

- 80 percent of K-12 public school teachers think class size is a serious

  problem; 42 percent of Troops to Teachers completers do not think it is a

  serious problem;

- 80 percent of teachers view discipline of students a serious problem; 35

  percent of Troops teachers do not see student discipline as a serious

  problem;

- 74 percent of teachers say classroom interruptions are a serious problem

  for them; 39 percent of Troops to Teachers completers say it is not a serious

  problem;

- 66 percent of teachers say dealing with unsupportive administrators is a serious problem for them as teachers; 47 percent of Troops to Teachers completers say it is not a serious problem for them; and,

- 65 percent of teachers say dealing with incompetent administrators is a serious problem for them as teachers; 49 percent of Troops to Teachers completers do see it as a serious problem. (pp. 23-24)

A continuing focus of the research on second-career teachers is the transferability of skills from the first career to teaching. The idea of transferability of prior experience can lead to the false assumption of a smooth and seemingly unproblematic transition from a first career to a career in teaching (Jenne, 1996). As Anderson et al. (2012) state, the larger the difference between old and new roles and the less knowledge people have about the new role, the more marginal they may feel.

Tan (2012) found that when administrators assign responsibilities to former military members new to teaching, they need to ensure they come into teaching with a sense of urgency as well as management and organizational skills. Sometimes, however, people are not able to transfer and adapt what they learned previously to their current job. One reason for this is that new teachers may be focusing on their new responsibilities rather than deciding how to transfer previous knowledge (Tigchelaar et al., 2014). Tigchelaar et al. also state that, given the small number of studies on second-career teachers' beliefs, the mixed findings about relations with earlier experiences, and the lack of knowledge about second-career teachers' beliefs about learning to teach, a better understanding of transfer of knowledge and skills may require further research.

Post-career military veterans sometimes criticize their fellow teachers regarding either pedagogical knowledge or classroom management. The post-career veteran is usually older and possesses more work experience than novice teachers (McCree, 1993). Often, these individuals believe their subject matter knowledge is better than that of their peers, which leads to intolerance of their colleagues (Watters & Diezmann, 2015). Some are so ingrained in the military mindset that it shapes how they view the world and their peers (Hadlock, 2016). Watters and Diezmann (2015) found that criticism of peers was a theme running through the attitudes of many career-changing teachers, particularly when the school system gave preference to seniority rather than expertise in confirming permanent appointments or considering promotions. Criticism did not just involve judgement of their peers' performance. Smeaton and Waters (2013) found that the issue which frustrated first-year teachers the most was hearing so many diverse perspectives from other stakeholders (teachers, administrators, and parents) concerning beliefs and strategies.

Nias (1984) found that when individuals sense or discover that their values differ from those of their colleagues they tend to withdraw in order to protect themselves from challenge, influence or dispute, and to free themselves for other, more congenial contacts. Diezmann and Watters (2015) argue that there are sometimes overly high expectations of the subject matter knowledge of career change teachers.

Once they deal with the issues brought about by the pre-transition phase, military retirees who become teachers face many more issues, and one of the most important is engagement with their professional community. How they deal with this particular issue often dictates whether they will gain a sense of belonging. This raises the issue of

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organizational health and employee satisfaction in the school organization. Because

engagement with their professional community often starts with engagement with

educational leaders, it is important to study the leaders that former military people who

are first-year teachers deal with. Aydin, Sarier, and Uysal (2013) found that ensuring

satisfaction of the employees is one of the most important tasks of management. Mentor

teachers can help these new teachers maintain their enthusiasm for teaching by providing

opportunities for reflection and the freedom to explore different teaching methods

(Richter et al., 2013). Although teacher enthusiasm can be defined in different ways,

including technical terms, Richter et al., conclude that it remains to be seen whether more

research in this area can help determine which factors support the beginner's

development.

Rieg et al. (2007) also found that classroom stress experienced by former

members of the military may recreate PTSD-like symptoms. Although most former

military members are provided with limited support in their early teaching, their expertise

and particular limitations are sometimes overlooked by administrators (Diezmann &

Watters, 2015). In some cases, say Diezmann and Waters, these teachers receive

inadequate support because of their perceived content expertise.

The problems discussed above can cause tremendous stress and eventually lead to

physical and emotional problems. It is often argued that teachers working at higher risk

schools (as many former members of military do) experience greater workload stressors

(Sass, Flores, Claeys, & Pérez, 2012. Not only do teachers have the responsibility of

direct care of their students, they also must fill an ever-changing, multifaceted role that is

notoriously underpaid and highly scrutinized by the public (Brown & Nagel, 2004). Sass,

et al. (2012) believe it is important to identify factors related to stress and effective coping mechanisms to deal with those factors.

In an effort to help first-year teachers cope with all these stressors, Rieg et al. (2007) recommend that teacher education programs and schools establish stress coping strategies, enhance or augment field-based experiences, and hold practical workshops for supervisors and pre-service teachers. Rieg et al. believe more research is needed on how to help first-year teachers deal with stress in the classroom, including practical steps such as beginners modifying their diets, exercising, and getting enough rest. In spite of the lack of research in the area of stress, the retention of quality newcomers to the teaching profession has garnered special attention in recent years as a significant component in a multifaceted effort to enhance overall student academic success (Anderson et al., 2014).

Many first-year teachers with military backgrounds also find that the bureaucratic hierarchy and power distribution within public schools leads to frustration (Taber, 2015). The rigid and inflexible nature of applying for a job, for example, came as a shock to some, who concluded that the system was archaic and overly regimented (Priyadharshini & Robinson-Pant, 2003). The challenge of adapting to the cultural values and practices of schools was a recurring theme in Wilkins and Comber's (2015) study, in which participants reported issues in adapting to contrasting professional norms as well as to the demands of teaching. Some of their participants expressed the perception that the organizational practices and structures of schools are cumbersome or too policy-bound. Vespia et al. (2016) argue that teacher preparation programs must provide a comprehensive support system for the aspiring teacher to understand and respond to such

things as the written and informal curriculum as well as how to learn to effectively work

with students, parents, and colleagues.

Support for Former Military Members New to Teaching

For former members new to teaching, support often is self-forming. Rumann and

Hamrick (2010) describe strategies such as seeking the company of fellow veterans,

disclosing experiences within supportive environments, and adopting self-discipline and

structure. Although little is known about former veterans actively cultivating new peers

in schools, Rumann and Hamrick claim that the practice may help veterans cope with

their new situation as teachers. The presence or absence of emotional support has a

powerful and lasting impact on former military members (Gallant & Riley, 2014).

Any teacher, especially a beginning teacher, needs to feel that their organization is

supportive (Watters & Diezmann, 2013), but data does not exist to show that specific

support systems exist for former military members who become teachers.   We also do

not know what happens when they are in doubt about being accepted, whether their

knowledge and skills are being accepted, and whether their expectations are being met.

A lack of social support systems, or of shared experiences with these systems, can

potentially foster feelings of separateness (Pease et al., 2015). It is important to consider

how change-of-career teachers' expectations and prior experience and skills are

integrated and valued during their induction phase (Anthony & Ord, 2008).

Support from the organizational culture can come from administrators, teachers,

other staff members, and parents. Hobson et al. (2009) add that it is important to

recognize that mentoring can have a variety of purposes or goals, can involve a variety of

practices and strategies, and can take place at different stages of a mentee's professional

development. Kemmis et al. (2014) describe different levels of mentoring; mentoring as supervision, mentoring as support, and mentoring as collaborative self-development. These views help illustrate the variety of practices and strategies of mentoring support that may exist for veterans.

Kemmis et al. (2014) view the first of the various forms of mentoring, mentoring as supervision, as the process of preparing new teachers during a period of probation to ensure they can meet the requirements as fully qualified and autonomous members of the profession. The second view, mentoring as support, sees mentoring as a process of professional support and guidance for a new teacher in which a mentor assists the mentee in the development of their professional practice. The final view, mentoring as collaborative self-development, sees mentoring as a process to assist a new teacher to become a member of a professional community in which they participate as equals in professional dialogue aimed at their individual and collective self-development. These different mentoring practices do not exist in a vacuum; they depend on the presence of particular kinds of cultural-discursive, material-economic, and social-political arrangement.

Even in the best-researched areas of mentoring beginning teachers, there are limitations with the evidence base, most often relating to the fact that the research is based predominantly on mentees' and mentors' perceptions and accounts (Hobson et al., 2009). Hobson et al. state that the negative issues that beginning teachers' experience may be outweighed by the support and strategies that advance their learning as teachers. When discussing the level of support from their schools, first year teachers often mention logistical obstacles, such as having to teach in different classrooms, having multiple

preparations, being assigned only classes with students who had significant academic challenges and behavioral problems, and inconsistent interactions with their formally assigned mentors (Smeaton & Waters, 2013).

Other forms of support for former military members who become teachers are the same as those offered to other novice teachers; they attend seminars and conferences; are advised to apply optimal approaches to student learning, and attend lessons conducted by highly qualified teachers and analyze such lessons (Chychuck, 2016). Chychuck claims that the type and quality of professional development depends on the state where the novice teacher works. For example, the Texas Education Agency's Education Service Centers (ESCs), which were established by the Texas Legislature in 20 regions throughout the state, offer a variety of workshops, conferences, and online courses to assist novice teachers in the preparation of lesson plans, strategies for dealing with disruptive student behavior, organization and time management, and strategies for reflective practice, among many topics.

Need for the Current Study

Former military members who become teachers undergo many challenges. Yet, the literature regarding how these individuals fare when they transition into teaching is scant. Consequently, it is necessary to conduct empirical research to inform district administrators, principals, and teaching colleagues what to expect from these career changers. Conducting research with former military members will begin to shed light on issues that are not well documented, such as the atypical experiences they face during their initial year or two of teaching when compared to traditional teachers.

While many studies discuss the importance of life satisfaction for teachers or

demonstrate that challenges exist, none have yet examined the full extent those challenges have on the adjustment of former military, second-career teachers in their jobs as teachers. Additionally, although much is reported about the longevity and suitability of former military members, the research on the causes of this phenomenon is scant. Also, a significant amount of data exists about the recruitment of former military members into teaching, including the alternative certification programs intended to recruit them, but information regarding their actual adjustment to teaching is scarce. An additional area where this research may benefit military-to-teaching career changers is to provide transition counselors with information that may help them understand the rigors of these unique career changers.

Summary

The number of former military members who are becoming teachers is increasing (Feistritzer, 2011). This is a positive trend for several reasons. First, it helps to address the shortage of teachers nationwide. Another reason for recruiting former members of the military into teaching is that they bring with them a proven record of success and expertise that can be translated into practical use in the classroom, as well as a maturity level that often makes a difference in a school setting. More than 80 percent of Troops to Teachers completers intend to remain in teaching as long as possible, or until they retire (Owings et al., 2014), suggesting that these teachers provide a stable, high-quality cadre of certified teachers (Owings et al., 2006). They are also strongly knowledgeable in their teaching content, are known to employ research-based instructional practices, and possess strong management skills.

Former military who become teachers, however, often experience unique problems. These include problems adapting to a seemingly foreign school environment and culture that did not exist when they were in school. Often, this culture runs counter to many beliefs they held while in the military and leads many to feel alienated or ostracized by their fellow teachers and administrators.

Toppo (2013) states that school administrators are increasingly finding that many former service members make good teachers and have hopes that their grit and perseverance can help improve student performance and lower teacher turnover rates. However, former military members often feel that neither the ethos of teamwork nor the commitment of colleagues is the same in teaching as it was in the military. While these former service members enjoyed obedience from subordinates in the military, that type of obedience is usually not the case in the classroom. Disobedience from students is often compounded by a lack of experience in classroom management and disciplinary policy. Often, those feelings trigger negative beliefs about teaching, and doubt begins to creep into their thoughts about their impact as teachers.

A phenomenological study of the experiences of former military members who become teachers will add to the body of knowledge on their impact on education in general, and the classroom specifically. A study of what they encounter as they begin their new jobs as teachers could help to change national and local policies concerning these individuals.

III. RESEARCH DESIGN

Modern phenomenology has been practiced for over a century. According to Mitchell (2012), phenomenology encourages a gradual approach to the subject of inquiry while at the same time providing a methodology which is both robust and in agreement with many of the common experiences concerning the way the world appears. Lester (1999) believes that, although researchers are often constrained by time and opportunities, they should still strike a balance between keeping a focus on the research issues and avoiding unduly influencing the data. Although face-to-face interviews and surveys are used to collect data, Englander (2012) argues that the face-to-face interview is often longer and richer in terms of nuances and depth.

Lester (1999) believes that any attempt to illuminate the specific or to identify phenomena through how they are perceived by the actors in a situation normally translates into gathering deep information and perceptions. This is done through inductive, qualitative methods such as interviews and participant observation, journaling, and then representing the data from the perspective of the research participant(s). Englander (2012) adds that the questions a researcher asks about a situation are vital since the discovery of the meaning of a phenomenon needs to have been connected to a specific context in which the phenomenon has been experienced.

To review, the following research questions guided the study:

1. What factors motivate former military members to enter teaching?

2. What support systems exist to assist former military members' transition into teaching?

3. What are the life experiences of former military members who go into teaching as a second career?

4. What keeps these individuals in teaching?

Each of the research questions listed above related to one or more of Schlossberg's four S's that make up this study's theoretical framework. Question 1, on motivation for entering teaching, related to self, situation, and support. Question 2 concerned support for the transition. Question 3, on life experiences during the transition to teaching, related to situation and support. Question four, on what keeps participants in teaching, related to all four S's.

Overview of Phenomenology

Phenomenology, or the phenomenological method, is concerned with how best to capture the details of a particular episode of experience by participants (Cerbone, 2012). The word phenomenology is derived from two Greek words, *phainomenon* (an appearance) and *logos* (reason, or word, hence a reasoned inquiry) (Stewart & Mickunas, 1974). In phenomenology, researchers collect the views of a number of participants through interviews; however, instead of theorizing from participants' views and generating a theoretical model, phenomenologists describe what all participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon (e.g., grief, anger) (Creswell, Hanson, Plano, & Morales, 2007). Stewart and Mickunas (1974) assert that a phenomenon is anything of which one is conscious and is a manifestation of the essence of that consciousness.

When engaging in qualitative writing about phenomenology one needs to consider van Manen's (2015) forewarning that addressing the phenomenality of everyday experiences is surprisingly difficult, and the primary reason for this is the reflection on

which the researcher must engage. van Manen (2015) notes that the researcher has to

search for the meaning of pre-reflective experience, while remaining objective and

disciplined enough to avoid influencing the results. Kaufer and Chemero (2015) assert

that phenomenology can have a profound impact on our understanding of a host of issues

relating to perception, cognition, and the general meaningfulness of human lives. Thus,

researchers who are engaged in phenomenology must develop what van Manen (2015)

refers to as a pathos for the great texts, but more importantly, must also reflect on the

living of everyday experiences and events.

van Manen (2007) describes phenomenology as a project of sober reflection on

the lived experience of human existence and suggests that reflecting on that experience

must be a thoughtful process, as free from theoretical, prejudicial, and suppositional

influences as possible. Cerbone (2012) states that an additional problem is caused by

introspection, which is irreducibly first-person, with results that are not subject to

independent confirmation or verification. Despite having to deal with these legitimacy

challenges, much research has been conducted on how participants attend to the

conscious thought, a memory, or memories of a lived experience.

Stewart and Mickunas (1974) believe that a central aspect of the

phenomenological method is the intentional structuring of consciousness. Broadly

speaking, consciousness includes recollection of the past, personal judgment, intuition,

imagination, and most importantly, emotion. Stewart and Mickunas explain that as

consciousness is investigated phenomenologically, its intentionality is revealed; that is,

consciousness is never experienced as a thing, but rather as an activity. Sokoloski (2000)

felt it important to note that the core doctrine of phenomenology is that every act of

consciousness we perform, every experience we have, is intentional. Moreover, when one speaks of the *objects* of consciousness, it is important to understand they are not necessarily physical, because there are so many non-physical objects that we may consider as well. Sokoloski warns that it is also important to understand that *intentionality* deals primarily with mental or cognitive processes.

Campbell (2002) reflects that one's conscious attention to an object and the highlighting of one's experience with that object affects the meaning of that experience. Having once consciously focused on an experience, a person is better able to track it deliberately, to answer questions about it, and to act on it. Phenomenology assists a person to act on an experience by capturing details of that experience while attempting to elicit an emotional attachment to the experience. When one views consciousness as phenomenon, with no presuppositions, one discovers its intentional structure (Stewart & Mickunas, 1974). Thus, in phenomenology, we encounter the concept of intentionality, which includes all conscious orientations, not just the thought of intending to do something. Stewart and Mickunas believe that all phenomenologists would agree that the self (ego) cannot be separated from its conscious activity (cognito) which is always directed toward some object (cogitatum). This understanding of human awareness is reinforced by what we know about the brain and nervous system (Sokolowski, 2000).

In his study of neurophenomenology, Bitbol (2012), concluded that experience is construed as a unique and inseparable reality; the reality out of which any intellectual production arises, including the intellectual production that supports our theories of neural functioning. In neurophenomenology, neurophysiology can be used as an interpretative filter of first-person experience just as much as, conversely, first-person

reports are crucial to interpreting raw neurophysiological data. Thus, Bitbol believes that how people come to experience things, what they think of those experiences, and how they come to remember them, is neurological. However, Bitbol believes these experiences are subjective, and are remembered in a first-person point of view, and that we may never be able to truly understand the introspection of those whose experiences are shared with us, particularly when those experiences are treated without the benefit of bracketing.

Streubert (2011) defined bracketing as the cognitive process of putting aside one's own beliefs, not making judgments about what one has observed or heard and remaining open to data as they are revealed. Researchers do not bracket the phenomenon they wish to examine, they bracket their historical understanding and beliefs so they can examine the phenomenon independently of their normal world vision and beliefs. van Manen (2015) further described bracketing as the act of suspending one's various beliefs in the reality of the natural world in order to study the essential structures of the world. Stewart and Mickunas (1973) stated that the purpose of bracketing is to discard all limiting theories and presuppositions.

Zahavi (2012) adds that in reflecting on that experience, one brackets the existence of an item; that is, we do not deny or doubt that the item exists, but we make no use of that fact. Instead, we engage in the reflective task of describing how it gives itself to us in a first-person experience—taking note, for instance, of the fact that it presents itself as existing. Each participant will be asked to reflect on the meaning and impact of his/her experiences.

Phenomenology and Memory

Memory plays a significant role when an individual is asked to relate life experiences. Do people remember things the way they perceived them when they happened? Are they able to remember things as they think they happened? However individuals are able to recall experiences, Sutin and Robins (2007) believe memories produce intense phenomenological experiences which bring autobiographical memories back to life upon retrieval and make them important in guiding our future goals and actions. Autobiographical memory is a general term for an area of study encompassing what people can remember of their lives or imagine as occurring in their futures (Rubin and Umanath, 2015).

Sokoloski (2000) explains that, when we actually remember things, we do not call up images; rather, we call up earlier perceptions, and when reenacted, these perceptions bring along their objective correlates. Also, despite the apparent importance of phenomenological experience, Sutin, et al. (2007) believe that researchers have yet to identify the primary dimensions of phenomenology that underlie autobiographical memories and develop a psychometrically-valid measure of these dimensions.

Although it is not the intent of this study to delve deeply into the complex system of neural networks (valence) that affects humans' memory, the capability of a military veteran to remember events will affect how, and to what extent, he/she relates that event. Prebble, Addis, and Tippett (2013) point out that any dysfunction in various aspects of self-experience and memory appears to be related to common neuropathology. Additionally, there is evidence to suggest that the valence of memories and other memory characteristics may be associated with age (Siedlecki, Hicks, & Kornhauser, 2015).

Thus, incomplete memories of experiences may be partly explained by Bauer's (2015),

conclusion that the amount of information lost from memory within minutes to days after

experiencing events accounts for significant variance in long-term recall.

Prebble, Addis, and Tippett (2013) further note that there is something inherently

human about both the capacity to contemplate who one is and the ability to remember

one's past. How military veterans neurologically remember their experiences in teaching

is difficult to determine, but Prebble et al. (2013) believe that it is commonly assumed

that an individual's sense of who they are is intimately connected to their memories of

their lives. Autobiographical memories may also be considered more personally

important in general, and because they are more important, it may be more difficult for

individuals to regulate the emotions associated with autobiographical memories

(Siedlecki, Hicks, & Kornhauser, 2015). Siedlecki et al. add that a subjective sense of

self provides a crucial precondition for episodic memory, which in turn is a prerequisite

for phenomenological continuity. Autobiographical memory, and particularly its

semanticized forms, are thus important for the formation and maintenance of a mental

representation of the objective self in the present moment and across time.

Historical Figures

Phenomenology has a rich and complicated history (Budd, 2005). The father of

phenomenology, Edmund Husserl, defined it as a descriptive philosophy of the essence of

pure experience (van Manen, 2014), which goes beyond what is immediately presented to

the senses (Kaufer & Chemero, 2015). Central to Husserl's phenomenology is the

assertion that openness to discovery of the essence of a phenomenon requires one to

ignore his/her pre-existing biases concerning the world (Budd, 2005). Husserl suggested

that only by suspending or bracketing the natural attitude could philosophy become its own distinctive and rigorous science, and he insisted that phenomenology is a science of consciousness rather than of empirical things. For Husserl, consciousness is being aware of things and recognizing that some sort of memory exists about those things. Often, the things we experience are not in our heads, but at a physical distance; for that reason, Husserl calls consciousness transcendental. Levering (2006) stated that when one has a memory of something that occurred in the past, the consciousness of it is transcendental because the distance between the current moment and when the event happened still exists.

van Manen (2014) further describes Husserl's transcendental phenomena as experiential entities that may lead to reflection regarding the meaning of objects we encounter in the world. Husserl attempted to make phenomenology clear and methodologically rigorous (Kaufer & Chemero, 2015). He tried to do this by introducing a phenomenological method which consisted of several steps called *reductions* that each individual needs to perform and constantly remind himself/herself of in order to remain focused on the proper object of phenomenology. Because one of Husserl's goals was for phenomenology to become a rigorous science in its own right, one with apodictic [timeless and divine] knowledge, he also attempted to introduce an original vocabulary for the basic concepts of phenomenology. His concepts of *noesis* and *noema* (discussed below) are examples of that vocabulary.

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, the German Idealist, believed that phenomenology represents the appearances apparent to human consciousness, both as human consciousness has changed throughout human history and as it changes in the

course of each person's life. Hegel speaks of phenomenology as a science of the experience of consciousness (Rauch & Sherman, 1999). Rauch and Sherman remind us that in phenomenological terms, what would turn us to self-consciousness would have to be something internal to consciousness, some problematic aspect of experience that would lead us to think about our thinking, to be conscious of our consciousness itself. Hegel believed that the subject and the object, or the perceiver and the perceived, are a unity and yet are distinct (Rauch & Sherman). Cibangu & Hepworth (2016) explain that Husserl wanted to make phenomenology a practice to be used by humans in all spheres of everyday existence.

Fields Influenced by Phenomenology

As cited in Cibangu and Hepworth (2016), Relph claimed that by the time of Husserl's death in 1938, phenomenology had achieved acceptance not only in philosophy but also in the fields of anthropology, sociology, and psychology, and influenced the work of poets, artists and novelists. This acceptance has grown to the point where phenomenology is a widely adopted approach to research in most of the social sciences. One such field is perceptual psychology. Patterson (1965) provided an outline of the characteristics of a phenomenological approach to human behavior, which takes an internal rather than external frame of reference in its study of such behavior. Because perceptions, particularly the perceptions of the self, determine behavior, Patterson argues that in order to change behavior we must first change perceptions, which leads to the study of perception in all its aspects, including the perception of the self as the point about which the phenomenal field is organized.

Another field which has begun to use phenomenology as a research methodology are the health professions, where researchers have conducted many studies using phenomenological approaches (De Chesnay, 2014). The importance of interviewing people and uncritically accepting their expressed illness descriptions without a phenomenological description of how they act and respond in their worldly engagement is important to many health practitioners, particularly in cases of disease in which people are challenged with distorted perceptions (Klinkel, Thorsteinsson, & Jónsdóttir, 2014).

Streb (1984) pointed out that phenomenology is also being employed in the world of art. For example, a work of art stands midway between the world of the perceiver and the world of the artist. The work of art mediates between the subjective world of the author and world views of the perceivers of the work and is presented as an embodiment of the artist's concern for his or her being-in-the-world and a concern for others. Through mediation and showing concern for the work, an observer may begin to understand the experiences of the artist.

Phenomenology as a methodology has also found its way into the world of education. Tenenbaum (1967) believes that a student's phenomenological being should be the focus and the center of education, and that learning is the only thing that matters. Saevi (2015) claims that the relationship between phenomenology and education requires a responsible remembering of the character of educational situations, and an awareness of the logic of educational practices. Some of those practices include the actions of teachers, who must be more than just keepers of the facts of a particular discipline (Streb, 1984). Teachers must adopt a way of seeing that opens to view the experiences of students.

For Tenenbaum (1967), even the crudest definition of education implies some change to a person's phenomenological field because he believes that people are driven by things that are essentially emotional in nature. That emotional commitment is the key to the profoundest drives, forces, and *learning* in man, and all those forces are tied up with his phenomenological field because emotional growth leads to optimal learning. Additionally, just as the teacher may understand the experiences of the artist, the teacher also plays a role in awakening a desire for learning (Duarte, 2014). Once the teacher has planted the seed of knowledge, he or she must guide the student to levels of consciousness higher than the student is capable of realizing alone (Streb, 1984).

Saevi (2015) states that a central goal of the educational researcher is to understand the meaning held within a particular educational situation, where the phenomenological orientation toward the lived, concrete, situated experience comes into play. The phenomenological approach should include an understanding of research as a reflexive understanding beyond the research activity in order to maintain the phenomenologically lived quality of the particular educational situation. Phenomenology is also loosely applied in the field of education management and leadership, where it typically refers to an approach which is a reaction to scientific and bureaucratic theories (Van der Mescht, 2004).

Once established as a matter of attunement, of being in touch with what appears before us, contemplation can be described as the consummation of learning. Van der Mescht (2004) found this approach to phenomenological research a potentially powerful way of making sense of education practitioners' (and learners') sense-making, and felt

that it could lead to new insights into the uniquely complex process of learning, teaching, and educational leadership.

Different Types of Modern Phenomenology

Kaufer and Chemero (2015) believe that there are different conceptions of phenomenology. The version of phenomenology to which I was attracted to is *transcendental phenomenology* because of its contention that the essential content of an experience goes beyond what is immediately present to the senses. In other words, there are parts of experiences that do not present themselves simply because one remembers them. Although recall is part of the experience, Kauer and Chemero believe the process of interviewing a participant may allow him/her to do more than simply recall the experience; it may make it possible for him/her to view it from an entirely different perspective, and thus learn and grow from it.

Another type of phenomenology is Martin Heidegger's *existential phenomenology*, which includes the concept of *dasein*, or of being present in a place, as well as the dialogue between a person and her world (Groeneweld, 2004). Heidegger, a follower of Husserl, provides an ontology of the self with some superficial similarities with Husserl's account. Heidegger argues that we have to make sense of the self in terms of an account of time, which is a constitutive condition of experiencing the world, and if we explain how time comes to play in this role, we thereby also explain what it means to be a self (Kaufer & Chemero, 2015).

Gruba-McCallister (1991) states that Heidegger's depiction of the public character of human existence is meant to locate existence first in the everyday world.

Being able to respond to an awareness of loss allows us to strive to return to living authentically with the possibility of death. This knowledge opens up the possibility of humans no longer thinking of themselves as impersonal, or solely a socially defined entity. *Existentiality* is thus Heidegger's claim that humans are disposed ability (and not a substance, subject, or ego that is disposed and has abilities) (Kaufer & Chemero, 2015).

Adding to Heidegger's beliefs, Jean-Paul Sartre's phenomenological existentialism is dominated by core questions and ethical consequences about existentialism (Kaufer & Chemero, 2015). According to Kaufer and Chemero, Sartre believed that Husserl and Heidegger shifted the basic questions of philosophy from those phrased in terms of reality and appearance to detailed conceptions of intentionality, which brackets questions about the existence of the object of consciousness. Sartre shares Husserl's starting point and then derives existentialist theses about the importance of moods, the role of the body, and the disclosive possibilities of anxiety.

Finally, *hermeneutic phenomenology* tries to be attentive to both terms of its methodology: it is a descriptive methodology (phenomenological) because it wants to be attentive to how things appear and allows things to speak for themselves. It is also an interpretive (hermeneutic) methodology because it claims that there are no such things as uninterpreted phenomena (van Manen, 2015).

Phenomenology Applied to Qualitative Research

General Principles. There are some general principles that apply to phenomenological research, regardless of which type of phenomenology is under discussion. The first principle embraces what we have already identified as *reduction*. Husserl's phenomenological method consists of two distinct reductions. The first is

called *eidetic reduction*, which is intended to shift our focus from accidental or non-essential features of an experience to essential ones. Eidetic reduction can take place both by means of a concrete comparison or through imaginary manipulation (Levering, 2006). Husserl's phenomenology is eidetic, whereby individuals are seen as the vehicle through which the essential structure or essence of the phenomenon of interest may be accessed and subsequently described (Priest, 2002). The second is *transcendental reduction*, which Kaufer and Chemero (2015) assert helps us shift our focus from the object of experience to the way that object is constituted. Thus, removing non-essential experiences and seeing the remaining parts of experiences allows us to practice phenomenological reduction in order to focus on the constitutive meanings of our conscious acts.

For Husserl, consciousness is a steady, uninterrupted stream, which shifts and vacillates between manifold objects and attitudes. Husserl divides that stream into individual acts, consisting of different ways of experiencing an object, thus the unity of conscious events allows us to divide an amorphous stream into distinct acts: one act per attitude and object (Kaufer & Chemero, 2015). Kaufer and Chemero believe that the most important feature of consciousness is its *intentionality*. Intentionality describes the way we are attached to the world and how consciousness is always conscious of something (van Manen, 2014). Priest (2002) sees the task of phenomenology as distinguishing between the natural attitude, which she considers a set of common-sense beliefs and assumptions about the nature and existence of things, and the phenomenological standpoint, which focuses on conscious ideas of objects. Knowledge of intentionality requires that we be present to ourselves and to things in the world, and

that we recognize that self and world are inseparable components of meaning (Moustakas, 1994). Thus, when we hear, see, or touch something or someone, or when we think of something, our experience of this thing, object, person, being, or subject is always as it is given or as it appears to us, rather than as it is in its unity or wholeness (Kaufer & Chemero, 2015).

Husserl also introduced the concepts of *noesis* and *noema*. Noesis refers to the act of perceiving, feeling, thinking, remembering, or judging, all of which are embedded with meanings that are concealed and hidden from consciousness (Moustakas, 1994). The noema, on the other hand, is the perceptual meaning of the noesis; for example, in recollection, the remembered as such.

Levering (2006) discusses subjectivity as the epistemological starting point of phenomenology; it stands for personal meaning, acknowledging that each human individual has his or her own outlook on reality. Inter-subjectivity, on the other hand, is the idea that the whole consists of a common giving of meaning.

Generic Data Gathering in Phenomenological Research. According to Creswell et al. (2007), the research begins with the identification of a phenomenon to study, bracketing one's experiences, and collecting data from several persons who have experienced the phenomenon. The interview process in phenomenological research demands a thorough understanding of the particular language and concepts of phenomenology (Bevan, 2014).

For Bevan (2014), systematic interviewing of several people will provide important modes of appearing and how an experience is constituted, and will limit the likelihood of incomplete analysis. Furthermore, Bevan cautions that we should add

structure to our questioning, and that structure does not necessarily have to tell you what to ask but rather how to manage the process of questioning. Thus, it is important to add the key concepts of description, natural attitude, life-world, modes of appearing, phenomenological reduction, and imaginative variation as components of the phenomenological interview method.

Critiques of Phenomenological Research

Phenomenology has its skeptics, and a review of some of the reasons for such skepticism may permit a more thorough understanding of phenomenology. Cerbone (2012) states that any stretch of experience occurs over a period of time, and by the time the experience is formulated and reported, that stretch of experience has come and gone. Hycner (1985) argues that a number of other issues are raised in the form of criticisms of the accuracy of the descriptions given by the participants, including critique of the use of a retrospective viewpoint, which is altered by time and therefore different from the experience itself. Any endeavor to describe an experience has to rely on memories of the experience, and that opens the door to the question of how one knows that the experience at the time really was the way it is remembered now (Cerbone, 2012). Not only does time affect the memories of the respondents, each time they attempt to remember an experience may be different from the other times they attempted to remember it, thus any attempt to report it may be fraught with memory gaps or errors. There is also the danger of confabulation, which happens when a participant fills in gaps in memory according to his/her later subjective viewpoint, or in a manner that he/she believes would please the interviewer (Hycner, 1985).

Another criticism of phenomenological research is that, apart from interpretation, there is also a different derivation of meaning (Levering, 2006) by the researcher and participant. Priest (2002) claims that some difficulties in using a phenomenological approach in fields such as nursing come about because of a wide range of participants. Also, derivation of meaning can be cultural, and sometimes relies on meanings we already have and which are partly incorporated in the language we have been taught in a particular cultural sphere (Levering, 2006). Hycner (1985) claims that a common criticism concerning interpretation is that the subjective influence of the researcher, in both the interviewing and analysis phases, negates any possibility of the researcher coming up with objective and therefore usable data.

Zahavi (2012) underscores that the point of the *epoché* is primarily negative because it precludes us from appealing in our analysis to any third-person explanatory theories of the experience in question. This introduces a criticism of replicability. There have been few studies undertaken to replicate the results of previous phenomenological studies in light of the reality that people experience the same things differently. This criticism is compounded by the innate differences among researchers, even if they were to interview the same participants. At the core of phenomenology is the very deep respect for the uniqueness of human experience. This ever-present uniqueness will always make the attempt to develop a comprehensive theory of human experience difficult (Hycner, 1985).

Phenomenology allows us to reduce personal experiences with a phenomenon to a description of their universal essence. From a phenomenological point of view, to do phenomenologist research is always to question the way we experience the world, as we

strive to know the world as human beings (van Manen, 2015). van Manen explains that doing this type of research allows us to also question the very secrets and intimacies which bring the world into being for us and in us. Phenomenology attempts to develop what Moustakas (1994) refers to as a composite description of the essence of experience for all individuals; what they experience and how they experience it. It is important to note that Moustakas continually stresses the arrival at a *description* of the essence of these experiences, not explanations or analysis.

Phenomenology allows a researcher to present the experiences of participants as they see those experiences, without interjecting biases of any kind. Any information derived from this type of research is strictly from the perspective of the participants. Because the researcher starts with at least some similar experiences, it is very difficult to avoid interpolating some ideas or thoughts on the findings. Nevertheless, phenomenological research allows us to answer the hard questions, to feed into policy making, and to enable replication of good practice (Van der Mescht, 2004).

<div align="center">Research Procedures</div>

Participant Selection

The participants for this research study included six teachers. Four of the six were males and two were females. This study required capturing the viewpoints and experiences of these individuals' transition from the military culture to the education culture. The participants were selected based on their qualifications under the criteria established for this study. In addition to having retired from the military, they must have gone into teaching right after the military, they must have stayed in teaching at least one year, and must have been in their first five years of teaching. The general definition of

what constitutes a veteran varies depending on the era of service (Veterans' Services, 2016). Generally, the number of days required to be considered a veteran during peacetime is 180 days or more on active duty and requires an honorable discharge. This short amount of time may not permit an individual to fully assimilate into the military, and any ensuing employment experience may not lend itself to a proper comparison with time spent on active duty.

To recruit the correct participants for this research, I contacted a number of teachers who retired from the military and used a preliminary survey (See Appendix A) to determine if they met the selection criteria. Additional criteria were that the individuals selected must have retired after at least 20 years of service, chose teaching as their first choice for a second career, and were not diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). PTSD is diagnosed in a patient after they have gone through a traumatic or life-threatening event and have reactions such as upsetting memories of the event, increased jumpiness, or trouble sleeping, problems that do not go away or may get worse (U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2016). Although this is a good area for follow-up research, those with PTSD were eliminated from this study because of the difficulty of gathering information on their condition. I chose only those individuals who transitioned from the military to teaching within two months after the end of their terminal leave. Terminal leave is a 60-day period each member receives at the end of their military service to prepare himself/herself for transition into the civilian world. Once the determination was made that the prospective participants met the criteria, they were formally invited to be part of this study. The participants were the first six individuals invited who agreed to participate in the study.

Data Gathering

Because reflection on the part of the researcher is often required in the research partnership, Postholm and Skrovset (2013) observed that the researcher must be honest and emotionally receptive to impressions and expressions, thus functioning constructively in the exploratory partnership. In her chapter about field relations, Glesne (2016) reinforced the idea that the researcher must present himself or herself in a way that will allow him or her to fit in and be welcomed. One of the challenges of the researcher is to try to remain emotionally removed from and controlling of the research process while remaining open and personable to ensure a collaborative relationship with participants. The researcher should not attempt to formalize the phenomenological method into a rigid system (Stewart & Mickunas, 1974). Rather, the research process must allow room to expand and contract, a process Saldana (2011) refers to as a broader spectrum of evidence and perspectives which are used to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of an analysis.

The data was collected using several data collection methods, including the preliminary survey, two interviews, and an artifact review, which is explained below. The first instrument, the preliminary survey, had two purposes. The first was to exclude those people that did not fit the criteria for participation, and the second was to narrow the number of participants to six from those that met the criteria. Participants were asked to provide some biographical information, the teaching preparation programs they completed to become teachers, the branch they served in and, their intent to remain in education.

Two interviews were conducted with each participant. Great care was be taken to ask questions that did not lead the participants toward an answer. Seidman (2006) believes that interviewing is a basic mode of inquiry, through which the recounting of narratives has allowed humans to make sense of their experiences throughout history. Asking leading questions impacts the process in various ways and can provide the freedom to answer openly and honestly. Participants shared an artifact that was discussed during the second interview.

Interviews. Kruger (1979) recommends establishing a comfortable atmosphere at the beginning of the interview and believes the easiest way of accomplishing that is to ask the participant to provide some personal information. Thus, both interviews began with questions designed to elicit personal information. Benner (1994) believes the most productive method of data collection is for each participant to provide narrative accounts of events, situations, feelings, and actions they have experienced. The focus of the interviews was to elicit information concerning the participants' transition from the military into teaching. A field journal was used to record descriptive and analytic notes. Additionally, all interviews were electronically recorded and transcribed. Field notes and transcripts were matched with each interview and were assigned a unique identifier for each participant.

A semi-structured interview protocol was also used. Mason (2002) explains that semi-structured interviewing has its own character, despite variations in style and tradition, and that all such interviewing contains the following core features: the interactional exchange of dialogue; a relatively informal style; a thematic, topic-centered, biographical, or narrative approach; and, the perspective that knowledge is situated and

contextual. Mason (2002) adds that one purpose of the interview is to ensure that the relevant contexts are brought into focus so that situated knowledge can be produced.

Kruger (1979) recommends that at the start of the interview session the participants be asked to complete personal data forms so that the researcher has biographical information which may be useful at a later stage. The aforementioned preliminary survey (Appendix A) was used for this purpose. The questions for interviews 1 and 2 are found in Appendix B and C, respectively. The interview questions followed a typology of questions proposed by Bevan (2014). Bevan believes that contextualization is critical because a person's context can be made explicit through asking descriptive questions about his/her experiences. Consequently, contextualizing questions enable a person to reconstruct and describe his or her experience as a form of narrative that will be full of significant information. Examples of contextual questions that were asked in interview one are:

- Describe your teaching position.

- Provide me with some biographical information about yourself.

Bevan's approach also requires the researcher to apprehend the phenomenon by exploring a participants' experience in detail through descriptive questions. Examples of interview one questions that may help apprehend the phenomenon are:

- What, if any, types of support have you received in your transition to teaching?

- Have your fellow teachers accepted you? Why do you believe they have/have not accepted you?

Finally, it is important to use imaginative variation to uncover invariant components of the phenomenon to clarify its structure. Moustakas (1994) describes

imaginative variation as the seeking of possible meanings through the utilization of imagination, varying the frames of reference, and approaching the phenomenon from divergent perspectives, different positions, roles, or functions. Moustakas asserts that imaginative variation gives the participant an opportunity to use a wide range of ways to describe the essence and meaning of their experiences.

Examples of questions from interview two designed to uncover an invariant component are:

- If you were the principal of your school, what types of support structures and processes would you provide for new teachers transitioning from the military?

- If, in the future, you would be assigned to mentor a new teacher transitioning from the military, what types of assistance would you provide that teacher?

Kolade (2016) recommends that data be collected at a place and time which were mutually agreed upon by the participant and interviewer; therefore, participants were given options for the place and time of the interviews. Fontana and Prokos (2007) advise the researcher to use caution when presenting oneself to the interviewee because that initial interaction leaves a profound impression and has a great influence on the success of the research. Benner (1994) recommends that the communicative context be set up in naturalistic ways so that the participants do not feel unduly awkward and constrained by foreign, abstract language. Thus, I attempted to ensure that all questions and discussions used language which was familiar to the participant. Additionally, I heeded Fontana and Prokos' (2007) caution that, although the respondents may be fluent with the language the interviewer is using, there are different ways of saying things, and there are things that should not be said at all.

Artifact. Phenomenology acknowledges that conscious acts bestow meanings which can be expressed in different ways (Giorgi, 2005). To capture some of the meanings which were not shared linguistically, each participant was asked during the first interview to provide an artifact to the second interview. During the second interview the participant shared the artifact and was asked the following question, "How does your artifact represent your experiences after the transition into teaching from the military?" Swafford and McNulty (2010) believe that when cultural artifacts are viewed as aspects of people's lives, they have much to think about as they closely scrutinize the details and complexities of their lives within the broader context of the world in which they live. Lethbridge (2014) adds that things made by or used by people can help tell that person's story and make an emotional connection to that person. The artifact represented anything the participant wanted it to represent, including the transition from the military to teaching, what they learned as new teachers, similarities between the military and education, or their greatest challenge.

Data Analysis

Phenomenological data analysis involves addressing a number of issues in order to construct an analysis that makes sense of essential life-experiences as told by an individual. Hycner's (1985) data analysis method requires bracketing and phenomenological reduction because of the importance of approaching the recordings and transcriptions with an openness to whatever meanings emerge. This means bracketing, as much as possible, the researcher's meanings and interpretations, allowing entry into the world of the unique individual who was interviewed.

Data analysis began with carefully reading field notes and transcripts and listening to recordings to gain a sense of the whole, or *gestalt*. Next, I did line-by-line coding of each transcript, creating a master list of codes and their meanings. Following open coding I established an axial coding system to cluster units of relevant meaning. From these clusters, I identified themes that expressed the essence of the clusters (Priest, 2002). During this phase of analysis, I continually addressed the research questions and compared them to the units of general meaning that were identified to determine if what the participant said responded to and illuminated the research questions. I shared the themes that emerged from each interview with the relevant participant and asked the participant to verify themes that rang true and to make any clarifications that the participant perceived as necessary.

All of the interview questions, including questions asking the participant to discuss his or her artifact, related directly to one or more of Schlossberg's 4S model that constituted this study's theoretical framework. Types of questions and their relationship to the four S's are listed below:

- Questions asking the participant to describe his or her teaching position: **Situation**

- Questions asking the participant to provide biographical information: **Self**

- Questions asking the participant what contributed to the decision to become a teacher: **Situation, Self, Support**

- Questions asking the participant about his or her preparation for teaching: **Situation, Self, Support**

- Questions about support received during the transition to teaching:

  Support

- Questions about acceptance by other teachers: **Support**

- Questions about the participant's teaching workload: **Situation**

- Questions about the participant's artifact: **Situation, Self, Support,**

  Strategies

- Questions about problems with transition, and attempts to deal with those

  problems: **Situation, Self, Support, Strategies**

- Questions about professional growth during the transition to teaching: **Self,**

  Strategies

- Question about the most enjoyable aspect of teaching: **Situation, Self**

- Questions about whether the participant believes the decision to become a

  teacher was a correct one: **Situation, Self**

- Questions about support and advice for others transitioning from the

  military to teaching: **Support, Strategies**

The next phase of data analysis consisted of a cross-case comparison in which I will identified common themes among participant perceptions in relationship to each of the four research questions. This cross-case comparison was assisted by a series of matrices I constructed that summarized results across the six participants. The final phase of data analysis included conclusion-drawing regarding experiences and meanings perceived by the participants, including any common experiences and meanings.

<center>**Ethical Considerations**</center>

This study adhered to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) ethical standards of Texas State University. All participants were treated with the utmost respect. Every aspect of this research, as well as any interaction with participants, was accomplished as honestly and openly as possible; no subterfuge was used to gain information. Participants were assigned pseudonyms. All identifiable information, including word documents, excel documents, biographical information, and consent forms, as well as electronic devices such as flash-drives, will be stored in a locked drawer in the researcher's home. Only the researcher will have access to the computer used to write this research paper.

The Informed Consent Process to be Employed

Before beginning the interview process, the IRB process was explained to each participant. A detailed and easily understood statement of purpose, including the planned procedures of the study, was also provided to each participant. Participants were asked if they had any concerns or questions. Once the participants' questions or concerns were addressed, they were asked to sign a statement of informed consent.

The elements of the 1998 Informed Consent Checklist provided by the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services (2014) were used to gain informed consent from each participant. In addition to the information contained in the sub-sections to this section, each participant was given the following information:

- A statement that the study involves research;
- The expected duration of the subject's participation;

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- An explanation of whom to contact for answers to pertinent questions about the research and research subject's rights, and whom to contact in the event of a research-related injury to the subject.

Each participant was given a copy of the consent form and all associated forms and were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason, per the guidelines provided by the IRB.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

Great care was taken to not reveal the identity of any participant. All data, including notes, paper documents, and audio recordings will be retained in a secure location for seven years. All data and documentation used for this research will be destroyed after a period of seven years.

Risks to the Participants

This study has minimal risk of harm to any participants. The researcher assured participants, verbally and in writing, that they would never be placed in a position which would make them uncomfortable with the questions asked. Furthermore, they were advised that they might elect to refuse to answer any and all questions.

The Anticipated Benefits to the Participants and Others

Participants were told that there would be no incentives provided for participation in this study. This research study was an attempt to fill existing gaps in the literature concerning the experiences of military retirees while transitioning to a second career, specifically teaching in a public school. Any gains were in the form of knowledge that future retirees who choose teaching as a second career may use to make sense of their experiences. An additional benefit was to help provide information that counselors or

transition program specialists may use to inform individuals on how best to deal with the transition from the military to a teaching career.

Summary

This research was a qualitative study of six second-career military personnel employed as teachers in large metropolitan school districts in the state. This chapter explained the research methodology that was used for the study. The interview method used in the study was a semi-structured format to allow for changes in the questions or follow-up questions based on the participants' initial responses. Research questions, designed for separate interviews, were based on Bevan's (2014) suggestion for an explicit, theoretically based approach. This chapter also described the target population, data collection procedures, and data analysis procedures. Finally, a section concerning the required ethical considerations was included.

IV. FINDINGS

This study attempted to capture the phenomenological experiences of retired military members who chose teaching as a second career. Of the six participants, one female is White, three of the males are Mexican American, one female is Mexican American, and one male is African American.

This chapter is organized into two sections: the participants' stories and cross-cutting themes relative to the research questions. The first section includes descriptions of the participants' teaching positions, details about their demographic backgrounds, factors that contributed to their decision to become a teacher, and their preparation for becoming a teacher. The second section addresses types of support participants received during their transition to teaching, level of acceptance by fellow teachers, a discussion of their work load, problems they experienced, ways in which they grew as teachers, and their most enjoyable aspects of teaching. The second section includes the types of support structures and processes participants would use to mentor new teachers transitioning from the military, as well as participants' final thoughts about teaching.

The Participants' Stories

Kathy

Kathy is a Hispanic female in her early thirties and in her second year as a high school teacher in a large city in far west Texas. After retiring from the U.S. Army for medical reasons, Kathy used the Troops to Teachers program to assist her transition to a second career in teaching.

Kathy taught three courses her first year, in grades nine, ten, and eleven. She experienced major changes in her second year of teaching and now teaches the junior-

level Advanced History course, the Advanced Placement U.S. History course, and the International Baccalaureate History of the Americas course. The school Kathy works at serves roughly 4,500 students from two very diverse areas, including students who commute from Mexico. Kathy estimated that 55percent of the 4,500 students that attend her school are from Mexico. The rest of the student body is comprised of students from the affluent west side of her city. Kathy describes the two demographics as "the very poor from Mexico and the very rich, generally Caucasians, that live in [her city]."

Kathy said the first year after she retired from the military she started her doctoral study. "I just wanted to spend time with my kids; they are 11 and 9 and so I never got to spend that much time with them when I was on active duty." While working on her doctorate, Kathy researched alternative certification programs and a little over a year later applied to an alternative certification program and was accepted. Kathy felt confident she would be a good teacher and did not expect to have problems getting through the alternative certification program. She said:

> In the military, it's either training or combat. And so, that was one of the biggest struggles when I was teaching. I had to remember that it wasn't a life and death situation, but in general, its teaching anyway, so it just felt like a natural transition.

When asked about a support system for her to transition into teaching, Kathy said she had an aunt in Massachusetts that taught math who explained to her what it was like to be a teacher. Even after her experience with an abusive teacher in her alternative certification program, others, such as her aunt, gave her advice on what to expect as a teacher, and Kathy decided to pursue a career in teaching. Kathy described observing

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other teachers as part of the alternative certification requirements. She was placed at a high-poverty high school for her first assignment, where she said the police presence was overwhelming. Kathy recalled that, as she was leaving the campus after a day of observation, a student lit a marijuana cigarette "right in front of me. It's a school and there's a curb like 10 feet away." She said that although she wanted to say something to the student, she hesitated because she felt that, if she said the wrong thing, the repercussions would be too severe for her.

Kathy was next assigned to an affluent school where she observed for a week. She noted that in the poorer schools the teachers didn't seem to care as much, but the teachers in the richer schools were at work early, worked with the students all the time, and were more engaged.

Once she became a teacher, Kathy felt that her alternative certification program did not meet her needs or prepare her fully to become a teacher.

> The alternative certification requires you to have 300 hours of student
> teaching during the first year. The biggest thing is they're all about money.
> Even the Regions that are run by Texas. They are for-profit organizations.
> All the people I've talked to, the ones that did the alternative certification, they
> thought the online programs were actually better, they're cheaper, the time
> constraints are less painful, and they don't have those…you don't have to interact
> with teachers that say, "Do as I ask, not as I do."

When asked to compare her military training with her teacher preparation program, Kathy said, "The biggest thing is that in the military, you have the crawl, walk, and run phases, where you get used to a concept, you see how the instructor applies it,

and then you do it at the end. That's how you evaluate if you understood the information

or not." Kathy felt that teachers could benefit by experiencing what she termed the

crawl, walk, and run phases, particularly when assessing students' progress after a lesson

plan. Kathy felt that the ACP she participated in had not only left out the *run* phase in

her teacher preparation, but also had done very little to prepare her for her teacher

certification examinations, including submission of applications and fingerprinting

requirements.

Kathy stated that she was assigned a mentor, but that was the only support she had

during her first year. She also sought help from a teacher near her classroom who taught

Pre-Advanced Placement classes to get his feedback when she needed information.

Although she had a mentor, she sought this teacher's opinion before she went anywhere

else for information, including the administrators in her school or district.

If I tried to express something that was any type of conservative at all, I had a

lot of problems. For instance, I make my first period stand for the pledge of

allegiance. I said, you don't have to follow along with the pledge. Just stand,

that's all I ask.

Kathy encountered a unique situation because she replaced a teacher who had

been placed on administrative leave.

The biggest issue I found when I became a teacher, they used me to replace a

popular teacher that they had been placed on administrative leave for unknown

reasons. He had been very vocal with the students and parents, and had gotten

them very organized. Even after he was gone, the students wouldn't talk to me

about a lot of things because he was seen as the guy, the real guy, and I was seen

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as an interloper. That lasted about three months until he got a job with another

district. What was most difficult about it was that his best friend was still

working on campus, and working with that man was, well, he made my life very

difficult. He would do stuff like covertly record our conversations. Things like

that.

Kathy began to experience feelings of paranoia, and thought that she was

overreacting, but when she found out that the teacher was recording their conversations,

she became convinced that her paranoia was legitimate. She found it hard to cope with

that feeling because she believed it included characteristics associated with Post

Traumatic Stress Disorder.

He wanted to make it look like I didn't know enough so they could try and rehire

that other guy. I eventually got really upset about it because there were students

with really low grades and they were going with what he was telling them, and

I'm the one that's giving them their grades, I'm the one that's doing the research

and work. Because he was on administrative leave, he wasn't supposed to be

talking with them at all, but he was still talking with them and I was still getting

"Well, Mr. So-and-so told us we were supposed to be writing this," and I'm like,

"interesting."

She confronted the teacher and he stopped recording conversations he was having

with her and became more professional in his interactions with her.

I actually wrote a memorandum of record, when I found out that guy was

recording my conversations. And they put me on an informal growth plan

because obviously I didn't know how to interact with my peers. After that, I told

myself, "I'm not coming back to them for help." But I did go to him and told him that I know it was illegal, even if Texas is a one-party state, because in education you can't do that. Only SpEd [Special Education] can record in the classroom without parental consent. After that, I had fewer problems with him when I gave him a copy of the memorandum. You know, this is what I put up with.

Kathy said she put in a lot of time and worked hard to help her students improve academically and she feels this led to improved relationships with them. Kathy felt that teachers should be given scripted lesson plans, particularly with special needs students. She thinks that when teachers go off script, it becomes difficult for students to understand the material being covered. When Kathy went "off script" one day, she experienced negative consequences:

One day, we had what we call "Spirit Day" and I wore a wizard cape and I pretended to be Severus Snape [a fictional character in J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter series] and evidently one of my students had an anxiety attack because I scared him. He didn't tell me about it, but I got called in to the administrator's office the next school day. It happened on a Friday, so I got called in on Monday. His mother was very unhappy, and I was surprised. I understood the kid had an anxiety attack, but I wasn't yelling at him, I wasn't going after him. I didn't even consider that being a scary villain, or person, was enough to set off his anxiety attack. I learned that it was just better to not participate in Spirit Days because you never know when it is going to set a student on the wrong path. I just thought it was funny because everybody else laughed at me.

When asked about the things in teaching that were the most enjoyable for her, Kathy stated that she enjoyed working with most of her students and peers. She believed that all teachers, not just new ones, must figure out ways to work their way through the negative things that happen in teaching.

Kathy said that if she was the principal of her school, she would implement several types of support structures and processes to provide for new teachers transitioning from the military.

> I would hook up the veterans with each other. Even if they're not your mentor. They share similar experiences and have similar "speak" so when you're trying to discuss something, it would be much easier if you were with people that understood where you are coming from. And also trying to use their experiences in a positive manner. I would ask them what they did in the military because there's certain skills that could be transferred over.

Kathy offered the following advice to any prospective teacher, particularly one who is transitioning from the military:

> The biggest thing is that it's not about the money. To be a teacher, you have to really want to be a teacher because the hours are sometimes not the best. No matter what school, kids are going through phases and they don't understand themselves, so if you're not willing to try to understand that you're just going to make the situation worse. So, you just have to want to be there.

Andre

Andre was born and raised in Chicago, IL. After a career in the U.S. Army (active duty and Guard), he retired and is now in his third year as a middle school teacher

in a mid-sized city in central Texas. Roughly 73 percent of the students that attend

school in his district are disadvantaged. The student population at Andre's school is 84

percent disadvantaged and very diverse, so it is a Title I school, but Andre said that is

part of the reason he chose to teach there. Although his school district serves a large U.S.

Army installation, only about 3 percent of the students at Andre's school are military

dependents. Andre describes the school as an even mix and thinks it mirrors the makeup

of our country, not just Texas. After his first year, he was moved to eighth grade to teach

math, and is now the eighth-grade team leader.

The neighborhood he grew up was, as Andre explained, "a pretty rough

neighborhood." It was so dangerous that his mother did not want him to go to the

neighborhood school. Instead, Andre attended school in the west side of Chicago. When

he entered high school, he remembered being asked if he wanted to take a Physical

Education (PE) course or Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) elective

course. Andre said he was not familiar with JROTC, because he had never heard of it.

> They said its [JROTC] Army stuff. So, I said, okay I'll take PE, but when it got
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> to the swimming part, uh, I remember one day the coach telling us to get into the
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> pool and swim to the part that was six feet of water and I wouldn't get in. So, he
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> said, "If you don't get in the water, you're going to get an F." So, I said, "Well,
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> I'll take the F because I'm not going to get in the water." So, they switched me to
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> JROTC, and I got in there and enjoyed it. It was kind of interesting.

Andre explained that as a freshman, he did well in JROTC and was always placed

in leadership positions. He also excelled in math and credited his math teacher: "I had a

teacher that was really awesome at explaining the concepts and I said I want to be like

this guy, I want to be a math teacher." As he approached graduation, Andre said he knew he wanted to go to college but did not know how he was going to pay for his education. You know, scholarships are few and in between. I didn't know how I was going to go to college and so I said, "I'll join the Army." I had a recruiter who helped me and explained how the Army would pay for college.

Andre believes that the combination of JROTC and his relationship with his freshman math teacher ultimately led him into the military and then into teaching after a career in the military. No one in his family had ever taught. Andre said that he was the first one in his entire family line to go to college and earn a bachelor's degree. He was also the second one in his family to join the military; he had an uncle that served his entire career as an enlisted sailor in the U.S. Navy.

Andre decided to enlist in the Army, but he also decided to get out after four years, go to college, and become a math teacher. While in the Army, he said he was always picked for leadership positions. He was in Armor, a combat arms branch, and while on a mission, he was the driver for the commander and explained an exercise where his commander made an ill-informed decision. Andre immediately gave his commander some advice. His commander was impressed and asked him if had ever contemplated becoming an officer. Andre's response was, "Officers make stupid decisions and I don't want to be one of those guys." Andre said that he was told that if he became an officer, he could help others make good decisions. His commander asked him what he thought about being recommended for the Green to Gold Scholarship, which offers tuition or room and board support, additional money for textbooks, supplies, and equipment, a monthly stipend for up to 10 months each school year and pay for attending

the Cadet Leadership Course between the junior and senior years of college. At the time, I said, "Sure, it doesn't matter." I was 19 and knew I was going to get out and go to college anyway.

Andre said he did not take it seriously at first. He was awarded the scholarship and decided to major in Mathematics Education. He left active duty, joined the U.S. Army Reserve and attended Jackson State University in Jackson, MS.   He said he started out in Mathematics Education, but the math became difficult after the first year. Because he was a Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) cadet and had other commitments he decided to change his major. He was told to change his major if he wanted to and he chose finance. He said at that point, "It didn't matter, all I'm trying to do is go on active duty. What does it matter what my degree is? I excelled in ROTC and once I graduated, I went on active duty as an Armor officer."

After four years on active duty. Andre decided to resign from the U.S. Army and return to Chicago. He said one of the reasons he struggled as an officer was because he had Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) tendencies. While working in the police department in Chicago he joined the National Guard, but after his wife was accepted to medical school, Andre moved with her to Baltimore, Maryland. He worked for a police department in Maryland until his National Guard unit commander asked him to switch back to be an officer. He said he did not want to do that:

> I said I'm perfectly fine being an NCO. At the time I was a Staff Sergeant.
> He said, "If you change your mind let me know, we are short officers in the
> Maryland Guard and we need your expertise," and I said, "No, I'm good."

Until finally, my battalion commander and others wore me down and I finally said, "Okay, I'll do it."

After committing to become an officer, he was asked to go back on active duty, but after a failed marriage, Andre moved back to an Army base in Texas to be close to his current wife and attempted to transfer to the Texas Guard. While he was in training he spoke to an acquaintance who had become a teacher. When asked what drove his decision to become a teacher, Andre said he had always wanted to be a teacher. However, he did experience some doubt and had trouble making the initial decision.

At first, my concern was just to make money, but then my thoughts went back to the thoughts I had when I was younger. When I was in high school, I wanted to be a math teacher. My wife asked me, "Why haven't you? All these years, 25 years since you said that's what you wanted to do, why haven't you done it?" So, at that point, I said "That's what I want to do," so I had more control over that decision.

After learning about the Texas Troops to Teachers program, he was asked to choose one of three programs. He called the three programs to ask questions concerning costs, but particularly how TTT would pay for each one.

Each one was different, had a different method. I ended up choosing ACT [Alternative Certification for Teachers] because of what they were allowing me to do. ACT had a blended approach where there was some stuff I had to go do in the classroom and meet there and some stuff I could do online. I didn't want something that was completely online because I didn't want to miss something. I

also didn't have the time to do the program fully in the classroom. I chose ACT based on that.

Andre was asked to name types of support he received as a teacher. He responded that his school district assigned him a mentor, but said he was 12 years older than her, and although she had more experience in teaching than he did, he had much more work and life experience. Unfortunately, that mentor only helped for about a month, when she told Andre she could no longer mentor him because she was experiencing personal issues and did not have time. He was subsequently assigned another mentor who helped him on a daily basis. If Andre was having an issue, that mentor often went to the administration to ask for their help or did what she could, even though they were on opposite ends of the building.

Andre's relationships with his fellow teachers was excellent, partly because they relied on him and sought his leadership on many things. He said he was able to help them organize because he planned things backwards, a strategy he learned in the Army.

What's the ultimate goal? I plan back from that and I put it on paper. I say, "This is what I think it should look like," and they say, "Well, we never thought of it that way." So, they mostly come to me when they want to organize something or a better way of explaining something. Even the math department chair will come and ask me what I think before she goes to the administration about something.

Being asked for his input or to help colleagues organize projects gave Andre a sense of acceptance, primarily because the people he worked with saw his military experience as a strength. They appreciated that he brought discipline to the classroom.

I think the reason it's a little easier at my school is because I've found that most of the teachers have one or two things in common. They are either retired military themselves, they've served in the military at some point, and so many of them have retired from [a local Army base] and just stayed there. I teach math, the teacher across from me served in the 82nd Airborne. The English teacher, her husband is an ex E-7. Another teacher across from me, her father is retired military. Some people are Reserve officers, they're young and so they come to me also. They come to me and ask me to help them with some Army stuff.

Andre's teacher workload was very typical of other teachers. He said that during the week he did not have a lot of time to prepare because he was busy teaching and working on his administrative internship. During the week, he usually spent an hour or two grading papers and on Sundays, about four hours, when he also mapped everything out for the following week, including his lesson plans. He was required to upload lesson plan material but felt that the administration trusted him as a lead teacher, so they did not scrutinize his plans. His additional duty, to make sure all the students got on the bus, occurred after school. As an administrative intern he was also required to show up at one sporting even per week.

When discussing the transition from the military and any assistance he received, Andre said the teaching transition itself was not difficult. The only serious problem was the lack of preparation from his ACP because he does not believe they prepared him for the first days of school. He felt that he stumbled through that and gave primary credit to his wife for helping him through that first year. He also got some assistance from the TTT office.

There was some from the school itself. It was really good at helping me. I

had really good mentors and that was key. I think without the mentors I had I

would not have been successful. When I got there, there were two sixth grade

teachers and I was coming in to be the third…my mentor was in charge of the

sixth-grade curriculum. She was very organized, but the other sixth grade teacher

wasn't organized at all, but she knew the math. I was good at the operations of it.

So, those are the top three things you need: you have to be organized, you have to

know the content, and you have to be able to know how it's going to flow.

Coming from the military, I understood how operations worked. So, being able to

take what those two teachers knew to the table made it so much easier for us to

collaborate.

With two years teaching experience, Andre had begun to grow as a teacher. He

implemented an organizational system he learned in the military, and set up his classroom

in a chain-of-command style, which encouraged students to be leaders and active in their

own learning, and had the additional benefit of freeing him to do more in the classroom.

He credited one of his fellow sixth grade math teachers with helping him understand how

to vertically align what he taught with the seventh-grade curriculum. Of this new-found

capability, Andre said, "My first year of teaching, there was no way I would have been

able to do that."

Andre had no regrets about becoming a teacher, but said that if he were a

principal, he would create a partnership plan with some of the alternative certification

programs and schools. He thinks that partnering with some of these programs would

provide prospective teachers with a place to practice their teaching.

I sat down and wrote out what my plan would be if I was asked to help new

teachers. The one thing I said I would do is, I would partner them with some of

these alternative certification program and schools as well. Partnering with some

of these programs and providing some of the people with a place to come and do

some teaching. Whether they come to work for me or not is up to them, but if

they do come work for me, they already would know how I operate, how a school

operates, and what's expected. I would also provide them with a mentor that suits

them, a mentor that has similar interests. If I had a mentor that was former

military I would do my best to partner them because, when you have something in

common with your mentor, it's easier for you to get along and it's easier for you

to figure out how each other thinks. A lot of times that's what you want, a veteran

working with a veteran.

Andre believed that one critical difference between the military and teaching is

the lack-of-discipline that existed in his school. Andre explained that discipline in his

school is very different from the military and can be frustrating for a new teacher.

A culture of discipline would help. It can be frustrating if the culture doesn't lend

itself to that. If you go to a school that doesn't have discipline and structure, I

think it would be harder because you're so used to it, and you expect it; it would

be hard. For me, I feel like at my school we lack that a little bit, and that kind of

makes it a little bit of a struggle. There are many veterans and we talk a lot about

our experiences and we ask ourselves, "How would this play itself out in the

military? This wouldn't be tolerated, or this wouldn't work." So, what kinds of

things can we do from our perspective to make this better? I think that has made

it a little better.

Andre also suggested that it would be better to have a school culture that is

military-friendly; for example, having an administration that understands the needs of

people who spent a career in the military and are now teaching. He felt that if the school

administration was sensitive to that, it would help make the transition a lot easier.

Concerning advice for former military members who are thinking of teaching as a second

career, Andre said,

I would first tell them to ask themselves why they want to be a teacher. If it's

because of money or recognition, any of those things, don't do it. It needs to be

because you want to continue to pass your knowledge.

Shannon

Shannon is a White female who was born and raised in a large city in South

Texas. She graduated from a school in the south side of that city and at 18 years of age,

she joined the USAF Reserves. After getting married at age 20, she enlisted at a U.S.

Air Force base in South Texas and then joined a ROTC program for two years, earned

her commission, and went on active duty as an officer. She served in six different

locations around the world, including Hawaii.

Shannon has been married for 27 years and said her husband had been extremely

supportive throughout her service in the U.S. Air Force, her education, and now her

teaching. She and her husband have two children, a son who is 21 and a daughter, who is

18.

Shannon remembers wanting to be a teacher since she was nine years old. She loved forcing her brother to play school with her because she was the *teacher*.

> As a child I played the same games as most girls, but what I enjoyed most was playing school. I vividly remember forcing my younger brother, niece, and cousins to play school. I, of course, was always the teacher. I liked it so much that my father bought me a traditional style school desk. When asked what I'd be when I grew up, the answer was always, "A teacher." This declaration made both of my parents quite proud.

Shannon taught third grade for one year at a charter school but left after that year ended because the classroom setting was extremely challenging. She is now teaching in a Preschool Program for Children with Disabilities (PPCD) at an elementary school in a school district in South Texas. She and another teacher and two aides work with 19 students.

In her first year at the charter school, she taught Mathematics, English, Social Studies, and writing. Of the thirteen students she had, twelve had special needs, including dyslexia, autism, bipolar disorder, and other emotional issues. She describes the challenges in her first year as so serious that she thought of leaving teaching for good.

> It was considered third grade Gen Ed [General Education]. In retrospect, it was probably not the best place for those children. We had counselors and Special Education coordinators coming in and we were doing what we called inclusion for them, and we did RTI [Response to Intervention] on a hit-or-miss basis. They were all economically disadvantaged students. All were what is called at-risk students. It was a mixture of Hispanic and Black.

She said she considered teaching as an option before she left the military. Her

father-in-law, a retired Master Sergeant, and her mother-in-law, a teacher's aide, told her

they believed she would make a great teacher. She also had the full support of her

children. Her father teased her because her aunt was a high school Algebra teacher and

he saw her coming home every day to grade papers and he joked that it would be a lot of

work, but he was always supportive of her desire to teach.

> I started thinking of what my next step would be and teaching came to the top
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> of the list. I made the decision when I went through TAP [Transitions
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> Assistance Program]. It was about a year out and I thought, "Okay, this is really
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> what I'm going to do." It had been in the back of my mind but at that point is
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> when I went, "Yes, I'm going to pursue teaching." I thought I was still young,
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> and I wanted to give back, and what better way of doing that than teaching? I also
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> wanted to have a sense of purpose and community. I guess I kind of lost that after
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> seeing what my kids went through in their public-school years. So, I thought that
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> if I was a teacher, I could do better than that.

Shannon had already earned her master's degree while in the military, so she

enrolled in an alternative certification program, I-Teach Texas, and coordinated the

enrollment with Troops to Teachers. The two-year long program required its students to

work on eight modules during the first year. The self-paced program suited Shannon,

who would go in one or two days a week to work on the modules. At the end of each

module she took a test, and once finished with all eight modules, she became eligible to

take her first certification test. Shannon passed her first test and became eligible to apply

to do her 30 hours of classroom observation. She was eager to finish and completed the required 30 hours in one week.

Although Shannon started her first day in the classroom without ever having done any student teaching, she feels that I-Teach was a good program. She said she thought that the best way for her to learn was to read about it, and then do it right away.

I didn't have the hands on, so I think that's what was happening. As I went into the classroom they assigned a mentor who came in four times throughout the school year to observe me. That was not very good because this mentor did not really provide any mentoring. He watched and, no kidding, after his first observation, he put a piece of paper on my desk and left. I'm reading this paper and it took me a long time to make heads or tails of this paper. Nothing verbal. I was sort of at a loss. I had to text him and track him down to ask him, "What exactly do you mean?" I wanted to read his opinion, but I didn't understand it.

Asked about advantages or disadvantages of the ACP, Shannon said the biggest advantage for her was that she did not have to return to a college setting. She was thankful for that, and for the self-pacing. She added that arrangement helped her adjust to retirement, and she could be with and help her family more. The disadvantage was that she never knew when something was going to pop up in the classroom because she never did any student teaching. She said she believed teaching is difficult for someone who has never taught before and thought student teaching would be beneficial for a teacher who was preparing to work with special needs children. In retrospect, she

thought she should have never been placed in that position, and attributed her ability to adapt to her military experience.

The military did help me with the discipline of going through the whole program. Even after I read the different modules I thought, "Oh, that's what this means to me." They thought about things like interviewing and I thought, "Okay, some of that correlates to some of the things I learned in the military."

Shannon had mixed emotions about the support she received from her teachers and administrators. The building she taught in had pre-kinder, first, and second graders and she had to work to build a network with the teachers, which became strong because they supported each other. On the other hand, the mentor she was assigned did nothing for her. Comparing it to the type of mentorship she experienced in the military, it wasn't what a mentoring program should have been. She said she could not get into the program designed to create the reading lesson plans and that made it difficult during the first few weeks because she was primarily teaching reading. She said she was not given the password for the program which was designed to create lesson plans for the math and science curriculum either. It got so bad, she finally reached out to a family friend who was a principal at another school in the same district to help her obtain the proper passwords to use.

I never got any true guidance on building lesson plans. It was a good four months into the year before I built a network with another third-grade teacher at another campus. She helped me with the training and I was able to use her lesson plan to help build mine. And, oh by the way, she was three months ahead with her students because she's a veteran teacher, she knew what to do. And when I would

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go to my administrator and tell him it was taking longer to teach whatever it is, he would say, "Oh, that's okay, just keep teaching it." The school I was at had the most turnovers for teachers and administrators and was the shortest on resources. The administrator that was supposed to be my mentor, it's no surprise that she wasn't able to be a successful mentor because she wore about four or five hats.

Shannon said that other teachers at her campus appreciated her military experience because she was stricter on students for things like lining up, yelling, and throwing things. She set expectations and tried hard to enforce them. She was told by other teachers that they appreciated that because previous teachers would not hold students accountable and had serious disciplinary issues.

Her teaching workload included handwriting. She said when she first started teaching she asked what was meant by *handwriting*. She initially thought it was about teaching cursive but found out that some of her children wrote in "teeny-tiny" letters and that it was hard to even teach basic handwriting skills.

> Most days I didn't get to Science or Social Studies because we were still trying to finish up reading and math. And so, I'm teaching them until 3:30, getting my lesson plans done and then they'd come back and say, "No, no, it's really 3:20" [the school release time]. By the end of the year we were letting them out at 3:05. One of the good things that they did do, because these children were low-income, they had some sort of a contract where they would give them an end-of-day snack. So, we would stop class about 3 o'clock and feed them until they were let out. I had some students tell me, "My mom doesn't have anything in the fridge," and I had no reason to doubt that.

She often took work home but would sometimes stay until 9:30 at night and wound up securing the building by herself. She said she did not like to take work home because it would not allow her to spend time with her family. Often, she was the first one at school and many students would come into her classroom.

> When I had had enough I did some research and went to the principal with a letter about why I should not be doing it [teaching] anymore. I had to film myself teaching the students. I would then upload that video and send it to a woman in Turkey, a U.S. Citizen, and then she'd send me, in writing, things on how to make my classroom better. Four or five days later I'd get that feedback and some of her inputs were, "Oh, okay." Other feedback was in direct contrast to what my district would tell me to do. So, how would she know what my school is telling me to do if she's not even coming into my classroom? I was getting so little out of it and it would take me hours to upload this program because something about the software that we had, it wasn't the right software. I went back to the principal and he said, "Okay, please don't tell any of the other teachers but you don't have to upload those anymore." So, then I felt bad and guilty because I'm thinking it shouldn't be just me, it should be everybody. I think I did three videos before I finally said, "Hey, I'm not doing this anymore."

Shannon stated that her artifact was the U.S. flag because she wanted to continue to make a difference after serving in the military. She viewed teaching as a calling and was initially excited about teaching, but when she started having problems, she began to doubt whether teaching was what she was supposed to do. Nonetheless, she believed that

former military members represented a smart investment in our children's future and found it a good way of giving back.

Shannon had experienced minor problems even before she became a teacher. Among the more irritating was finding it difficult to contact the Troops to Teachers office because the website she was given was not linked to them. So, she had to do research until she was finally able to find what she needed. She did not experience problems with the ACP academics, but she did consider the possibility that she might not be able to successfully finish the requirements to become a teacher. However, she was determined to give it her best effort.

In the classroom, Shannon began to grow as a teacher, although it was a constant struggle to learn about techniques for working with children, including different options for working with children who needed redirection. She learned much about the required student-to-teacher ratio, particularly when a teacher is assigned special needs children, and determined that she was overloaded when she could least manage it.

For students with special needs, finding a voice of wanting to say, "Wait a minute, this isn't right." Not for me, but for my students. It may be for my own sanity as well, but more for the students. When I went in last year, I waited a few months before I said, "Stop, you have to fix this." And now knowing that, I wouldn't let it go a week because I found my voice and became confident that I could do that. I think I still have a ways to go, but I think I've come quite a way.

Feeling that new teachers should receive more help from the school system, Shannon said she would establish some type of sponsorship, similar to the way the military does it, which would require introducing the new member to everybody at

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school. She would ensure the sponsor helped the new teacher at least for the first week, making sure they knew where to go for things such as meetings and helping with the required documentation for students. She would also assign the new teacher a mentor who was either currently teaching in their grade or had taught in their grade and thought the mentor should provide the novice with examples of lesson plans. Finally, she would follow up with the teacher and the mentor to make sure they were getting what they needed.

When discussing the type of culture that teachers who have retired from the military could benefit from, Shannon added that it would be optimal for the teacher to feel like he or she had joined a true team, a true community, such as she experienced while in the Air Force. Shannon remembered being part of very organized units in the military, where Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) were available from day one. She felt having those SOPs up front would be critical for new teachers. She would also make new teachers feel welcomed by asking them to introduce themselves at a faculty meeting.

Now, sometimes I feel like maybe they think I'm fresh off the boat, even though I'm much older. I've been asked, "Oh, did you just graduate? No?," and then I have the opportunity to tell them I had been in the Air Force and tell them a little bit of what I did. I guess it would [have been] wonderful to have [had] that initial introduction and tell them a little bit of what I did.

Shannon offered what she thought would be good advice for a new teacher. The first thing she felt aspiring teachers need is to meet or shadow a teacher before committing to become a teacher. She felt former military members need to go back to their home of record, or wherever they are heading back to, and make it a point to speak

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with a teacher teaching in a grade that they are interested in. She also recommended that aspiring teachers not stress over the certification examinations. She added that if they take it and do not pass, they will know where to focus to prepare for the next exam. Finally, she would tell them to try to get the most out of the certification program they choose.

> Get all you can out of it. That way, you're more prepared for when you walk into the classroom. I don't think anything can prepare you 100 percent, but kind of enjoy the process.

Ricardo

Ricardo teaches at a high school in South Texas. He is one of two Army instructors at his school and has students from all grade levels. The school he works at is a hub for other schools, so he has students from each of those schools. He describes the demographics in his school as consisting predominantly of Hispanic students. The JROTC program and the cadet command have a curriculum that is based on leadership, community service, physical fitness, and a variety of other topics. The program is not necessarily designed to recruit people into the military; it is primarily a leadership program, designed to teach young people the skills necessary to be productive citizens.

Ricardo is the son of Mexican immigrants from Juarez, Mexico, and he is very proud of that fact. His father volunteered to fight in the Vietnam War and retired as a commissioned officer after 20 years in the U.S. Army. Ricardo also served in the U.S. Army and retired just short of 21 years. He has travelled around the world, on active duty and as a military dependent. He feels that the opportunity to travel was a special gift because being a military dependent, he met people from all walks of life, different

cultures, and from different countries. The places he has visited are different from the United States, but he views the world as a blended community. He described it as, "One big family." Comparing his days as a student to today's schools was difficult for him because it has been many years, but he felt the teaching methods back then were very different than they are today.

Ricardo said many factors influenced his decision to become a teacher. As he was preparing to retire, he was not sure what he was going to do, but a discussion with a retired U.S. Army Command Sergeant Major, whose son was in Ricardo's battalion, made him think about teaching. The Command Sergeant Major was teaching in Virginia and said he loved the job. Because of this discussion, Ricardo started thinking about teaching and compared teaching to what he had done in the military, except in the U.S. Army he taught young adults instead of teenagers. He said he has always enjoyed working with people and seeing them succeed.

> It's a good feeling knowing you're helping people and that is the main reason. If you could help someone grow and then watch them succeed, it's a pretty good feeling and that's why I enjoy it and decided to teach. But, it took me a while to become a successful teacher because in the military you have a lot of discipline, and high school kids are not always disciplined. But, I learned that with being stern, and having standards set forth from the beginning that kids will behave from the beginning. You don't win every battle and reach every kid, but I think that by using a stern approach, a fair approach, with the kids [they will] respond better, without the classroom running amok.

Another factor in Ricardo becoming a teacher was timing. He said he thought everything happened for a reason, including the chance encounter he had with someone who was teaching. He was told about how Troops to Teachers was recruiting military retirees to help address a shortage of teachers when he was in the process of retiring from the military. He stated that teaching was not the only option when he retired, but because the teaching option became available, he interviewed for the position and was hired. Ricardo said his certification process fell under the auspices of the state of Texas and the U.S. Army command in charge of JROTC. Because he retired with an active security clearance, the hiring process was simplified. The school district and the cadet command had certification requirements for him to complete, including basic and advanced courses. He must complete annual training and refresher courses every three years.

Ricardo stated he had the advantage of becoming familiar with the curriculum before he started teaching. The curriculum is the same throughout the United States, and is directed through the cadet command.   He also said that the military training he experienced was different from his educational training because in the military soldiers are trained on tactics, weapons, and survival, among other things. JROTC bases their curriculum on leadership experiences and citizenship, and not on military scenarios.

Teaching the curriculum requires that he put in many extra hours on a weekly basis.

> Believe it or not, I joke that I work more hours now than I did in the military, but in the military it's the military, when you leave for a year and you go to war zones, your life is in danger. So, the comparisons are not there…in the military…when you deploy you're on duty 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

As a teacher, you do work 60 hours, but you get the holidays that the students get.

Ricardo also discussed the support he received from school personnel. He said he does not usually speak to the district leadership on a daily basis. His teaching requirements are the same throughout the district and require him to attend several training sessions throughout the year. He said an Assistant Principal (AP) was assigned to his program and was very supportive. Ricardo believed that part of the reason for this was that the AP also served over 20 years in the military and then transitioned into teaching. Sharing the same background with his AP was useful because the AP could relate to the transition from the military into teaching.

Ricardo described the AP as a perfect mentor because he had been supporting the program for many years. Because he experienced disciplinary issues with his students, he felt that the AP had helped a lot with the administrative side of dealing with students. After that AP retired, the AP that replaced him also had military experience. Ricardo underscored his feeling that military retirees are able to understand how to work with people who have left the military and gone into teaching, compared to someone who has never been in the military.

Ricardo experienced several problems he felt were based on cultural differences. One of his worst experiences was greeting teachers who he did not know, only to see them ignore him.

> At first, I just shrugged it off. I was kind of annoyed and said, "Well, what is it that this person thinks? And, who does she think I am?' I was annoyed by the thought that this person doesn't know me, and a common greeting didn't get a response. If they are stuck up to the point that they don't even want to

respond back, you know, it's not a good feeling. It had to be that I was military. I mean, what else would it be when you greet someone, and they don't respond back? Again, it's politics.

Because of this particular experience, Ricardo felt the transition to teaching in his high school had been very difficult. His workload as a teacher was very similar to other teachers' responsibilities. He said that his 60-hour work week included arriving at school at 6:30 a.m. to work on physical fitness with his students. In the afternoons, he conducted practice until 6:00 p.m. to prepare his students for various competitions. Because there were only two people in his department, he said his workload was especially heavy. Because his days were consumed by being at work, he focused his time on his family when he was home. In order to do maximize those precious moments, he had to spend his lunch or conference periods preparing lessons.

When asked to discuss his artifact, Ricardo said his gray hair represented the transition from the military to teaching. He also offered his personal U.S. flag as a co-artifact because it represents the commitment he made to serve as well as the transition to teach students about patriotism. He felt that students do not know much about patriotism, and that they were not taught about it at home. Another issue Ricardo had with education, the one that was the hardest to overcome, was that he felt there are many teachers that do not support, believe in, or understand the military or its mission. He said the JROTC program works to overcome those negative feelings by teaching discipline and leadership in a way that helps teachers out in class.

Ricardo said that, although he had problems with the culture at his school, Troops to Teachers helped him with the transition into teaching. He started the year with very

little knowledge about what to expect so he created a network of people that taught the same course he did in order to help himself and others. He said the U.S. Army and his school district, including the JROTC Director, contributed to the curriculum, but it was his collaboration with other JROTC instructors on issues of discipline that helped tremendously because they all had the same issues with their students. He added that there was a small cohort of teachers that helped him when certain situations occurred that he was not comfortable with.

Learning to deal with unusual situations allowed Ricardo to grow as a teacher. The more years he taught, the more experience he gained in working with his students. He said a critical step for him was realizing that his students are not in the military and are not going to take *orders* and do things as quickly as you'd like them to.

> …learning that what you were used to in the military is not going to happen in high school. And just being more patient with the students and learning not [to] get upset if something doesn't happen that you expected. Just in general, being more patient and realizing that a lot of these kids come from dysfunctional families and they might be going through tough times, more than you realize in the classroom. So, that could be a real reason they are misbehaving in the classroom.

Ricardo said that it did not take long for him to begin to enjoy teaching after he realized he was working with young students. He appreciated working with students that came from dysfunctional families because he felt that if someone mentored those students, and shared life and work experiences with them, they begin to realize they can be better citizens, with values and a work ethic. Ricardo felt a high sense of satisfaction

when he worked to give those students hope that they could achieve things in life.

Those special moments in teaching led Ricardo to believe that his decision to go into teaching was the correct one. He shared that he is in a position to do a variety of things in his classroom to teach his students. He relied heavily on his military experience to teach students how to set goals, the importance of physical fitness, and all the things he learned in the military that often are not taught in school. Becoming a teacher has also allowed him to become a mentor and a coach to his students.

Ricardo said that, if he was in a leadership position, he would help teachers from the military by teaming them with mentors that had been teaching for over 10 years. This would allow for the maximum benefit of learning from someone with significant experience working with students who could assist novices with teaching strategies and techniques. Ricardo added that he would ensure the mentor did not have a negative opinion about the military so the transition from the military to teaching was a positive experience.

Ricardo said he would establish a structured school where enforcement of rules and standards was routine. He felt that type of environment would help reduce culture shock for someone coming out of the military. He added that the school culture would have to be changed by school leadership, but thought that would be difficult to do because many teachers do not have the sense of responsibility that a military member would have.

> Teachers and the military are totally different. Culture could be changed by teachers being reprimanded when it's needed; when they take their time or show up late for meetings. They don't take things seriously, so they need to

be reprimanded. I mean they wouldn't want their students showing up whenever they wanted. A lot of teachers do have the responsibility, but a lot of them don't. Some show up late for meetings and have food in their hands, such as from [a restaurant]. You could tell they went and bought that food instead of coming to the meeting on time.

Ricardo's advice to new teachers coming from the military would include telling them that, if they do not have the patience to work with teenagers, they should consider another career because it is not easy to work with them. He added that he did have respect for teachers because they are in a profession that constantly deals with unruly teenagers. Ricardo said he would warn people coming from the military who are used to getting things done quickly that teaching might prove difficult; he would make it clear that teaching is a completely different world. Finally, he added that if an individual was not prepared to work 60 hours or more a week, including weekends, without a stipend or extra compensation, they should stay clear of teaching.

Mateo

Mateo is 52 years old and currently teaches Spanish I and II in a high school in South Central Texas where his students, who are affluent and primarily non-native, non-heritage speakers. He began his teaching career at a middle school 90 miles from the school he now works in. He said he teaches Spanish because it is his native language and believes he is better at Spanish than English.

He grew up in a large city near the Texas-Mexico border, where he went through the public-school system until he graduated from high school in 1984. He is married to his college sweetheart and has a son who is a senior in college. He is proud of the fact

that his parents are first-generation Americans who came from Mexico as young adults. His mother graduated from high school in Mexico, but his father's highest grade was second grade.

Mateo was in the delayed entry program and joined the U.S. Army right out of high school. He was accepted at a major university and was a member of the Simultaneous Program, which allowed him to be a U.S. Army Reservist while being in ROTC. He graduated in 1988, was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant, and then was selected to go on active duty in early 1989. Starting his military service as an Infantry Officer, he ultimately served 25 years on active duty as a commissioned officer after serving five years of enlisted time for a total service time of 30 years. He retired in 2013 with the rank of Colonel.

He said he became interested in teaching because while he was in the U.S. Army he learned that the military is about pulling people up and making them successful. He was selected to teach at West Point from 1998 to 2000 and earned his Master's degree through the Army in order to work at what he called his first teaching assignment. Mateo taught Spanish in the Department of Foreign Languages at West Point and thought he made a difference with many cadets.

Mateo said he became a teacher for different reasons. He said he focused on his education because it was the reason he eventually became a teacher. He said his parents stressed education because they had not had the opportunity to continue their own educations. His parents taught Mateo that an education was a primary way to get ahead in life. He said he was very motivated to teach, not for monetary reasons, but because he wanted to give back to the people of Texas. Another reason he wanted to teach was to

show his son that the only solid way to success in this very tough and competitive country is through education.

> I do it because I want to do it, and I want to give back. And in this little area where I work there aren't any Martinez's. So, I look into my students' eyes, and I see them, and they are actually trying to communicate, and their last name is Stafford or Jones. I may be too idealistic, but I think I'm making a huge connection for when those kids end up meeting someone in their professional lives that has a last name like Martinez, or something to that effect. Because when I was in the Army, I met a bunch of people from places like Idaho, Montana, Oklahoma, and I've never been there, but I knew that I had presented myself in a positive way. So, the way I teach my Spanish kids, I would like to think I'm doing it for them. It's not because I need a paycheck.

He said that when he first began teaching there were times when he was a little hesitant. His first teaching assignment was near a major military base in Texas where 30,000 to 40,000 soldiers are stationed. He found that the maturity level at his middle school was almost non-existent, causing him to hesitate. He usually had between 25-28 students in his classroom and added that it was challenging and a little concerning at times, but he did his best.

> I wasn't perfect, but I managed to teach them a little Spanish and a little bit of maturity, as much as you can teach someone about maturity at the age of 13. I got through it. I came out a better man, a better teacher.

To work on his certification, Mateo chose the ACT in Central Texas program, located in Temple, Texas. ACT is a state-approved program with authority to assist

individuals with their teacher certification without additional university coursework. The program consists of several classes in the evenings, when students are taught how to create lesson plans. After the classroom phase was finished, Mateo began the student observation phase in 2014, the same year he passed his subject matter teaching test. He wanted to teach Spanish because he thought Texas was multicultural, multi-lingual, tolerant, and inclusive. He passed the pedagogy test in early 2014 and by May of that year he was hired to teach in a school where several former Army members were already teaching.

He said one of the advantages of an alternative program such as ACT was the flexibility to do what he chose after retiring from the Army. He retired in Sept 2013 while overseas and knew he was coming back to Texas to work on his house in order to live in it. He worked on his house and read what he had to for his ACT training. He said that after 30 years in the U.S. Army he knew how to treat people professionally, and felt he had been treated like an adult with flexibility and responsibility when he was enrolled in ACT. Throughout his military training he had focused on improving himself because he knew he would have to in order to lead soldiers.

> So, all the training I took, yeah, that was for me, but I also thought that it was to
> help me develop somebody else's son or daughter. I viewed it as, "I'm borrowing
> this knowledge and [I will] use it to help me make somebody else better." So,
> going through ACT, it was a no-brainer. I was a novice teacher but, well I went
> through West Point, but it wasn't like teaching in public schools. The West Point
> cadet is a very select person. There aren't going to be many 11-year-olds
> throwing spit wads at someone. I knew that the experience was going to be unlike

anything at West Point. It's about building people up.

He said his mentor in his first year was just a name. In his current school district, he was assigned a mentor, but he told her he would seek her help if he had a question. He said, "So, I did have a mentor but I didn't go to them every two seconds." Another support system came from teachers at his ACP, who supported him in the classroom by observing him and giving him feedback. He also stated that some ACP employees liked the idea that a U.S. Army Colonel was about to enter into education as a teacher because they felt he would be a great role model. He said his fellow teachers helped him when he asked, but primarily with the technology side of teaching. He felt that he had been accepted in his first assignment, primarily because the school was located next to a military base, and the majority of the teachers and students were related to the military.

> That was a win-win situation. In my current school, I think when I turned in my resume, they asked me what I had done before. I told them I was in the Army for 30 years, here and there. That kind of caught some eyes. Some of the people that interviewed me, because I think I look different on paper, I wasn't a 22-year-old who needed a job just so I could eat. I'm not being mean about it, but that was the way it was. I just said if you want a guy like me, I can help you. If you don't want to call me, don't call me. Well, they welcomed me. In my district, they have a saying that they want role contributors. People with world experience. I said, "Okay, that could be me."

He said preparation for class required him to write his own lesson plans, and adjust or tailor them to his students. His school was on a block schedule, so he taught

three 90-minute classes. He had duty once a week in the cafeteria for 20 minutes.

However, at his first assignment, his duty lasted for an hour each day.

Mateo's artifact was his wedding band, which he said represented the support his

wife gave him throughout his 30 years of military service. His wife had a lot of influence

on his choice of teaching and helped him fulfill all the requirements to teach at West

Point. That wedding band represented more than 30 years of commitment. He said he

had never experienced major problems with the transition from the military to teaching.

> I guess in that regard, I may be an oddball, but I've been very fortunate. But I can
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> think of something going on right now in my current assignment in high school.
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> We're a smart outfit, but I believe we can be doing better in trust and
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> communication. To me, those are very simple words because the military culture
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> and ethos puts that into you. You've got to trust the guy on the right, the guy on
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> the left. You've got to believe that the mission is a wholesome mission and stuff
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> like that. So, however it's communicated to you, you've got to believe it is part
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> of a bigger picture. In my regard, I think it is in my school, but I think it could be
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> better.

Mateo believed that part of the problem was a lack of trust among some of his

peers. His school district consisted of one high school and two middle schools and all of

the schools were supposed to adhere to the curriculum. He said there was some friction

between the high school and the middle schools.

> In the military, I don't remember there being no trust, and not believing that you
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> were going to do what you said you were going to do. Fortunately, or
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> unfortunately, none of my colleagues have ever been in the military, the ones I

work with now so they might be missing that subset of trust within each other and within the outfit.

When this situation arose, his response was to provide leadership and he intervened several times, advising open communication. He felt that the parties in conflict needed to sit down and discuss what each needed to do. He added that the situation in the district was so unlike how collaboration works in the Army, because when orders are issued in the Army everyone is depending on the team to do the right thing. He said he spoke up because he thought it would help.

> I haven't pulled back, but in my mind I have to try to do due diligence to leave the outfit better, the people better. In my mind, it's a no-brainer. Maybe in 10-15 years, they will listen.

Mateo said that he would explain to aspiring teachers what to expect from ACPs, and the flexibility those programs offer. He also felt that it would be important to show new teachers around the school, and spend time explaining school and district policies. He considered it beneficial to help new teachers with the technology required in classrooms, including social media and software. He would also give new teachers practical advice, such as,

> Hey, this school's been here for a while and the kids are going to keep coming. So, you need to figure out how you can contribute to the kid's success. Not so much what you're going to get out of it, it's the kids. The ultimate goal is to leave the kids better. So, a culture around that, where everyone is pulling to making the kids better.

Mateo added that he would remind aspiring teachers that teaching does not pay high salaries and is not a 9-5 job. He felt that when discussing a teaching career with prospective teachers, we should be upfront and not try to mislead anyone. Mateo suggested that educational leaders be honest about their expectations, the students, and the amount of time it takes to grade, plan for class, fulfill professional development requirements, duties, and tutoring. Mateo also suggested that aspiring teachers also be told:

> They can make a difference. Again, it's about focus and perspective, [but mostly] it's about the kids. That it's a good profession to go into and it is very much like the profession we served in to uphold the Constitution when we came into the DOD. Really, what we're making…the end product, the kids that graduate or do not graduate, that's the country's future. So, I would tell them to do their best to make a positive difference, to help them find their way. Just like we said in the military, we have to find our way, and make a difference. You just have to understand the objective, which is the kids.

Richard

Richard is in his first year as a 7th grade special education co-teacher at a middle school in a large city in South Texas. He teaches reading, mathematics, social studies, and Texas history in a non-Title I school, where the demographics are 44 percent Hispanic and 40 percent White, with students from other races making up the difference. Of 1250 students enrolled, only about 15 percent are considered disadvantaged.

As a co-teacher, his role is to work with the general education teachers to help special education students or students that have been identified under a 504 plan. He

described a 504 plan as one created by the U.S. Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to ensure that a child who has a disability is identified and receives accommodations that will ensure access to the learning environment and academic success. He added that a special needs student is one who falls under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which identifies 13 disabilities which prevent children from achieving an education similar to students in a regular education program. A 504 student does not fall under any of the 13 categories of IDEA, but has certain issues that requires accommodations.

Richard grew up in Jamaica Queens in New York City, NY and joined the military in 1985. He said he was sent to boot camp training at a large Army base in the south and from there spent 22 years in the military. He said that while he was growing up, he had many different types of jobs, including being a bike messenger in NYC.

I did that job for about 2 years. I used to travel from Queens to Manhattan, so I cycled a lot and did some other little jobs. I worked at a paint factory, I did that job for a while. I didn't like that job because you had to join a union. In NYC, you had to pay a lot of taxes. You had to pay federal taxes, state taxes, city local taxes and you had to pay union dues. After a whole week of work, I came home and didn't have much. So, I didn't stay on that job that long.

While in the U.S. Army, he was first an infantry soldier and then qualified for airborne school and became a paratrooper. He then became an Army Ranger, spent most his active duty service in the infantry and was stationed at several bases, including one in Korea, and at Fort Ord, California. When stationed in Korea he was a member of the Joint Security team. His last job in the Army was in the North East USA.

He pointed out that he was no stranger to teaching, except that in the military, he worked with young soldiers. He said he spent time as a military instructor and taught the Primary Leadership Development Course, where young sergeants (E-4s) learned to be E-5s. He also taught the Basic Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) Course, teaching E-5s how to be E-6s. He served the last eight years in an Active Guard unit working as a Military Entrance Processing Station guidance counselor. While stationed in Hawaii, he taught military leadership, with subjects such as map reading and military justice. As NCOs, his students had to learn about the court martial system, how to counsel soldiers charged with Article 15 violations, and the various types of punishments meted out by the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Students also learned how to manage a rifle range and work with explosives, including how to set up an explosive range.

Richard said that he went into teaching because of his youngest daughter. In 2012, when his wife was pregnant, their unborn daughter tested positive for Down's Syndrome. He did not know the first thing about working with people with Down's Syndrome.

> So, that came upon us and I had to do some thinking, and then I heard about Spec Ed [Special Education] and said, "Let me go check those things out." I was doing some research about Down's Syndrome and that research led me into Special Ed. That was the motivation, because of my daughter. And then she was born, and she didn't have Down's Syndrome. So, I did all that studying and training for nine months, and so I decided I was going to stick with it because I did like some of the things I learned. I think God was pushing me toward that. I always say

God has a sense of humor. So…and that's the way it was and that's what got me into teaching.

He said he felt he would be a successful teacher because of his background in the military, particularly as a recruiter, when he operated under a quota system. He was required to recruit a certain number of people per month and he said that made him work hard because it was like being in charge of a business, where people have to operate and plan to be successful.

So, I've always worked hard, like that. That to me was more stressful than working infantry, because infantry, yeah, you had to work hard with the physical stuff, and your mental stuff, but you had the support of your guys. In recruiting, you were on your own. You couldn't go to your boss, you were pretty much on your own, especially in New York City. You know, that's a major liberal area and the war was going on at the time in Iraq. I had to do a lot to make it work. So, for me, when I look at teaching, I haven't seen anything that bad yet. I say yet because I hear people saying things, but I haven't seen anything bad yet.

As difficult as teaching seems to him, Richard said he had no intention of quitting. He said he would do whatever it took to make sure his students got what they needed. He believed that his work ethic had a lot to do with his military training and what he learned as a bike messenger in NYC. He said riding a bike when it was warm was easy, but when there was snow on the ground he stuck to it because he had to earn a living.

Richard recalled that after his decision to go into teaching, he received some assistance from the GI Bill and a program called VOC Rehab (due of his disabled-veteran status) to earn his bachelor's degree in Occupational Education from a large university.

He did not go through Troops to Teachers because he did not consider teaching after retiring from the military and was not aware that there was a time limit after leaving the military to enter the TTT program, so he entered teaching through the Texas Teachers program.

> Well, I mean some people did talk to me about being a teacher, but I didn't take it serious…I said, "Me being a teacher? Nah." I had the attitude of, "No, I didn't want to be a teacher." I just wanted to work with computers, you know, with wiring and administering the network. I thought about just sitting inside a closet with some rack space with computer items and wires, network racks and so forth. That was me. But I did have some people say, you know you'd probably make a good teacher, and I responded, "Nah." You know, elementary school, that's not me. Middle school, nah, that's not me. But like I said, God has a way of working and here I am, I'm teaching [in middle school] and loving it.

Richard discussed the advantages of his teacher preparation program. He did not have to work when he left the military--he was satisfied with his retirement income--but when he decided to look into teaching, he took advantage of the GI Bill. He said the only disadvantage was that he found the computer science program was not what he expected it to be. On the positive side, he learned to write solid lesson plans while in the military because his instructors were hard on him. When he went through his teacher certification program, he was not taught how to speak in front of people.

> In the military, they taught you how to walk around the classroom, and how not to keep your back toward your students, how not to use your hands too much. They were real hard on that and how to write your lesson plan. I mean to the point

when you wrote a lesson plan, you not only wrote one, you wrote a backup. You
know, I knew about TEKS [Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills] already
because they had they this thing called test conditioning standards. So, you had to
put the task, the conditions, and the standards. And that's the same with the
TEKS. I think they went more in depth with the way they did theirs when it came
down to write the lesson plan. In the field I worked in we didn't have special
needs kids; we called them soldiers, and no one was allowed to fail. So, you
[had] to make sure all students [passed] whatever test [they were] taking because
it can reflect on you, on your evaluation, to the point where they can relieve you.

Richard said the support from the principal, other staff members, and especially
his mentor, who was also a military veteran, was exceptional. He said that, although he
did not like to ask too many questions because he preferred to find answers on his own,
anytime he did ask for assistance, someone always helped him. He said his mentor
taught him to use software application programs such as Scribe, Eduphoria, and
Mainframe, where all student-related data is kept. The Assistant Principals established a
working relationship with him, and when he did not have access to a computer, they
loaned him a Chromebook. He added that all the teachers he had met had been very
receptive, and he singled out one teacher who taught him about special education and
about the special circumstances special education teachers go through.

There's some things I can say that he's going to understand that others would not.
Like I can talk 24-hour time with him and I can say, "Hey, Hooah" [an Army
battle cry] and he would off the bat understand. I remember one time I said that
to someone and he thought I called him a whore, and I said, "No, I said Hooah,"

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and he asked me what that was, and I told him it's a military thing.

Richard noticed that some teachers were fearful of some students. He remembered a substitute teacher's reaction with a particularly big student. She came in and was concerned about the student. Richard worked at a high school one summer and had a student that was over six feet tall, and large. He said the student came at him as if to confront him but Richard held his ground and was not afraid because he knew he was in control, not the student.

In terms of his workload, Richard said he had to prepare lesson plans, but when he compared them to what he did in the Army, he felt it was not demanding. Richard shared that some of his students had Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) which required him to prepare suitable lesson plans. He was also responsible for reviewing Individual Education Plans (IEP) and ensuring the students were prepared for an Annual Review Determination (ARD) Board. In order to assist such students for that meeting, he was required to conduct research on the students, including gathering information from teachers, and enter the information into a computer using a program called E-Sped. Richard was also required to call parents, and he said that he learned that it was best to call on Sundays, something he learned as a recruiter in the U.S. Army. Richard describes his approach to these tasks:

> I have some set things to do and it'll take me an hour or two. Like I have some
> AIPs [Accelerated Instruction Plans] I do for kids who failed the STAAR [State
> of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness] test. If a kid failed the STAAR,
> there's got to be some kind of plan, and it kind of reminds me of when I was in

the Army, when you wrote a counselor's statement on a soldier. You had to have an action plan. I don't see anything hard about that.

Richard said his artifact was a book because to him books represented different phases of his life. For example, when he began his military career he opened that book, and at the end of his career he had finished that book. He then opened another book which represents his entry into teaching. In that new career, he noticed that a lot of people complain about many things.

I'm not so big on complaining. I'm more like, when I get something that needs to be done, or when I come to work and do my job, I mean I go through some rough stuff, but I don't let that get to me to the point where I start complaining. I just do it…but that's something I'm going to have to get used to. In the Army, in the infantry, a lot of guys go through a rough patch, but when it came down to go to work, you just do your job. You don't let the small stuff affect how you do your job.

Richard explained that such complaining does not happen on a daily basis, and he thought the majority of it was caused by required procedures such as gathering data or producing reports. He said he had adapted to those requirements and did what he had to do. He added,

This ain't my first rodeo. Coming out of the service, I'm not used to taking lunch because it's time to take lunch, or you have to go take a break because it's time. It's in the rule book, you can take a break. In the military, you don't take a break until you're finished with the job…like when I was recruiting. We didn't close the office because someone had to go eat lunch. Someone stayed in the office

while the other one went out. In the civilian world, they all do it at the same time, so, there's nobody there to deal with. So that took some time to get used to. That's the civilian life; that's the way it is.

Richard said he had matured quickly and had learned a lot about education and teaching, because for him, it was about learning. He felt that he was still in the learning phase and would remain in that process for some time. Richard felt that it was important to be organized, a skill he learned when he was recruiting and constantly dealt with sensitive information. He said it was just as important to secure students' information so it was not exposed.

Richard recalled he had worked briefly with students with behavior issues before he was certified and used that experience in class even though the behavior of his current students was not as bad. He said teaching was challenging, especially when working with students with ADHD because they move around so much, but he has learned to adapt his teaching to those students. Despite the challenges he faced and the documentation requirements, Richard enjoyed teaching immensely and planned to stay in that career for the foreseeable future. He also felt that a military background does not translate into excellence in teaching. Richard had been a Ranger in the U.S. Army and being part of Special Operations meant his thought process was different from others in the military. He felt that some people were not proficient at certain things: they served, they did their job, but they were not adroit. Richard elaborated:

So, I guess if I was a principal I would want to know what type of background that person had in the military. Some people, their minds are always going 1,000 miles per hour. Mine, is always going at that rate, others didn't do that. I think

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that's what something like this doesn't bother me. Things like taking a break, and in the civilian world it's a big thing, stuff like that. They make big deals out of stuff that doesn't make sense to me, but it's just something you have to do. I'd have something universal. I'd say, hey, I know you're from the military, some things might be different, for example, the mindset is going to be different, and it's not like something you were used to when you were in the service.

Richard stated that he would show the new teacher what he or she had to do and would be as accessible as possible. He believed a mentor should give a new teacher a preview of what they are coming into. He would help him or her with IEPs and encourage them to adopt a tough mental attitude.

You need to know how to do IEPs…we would do things together…I wouldn't complain about stuff that's going on. I would set the example. I would leave the politics out of it. Here's the job, here's what you have to do to do the job. Don't put politics into it.

Richard would have liked to see a culture where people don't miss work or come in late, something he said he never did, even when he was ill.

In the Army, if you went to sick call, that's not a good thing. If your records were thick, that's a problem. In the civilian world, that's ok. In the military world, half an inch of medical records is a problem. I used to jump out of airplanes, helicopters, but the thinking is, I'm not the only one.

Richard said he would tell someone from the military that wanted to be a teacher that a military person like him is right for education, especially in Special Education. He said he felt some people wanted to quit because they did not want to work with special

education students and cringe when they see them, or talked bad about them. Richard added,

> I'm not like that. I look at it like, "Hey the kid's got special needs." I'd tell them
> to get into Special Ed, and I'd have to give them the heads up that they have to
> understand they are going to be working with people with a different mindset. In
> the military, since we were always going 1,000 miles per hour, you take a deep
> breath…another thing that works for me, you know, I've always believed in God.
> When I got in the military, the military taught me about honor. So, you think
> about honoring God, the military, and your family. So, I think like that. That
> always motivates me, it motivated me when I was in the service, and it motivates
> me today.

Cross-Cutting Themes

Recognition of Veteran Status: Split Themes

Three of the six participants felt they were recognized by their colleagues as military veterans, but for the other three that was not the case. Kathy said that the Student Council was placed in charge of activities for Veteran's Day at her school, but it had been a very small and informal event. She said it that it seemed as if no one wanted to recognize the fact that there were military veterans at their school.

> We don't talk about it. For Veteran's Day, the Student Council bought us a
> couple of burritos, but other than that it's not really a big deal; they kind of really
> downplay it. I think it's because we have a high undocumented population,
> they're afraid to talk too much about the government and cause people to get
> unduly nervous.

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Mateo felt that his current school has not done a good job of formally recognizing teachers who are veterans on Veteran's Day and Memorial Day. As an example, his school administration invited former service members to speak during Veteran's Day, but brought in military retirees or people from nearby Army bases. Mateo questioned why they felt it necessary to go outside of the campus to find military veterans when there were already some on the faculty.

If you've got them in your math department, your science department, why not recognize those that have served once, and are now serving twice? You don't need to fantasize about something that happened 50 years ago. You've got them in your own faculty. That's what I would do if I was a principal.

Ricardo felt that the political views of the teachers was reflected in their interaction with him, and dictated how they reacted when he spoke to them. He said that the fact that fellow teachers were not acknowledging his greetings spoke volumes about how they perceived former military members that were part of the faculty. He said this had happened enough times that he was convinced it had to be because he had been in the military. He added that there was some sense of understanding from several teachers that he had interactions with, but the fact that there were some that did not respond to him made him uncomfortable and unwelcome.

Some teachers seem very rude for no reason. So, you're thinking to yourself, "I wonder why this individual is acting this way? Is it because they see the military in a different way? Do they not believe in the military?" A lot of teachers, you can tell, are very patriotic, so you can tell they support the military and what we do here. So, it's a mix. It's a mixed feeling but you

pretty much sense in your interactions what teachers are supportive and those

that aren't. You also sense what teachers have different views and don't

understand what you're doing.

Dealing with Classroom Behavior

Classroom management played a major role for four out of five participants and

made their transition difficult. Kathy felt that she was challenged by some of her students

because of her former military status, and because they believed that she was too

authoritative as a result. She had a strong sense of patriotism and felt that people who

had joined the military had done so out of a sense of selfless service. She believed her

students should recognize that service and give some respect during the playing of the

pledge of allegiance in the mornings.

One of my students thought that I was being too authoritative, and they weren't

being allowed to express their opinions. So, I said, I know a lot of friends who

have died for the right for us to say the pledge of allegiance. I'm not asking you

to pledge allegiance to the United States. I'm not even asking you to be a good

American. All I'm asking is for you to acknowledge the fact that other people

have sacrificed this particular thing. I got in trouble with my AP, who had a talk

with me to tell me I was being too authoritative or conservative in my classroom.

Shannon said she had students throwing themselves on the ground on a daily

basis. "I had bi-polar students. One minute they're great, the next they're on the

ceiling." Having to deal with those students during her first year required Shannon to

spend a great deal of time using a technique called differentiation, which meant she had

to tailor her lesson plans to meet the individual needs of her students. Each of her

students had a separate behavior plan, and she found the requirements overwhelming and very difficult to properly adhere to.

Andre's first year was stressful for several reasons, particularly learning to control his classroom as a sixth-grade mathematics teacher. He had been an officer in the military and said he was used to people doing as he asked without hesitation.

> My initial instinct was to go to what I had done as an OCS instructor, trying to maintain that order and discipline in the classroom, and it wasn't working out. It was a totally different animal, so I had to change my mindset. I still kept some of that in the classroom, and even today my classroom management is set up like a military unit. They have class leaders, each leader in the classroom is denoted by their military rank and know…what they have to do.

For Mateo, the highest ranking (while on active duty) participant, working with pre-adolescent students was an eye-opening experience. He said he had a son, so he was aware that students in middle school were not at a maturity level that he was used to. Although challenging at first, Mateo's behavior management skills have improved, especially when compared to his first assignment teaching seventh and eighth graders.

> Those kids will act goofy because of their age. I've evolved and become more tolerant. I let things go a little bit. I do run a tight shop, but I feel better that, behavior management-wise, I've gotten better.

Lack of Resources

Three of the six participants struggled due to lack of resources. Kathy's said she was not provided with a curriculum for either history course she taught her first year and was told to teach whatever she wanted to. Kathy said that her job was exacerbated by the lack

of standardized material to teach, and she was forced to spend a lot of time conducting research, looking for applicable material to use with her lessons.

> In Advanced Placement U.S. History, there's a lot of stuff you have to cover, you know, a lot of skills, but I had nothing to prepare me. Every night over the summer, I did nothing but Power Points. Then, during school nights I went over the next couple of weeks and looked online to see if there were any cool projects or anything I can add to my curriculum.

Shannon was not provided with curriculum or lesson plans either. She said she was told she had to create it all on her own and was given an outdated system to use for that purpose. She said she did not have access to that system because the school failed to provide her with the password to use the program, even after she asked for it.

> One of the administrators was my principal. The things I ran into were, I needed the password to access the program that was the basis for teaching, say, your reading program. You need a password to get into the system. No kidding, it took me six weeks to get that, go in and start using it. I asked about the lesson plans because I had built one lesson plan with I-Teach and it was nothing like what the district required. I thought, "I wish I had a lesson plan to build off of because that would help me." It was actually a good six or seven weeks before I got the password to get into the system to start working.

Andre felt his ACP did not adequately prepare him for the first day of school and added that none of his training focused on what he was supposed to do during the first week. He said he had many questions as the first day of his new career got closer.

How do I plan my lessons? What are my guidelines? You know, in the military, we live on structure and I felt the structure wasn't there, so I freaked out a little bit and I remember the Friday before school started I asked a person at the ACP, "So what are we doing next week?" I was still not sure, and she looked at me and she said, "Don't worry about it." I said, "What do you mean don't worry about it? School starts Monday!" I had an idea, but I didn't get anything from the alternative certification program about what I was to expect. I had very little understanding of how I was going to run my own classroom.

Time Spent Outside of Class

Five of the six participants spent a great deal of time outside the classroom preparing for class or grading assignments or papers. Kathy said she easily spent about 40 hours a week outside of class: "I get to work at seven in the morning and leave at 6:30 every night. I go home and work some more. And over the weekends give them more time."

Mateo said he also spent a lot of time at home either preparing or grading. He had between 25-29 students in each class, so when he assigned homework or an assignment that had 30 or more answers, he said it took a lot of time during the evening to grade those papers.

Richard enjoyed spending time with his own children but said he did not have that much time off because he usually worked on lessons or grading at home. He shared, "Yesterday, I went to bed at 12 and the night before it was three in the morning. Weekends, I try to write IEPs. But, for me, that's the way it is."

Issues with ACPs

Of the six participants, five had serious concerns about their ACP. The concerns ranged from not being provided basic information such as phone numbers to not being fully prepared for the realities of the classroom. Kathy described her ACP as a disaster and stated that if it had not been for her confidence that she could successfully pass the ACP requirements she would not have continued in the program. She said the worst experience was that she felt they taught her to *do as I say, not as I do*, and that it bothered her tremendously that she had to put up with that philosophy.

Further describing the alternative certification program, Kathy said that one of her ACP teachers demanded she and her fellow students take notes a certain way. She said they sat for hours at a time and did nothing but listen to presenters. Kathy said that her training was exacerbated by personal issues she had when she left the military. She had suffered a traumatic brain injury (TBI) and needed to have some method of maintaining her focus on the material being taught, but she suffered from a humiliating incident at the hands of one of her teachers. She had been taking notes on her laptop and the teacher walked up to her, picked up the laptop, and slammed it down on her hands, causing injury to one hand. After he had done this, he told her that she would have to learn to write down her notes using a pen and notebook paper, like all the other students in her cohort. Kathy explained that she had difficulty taking notes in that manner and needed to conduct research on things as they were being taught so she could reinforce her own learning, but the teacher did not permit her to do that. After that incident, Kathy said that individuals at the ACP tried to expel her from the program because of her TBI. At that point, Kathy was thinking of leaving the ACP but decided to stay.

Andre also experienced problems with his ACP and definitely let them know of his dissatisfaction when he answered the end-of-course survey. Andre felt ACT was following a scripted formula.

> They said I was going to sit through this course for 40 hours and they were going to give me the material I needed to do it. It felt like they were more about checking the box because the state says you have to do x, y, and z versus, am I actually learning this stuff? What's the reason the state wants us to do it? There was one particular lesson I remember where they wanted us to do a put together something on Blooms' Taxonomy. I went online and posted it, but they said it didn't have the numbers on it, you know, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, but I had everything there except for the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 next to each one and she said, "We can't accept this, you're going to have to re-do it because if you turn it in like this, the state is not going to take it." So, I asked them if they were just trying to check a box or were they trying to find out if students understand the material. And they said they couldn't get around what the state wants, so I said, "Okay I'll put the numbers in, that's not an issue but I was curious why we're checking the box and not for understanding." So, at that point I realized that was what the program was all about. The other thing is because of that, there was a lot missing. They had an opportunity, there were a lot of things they could have done to better prepare me, so when I walked in that first week of school I wouldn't have been as confused as I was.

For Shannon, issues with her ACP were related to not being able to contact the proper people to ask questions about her ACP or Troops to Teachers.

I remember it taking me weeks of looking, you know, an hour here and an hour there. It was really a lot more difficult than it should have been getting in touch with the Texas chapter or the Texas branch. It took me a little while to figure things out, especially Troops to Teachers. It was not as transparent as I would have hoped. Their website was not super user-friendly, so it took me a while to figure out how to even contact them. Now, once I contacted them they put me in touch with the right office, they were tremendous. They were great, and they gave me help. I forget how I actually came upon that number, but it took a while.

Lack of Support

Four of the six participants felt they did not have the support of either their school district, their campus, or their fellow teachers. Kathy said she felt that asking for help from anyone other than her mentor or her neighbor teacher seemed like a distractor. She did not feel welcomed in her school and felt that her relationship with other teachers seemed strained because of her former military status. She said she often had to toe the party line, and added, "They have to feel that I'm very, very liberal in my views."

Shannon said she got very little help from the administration at her school during her first year. She tried in vain to obtain the necessary passwords to get in and prepare lesson plans but she also got what she called "push-back" because, as a new teacher, it took her a long time to put a lesson plan together.

School ended about 3:30 and they wanted everybody off campus by 4:30 and that's even after meetings and training. Well, everyone off campus by 4:30, sometimes no later than 5:00 but I still needed more time to plan. It came to a point about six weeks into the year, I went to the principal and I said, "Okay, this

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is what's going on. I will not take my work home to do it. I have all the

resources here to do it, I don't have the right environment at home to work."

Andre said that his school district provided training on a variety of things but did

not advertise them very well. He said that most of the information or training he received

from the district consisted of things he took the initiative to look for.

I'll go look for it myself and I dig deeper and find out more. Then I ask to see if

the district has anything more that teaches me this. The support is there, but is not

out there enough for new teachers. That was a big problem. Most of the support I

got from my school was, well, "We'll support you if you ask." It's not a, "Hey,

we noticed you're having this problem, let's help you fix it."

For Ricardo, the lack of support for student discipline was the most difficult thing

he had to learn to overcome. He felt the major difference between when he was a student

and today was that teachers could be stricter with students when he was younger.

Society has changed and become less restrictive on many things, become less

vocational, and has moved away from what was a better system when I was

younger. Teachers were allowed to discipline their students without worrying

about being politically correct.

Ricardo also believed that an underlying problem for many teachers, including

himself, was caused by students not being taught to live in a disciplined, structured style,

and that the result manifested itself in the classroom.

It affected me personally because you transition from a military environment

which consists of patriotism and physical fitness to an environment where things

that are important to you are not enforced. For example, honoring the

anthem, honoring the pledges, patriotism in general. I think the lack of

structure was the biggest problem. Really, I haven't learned to deal with it.

Ricardo said it was important to be straight forward and give advice to

prospective teachers about what they have to look forward to in education. He said he

told a new teacher which teachers he felt respected the military and which teachers would

be giving the beginner disapproving looks.

And I told him, you can tell right off the bat they have different political views

and they don't understand you. You know, it's kind of sad that grown

teachers would act so snobbish toward you. I was shocked that some of them

would not respect you or your program. So, therefore, they have a very

standoffish attitude toward you.

Ricardo said he learned right away to ignore certain things because some teachers

did not know that he was there to help young students. He shared advice he would give

to former military members entering the teaching profession:

Another thing I would tell them is to be ready to see people that are

unpatriotic. I attended a ceremony that began with the national anthem. They

were also raising the flag. I looked around and there were many kids with

headsets on, listening to music, and not even paying attention to the

ceremony or the anthem. I went up to one kid and told him that I knew a lot

of people that died so he could stand there, free, and listen to this ceremony.

He just shrugged. I could not believe that there were so many people just

ignoring the ceremony, they were talking to each other, laughing, not even

aware of what the ceremony was about. That really pissed me off, but then I realized where I was at and that helped me deal with that.

Second Thoughts about Teaching: A Minority Theme

Regardless of the difficulties the six participants encountered during their entry into teaching, only two expressed doubts about their chosen career. Andre said there were times when he came home and told his wife, "I can't do this." Sometimes at lunch he texted his wife and told her he was fed up, but she always encouraged him and said, "You can do this. You've done things in the Army that are a lot harder than this, so you can survive this." Andre added that she always supported him and paid attention to what he did in order to help him.

Because of a lack of support to obtain the required passwords, Shannon said she expressed doubts about remaining on the job to her principal. She was also required to leave the building by 4:30, something she did not want to do because she wanted to pay attention to her family when she got home, and all the resources to plan lesson plans were available only at work. Shannon described a conversation she had with the principal:

> I said, "Oh, by the way, I don't have the passwords." I also respectfully said, "I appreciate the opportunity to work here, but if these things don't change, I'm going to go elsewhere," and the principal told me to please not do that. He then made it so I could stay and get my lesson plan done and helped somewhat with the passwords. I still had some issues where I couldn't access other systems.

Remain in Teaching

All of the teachers stated they were planning to remain in teaching; however, Kathy said that once she obtained her doctorate, she was going to make a decision about whether or not she planned to stay in K-12 teaching. Shannon said,

> Yes, I absolutely do [plan to stay in teaching]. I honestly think it was the correct decision because, when you see the children grow and learn, I really think it's an investment in their future. I'm not saying I'm the be-all, end-all, but I may make a difference, a real difference in some student's future. Even if it was a couple of students, I think I've made the right decision.

Mateo said that his wife encouraged him by advising him that his students did not understand that he used to be a Colonel.

> The kids did not know the rank structure in the military and did not know what rank meant. I've grown to try to put myself in their shoes, and learn the subject matter of the stuff I'm trying to teach. I've kind of turned it around because in the Army, whatever I said went. So now, with 13 and 14-year-olds, I've evolved as an educator, as a human, and as an adult. I understand that it's definitely not about me, it's about the kids. I would say the decision to teach was because I believe in making a difference. I'm not about sprinkling dust and changing the whole world, the solutions to hunger, or world peace. I wish I could find those where I live, but I think I am making a difference.

Envisioning the Mentoring of Former Military Members New to Teaching

To varying degrees, all the participants felt that mentoring was crucial for the success of teachers who came from a career in the military. Kathy discussed the

importance of mentoring new teachers, particularly those from the military; however, she felt that the type of mentor required often depended on the teacher's personality. For example, she said that some teachers might begin their career with feelings of insecurity, therefore, mentors must work with them until they are comfortable. Kathy suggested that one way to do that is to meet with mentees once a day. On the other hand, if new teachers are more "standoffish," she believed the mentor should wait until they ask for help.

Shannon stated that if she was in the grade level of the new teacher, she would not only share her lesson plans, she would sit with the novice and teach her or him how to write lesson plans. She also felt it important to share tips with new teachers on how to communicate with parents.

> I would help them understand how the lesson plan should crosswalk back to the TEKS. I would help them understand the timeline, especially when you talk about third grade and those grades where they are tested. Helping them understand the number of TEKS they have to cover in a very short amount of time. And also, I would talk to them about interacting and dealing with the parents.

Shannon said she sent letters home but then realized that some parents did not read those letters, so she started making phone calls instead. She also made sure that she was available during student drop-off in the mornings and pick-ups in the afternoons and walked the student to their parents' vehicle. Shannon said she always made sure she shared the great things their students did, not just focus on the negative. She would share these experiences with a future mentee.

Andre said that he believed that it was important to demonstrate to a veteran new to teaching how education is different from the military, because things have to be done differently in schools and classrooms. When he was asked to mentor a new teacher during his second year in teaching, he was happy when his mentee was a military veteran because he said he knew that teacher possessed strengths simply by being associated with the military as an Army Reservist. Andre said he used his knowledge of the military to help the novice improve as a teacher.

Mateo said that he thought providing mentors might be beneficial to teachers with military backgrounds. Just as important, he thought that teachers should be shown who their military counterparts are, as well as try to help them understand how those backgrounds might positively impact the school.

> I would want them to give a professional development presentation about who they were. You know, having these guys present to people who never served, not to toot their horn or anything, but having the faculty understand where these people are coming from and establish that relationship between the military and non-military. I think, of course, that we should continue with the normal mentor.

Ricardo said he would have a tough time being a mentor because of his workload, but he thought it was important to establish a strategy to help new teachers with military backgrounds adapt to an educational culture. Ricardo felt the job of a mentor was crucial and his approach would be, "Hey man, here's my telephone number, if you need anything just get in touch with me."

Satisfaction with Teaching

All six participants expressed their satisfaction in teaching, with the majority of their comments focused on student success. Kathy said she liked teaching and enjoyed the challenge of developing her own curriculum. Andre enjoyed teaching and said the highlight of his day was getting feedback from students indicating they were learning and enjoying his class. He added that his best days in the classroom were days when he was teaching a difficult concept and he saw "the light bulb in a kid's eye and they go, 'Oh, I get it!'"

Of all the things Shannon liked about teaching, it was her students' success that meant the most to her.

> The second you see a child that's struggling with something, that light sort of glimmer for them and they start to catch on, and then they get it. That is so rewarding to know I've helped that student. Whether it was with reading, with social interaction with another student, learning to use their words. Whatever it is, whatever aspect, when you start seeing them start to understand and be able to apply what I've been trying to teach them.

Ricardo said that he had a young female student three years ago whose father was abusive and alcoholic. He often beat his children, and one day threw them out of the house.

> I found out that her and her mother and her siblings were living in a shelter. But this particular student would still smile, would still do well in school. She wound up joining the Navy, and despite all the hardships she was going through, she was

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still resilient enough to not spiral downward and do drugs or hang around the wrong people. This individual had the strength to still do well in life.

Ricardo enjoyed making sure that his students received life skills and the knowledge necessary to help them advance in life and added, "You know, it feels good to know they are learning and receiving knowledge." Mateo's most enjoyable time in middle school was the two years after he had become a teacher. He said he taught students that he "sort of adopted" and enjoyed thinking about them and watching them for the two years they were his students. They became confident in their language skills and were so satisfied with his course that they were going to try to take another year or two of Spanish classes.

> These were non-native speakers, but they really embraced the language. I remember watching them develop…that was about three years ago. In my current stage, now I'm really happy because the kids I work with are a little bit older, they're about to graduate and they're more tuned into the world, I mean outside their country…they understand the bilingual, bicultural world they are going to be living in. And just kind of knowing that just the small little drip of knowledge that I've contributed to them makes me feel good. I think there's value, not just for me, but for the kids. I don't teach because I think it helps me, I would like to think that whatever I am imparting to these kids will help them for the rest of their lives. And I mean that.

V. DISCUSSION

This study attempted to capture the phenomenological experiences of retired military members who chose teaching as a second career within a short period of time within retiring. Factors that contributed to or hindered the transition of participants were identified in the hope that a study of those factors may help change policies concerning the preparation and induction support these individuals receive during their transition into teaching.

A phenomenological approach was used for this research because it is an appropriate methodology for researching the lived experiences of individuals (Glesne, 2016). The researcher used a preliminary survey to assist in the selection of the participants, followed by two interviews for each participant. The first interview consisted of questions designed to elicit participant background information, such as where each participant taught, biographical information, factors that contributed to their decision to become a teacher, and support they received during their transition from a career in the military to teaching. The second interview was designed to determine if the participants experienced any problems as new teachers and how they dealt with these problems. After noting their experiences, each participant was also asked how they would assist a person interested in becoming a teacher after a career in the military as well as recommendations to make the transition a positive experience.

The researcher found that each participant experienced problems during their transition to teaching from the military. Some of the problems stemmed from their participation in Alternative Certification Programs (ACPs), which according to most

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participants, did not adequately prepare them for their first teaching job. Some of the

participants viewed the ACPs as money-making ventures which focused on the technical

requirements of state law regarding certification rather than on what they believed should

have been a well-rounded approach to prepare them for the practicalities of the

classroom. Participants also encountered issues when they dealt with the culture they felt

existed in their new jobs compared to the culture they had experienced in the military,

including a perceived lack of cohesiveness and respect for the U.S. military in the school

culture.

Interpretations

When participants were asked questions regarding factors that contributed to their

choice of teaching after a career in the military, their responses could be grouped under

Howes and Goodman-Delahunty's (2015) five general themes concerning reasons for

choosing teaching: personal fulfillment, practical considerations, desire to contribute,

lack of alternatives, and influence from others. Generally, participants in this study

seemed to confirm Howes and Goodman-Delahunty's assertion that only the first three

reasons had any substantial bearing on their choice of teaching as a second career.

Specific responses from participants concerning whey they entered teaching echoed

Watters and Diezmann's (2015) acknowledgement that many different motives exist for

people who choose to become teachers.

Although somewhat consistent with the literature regarding a range of factors, the

participants expressed unique personal reasons for becoming teachers. Priyadharshini

and Robinson-Pant (2003) noted that a wide range of push-pull factors usually provide

momentum for people to choose teaching. Only two of the participants expressed a

desire to become teachers based on decisions they had made during their youth. Two other participants were particularly interested in working with young people and helping them succeed in life. One participant had no intention of going into teaching after retiring from the military but decided to obtain his teaching certificate after finding information about children with special needs. Another participant did not point to a specific reason she became a teacher. Although the reasons given by the participants sometimes matched the reasons discussed in the literature review, the results suggest that most people that leave the military to become a teacher will provide at least some unique reasons for doing so.

Another issue explored by the study was whether retired military individuals would be suitable for a second career in teaching. According to Anderson, Fry, and Hourcade (2014), one of the many reasons that former military members are viewed as suitable for a career in teaching is because they possess content expertise, professional experience, and maturity. McCree (1993) added that, when considered as a group, post career military veterans have a proven work record and a documented ability to function under adverse conditions. Nonetheless, the majority of the participants did not feel that the people in their school districts or schools gave them the credit they felt they deserved for their past experiences and accomplishments. For some, it was almost as if no one wanted to recognize what they had achieved while in the military, including years of supervisory experience, responsibility for vast sums of material and resources, and immense planning experience. Three of the participants inferred that maturity, experience, an ability to overcome personal challenges, and extensive collaboration abilities did not result in automatic respect from administrators, teachers, or students. For

example, Richard was an experienced paratrooper. What administrators, teachers, and students failed to realize is that an individual does not simply climb into an aircraft with a parachute on his/her back and jump. First of all, people have to apply for jump school and then have to go through a rigorous selection process. They have to attend physiological training, altitude chamber training, and learn about related topics, followed by assessments. Their training includes various phases, and they have to be successful in each one before they move on to the next one. Jumping out of airplanes takes a huge amount of team work and collaboration with an aircrew. Possessing "jump wings" says a lot about a person, if someone knows what to look for.

For Mateo, the fact that he taught at West Point was not recognized for the achievement that represents. Only a very small fraction of U.S. Army officers teach at that academy and the vetting for teaching there is arduous, but that did not seem to have an impact on where he taught or the duties he was assigned. Another participant, Kathy, said that her school felt so little about veterans that, for Veteran's Day, students were placed in charge of the activities, and the military veterans were not consulted about what they felt would be appropriate activities. The low point of the day was when the veterans received two burritos as recognition of their military service. For Kathy, who spent a career in the military, and retired with a brain injury that she would have to deal with for the rest of her life, being handed two burritos in recognition of her service to her country made her feel insignificant and underappreciated.

Likewise, Mateo felt that his current school administration had not done a sufficient job of formally recognizing teachers who were veterans at his school. He questioned why the school administrators would invite military retirees from the

community to speak during Veteran's Day when there were several staff members already on the staff on his campus. Inviting them to speak would have been a great way to not only recognize their service, but to identify the veterans on campus. For Ricardo, the fact that fellow teachers were not acknowledging his greetings spoke volumes about how they perceived former military members that were part of the faculty.

For Derek, Shannon, and Ricardo, the recognition they enjoyed corresponded to what was found in the literature—they were viewed as making a positive impact in their schools because of their status as military veterans. Derek and Shannon's experiences were very positive, but Richard's perception was simply that he did not have any *negative* experiences, and he attributed that to a fellow teacher who was a veteran. Derek's team not only recognized his veteran status, but he was viewed as a natural leader at his school and was placed in a team leadership position as well as on an administrative track. Shannon's fellow teachers respected her classroom behavior management so much they consulted with her often, even if she was in her first year. Although Ricardo was not singled out by either his administrators or fellow teachers for his veteran status, he received support anytime he needed it.

Conclusions

There are several conclusions to be drawn from this study:

- There were no common reasons why the participants entered teaching. Each participant had unique push/pull factors that led them into teaching.
- The extensive experiences and training that military retirees possess when they become teachers did not translate into significant advantages for the participants during their first year of teaching. Some of the participants were not recognized

as military veterans and were treated like traditionally prepared teachers. It seems that one of the few advantages for these veterans was how their maturity and willingness to work as full team members with the other staff members at their school made them feel as if they were contributing to their schools and students. However, during their first year, none were given any special responsibilities which reflected any experience or training while they were in the military. In fact, they were given typical duties such as lunch duty or bus duty.

- The participants did not experience similar acceptance levels at their schools. There were cases in which participants were employed by schools where there were already military retirees working as teachers who readily accepted them. Two of the participants began their teaching career in a school district that served the dependents of soldiers stationed at a very large U.S. Army installation and where there were a large number of former military members teaching. There were some cases where veterans experienced outright disrespect and where they struggled to comprehend why students and staff members did not share the same feelings of patriotism regarding certain ceremonies. For Kathy, it seemed as if nothing she did was right, including the instance when she wore a costume to celebrate an event.

- Some school personnel (teachers, administrators, students) did not seem to have a thorough understanding of what the military entails. Their superficial knowledge of our military sometimes resulted in perceived slights among some of the participants and added to frustrations regarding how they felt they were being viewed.

- It may not be necessary to have former military members undergo rigorous psychological testing to determine their suitability for teaching. Although Hoge, Castro, Messer, McGurk, Cotting, & Koffman (2004) argue that studies are required to assess the mental health of members of the armed services who have participated in war-time operations to inform policy, all six of the participants provided a sense of well-being and mental stability.

- The results of this research suggest that, regardless of the program used to recruit them from the military to teaching, the majority of participants planned to remain in teaching until they reached retirement eligibility. This exceeds the usual retention figures of traditionally-trained teachers, many of whom are out of teaching within their first five years, and corresponds with other research findings that Troops-to-Teachers completers are more likely to remain in the education profession than teachers in general (Feistritzer, 2005).

- Not all ACP experiences were the same. There was a general consensus among participants that ACPs were more interested in "filling in the squares" and for some of the participants, the expeditious manner of their ACP experience led to what they believed was incomplete preparation.

- None of the participants were provided with an assistance program at their school designed to support former military members new to teaching. District-level new teacher orientation events, which were intended to build teacher capacity and professional success, included sessions with district master teachers, instructional specialists, and program area supervisors, but these sessions were designed for all new teachers, not select groups.

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- The single greatest source of support reported by participants was mentoring. As described by the participants, mentoring can be hit-or-miss because sometimes a person assigned as a mentor is not fully committed or is not available at critical moments.

- Types of support for former members of the military transitioning to teaching recommended by the participants included assigning a mentor with a military background carefully chosen based on the new teacher's personality, sharing lesson plans and collaborating closely with the novice to teach her or him how to write lesson plans, and providing sessions to discuss how education is different from the military.

Recommendations

This study generated a variety of ideas on how we can help make the military veteran's transition into teaching a positive experience in which their knowledge and experience is highly respected.

Recommendations for ACPs

Because ACPs are concerned with training people that will be hired by school districts, it would be beneficial for ACPs to collaborate more closely with school districts to ensure that practical knowledge is also taught, while meeting required state standards.

ACPs should ensure students are offered an opportunity to do traditional student teaching, rather than participating only in an internship requiring them to work a set number of hours. Identifying problems or obstacles that ACP students face while doing student teaching may lead to improved understanding of the teaching role, and would allow ACP students to identify areas where they know they will need more help.

ACPs should provide a special workshop for military members about to transition into teaching that will address special issues that former military members typically face. These may include cultural differences between the military and education, second-guessing their decision to enter teaching, learning to disassociate student behavior with the behavior exhibited by military members, learning not to be too harsh when comparing typical military values with new values in contemporary society, and establishing strategies to cope with what they perceive to be a lack of patriotism.

ACPs should collaborate to create geographically-centered support groups for military members in their first year of teaching that will bring former military members teaching in different schools together to share experiences, problems, solutions, etc. Support groups do not necessarily have be conducted in face-to-face meetings; online support groups may work well for teachers who live and work far away from each other, or for individuals who prefer online meetings. There are also opportunities to conduct support for military members in their first year of teaching via social media. Finally, ACPs should collaborate with colleges, universities, and their state legislatures to establish common guidelines for ACP programs.

Recommendations for School Districts

In order to find a proper fit for military veterans, school districts should consider an office whose primary job is to have an active, information-seeking and sharing relationship with ACPs. It would be very appropriate to staff this office with teachers with a military background who obtained their teaching certificate through an ACP. As liaisons between their school district and ACPs, these individuals should meet with their

school district's human resources office to determine the type of certifications needed to meet the school district's needs.

Based on this study, it is very likely that Paredes-Scribner and Heinen's (2009) claim that the true structure and function of ACPs remains inferred and underexplored among practitioners. Military transition assistance offices should compile detailed information about ACPs in the state and make this information available to veterans interested in teaching. It would be beneficial for military transition officers to become more familiar with the ACP process and then assist a retiring member to locate the one that best fits their needs, versus having an individual find the information himself/herself.

School districts should make careful, conscious choices in the assignment of a mentor to their new teachers who came from a career in the military. The quality of assistance from these mentors may sometimes represent the tipping point on how a veteran feels about his/her choice of teaching. A mentor with a military background will have a greater impact on the new teacher. A mentor that does not know or understand the military or is apathetic in their role may very well lead to a new teacher deciding to leave. What resonated in this study was that each of the participants felt strongly that former military members who become teachers should not only have a mentor but that the mentor should be in the same grade level, teaching the same subject, and preferably be a military veteran himself/herself. Mentors should be provided specific information by their school districts to share with their mentees, such as information about district and school policies and procedures. Mentors should also provide direct assistance tailored to the individual beginner's needs, such as emotional support, assistance with securing curriculum materials, help with lesson planning, and so forth.

School districts should devote one or two sessions during administrator professional development programs so that administrators are introduced to military veteran recruitment efforts. It would be advantageous to have administrators experience a presentation conducted by teachers with military backgrounds covering a wide variety of topics, including the experiences many veterans have. Additionally, the district should include a separate session during new teacher orientation week for former military members new to teaching to provide them with an interface with former military members who are teaching in the same school.

In school districts that hire a significant number of former military members as teachers, a professional development program for all teachers should be established to provide them with information on former military members new to teaching. This includes their reasons for becoming teachers, strengths they bring to teaching, their concerns, their needs, etc., as well as the types of understanding and support they should be provided by colleagues. This is not an attempt at coddling new teachers coming from the military; it is primarily for the benefit and knowledge for teachers who are not familiar with the military or with programs designed to attract and recruit military members into teaching.

Finally, the establishment of a district support system for former military that goes beyond the assignment of a mentor should be considered. The support system could include the provision of different types of information, such as information on the community, the school district, the teacher evaluation system, how to incorporate essential knowledges and skills into the curriculum and lesson plans, creation of lesson plans, and district policies and procedures. The support system may include additional

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services such as a district support group, coaching of teaching by a district instructional coach, and arrangements to observe former military members who are now veteran teachers.

Recommendations for Principals

Principals should actively seek former military wishing to transition into teaching and hire them to teach at their schools. In her study on TTT, Feistritzer (2005) stated that educational leaders have identified specific kinds of teachers that are needed in our classrooms: more male teachers; more qualified teachers in our inner cities; teachers of special education, mathematics and the sciences; more persons of color; and, more teachers who can competently teach the subjects in the grades they are teaching. Feistritzer added that the advantages of hiring former military members are that eighty-two percent of teachers entering through the TTT program are male, nearly two-thirds hold a Master's degree or higher, thirty-seven percent are persons of color, and TTT teachers are meeting the demand for mathematics, science and special education in significantly higher proportions than all teachers. Additionally, 78 percent in Feistritzer's survey stated they expected to be employed in teaching for more than five years after the survey was completed. Bank (2007a) added that 90 percent of principals told researchers that they considered former service members more effective in classroom instruction and management than other teachers with similar years of teaching experience.

Principals should become familiar with the research on former military members' transitioning to teaching—especially the challenges they typically face—so the principal is in a better position to assist the new teachers. Principals should be aware that programs such as Troops to Teachers are producing primarily male teachers. There is a

continuous need for male role models in our schools. Also, because a large number of the males that are choosing teaching have been identified as coming from disadvantaged groups, they are in a position to truly understand the disadvantaged students they teach. Finally, military retirees have experience successfully dealing with different forms of adversity in a wide range of areas while on active duty, something that happens in our schools on a frequent basis.

Principals are in the best position to ensure that military veterans who teach at their school are recognized for their service and for the potential they bring to the classroom. Principals must recognize that veterans possess certain strengths that can help students and teachers. A principal should learn about those strengths and use them to their school's advantage. For example, the issue of school security has become critical due to tragedies that have occurred nationally. It is highly likely that veterans were trained in security procedures and techniques. Principals should interview teachers with military backgrounds to determine who possesses this type of experience, and involve them in committees or teams whose goal is to improve school security measures. Any procedures created from such collaboration should be shared among all schools in our school districts to ensure that standard procedures are in effect.

All participants described the inordinate amount of time it took them to prepare lesson plans, assess students, grade papers, and perform additional duties. A teacher is normally on duty between eight and nine hours, but all participants reported that they worked many additional hours at home. One participant said he now worked more hours on his new job as a teacher than he did while on active duty. Principals could address the lack of enough time to accomplish teaching duties by considering an extra planning

period for all new teachers, not just for veterans, at least for their first year. Darling-Hammond (2001) found that new teachers are often assigned the most difficult teaching assignments and burdensome administrative tasks. The principal should ensure that the new teacher is not subject to some of the unfair practices that new teachers often have to deal with—being assigned the most difficult students, the least wanted courses to teach, the least well-equipped classrooms, outdoor classrooms, or classrooms without air conditioning or heating. Principals should assign duties which are consistent with the experience of the new teachers and that the teachers will have adequate time and resources to fulfill those duties.

Principals should ensure that mentors share information on truancy, referral steps for student behavior, the use of electronic devices in class, and major discipline infractions. This should include assistance with documenting such behavior in whatever software application the district uses for discipline matters. Although many districts offer professional development courses which include district procedures and policies, often behavior management is discussed superficially. It may be helpful for the mentor to routinely meet with the mentee to determine if new teachers are adjusting properly to the school environment. Besides instructing the mentor to meet with their mentee regularly, the principal should plan to regularly observe and meet with the new teacher.

Finally, principals should have conversations with teachers with military backgrounds to ensure they understand and are able to deal with the culture of the school. Parham and Gordon (2016) found that an overarching problem faced by former service members in their first year of teaching is the stark difference between military and school cultures. The experiences of each participant overwhelmingly confirmed this finding, but

the culture shock differed for each member. One saw a very large discrepancy between the military and education, another found that some in her school were not willing to acknowledge her military background, while others found more moderate differences.

Rather than assign one mentor, a principal should consider assembling a mentoring team comprised of members who are experts in areas such as conflict-resolution (counselors), grading (assistant principals), technology (technology committee member), education law, and child abuse recognition to work exclusively with new teachers. A lead mentor could facilitate the mentoring team.

Recommendations for Leadership Preparation Programs

Leadership preparation programs should expose aspiring school leaders to the research on former military members who enter teaching, including the research on their demographics, the demographics of schools that employ them, the strengths they bring to the classroom, the challenges they face, and their longevity and level of performance as teachers. Future school leaders also should learn about developing entry-year support programs tailored to the needs of such teachers.

Another recommendation is to have aspiring educational leaders interview former military members, and in their administration internship, to work directly with former military members new to teaching (observing, coaching, facilitating a meeting of a support group, etc.). Teachers with a previous career in the military can offer insights to aspiring educational leaders and set a precedent whereby eventually all administrators will be fully informed of what these teachers can offer to education.

Recommendations for Future Research

To assist the transition into teaching for former military members it is necessary to continue to conduct empirical research to inform teacher educators, teacher candidates, school districts and principals what to expect from these career changers. Research could explore what former military members experience during pre-certification, certification, and post-certification. Research findings should be shared with people thinking about a second career in teaching, transition counselors, and school districts.

To determine the full extent of the challenges that former military members face, researchers associated with alternative certification programs or other researchers could do follow-up research on graduates for at least two years. This research should include gathering data regarding graduates' retention in or departure from teaching, and the reasons for either.

Research should be conducted to explain why the longevity and suitability that former military members bring to education is so positive. Rather than advocates simply relying on adjectives to describe former military members' job performance, the impact that former service members have on schools and students should be explored through sophisticated data gathering and analysis.

Another recommendation is to conduct other studies similar to this exploratory study, but involving larger numbers of teachers. A larger study with a balance of males and females who were former military members could determine whether the experiences of male and female participants were different. A study with large numbers of Whites, African Americans, and Hispanics could determine whether the experiences of different cultural groups were different. A larger study with students who had graduated from

different types of teacher preparation programs could determine if the experiences of participants prepared by different types of programs were different. Another potential study would entail research on former members of the military who chose teaching as a second career who are at different stages of their teaching careers (early career, mid-career, late career) to compare participant perceptions at each of the three career stages. Finally, a study that compares non-military ACP graduates with former-military ACP graduates on things such as longevity, student success, and other important teaching factors would add to our knowledge base, and would allow us to compare and use information from both types of graduates. Many questions continue to exist and additional research, such as recommended here, will help answer those questions.

To summarize, conducting research with former military members will begin to shed light on issues that are not well documented, such as the atypical experiences they face during their initial year or two of teaching when compared to traditional teachers. Finally, research can better inform educational leaders and colleagues how to better support former military members new to teaching.

Concluding Comments

When we look deeply into the research on veterans who become teachers, we begin to realize that the transition is really a two-way transition. For the veteran, teaching offers an opportunity to fulfill a life-long dream, to serve again, spend more time at home with their families, and many other positive life experiences. For school districts, veterans bring life experience, maturity, an ability to collaborate, diversity, and many other benefits.

Sometimes, veterans have experiences which lead to disillusionment which negates any advantages they bring to a school district. Veterans who do experience a smooth transition into teaching seldom share what made their transition positive with the educational community at large or with members of the military considering a teaching career. Any knowledge that could prove of use to new teachers from the military, to educators who prepare these teachers, or to schools that hire them, should be discovered and shared. It is my sincere hope that my research accomplishes part of that goal and makes a difference to veterans considering teaching as a second career.

APPENDIX SECTION

Transitioning from the Military to Teaching

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. We want to better understand your background and how you became a teacher. It is important that you fill the survey out completely, honestly, and accurately to provide data that are meaningful and representative of your experience.

1. What is your gender?

    a. Female

    b. Male

    c. Other (please specify) _____

    d. I choose not to answer this question

2. Which category below includes your age?

    a. Under 30

    b. 30-39

    c. 40-49

    d. 50-59

    e. 60 or older

3. What is the highest degree you have achieved?

    a. Bachelor's degree

    b. Graduate degree

4. What was/were your degree(s) in?

    Example: Bachelor's degree in English

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

5. Are you White, African-American or Black, Hispanic, Native American, or some

    other race/ethnicity?

    a. White

    b. African American or Black

    c. Hispanic or Latino

    d. Native American

    e. Some other race/ethnicity (please specify) _____

6. In which branch (or branches) of the United States military have you served?

    a. Air Force

    b. Army

    c. Navy

    d. Marine Corps

    e. Coast Guard

7. How much time did serve you active duty, guard, or reserves?

    a. Active _____

    b. Reserves _____

    c. Guard _____

8. How many total years did you serve in the military?

    a. _____ years and _____ months

9. Which teacher preparation program did you use in your transition into teaching?

    a. Troops to Teachers

    b. Teach for America

    c. Some other program: _____

    d. I did not use any program, I did it on my own.

10. If you did not use a formal teacher preparation program, please describe the reason.

_____

_____

_____.

11. How much time passed between leaving the military and teaching in a classroom?

    a. _____

12. How long have you been a teacher?

    a. _____

13. How many courses did you teach your first year.

    a. One

    b. Two

    c. Three

    d. More than three (please specify) _____

14. This school year, in which grade levels are the students in the classes you currently teach? (circle all that apply)

  a. Ungraded/Prekindergarten/Kindergarten (please circle correct answer or answers)

  b. 1st / 2nd / 3rd / 4th / 5th / 6th / 7th / 8th grade (please circle correct answer or answers)

  c. 9th / 10th / 11th / 12th grade (please circle correct answer or answers)

15. Do you plan to stay in teaching, and if so, for how long?

  a. I plan to leave as soon as I find another job.

  b. I plan to leave teaching at the end of this school year.

  c. I plan to leave in the next five years.

  d. I plan to stay until I am eligible to retire.

16. If you are planning to leave teaching, would you stay in teaching if offered a job in another school or grade level?

  a. Yes

  b. No

  c. This question does not apply to me.

  d. It depends. Please specify below.

_____

_____

_____.

Once again, thank you for participating in this study and answering these questions.

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW 1

Contextual Topics

1. Describe your teaching position.

- Describe the school you teach in and the community it serves.

- What grade level/subjects do you teach?

- Describe the students you teach.

2. Provide me with some biographical information about yourself.

- Growing up

- Military years

- Any other aspects of your life history that you would like to share

3. Discuss factors that contributed to your decision to become a teacher.

- How motivated were you to become a teacher, and why did you possess that level of motivation?

- How confident were you that you could be a successful teacher?

- How much personal control did you feel you had over your career transition to teaching?

- How much support for your career transition did you have from people in your life?

- To what extent was your decision to become a teacher an independent decision on your part?

4. Discuss your preparation for becoming a teacher.

- Describe your college/university preparation for becoming certified teacher (including coursework and field experiences).

- What are some advantages and/or disadvantages of the type of preparation you have described?

- Compare and contrast your military training with your teacher preparation program.

Topics for Apprehending the Phenomenon

5. What, if any, types of support have you received in your transition to teaching?

- From the school district?

- From the school administration?

- From a mentor?

- From other teachers?

6. Have your fellow teachers accepted you? Why do you believe they have/have not accepted you?

7. Discuss your workload as a new teacher.

- Number of courses taught

- Amount of preparation required

- Other aspects of workload

- Time required to meet work requirements

(Additional apprehending questions in Interview 2)

At the end of the first interview, the participant will be asked to select an artifact that represents the most significant event in their transition from the military to teaching and to be prepared to explain the artifacts significance during the second interview.

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW 2

Questions for Apprehending the Phenomenon (Continued from Interview 1)

1. Discuss your artifact and why it represents the most significant event in your transition from the military to teaching.

2. What are some major problems you have experienced in your transition from the military to teaching? For each problem, ask participant for:

   • Description of problem

   • Effects of the problem

   • How the participant attempted to address the problem (including seeking/receiving support from others)

   • If the problem still present or if has it been resolved or minimized

3. What types of assistance that we have not yet discussed assisted your transition from the military to teaching?

4. In what ways have you grown as a teacher during your transition?

5. What are the most enjoyable aspects of teaching for you?

6. Do you believe your decision to go into teaching was the correct one? Why or why not?

Topics Based on Imaginative Variation

7. If you were the principal of your school, what types of support structures and processes would you provide for new teachers transitioning from the military?

8. If, in the future, you would be assigned to mentor a new teacher transitioning from the military, what types of assistance would you provide that teacher?

9. Imagine a school culture that would be optimal for a new teacher transitioning from the military. What would be some key characteristics of that culture?

10. What advice would you give to a former member of the military about the transition from the military to teaching?

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