



Boots to Books: The Transition Experiences of Student Veterans from Camouflage to College



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Abstract

- Since the passing of the Post 9/11 G.I. Bill in 2008, colleges and universities are now faced with increasing populations of student veterans.
- According to the National Conference of State Legislatures (2014), there are over one million veterans and their dependents that are utilizing benefits from the Post 9/11 G.I. Bill to pursue college.
- Beyond the financial benefit, many student veterans are in need of additional academic, career, counseling, and social resources in order to provide a more positive and successful transition to college campuses that predominantly cater to traditional students.

Literature Review

- Many student veterans are first generation students who are older than non-veteran students, and tend to have more outside responsibilities such as marriage, children, and employment that hinders their time for education (Kim & Cole, 2013).
- According to Lighthall (2012), the transition from an intense military culture to a more self-reliant civilian existence can be challenging and overwhelming. While most traditional students face new challenges amidst their traditional experiences to college, student veterans have already had transitional work and life experiences through their military training.

Significance of Research Study

- The proposed research study is valuable because student affairs administrators, faculty, staff, and non-veteran students need to embrace student veterans to seek a greater sense of community in the journey of academic and career success.
- The proposed research study is unique in its research site, the University of Dayton, and serving its first student veteran association.

Purpose

- The purpose of this qualitative narrative study is to explore the transition experiences of student veterans with prior military experience who are studying at the University of Dayton.

Research Question

- How do student veterans returning from the military describe their transitional experiences into higher education at the University of Dayton?

Research Methodology

- Qualitative- Narrative/Themes from Storytelling
- Sampling- Six UD Student Veterans/Criterion Sampling/Interview Consent
- Collection- Interview Protocol/Process/Transcription
- Analysis- Chronology/Epiphanies/Interpret Meaning
- Trustworthiness- Peer Debriefing/Member Checking/Audit Trail

Guided by Creswell (2013), and Ridenour and Newman (2008)

Key Findings

- Military experience assisted with transition to college from acquired skills and training: leadership, discipline, teamwork, prioritization, goal setting, work ethic.
- Cultural differences are extremely different from the military compared to campus life.
- Student Veteran Association has been beneficial in building supportive relationships and inclusive community.
- All participants were dealing with the complexities of balancing parenthood and student life.
- Non-traditional aged. Majority live off-campus

Future Recommendations

- Welcome packet and student veteran orientation
- Student veteran resource center needed to strengthen community
- Veteran programs and services created to support student veterans and promote campus awareness.

Selected References

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