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HOW HAS MILITARY EXPERIENCE AFFECTED VETERANS WHO BECOME
TEACHERS?

A Thesis by:
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Submitted to Office of Graduate Studies
Texas A & M University-San Antonio
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION:
TEACHING IN DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

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ABSTRACT

How Has Military Experience Affected Veterans Who Become Teachers?

(December 2023)

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Veterans transitioning into education roles often face significant challenges related to combat trauma, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This qualitative research study explores the impact of military service on veterans who have transitioned into educators and identifies potential support systems. Findings reveal veterans' difficulties in the education system, particularly accessing administrative support and navigating classrooms. The study emphasizes the importance of mental health training and awareness within school districts to better support teachers with military backgrounds, especially those with invisible conditions like PTSD, enhancing inclusive and supportive environments for veteran educators, and acknowledging their unique perspectives and resilience. By revealing the need to promote administrative understanding and mental health training, the study seeks to improve the well-being and performance of veteran educators with the ultimate goals to create a more supportive education system for military veterans, reducing stigma, raising awareness, and enhancing support mechanisms.

Dedication

To all my brothers and sisters. We may not share the same blood, but we share something even stronger, a bond that is defined by the unspoken love and support we have for each other.

Acknowledgements

I would like to highlight two truly exceptional people who have made this possible. My loving wife Sabrina, and my thesis committee chair Dr. Michael Boucher for always being there when I needed their support, reviewing my progress constantly, guiding me through my master's studies. Dr. Boucher took a war-torn veteran who felt like he didn't belong and made him into a veteran who has found his purpose. Dr. Boucher's work focuses on empowering individuals and within my journey to this point has empowered me know that I can do anything with time, effort and surrounding myself with the proper support.

My amazing wife Sabrina with her unlimited support, never blinking an eye when I needed to stay up late all those nights or missing out on family events due to rewrites. Sabrina you are my rock, you have kept me sane and organized through the toughest of times. You understand my past, believe in my future, and accept me the way I am.

My daughter Blaize is my purpose and drive. You are the reason I want to break the lineage chain of thought that even if you don't think you can do it, everyone around you does, and I am proof of that. I hope I always make you proud.

Finally, I need to thank God. You have seen me through my valleys and have stayed with me through it all, never giving up hope for me, even when I did. Without my loving wife Sabrina, my amazingly smart daughter Blaize and for every professor I have had over the years, this study has been done and completed because of all of you.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In recent years, there has been a surge of interest in the connection between military trauma and educational success (Ford & Vignare, 2015). In the United States, veterans who have experienced trauma during military service are increasingly becoming educators, a trend which has led to an increased focus on identifying whether veterans with military trauma can be successful as educators (Cohen et al., 2019). Although there is limited research conducted on this subject, studies point to several potential challenges, as well as potential benefits, which may be associated with veterans with military trauma becoming educators. A survey of veteran educators by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) revealed that veterans with military trauma face several challenges when transitioning to a career in education (Gregg et al., 2016). Veterans reported feeling isolated and overwhelmed in the classroom, as well as having trouble in establishing positive relationships with students and colleagues (Palmer et al., 2022). Additionally, they reported feeling like they did not fit in or have the necessary skills to be successful in teaching (Palmer et al., 2022).

Veterans of military service are more likely to have experienced the difficulties associated with trauma. As a result of exposure to a stressful event, traumatic experiences cause a complicated and long-lasting disorder. When the level of anxiety increases, both personal and societal functioning is disrupted (Williamson et al., 2020). PTSD in men is more commonly brought on by military experience. Veterans of conflict are at an even higher risk of having PTSD. The probability of having PTSD increases with the number of deployments and quantity of conflict experienced. Long wait periods make it simpler to lose hope while living with untreated PTSD.

Additionally, a veteran may struggle to build relationships, feel guilty, lose interest in once-enjoyable activities, and struggle to be happy (Lippe, 2018). Returning veterans frequently endure emotional waves due to having survived terrible situations, such as being attacked or seeing others suffer injuries or fatalities (Gawande, 2004) Some veterans experience attention problems, traumatic event reliving, and suicidal thoughts (Aldridge et al., 2019). Therefore, to investigate this phenomenon, this study investigated the research question: **How has military experience affected veterans who become teachers?**

Purpose of the Study

This study investigated how trauma experienced by military veterans affected their civilian success of educators. This study can help veterans, school districts, and administration in the US to become more informed about the effects of war-related experiences can have on teacher-veterans' ability to teach effectively, leading to less stigma and misunderstanding of challenges that veterans face.

Positionality

In the spirit of self-reflection, I acknowledge my standpoint as a veteran, an educator, and a researcher. I acknowledge that my positionality influenced this project and my desire to provide voice to veterans entering the field of education. My reason for conducting this study stems from personal experiences with being an educator and a military veteran. I wanted to identify if what I perceived as an unaddressed gap in teacher preparation was common across other veterans who have become educators or just an isolated issue. Self-reflection allows me to take a step back and gain perspective on what matters, and more importantly what can or cannot be ignored. If this study indicates that there is a negative experience of military veterans who

become teachers, it could be a tool utilized to advocate for policy change and explore the challenges, barriers and implications faced by veterans' transition into the teaching profession.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

This study seeks to fill a gap in the current research by examining how military experience has affected veterans who become teachers. The findings of this study suggest that veterans face a complex process that involves facing numerous challenges and developing strategies for success. The authors in the review of literature argue that further research is needed to better understand the experiences of veterans with not only invisible injuries but also breaking stereotypes and preconceived notions of veterans to develop effective strategies for supporting the pursuit of becoming a successful teacher.

Trauma and Military Service

Military service is associated with trauma. According to Morrissette et al. (2021), veterans have poor academic achievement due to PTSD or war-related trauma. The trauma limits their achievement, and they are unable to study comfortably. However, many veterans also face and suffer from unsuccessful employment since there is no training for the recognition of their existing condition and how employers are sensitive to it (Patel et al., 2021). In the area of respondents' willingness to employ Veterans with disabilities (VWD), findings indicated most employers believed VWDs would benefit their organizations and would perform as well as other workers, yet they believed employing VWDs would involve more cost and more of a manager's time and were largely unsure if workers with PTSD were more likely than others to be violent in the workplace (Haynes et al., 2022). Respondents' actions/practices indicated that the majority were not using recruitment or other resources specific to VWDs and had scant experience in

accommodating workers with PTSD and Traumatic Brain Injury (TB) (Ramchand et al., 2015). Only 17 states have enacted laws to provide mental health training and resources for school staff (Gould & Honsberger, 2022). When it comes to schools, most school districts do not have a training program targeting people with mental illnesses, paving the way for mental problems to limit their lives and employment success (Blakey et al., 2022). PTSD/Mental health awareness and sensitivity training can be instrumental in educating school administration the ability to not only identify and help teachers, but it can be equally as instrumental for teachers to be able help with students as well. Research shows that the greatest benefit is this type of training is assisting employers to recognize the problem and developing methods of helping them live better lives (Morrissette et al., 2021).

Albright et al. (2019) conducted research with an aim of examining the role of postsecondary education in the transition of women veterans as they returned to civilian life. Research has shown that women veterans face unique challenges in transitioning to civilian life, such as a lack of access to education, employment, and adequate health care (Albright et al., 2019). Furthermore, the number of women veterans is increasing, which has led to an increased need for research on their transition experiences. Previous research has identified several factors that influence the successful transition of women veterans (Albright et al., 2019). These factors include access to educational opportunities, employment, and mental health services (Albright et al., 2019). In addition, studies have shown that social support networks, including family and community resources, can play a key role in the transition process for female veterans (Bilmes, 2007). Furthermore, research has highlighted the important role of postsecondary education in the successful transition of women veterans, as it provides access to career opportunities, increased financial security, and the potential for personal growth and development (Albright et

al., 2019). Many student veterans enter the armed forces as a temporary career, some veterans separated from the military involuntarily and, prior to discharge, consider the military to be their first choice. Much like traditional college students, many student veterans face barriers to higher education such as the need for remediation, financial issues, and the challenges of balancing school with other aspects of life. However, student veterans also experience a variety of unique barriers to higher education such as mental health issues, lack of information about G.I Bill benefits upon discharge from military services and the added challenge of lack of support of transitioning from military life to civilian life (DiRamio & Jarvis, 2011; Radford, 2009; Schiavone & Gentry, 2014).

Military Service and Teaching

Public schools have hired over 17,000 veterans (Gordon, & Parham 2019) to be classroom teachers. Veterans regularly observe that the military does an extremely effective job of training them to operate within the military, and an extremely poor job of reversing that training or preparing them before sending them back into civilian life. Over the last two decades, thousands of U.S military veterans have entered teaching as a second career. (Gordon, & Parham 2019). The basic idea that veterans must embark on a “transition” as they move from military to civilian life has been central for researchers, doctors, policy makers, and activists thinking about the physical, emotional, and social experiences of post 9/11 veterans (Ryan-Gonzalez et al., 2019). There are advantages and disadvantages to describing these consequences as a “transition.” “Transition” provides an alternative to “trauma,” and promotes a comprehensive view of veterans’ post military difficulties. It has been used to encourage veterans to seek help despite recalcitrant stigmas surrounding mental health concerns such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Finley, 2011). Understanding PTSD among Veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan

contains a comprehensive discussion of stigma as it shapes service members' experience of PTSD and mental health care. (Finley, 2011).

Since 2003, enlisted service members have been leaving the military at a rate of roughly 250,000 each year, (Frame, 2018). Between 2014 and 2016, from 65 percent to 80 percent of veterans surveyed left the military without a job, expecting to find meaningful employment quickly (Keeling et al., 2018). Eventually, when veterans are ready to look for a new career, they may be unprepared for a variety of reasons (Keeling et al., 2018). Mobbs & Bonanno (2018) revealed that 38 percent of military veterans considered finding a civilian job was a significant challenge due to their service-connected disability. Military work happens in a disciplined, rigid, high stakes environment with a relatively transparent salary structure and authority hierarchy. Being accustomed to a military work environment diminishes veterans' job preparedness in unexpected ways. For example, interviews with case managers showed that veterans have unrealistic expectations of how their skills will transfer to the civilian job market (Mobbs & Bonanno, 2018). Although they are highly motivated to work hard and move up corporate hierarchies, veterans were frustrated by having to start in low paying entry level positions and felt as if they were starting over completely.

During wartime, it is common for the media and researchers to focus on health conditions which seem particularly symbolic of the wars, or which present a pressing need for action. In the post 9/11 era, traumatic brain injury (TBI) has been one such health problem (Ryan-Gonzalez et al., 2019). Traumatic brain injuries, even mild ones, can affect mood, cognition, and emotions. Because the rate of TBI in post 9/11 combat veterans has been estimated to be up to 10 percent (Taylor et al., 2012). U.S. military veterans may be stereotyped based on their group membership, and these stereotypes may influence ratings of perceived job fit.

Veterans with military trauma can learn to manage their trauma with the right support. This includes access to counseling and peer support, building meaningful relationships with their students and colleagues, and engaging in activities that help them to process and manage their trauma (Rattray et al., 2020). Learning relaxation techniques and developing positive coping skills can also help veterans to manage their trauma and be successful educators. By providing the right support and resources, veterans can learn to manage their trauma and be successful in their new roles as educators. In 2019, Cook et al. (2019), performed a study that reviewed the current state of trauma training, including competencies, initiatives, and resources. It provided a comprehensive overview of the field and identified areas of focus and improvement. The authors began by discussing the various types of trauma training, including didactic, experiential, and interdisciplinary models (Cook et al., 2019). They then outlined current competencies for trauma training, including trauma-informed care, trauma-sensitive practice, and trauma-specific interventions. Additionally, they discussed initiatives such as the National Child Traumatic Stress Network and the National Center for PTSD (2019) and considered the impact of trauma training on health and well-being. The authors also examined resources for trauma training, such as professional organizations, online courses, and conferences. They identified the need for more research in this area and suggested potential areas of focus. Overall, this study is a comprehensive overview of the state of trauma training, competencies, initiatives, and resources. It highlights the need for more research on trauma training and suggests areas of focus for future studies.

Military Veterans and Education

Research shows that veterans with military trauma can be successful educators if they have the right support. Trauma can affect veterans in many ways, making it difficult for them to

navigate their new roles as educators. However, with the right support, veterans can learn to manage their trauma and be successful in the classroom (Montgomery et al., 2020). Some ways to support veteran educators include providing counseling and peer support, helping them to build meaningful relationships with their students and colleagues, and teaching them strategies for managing their trauma. With the right support in place, veterans can be successful educators and can help their students succeed.

A survey by Gregg et al. (2016) revealed that veterans with military trauma can be successful as teachers in the classroom. They found that veterans with military trauma reported feeling more confident in their teaching abilities and that they had a greater sense of purpose in their new role as an educator. Postsecondary institutions should establish cutting edge collaborative relationships with a wide variety of both on campus and off campus military support programs to help veterans with disabilities make the often-difficult transition from the battlefield to the classroom successfully” (Whitford & Emerson, 2019). Additionally, the survey found that veterans with military trauma felt better equipped to handle difficult classroom situations and reported being better able to connect with their students (Williamson et al., 2020). Furthermore, veterans with military trauma reported feeling more connected to their students, which can lead to greater academic success. In addition to this survey, other studies have been conducted which have looked at the potential benefits of veterans with military trauma becoming educators (Gregg et al., 2016). One such study, found that veterans with military trauma can bring a unique perspective to the classroom, and that their experiences can be beneficial to both their students and the wider school community (Griffin & Gilbert, 2015). The study found that veterans with military trauma can provide a different perspective on difficult topics and provide a valuable example of resilience and perseverance to their students. The study also found that

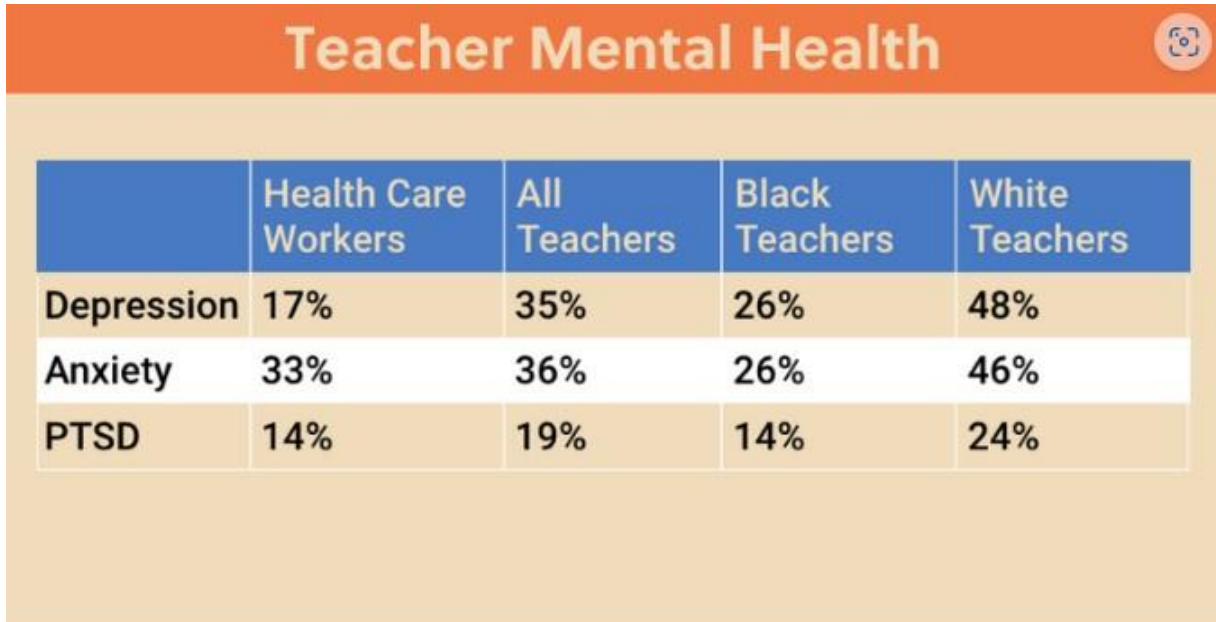
veterans with military trauma can provide a unique perspective on leadership, which can be beneficial to both the students and the school community.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, also known as PTSD, is a psychiatric disorder that may occur in people who have experienced or witnessed a traumatic event, series of events, or set of circumstances. Even though PTSD does not discriminate, most people relate PTSD to military (Phelps & LeDoux, 2005). In 2020, there were over 3,000,000 teachers in the United States and 107,000 of those were military veterans (Taylor-Desir, 2022). Teachers' mental health is closely linked to how effective they feel in the classroom. A study conducted in New Orleans showed that more than a third of teachers meet the threshold for mental health concerns. 35% of all teachers showed signs of depression; 36% showed signs of anxiety; 19% showed signs of PTSD; 26% of black teachers showed signs of depression (Lewis et al., 2020). Moreover, 26% of teachers showed signs of anxiety and 14% of black teachers showed signs of PTSD (the74million.org). Up to 20% of military veterans will experience PTSD symptoms (Finley, 2011).

Figure 1

Teacher mental health compared to health care workers (Finley, 2011).

A table titled "Teacher Mental Health" comparing the prevalence of Depression, Anxiety, and PTSD among Health Care Workers, All Teachers, Black Teachers, and White Teachers. The table shows that White Teachers have the highest rates of all three conditions, with Depression at 48%, Anxiety at 46%, and PTSD at 24%. Health Care Workers have the lowest rates, with Depression at 17%, Anxiety at 33%, and PTSD at 14%.

	Health Care Workers	All Teachers	Black Teachers	White Teachers
Depression	17%	35%	26%	48%
Anxiety	33%	36%	26%	46%
PTSD	14%	19%	14%	24%

Courtesy of the Trauma-Informed Schools Learning Collaborative

While these numbers are cause for concern, teachers who are military veterans have additional mental health considerations. The education field presents many unique challenges for veterans with PTSD. For example, teachers must often work in environments with large numbers of people and loud noises, which can be difficult for those with PTSD. Additionally, teachers often must work with unpredictable situations and may face confrontation or aggression from students or parents, which can be triggering for those with PTSD (Gibbs et al., 2019). Finally, educators may have to take on roles that require them to oversee a situation and make decisions quickly, which can be difficult for those with PTSD. Likewise, a 2019 study examined the long and winding road to postsecondary education for US veterans with invisible injuries. Invisible injuries, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury (TBI), and military sexual trauma (MST), can interfere with veterans' ability to access and succeed in

postsecondary education (Albright et al., 2019). Despite the high prevalence of these injuries among veterans, the current literature on postsecondary education for veterans is limited.

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a serious mental health issue that can cause significant distress and impairment in day-to-day functioning. It is estimated that 7-8% of the U.S. population will experience PTSD at some point in their lives (Cusack et al., 2019). According to (Straud et al., (2019) Military veterans who are experiencing these symptoms might think they are going crazy or are about to have a heart attack. As a result, traumatic stress reactions are sensible and adaptive, acting both as a means of surviving the trauma and as an effort to overcome it later. Understanding the normal traumatic stress reactions is much easier after the cause of these symptoms has been located. Letting go of parts of these reactions that are no longer helpful and are primarily affecting the traumatized person's quality of life is challenging (Aldridge et al., 2019). Anxiety can be a situation-specific or generic feeling of unease. Military veterans tend to steer clear of a wide range of situations that make them anxious, which may be incredibly crippling. The symptoms are very distressing and can lead to much anxiety. These problems could manifest on their own or because of PTSD. Many of these problems are thought to result from veterans' attempts to manage their symptoms or environment, such as alcohol and drug abuse or avoidance behavior and angry outbursts (Phipps et al., 2020). Many symptoms are also directly linked to stress, including skin issues and general aches and pains. Anxiety, sadness, and substance abuse are generally the issues with PTSD that military veterans experience the most frequently.

PTSD can cause a persistent feeling of being on edge, alternating between fleeting flashes of horrific recollections and intervals of avoidance, and numbing. The traumatized veteran's mind and body remain alert, not to miss any future signs that such an incident might

recur because they have already been through an experience that could have threatened their or another person's lives (Forbes et al., 2019). The traumatized person, however, often feels unsettled or anxious due to the continual activation of this threat-detecting system. Additionally, the threat detection system is so sensitive that it constantly activates even when there is no threat, making it difficult for the person to lead a regular and happy life. The same goes for fury; it has an explanation. Combat veterans report that perilous circumstances benefit from anger (Jones et al., 2019). When veterans' lives are in danger, it energizes us and helps us survive, which is frequently a more adaptive reaction than becoming paralyzed with fear. Again, once the threat has passed, it is no longer necessary for survival. Many, and by some accounts most, veterans experience high levels of stress during the transition to civilian life, however transition stress has received scant attention.

Since 2011 Over 2.6 million soldiers deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan have transitioned back to civilian life with another one million expected to do so over the next five years (Finley, 2011). military engagements, combined with the varying duration of service commitment lengths, make it difficult to discretely identify, track, and compare affected at risk groups both during the period of service and beyond. Finley's (2011) study of veterans deployed in the recent conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq (OIF/OEF) have estimated the range of PTSD prevalence between 4.7% and 19.9% (Mobbs & Bonanno, 2018). Mental disorders have been shown to be the leading medical cause of discharges from the military in the United States, and having an anxiety disorder may lead to discharge (Packnett et al., 2017). Alternatively, transitioning to veteran status has been identified as a stressful period of great change, due to several factors including social, interpersonal, and employment related challenges, which may contribute to a greater vulnerability for mental health problems, including anxiety disorders (Mobbs &

Bonanno, 2018). Most combat deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan were profound and elongated. Such deployments resulted in an increased diagnosis of mental disorders and concern over employment prospects among returning service members (Horton et al., 2019). Military veterans understand that traumatic incidents or a string of difficult-to-accept or-understand occurrences frequently result in PTSD (Gregg et al., 2016). But it is difficult for veterans to understand that those traumatic incidents result in PTSD and is inconsistent with how military veterans understand the universe and believe things should be.

Other problems military veterans may experience can harm their ability to work, interact with others, and live a quality life (Howard et al., 2019). Apprehension and worry that something unfavorable is about to happen are characteristics of anxiety. It typically comes with several incredibly concerning bodily signs. Humans naturally gravitate toward trying to interpret their surroundings. Traumatized veterans relive the incident repeatedly in their brains to try and understand what happened. This is a healthy way to deal with or accept challenging situations, which seems to work for many stressful situations. Due to the anguish connected with memories of more severe trauma, ideas and emotions are often suppressed to protect the person (Cohen et al., 2019). As a result, even though the memory may vanish for a while, the need to resolve it has not been satisfied, and it keeps returning. The cycle of intrusive thoughts and sensations regarding the trauma, followed by avoidance and repression, can practically go on forever if it is not ended. Military separation, mental disorders like depression or panic/anxiety, and poor physical health may have greater impact than prior deployment experiences or PTSD on the ability to find or maintain employment post service (Horton et al., 2019).

According to Rattray et al. (2019), the deployment of military veterans raises the possibility of PTSD. Veterans who have been deployed are three times more likely to experience

PTSD than Veterans who have not been deployed from the same military era. Some aspects of a combat situation, such as the military occupation or specialty, the politics surrounding the conflict, the conflict's location, and the type of adversary encountered, may exacerbate PTSD and other mental health problems. PTSD in the armed forces can potentially be brought on by military sexual trauma (MST). This covers any sexual harassment or assault while a person is serving in the military. MST can happen during peace and war and can impact anyone (Rattray et al.2019).

According to Gibbs et al. (2019), veterans who experience hyperarousal are always on guard and frequently uneasy in strange settings. For instance, they might prefer to sit by the door in a restaurant, be on the lookout for objects or persons that could be dangerous or feel the need to be near an exit. This can be distressing, making it difficult to concentrate and making it difficult to truly appreciate simple activities like having dinner with the family. A veteran may also find it challenging to form new connections, have feelings of guilt, humiliation, or remorse, lose interest in once-fun activities, or find it challenging to feel pleased. Gibbs et al. (2019), further discussed how PTSD is manifested in a wide range of symptoms. PTSD in men is more commonly brought on by military experience. For example, PTSD has been diagnosed in 30% of Afghanistan and Iraq War veterans, according to research. Veterans of conflict are at an even higher risk of having PTSD. The probability of having PTSD increases with the number of deployments and quantity of conflict experienced.

According to Albright et al. (2019), not every military veteran who encounters a traumatic event goes on to acquire PTSD. Therefore, it is now more widely acknowledged that personal vulnerability factors other than the traumatic event play a role in the onset of PTSD. Several studies in the last few decades have looked at posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) due

to military service and have identified individual and environmental risk factors. Young age, female gender, racial minority membership, lower socioeconomic position (SES), and lack of social support all increase vulnerability to the adverse effects of trauma (Albright et al., 2019). Being of a minority race, having a low socioeconomic status, and being socially isolated are other variables that increase vulnerability.

Women and PTSD.

According to Andrewartha & Harvey (2019), sexual assault and sexual abuse of children disproportionately affect women. Childhood sexual abuse can increase an adult's chance of developing posttraumatic stress disorder. The researchers used data collected in an epidemiological survey for their analysis. Because of the small sample size, we cannot draw firm conclusions on whether sexual abuse in childhood increases the risk of developing PTSD.

According to (Fel et al., (2022), there are other possible explanations for why women may have a higher prevalence of PTSD in addition to the association between abuse and the disorder. For instance, women tend to view trauma negatively and are more sensitive to risks. They are also less likely to use appropriate coping mechanisms. Additionally, men and women are likely to experience the same level of fear in the face of an unexpected traumatic event. However, women are more likely to express their fear verbally. Scott (2003) explained that victims of sexual assault are more prone to avoid social situations, remain on guard, be more quickly shocked, and be overwhelmed by disturbing flashbacks and memories of the event. This research provides potential explanations for this connection. Women may find it harder to handle stressful conditions than males since they are thought to be more vulnerable to stress hormones. Some protective factors, such as unit cohesion, have been shown to benefit males more than females, suggesting that women may not reap the same benefits from these factors as men do.

The fact that males seem to gain more from this characteristic than women lead us to believe our hypothesis is correct.

According to (Ziencik, 2020), military veterans may develop a variety of unfavorable interpretations or beliefs about what happened, as well as about themselves and the world. For instance, they might think that their actions were wrong or evil. They might think that what happened was their fault. They might think of themselves as helpless or inadequate. They might think that the world has become a dangerous place, and that other people are cruel, vengeful, and out to get them. There is a chance that some of these ideas have some basis in reality or truth. Conversely, they are often totally off base or grossly exaggerated. Negative emotions like sadness, guilt, worry, fear, and wrath can all originate from this thinking. Sometimes the point of therapy is to help the patient see the fallacy in a set of ideas and have those beliefs challenged and disproved so that the patient can replace them with a more accurate assessment of who they are and the reality in which they live.

According to (Chatters & Liu 2020), additional sociodemographic risk factors for PTSD in service members and veterans include race and education. Mainly, PTSD was more prevalent in non-white military personnel than white personnel. The cause of why minority military personnel may be more susceptible to PTSD's harmful impacts is unknown. There is no evidence that they have higher pre- or post-trauma risk factors or are more likely to be assigned difficult combat jobs. Lesschaeve (2020) emphasized that this variable was dichotomized, which may have hidden significant discrepancies between minority ethnic groups. Education can affect finances, social status, social networks, and health. Thus, higher-educated military personnel may have better coping methods, reducing depression rates. This contradicts military studies.

Smith and colleagues found that divorced people were more likely to have PTSD than married or never-married people. Thus, future research should examine whether marriage causes PTSD.

According to a study conducted by Rowland et al. (2020), when military characteristics were considered, it was shown that veterans of the armed forces significantly contributed to the emergence of combat-related PTSD. Due to their greater exposure to combat, non-officers and supply personnel were more likely to be diagnosed with PTSD. Enlisted people are more likely than officers to experience PTSD. Few studies have looked at the connection between serving in the military and exposure to battle or how military service mediates the link between combat exposure and mental health. Combat experts were shown to be more susceptible to developing PTSD than health professionals, service supply workers, and available staff in one of the few studies on the subject. The longer and more frequent military personnel deployments were thought to cause these discrepancies. Military personnel were thus more likely to be subjected to hostile attacks and exposure to war, which raised their chance of acquiring PTSD. However, it should be noted that in these earlier meta-analyses of trauma, participants with PTSD diagnoses were not included, nor were the risk factors of PTSD systematically examined.

According to Howard et al. (2019), a person's perception of a situation's danger increases the more they avoid it. Furthermore, even if the person does not avoid it, their anxiety might keep growing once they are there. At the very least, they will likely think the unpleasant emotions will be intolerable. After experiencing trauma, a person may benefit from a setting that encourages them to heal. But by exposing the patient to the feared stimuli, exposure therapy aims to show that this is not the case. To minimize discomfort, this is carried out in a very controlled and progressive manner under the direction of skilled therapists. Through a series of victories in

tackling these feared circumstances, the person eventually gains confidence and stops avoiding them. This plan of action makes sense in many ways.

Concurrent psychological problems and some personal characteristics that have been thought to be potential risk factors for PTSD. The incidence of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) has been linked to higher levels of social isolation in both civilian and military groups. An individual's sense of autonomy and competence is protective against the onset of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) if they serve in the military and receive extensive social care and support. In addition, those who served their country but were then unemployed experienced a higher rate of PTSD symptoms. This shows that due to a reduction in income, veterans cannot provide for their families to the same extent as they did before deployment.

Khan et al. (2020) suggests that comorbid psychological issues after war exposure may be risk factors for posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), that PTSD may be a predictor of comorbid psychological issues, or that they may share risk factors. War exposure is cited as a possible contributing factor in all three explanations of PTSD's origins. Nevertheless, research showed that co-occurring psychological disorders were essential risk factors, with depression being the psychological condition most closely predicted as PTSD. Therefore, future studies should examine how the mind reacts to exposure.

Functioning with PTSD

Veterans face incredible difficulties as they adjust to civilian life. However, the trauma that many military personnel experience during their service may endure and result in post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which can show up in unanticipated ways (Howard et al., 2019). Many veterans are unaware of the importance of PTSD symptoms or how to seek therapy. Student-veterans with undiagnosed PTSD could encounter more challenges than the typical

student does. Even though school learning environments demand focus, patience, and effort, PTSD can directly impede learning. This post will go over how veteran students can reduce the disruptive effects of PTSD by using distance learning to finish their education.

Although there are effective treatments for PTSD, many veterans of the military report treatment barriers like cost, accessibility, and stigma. Therefore, cutting around these barriers in novel treatment strategies would be beneficial. Because it can be done without a mental health professional's supervision, often with minimal supervision, or at home, exercise may present an exceptional opportunity to lower treatment barriers. Additionally, because military organizations have physical fitness standards, veterans are accustomed to exercising (Howard et al., 2019). Exercise training helps people overcome logistical challenges like cost, schedule, and transportation because it can be done whenever they want and is frequently affordable.

According to Jones et al. (2020), Veterans are thought to be less likely to die than the general population. The high physical health requirements for entrance into the military have led to what has been nicknamed the "healthy soldier effect." However, more recent research indicates that the healthy soldier effect is waning among veterans of contemporary conflicts. The expected mortality rate for US soldiers who served in Iraq and Afghanistan was equal to or higher than that of the US population. However, the authors could not pinpoint the precise causes of this shift in mortality and could only speculate on possible explanations. Greater reliance on Guard and Reserve personnel and survival from wounds that would have resulted in death in earlier conflicts. Despite this, the authors hypothesized that prolonged and repeated deployments might be linked to this change in mortality.

One study conducted by Williamson et al. (2020), found that in the organized framework of the Australian Defense Force, full-time personnel have unlimited access to healthcare services

that meet the needs of people's general wellness. This is in line with the norm in the majority of nations. Ex-service members may have to readjust to a less controlled lifestyle once they leave the military. This is because transitioning out of the military into civilian life does not guarantee the same degree of support. Understanding veterans' health and wellness needs guides future programs and activities. Over seven and a half times as many veterans were likely to be interested in getting help if they acknowledged a problem. Over 7.5 times as many veterans were likely to be interested in getting help if they acknowledged a problem. (Holliday & Monteith, 2019).

This suggests that recognizing a problem encourages help-seeking behavior. Additionally, the severity of a veteran's symptoms may encourage them to seek help, as many veterans claim that their problem must be "severe" before they will do so. According to studies, mental health treatment and depression severity are positively connected, meaning people with more severe depression were more likely to seek treatment (Holliday & Monteith 2019). The perceived need for care was also correlated with the severity of the symptoms, and encouragement from a veteran's support system can improve that possibility. Additionally, veterans' perceived need for care was frequently a result of their inability to control their symptoms on their own.

Also, mental health training can help students and employees identify their colleagues with the problem and offer solutions to enhance their health (Simola, 2019). Research has shown that lack of research makes it hard for people with such conditions to learn, work or get assistance. A survey of 1,083 human resource professionals examined employer readiness in three areas: knowledge, beliefs/willingness and actions/practices, and emphasis on the signature disabilities of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). Overall, employees surveyed did have a willingness to employ VWDs and saw some benefits in doing so.

Yet they had key knowledge gaps and accommodating workers with PTSD and TBI and around disclosure issues.

In summary, PTSD is a serious mental health condition that has the potential to significantly impede daily functioning and cause great distress. Evidence suggests that group psychotherapy can enhance overall quality of life and lessen symptoms of PTSD, making it a promising therapeutic option. According to recent study, group psychotherapy can boost PTSD patients' self-efficacy, and gender and treatment response may function as moderators of this impact (Mongelli et al., 2020). To better comprehend the experiences of veterans with invisible injuries and to create practical plans for assisting them in pursuing postsecondary education, more research is required.

Investment in Training on PTSD in Schools

American organizations, including school districts, have invested in multiple training courses to address societies' emerging problems (McIntyre et al., 2020). The trainings targets topics such as anti-bullying, anti-harassment, and discrimination (Cook et al., 2019). However, school districts have not invested in training that involves PTSD/mental health sensitivity and recognition. For instance, while Texas has the second largest veteran population of 1.5 million veterans, the Statewide Behavioral Health Coordinating Council's behavior health expenditure report for 2022 shows the Texas Education Agency (TEA) did not receive any portion of the \$1.7 billion in general revenue distributed by the legislature across 24 of the other states entities for mental health or substance about prevention, intervention, and treatment services (Saxton, 2022) The cost of any mental health activity undertaken by TEA or school districts had to be absorbed into their general budget or funded with outside grants such as federal ESSER funds that are time-limited and will expire after the current school year (Berger & Martin, 2021). This is

alarming considering that veterans both with and without trauma end up in the education field when leaving the military. (Elder et al., 2019). This research investigated the ways in which military experience affected veterans who become teachers.

This study provides implications for hiring managers by demonstrating potential biases when reviewing resumes of applicants who have military experience. In addition, this study provides evidence of potential barriers to employment that may be a contributing factor in high veteran unemployment (Ryan-Gonzalez et al., 2019). PTSD has negative effects that are broadly associated with employment outcomes (Howard et al., 2019).

Chapter 3

Method

This qualitative research study consisted of data collected from semi-structured interviews of teachers with former military experience. Three teachers were interviewed by the researcher for approximately one hour regarding their understanding of, attitude toward, and effects of, military service on their teaching. The interviews were conducted via zoom in a convenient and private location away from their school for both the participants and the researcher. No other individuals were present for the interviews. The interviews used zoom recording to capture data. The participants were asked a series of questions to gauge the impact of their service in the military on their civilian careers as teachers.

Research Design

Qualitative research using semi-structured interviews was conducted to collect data from teachers with military experience. The research study used emergent design and all interviews were transcribed and coded to identify any emergent themes. The research was conducted following a design that explores the effects of teacher training, development and identity of military veterans who are teachers. The design entailed interviewing participants and the researching reading documents on the topic to further understand the phenomenon (Simola, 2019). The framework of this design enabled the researcher to rely on the participants' perspectives towards a particular motivation (Aspers & Corte, 2019). In this case, the Veterans demonstrated if their success or failures are attributed to PTSD and over all mental health as well as if they felt mental health training and sensitization is necessary for not only school districts but within corporate settings as well. Pseudonyms were assigned to each participant.

Sampling

After receiving IRB approval (Appendix A) and beginning in July 2023, the researcher met with veterans within the VFW as well as reaching out to educators within the surrounding school districts and church group affiliations. The researcher extended that outreach through social networks such as LinkedIn, Facebook and Next-door, asking for participants who meet the combined criteria of educators who are currently or have been educators and have served in the military and questioned if they wanted to participate in a study. Before the interviews, no screening was done to see if the participants had endured military-related trauma. Recruitment was conducted via word of mouth within the community's neighborhood church. By asking if the criteria were met of individuals who are current or former teachers that served in the military, as well as bulletin board through social media outreach through a neighborhood application called Next Door as well as used Facebook to recruit using the same criteria.

The research sample consisted of participants who have previously worked as educators and self-identified as military veterans. All participants were provided with a pseudonym for this study. The first participant, Janet was a 42-year-old white female and a 10-year Air Force veteran. She experienced combat duty overseas, taught in various locations stateside, and was formerly a teacher. Currently, she resides in Texas. Andrew was a 48-year-old Hispanic male and a 5-year Army veteran. He did not serve in combat. He has a current residence in Texas and is presently employed as a teacher in the state. The third respondent, Sam was a white male and a 10-year Army veteran. He has completed two overseas tours and currently resides and current teacher in Georgia.

Data Collection

The interview was conducted with an open-ended seven question survey. The veterans responded to the questions and offered insights about how they feel their school setting has

affected their success or understanding of their military background. The interview revealed if the schools currently promote access to mental health training and, if not, the potential benefits of such education.

Data collection was through qualitative semi-structured interview questions (Aspers & Corte, 2019). The seven questions and follow up was the basis of data collection on the background in the military, personal and civilian education, and experience with teaching. Data collection focused on military experience, deployments, and other situations that may have exposed the participant to trauma. They then identified how they felt when they engaged in schools without proper training of sensitization on mental health identification from their experiences and ways that the system has or has not been supportive. Since the questions were open-ended, the responses were unique to each individual and the responses were not necessarily uniform (Aspers & Corte, 2019). The information was then analyzed through the scope of proper reference standards of descriptive vividness, methodological congruence, analytic preciseness, theoretical connectedness, and heuristic relevance (national institutes of health). The interviews touched on military experience, deployments, and other situations that may have exposed the participant to trauma as well as their experiences with the systems after leaving the military. The questions used for the interview (Appendix B) were as follows

Questions Used:

- Do you feel as if you are able to speak to your administration about anything that you need?
- Why did you want to become a teacher?
- How did you imagine your teaching/career?
- What did you want to accomplish as a teacher?

- How did your expectations meet the reality of teaching?
- What kind of support did you get while teaching?
- What type of support would be or would have been beneficial?

Analysis Procedures

The study used a qualitative approach to investigate the effects of educators who had served in the military on their professional careers, paying particular attention to both triumphs and difficulties. The research was conducted following a design that explores the effects of training on the educators who are military veterans and whether their experience and focus on the professional success or pitfalls of that experience. The purpose of this qualitative study was to describe, discover, and understand if military service has affected the professional careers of educators. The design entailed interviewing participants and reading documents on the topic to further understand the phenomenon (Simola, 2019).

To achieve a comprehensive and rigorous study, a methodical coding technique was used (Lochmiller, 2021). The data obtained from interviews and documents underwent thematic analysis, which included identifying and categorizing reoccurring themes and patterns in the material (Lochmiller, 2021). The coding technique used a rigorous and iterative methodology, facilitating the identification of significant themes about the impact of military service on educators' career trajectories. The framework of this design enabled the researcher to rely on the participants' perspectives towards a particular motivation (Aspers, & Corte, 2019). Throughout the analysis, the data obtained from the interviews underwent coding and organization, which were classified into significant categories that were derived from reoccurring themes (Roberts, Dowell & Nie, 2019). Each of the interviews was transcribed via the software program, Transcribe Me. The coding identified correlations between the wartime experiences of veterans

and their subsequent careers as educators. Based on the responses from the interviews that were conducted, the three primary themes emerged and were identified as: 1) **the lack of administrative assistance**, 2) **misalignment with teacher expectations**, and finally 3) **the challenges in integration and acceptance**. Through a comprehensive analysis of the data, I sought to ascertain if educational institutions facilitate the provision of mental health training and assistance. Additionally, when there was a deficiency in such assistance, the participants aimed to explain the possible benefits and significance of including mental health education in educational and business settings. After conducting semi-structured interviews with three participants, this research has found several unique themes that provide insight into the experiences of educators who have military backgrounds and the problems they face throughout the transition to teaching jobs

Most importantly, the interviews reveal the potential benefits and challenges military veterans face when transitioning to teaching educators (Gregg et al., 2016). This analysis provides valuable qualitative data that contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the experiences and perspectives of veterans-turned-educators. The Findings for this study can assist with both school administrators and school district personnel with their training and preparation of veterans who become teachers in their school districts and will a skill set for teachers to recognize warning signs within their classrooms.

Chapter 4

Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine how military experience has affected veterans positively, negatively or no effect on military veterans who have become educators. It further examined if previous military experience had a positive or negative effect on their teaching careers. As stated in the methods section, the three emerging themes that were identified in this study was: 1) Lack of Administrative Assistance, 2) Misalignment with Teaching Expectations, and 3) Challenges in Integration and Acceptance.

Lack of Administrative Assistance

The first participant, a white female, who will be referred to by the pseudonym Janet, brings a wealth of experience as a 10-year Air Force Veteran who has undertaken combat duty overseas and served as an educator stateside. Currently residing in Texas, Janet offered comprehensive and insightful responses that addressed the core interview inquiries. First, Janet felt unsupported by the school administration during her teaching career. At first, she felt confident she could speak freely to the administration concerning her needs or requirements, but over time, she felt she was becoming a nuisance to the administration. She responded that “When I first started teaching, yes. As time went on, no. When asking for accommodation due to certain stressors I have, it was my perception that I was becoming a nuisance to them”. Consequently, the constant lack of support from the school administration hindered her ability to effectively navigate the difficulties they faced due to their military-related trauma and unforgettable experiences.

Furthermore, the third participant ,who will be identified by the pseudonym Sam, also identified the need for strong administrative support. Sam was a white male and a 10-year Army

veteran. He completed two overseas tours and currently resides in the state of Georgia, where he also works as a teacher. Same discussed the constant challenge of administrative insensitivity to educators' needs and also noted considerable challenges in their teaching profession, notably with administration. When asked if he was free to ask anything he needs from the administration, he said "No not all".

Participant two is identified by his pseudonym, Andrew stated that he had the support of administration assistance, but not financially to accomplish what he wanted to achieve.

Misalignment with Teaching Expectations

Participants expressed a significant dissonance between their expectations of teaching and the reality they encountered. They were motivated by a desire to effect positive change and mentor future generations. Still, a sense of isolation marred their actual experiences due to PTSD and lack of support from colleagues and administration. This disconnect between their aspirations and reality made them question the value of their military service and their capacity to bring about meaningful change within the education system.

The motivation for being an educator was driven by their desire to facilitate change, positively impact their communities or families, and become mentors for future generations. When Janet was asked why she became a teacher she said, "I wanted to be a facilitator of change, I wanted to be a mentor to our future" Most importantly, they idealized the teaching vision, inspired by the TV shows and movies they watched during their military service. However, their actual experience differed considerably from their expectations. Instead of receiving unwavering support and collaboration from administrations, they felt like outcasts during their struggle with PTSD, without any form of support from their administration or

colleagues. The participants hoped that as a teacher, their students would recognize them as significant figures in their life.

The second participant was a Hispanic male and a 5-year Army veteran, and is identified by his pseudonym, Andrew. Andrew did not serve in combat but did have prior military experience. He resided in Texas and was employed as a teacher in the state with 10-year experience in teaching. When asked why he became an educator, he responded “I think for a while, I guess, just trying to find a purpose as far as during and after my military career.” Andrew then spoke about his work with children from broken families and his aim to be a good role model and support system. He also expressed a desire to work in physical therapy and assist disabled soldiers in the future. All three participants exhibited a tremendous desire to be there for their own children and offer the support they may have lost as children owing to various situations from their military time.

When Sam was questioned about his professional aspirations as a teacher, he highlighted the necessity of making a difference in the lives of at least one person. He said that “I would say, hey, go with God. Change the world. And make a difference.” In addition, he offered personal stories of past students approaching him and expressing thanks, confirming their efforts were worthwhile. As a teacher, his responses consider the expectations versus the realities. He described being prepared by their schooling and have a problem-solving attitude. Both teachers emphasized the necessity of being adaptive and inventive to provide their kids with a better learning environment, mainly when resources are limited.

In contrast to their military experience, when they questioned the purpose and effect of their acts, the participants aspired to make a positive influence. However, a lack of administrative oversight and assistance hampered the participants' capacity to attain their objectives. Janet said,

“But I NEVER thought that administration would be so disconnected from what educators do, that it pushes the good ones out.” This made them doubt the worth of their military service and their capacity to affect change in the school system.

The participants' expectations of educators' training did not match the reality. Their military experience and no-nonsense approach contrasted with their colleagues' dominant attitudes and opinions. Due to a lack of understanding and compassion for their unique experiences and perspectives, the participant struggled to integrate into the teaching community.

Challenges in Integration and Acceptance.

Participants' military experience made it more difficult for them to integrate into the academic environment. Their military-style approach was more straightforward and controlled than that of their peers. As a result, they needed help integrating into the classroom setting and sharing their unique experiences and viewpoints. This topic emphasized the need for increased school-wide knowledge and assistance.

The administration's insensitivity to veterans and people with PTSD made work difficult is pointed out by Sam. During the encounters, Sam felt misunderstood and harshly evaluated. Male instructors, particularly those with military experience, were typically given complex tasks, reflecting a notion of hardship and obedience without complaint. Colleagues and supervisors misunderstood him as a male instructor with PTSD and having a military history. Sam noted that the education system is primarily dominated by females, which might contribute to unconscious prejudices and preconceptions in their working connections. When asked of these challenges, Sam said that “It's a couple of things. Right now, being an elementary school teacher, it's a very female-orientated world. Many schools are lucky if they have two males teaching, and you're talking pre-K here to fifth grade, and there's 30-something elementary schools, and multiple

classes of each on each level, so administration is already used to not dealing with a man. The staff is not used to being able to deal with a man. The kids are the ones that are the easiest. They come in terrified like, 'I've never had a male teacher before.'

During his academic training, Sam got mixed indications about assistance. While other participants gave positive and negative feedback, Sam learned to adapt to and accept the system's limits. However, regarding his real teaching experience, the administration let down the participant. His PTSD-related need for accommodation was greeted with uncertainty and an inability to offer adequate assistance, leading to isolation and exclusion.

Supportive Administrations Make a Difference

The influence of a helpful administration was cited favorably by Andrew. The classroom atmosphere was brightened by open lines of communication and prompt attention to student needs. Teachers with military experience may succeed and make valuable contributions to the education system, provided schools place a premium on compassion and understanding. Furthermore, the participant was grateful for the help from his school administration. He said that anytime he communicated his demands or suggestions, the administration was responsive and helpful in coming up with answers. When asked if the education met his expectations of what he envisioned, the second participant said "Yeah. I was fortunate to have great teachers at UTSA. And they somewhat prepared me-- well, actually not somewhat. They prepared me well in a sense to where one of my teachers, I won't forget what she said, she was like, "Look, don't be--" One of the assignments, we had to create our own curriculum map." He added, "And of course, I went to a school where, obviously, the state doesn't give you money for private Catholic schools. So, I didn't have much. But because of this curriculum map that I created myself, I was able to, "Okay, I can do this. I can manipulate. I can move this, move this around." So, my

expectations when I got to the school were already to a point where, "Okay, this is what I was expecting."

Military Background as An Asset

All three veterans spoke highly of the work ethic, flexibility, and capacity to handle the pressure they had homed in the service. This military experience helped them overcome obstacles in the classroom, proving that their backgrounds are an asset in the teaching profession. Andrew, a combat-free Army veteran of five years, showed how his service had given him a strong work ethic and the capacity to adapt to new situations, and his time in the military had ingrained in him a methodical attitude to work that allowed him to face obstacles head-on and work hard to achieve his goals. His work ethic was so strict that it carried over into his teaching profession seamlessly. The participant's flexibility, acquired in the military, enabled him to adjust to the dynamic nature of higher education and develop novel approaches to his challenges.

Sam's interview sheds light on the impact of educators' military experience and the significant obstacles that arise in their new careers. Most importantly, the participant was inspired to become an educator by family members who worked in the military and served as teachers afterwards, with the desire of wanting to help young children and make a difference in society. He says "It's something that started back when I was young. My grandfather was in the military, and he was a teacher, and that kind of inspired me right there. And then my other grandfather was also in the military, so that kind of went that military route, but then coming into the military, saw a lot of young kids coming in with this chip on their shoulder, and I was older coming active duty because I did six years of reserve beforehand." The participant stressed authenticity in teaching and student relationships as the greatest motivation.

In addition, he learned how to deal with stress, thanks mainly to his time in the military. He developed the capacity to keep his cool under pressure because of his stressful experiences while serving in the military. This quality served him well in the classroom, allowing him to alleviate the stress of teaching and foster an atmosphere that encouraged student growth. He stated, "And I find they put me on lots of duties that nobody else will do because-- for instance, traffic, obviously, parents, they're going to yell at you, and they're going to cuss you out, and a lot of the people can't handle it. So, they're like, "He's military, put him out there."

Both Andrew and Sam stressed how their military backgrounds had a beneficial impact on how they approached teaching. They could approach problems systematically and keep their composure under pressure because of the discipline and resiliency they developed while serving in the military. They created authority in the classroom, demanded respect from their pupils, and set an example for them using this military-inspired strategy. Additionally, they could employ innovative teaching tactics and adjust to changing student demands because of their capacity to stay flexible in dynamic educational environments.

In addition, they discussed their military experience and how it informed their teaching profession. They credit their upbringing and army history for their work ethic, flexibility, and ability to deal with stress. They expressed that their military perspective has helped them navigate the difficulties of teaching while retaining a good outlook. The interview finished with the Andrew expressing gratitude for the research and offering further assistance. They exhibited and appreciation for the study and for me conducting the study and indicated a desire to return to their old teaching environment.

The Need for Addressing Mental health and Veterans' Needs

All three participants in the study stressed the need to raise public awareness of and assist educators with military experience, especially those struggling with mental health problems like PTSD. The participants' experiences highlight the significance of identifying and meeting the requirements of this group inside the educational system.

The first participant, Janet, subtly emphasized the need to attend to mental health concerns. She served as an excellent example of the need for an understanding and accommodating atmosphere due to her experience of feeling unsupported by the school administration and her difficulty communicating her concerns and needs. Her story demonstrated how a lack of sufficient support systems might make it difficult for educators with military experiences to successfully deal with the aftereffects of their service, such as PTSD. Regarding positive assistance, the participant emphasized the necessity of administrative understanding and empathy. She recommended that administrators explore how they can help the participant succeed and give support during stressful periods. The participant compares physical injuries to PTSD, underlining the need to recognize and support invisible ailments and mental health difficulties.

The second participant, Andrew, expressed his desire to assist young people who could be going through similar difficulties as he did. His emphasis on helping children from broken homes and his desire to encourage handicapped troops highlighted the critical role that instructors with military histories play in supporting and understanding pupils going through challenges. The participant's story illustrated how personal experiences may help teachers create a welcoming and compassionate learning environment.

The third participant, Sam, shed light on the difficulties experienced by male instructors with military histories in a primarily female educational environment. The educational

community must be more sensitive and observant because he was misunderstood and unjustly judged by administrators and coworkers. His story also highlighted the need to create a network of assistance that attends to the requirements of educators with military experience, especially those who are dealing with PTSD.

The participants experiences demonstrate the need for more assistance for instructors with military histories and mental health issues like PTSD. Sam said, “And I will deal with all the stuff admin or whatever the discrimination, especially with PTSD because they just don't get it. Even during field day, when things pop off, they'll jump in, and the bell goes off and I'm jumping.” Everyone, including teachers, should be responsible for challenging any prejudice and difficulties that may arise in the teaching environment to ensure the well-being of everyone, regardless of their past. Schools should raise knowledge of such concerns to make teaching more inclusive and helpful

The participants responses identify the difficulties that veterans-turned-educators experience and the lack of support they meet inside the educational system. The participants' experiences are consistent with the overall focus and intent for the study, which , suggests the need for enhanced awareness and assistance for veterans in teaching positions. These findings contribute to a better understanding of how military service affects educators' professional careers and the potential advantages of mental health training and sensitization in school districts and other contexts.

Chapter 5

Discussion and Conclusion

There is a significant relationship between military trauma and classroom educator success, particularly in veterans' transition into teaching educator roles (Gregg et al., 2016). The current literature provides valuable insights into the context of the research. Similarly, the qualitative study through semi-structured interviews also reveals the reasons and experiences of military veterans in teaching educator roles. The studies cited in the literature review show that military veterans with trauma are increasingly becoming educators, which resulted in significant research interest in identifying the potential reasons, benefits, and challenges of this transition. The research question aligns well with the literature reviewed.

Most importantly, the literature points out that veterans with military trauma face significant challenges when transitioning to a career in education. These obstacles include the feeling of being a nuisance and isolated, particularly those with PTSD-associated trauma experiences they had during their military time (Riedy et al., 2016). In addition, having a sense of not fitting or lacking the required skills and expertise for teaching. However, the study also highlights the benefits associated with transitioning to teaching, such as gaining confidence in the education abilities and being equipped to handle classroom conditions and positively impact the future generation.

Most importantly, the findings from this study extend the current literature by identifying the significant challenges veterans face in educator roles, specifically those related to PTSD experiences (Lewis et al., 2020). These challenges include a feeling of isolation and lack of support from fellow educators and administration, which contrast with their expectations before transitioning to teaching. In addition, the insensitivity of the education system that includes the

supervisors, towards educators with military experience and PTSD disorder is another challenge veteran's face. The school administrations are not sensitive enough to understand their experiences but rather give them complex roles which can further subject them to stressful and traumatic conditions. Male educators suffer significant challenges navigating the education system because of the increased stereotypes and prejudice of the system being female-oriented. Notably, these challenges, which show their struggles to navigate the education system to find a purpose for doing the greater good, reflect the barriers well documented in the literature. On the other hand, the veterans reveal their sense of motivation, finding a purposeful meaning, and the desire to have a positive impact as an educator with military experience. These insights resonate with the benefits highlighted in the literature, particularly the unique qualities that veterans might bring to the field of education. As a result, there is a comprehensive understanding of the effect of military experience on veterans who become educators, which can further be discussed below:

Impact of Military Experience on Veterans Who Become Educators

The impact of military veterans who transitioned to becoming educators may encounter a variety of challenges as well as benefits. There is a growing interest in understanding the connection between military trauma and educational success, particularly among veterans who transition into teaching roles (Ford & Vignare, 2015). As more veterans with military trauma enter the education field, it becomes crucial to identify the potential challenges and benefits associated with this transition (Cohen et al., 2019). Veterans who offer the move to teaching careers a special set of abilities, views, and life experiences to the classroom. However, they could also struggle with adjusting to civilian life and their trauma from the military.

Potential Benefits

Transfer of Unique Skills to the Classroom

Veterans who have experienced military trauma may succeed in the area of education. Veterans feel more secure in their teaching skills and have a deeper sense of their mission as educators, according to a poll by the AACTE (Whitford & Emerson, 2019). These benefits result from their distinctive combat and non-combat military experiences and their capacity to use crucial academic abilities. They could offer a fresh viewpoint to the classroom and provide their pupils with useful examples of resiliency and tenacity. Additionally, veterans' military histories provide them with useful abilities like leadership, flexibility, and stress management, which may favor their employment as teachers. Their military experiences may have influenced their teaching style, stressing ingenuity and problem-solving (Keeling et al., 2018). According to a University of Maryland research, veterans may provide students and the school community with a fresh viewpoint on challenging subjects and a special leadership knowledge.

Resilience and Role Modeling

During their time in the military, veterans often encountered challenging and stressful circumstances (Miller, 2015). They may develop a strong feeling of resilience as a result of being exposed to difficult situations, which they may then impart to their students. Veteran educators may be excellent role models for students by displaying resilience and tenacity, inspiring them to overcome challenges and pursue achievement. In addition, veterans may have received mentorship and assistance during their time in the service. As teachers, they may extend this mentoring to their pupils by providing direction and support, particularly for those dealing with personal difficulties (Miller, 2015).

Teamwork and Discipline

The military strongly emphasizes cooperation and teamwork to accomplish shared objectives. Veterans often have strong cooperation abilities, which may be very helpful in

creating a supportive and cooperative learning atmosphere in the classroom (Kirchner, 2015). They may inspire group work and foster community among the students, promoting their academic and social development. Veterans also often get training about resolving conflicts and have a strong sense of discipline. These abilities may be used to control classroom dynamics and settle disputes among pupils. Veteran teachers may create a favorable and conducive learning atmosphere for their pupils using efficient punishment tactics (Kirchner, 2015).

Cultural Awareness and Adaptability

Individuals are often exposed to many cultures and viewpoints while serving in the military, which promotes a feeling of inclusion and cultural understanding (Miller, 2015). Veterans who have transitioned their career to teachers could have a stronger appreciation for cultural variety, which can enhance conversations in the classroom and support a more inclusive curriculum. Military troops are used to quickly adjusting to shifting conditions and unpredictably altering situations (Keeling et al., 2018). This versatility may be useful for meeting the unique requirements of students, incorporating various learning preferences, and adapting teaching strategies to fit various classroom circumstances.

Organization and Ethical Decision-Making

Military duty requires accurate organizational and time management abilities, particularly under severe pressure. These qualities may be brought to teaching jobs by seasoned educators, guaranteeing effective lesson design, classroom management, and attainment of learning goals. Ethics and principles are highly valued in the military. Veterans in the field of education could preserve high moral values that direct their professional choices and relationships with pupils, coworkers, and administrators.

Potential Challenges Isolation

The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education's (AACTE) study illuminates the difficulties veterans who have experienced wartime trauma encounter while pursuing a career in teaching (Whitford & Emerson, 2019). Veterans transitioning to civilian life may find it difficult to connect with their non-military coworkers and feel cut off from the larger educational community (Shepherd et al., 2020). Their well-being and professional growth may suffer because of this feeling of isolation. Schools and educational institutions must provide a welcoming and inclusive climate that promotes camaraderie among all instructors to handle this difficulty. Mentoring programs and support groups designed especially for senior educators may foster a sense of community and interdependence, which can lessen feelings of loneliness.

Difficulty in Transition to Civilian Life

Veterans often struggle with the transition from military to civilian life, which may be made much more challenging if they decide to work in education (Gordon & Parham, 2019). There are difficulties in adjusting to the new environment due to the significant differences between the military's organization and culture and the educational system. Additionally, veterans may have inflated expectations about how well their military talents would translate to the demands of civilian employment, which may cause dissatisfaction and a feeling of having to start again (Shepherd et al., 2020). In addition, the classroom environment, with large numbers of people and loud noises, can be difficult for those with PTSD. Educators may also encounter unpredictable situations and potential confrontation or aggression from students or parents, which can be triggering (Ramchand et al., 2015). By offering veteran specialized assistance and training programs that aid in their smooth transition into the teaching profession, schools may solve this difficulty (Shepherd et al., 2020). Schools may enable veterans to flourish in their new

professions by recognizing and rewarding the abilities and experiences they bring from their military service.

Traumatic Experiences

Many veterans have gone through horrific experiences while serving in the military, which may have an ongoing impact on their mental health and general well-being. Their capacity to manage the rigors of being an educator may be impacted by post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other mental health issues (Morrissette et al., 2021). For instance, a study conducted in New Orleans study found that over a third of teachers meet the threshold for mental health, with 19% showing signs of PTSD. Additionally, it highlights that up to 20% of military veterans will experience PTSD symptoms (Riedy et al., 2016). In addition, the exposure to complex tasks in schools mostly because supervisors believe that military veterans can handle difficult tasks, further subjects them into stressful experiences. Veteran educators need mental health help, and schools and administrators must prioritize giving them access to peer support and therapy. A supportive and understanding atmosphere may be fostered by providing school employees with trauma-informed training by raising knowledge of and sensitivity to the special needs of veterans who have experienced wartime trauma. Traumatic brain injuries (TBI) may pose special difficulties for veterans and have a long-term impact on their mental health and cognitive function (Taylor et al., 2012). Educators with TBI should be able to carry out their teaching duties effectively by receiving the assistance and accommodations they need from schools and districts (Keeling et al., 2018). This might include adaptable lesson plans, accessibility to mental health resources, and thorough training on recognizing and assisting coworkers who have TBI (Stone et al., 2018).

A Sense of Isolation and Lack of Experience

Veterans with combat trauma may feel alienated or like they cannot be successful teachers (Palmer et al., 2022). This emotion may result from the idea that one's military experience distinguishes one from one's civilian peers. In addition, the insensitivity of the education system that includes the supervisors, towards educators with military experience and PTSD disorder is another challenge veteran's face. The school administrations are not sensitive enough to understand their experiences but rather give them complex roles which can further subject them to stressful and traumatic conditions. Male educators suffer significant challenges navigating the education system because of the increased stereotypes and prejudice of the system being female-oriented, therefore, creating a feeling of not fitting in the modern system. Educational institutions may assist veterans in overcoming this challenge by offering specialized professional development opportunities that allow them to expand on their current knowledge while learning new skills relevant to the teaching profession (Keeling et al., 2018). Veterans' perspectives and experiences are unique and recognizing and valuing them in the classroom may help veterans feel more confident and a part of the community.

Difficulty in Establishing Positive Relationships

Developing positive connections with students and colleagues is crucial for a successful teaching career. Due to the psychological obstacles brought on by their experiences, veterans who have experienced combat trauma may find it difficult to establish these bonds (Palmer et al., 2022). Also, the increased prejudice and favoritism of education system towards women more than men, has elevated a sense of not belonging, therefore, male educators with military experience find it difficult to develop meaningful relationships with colleagues and students. By introducing mentorship and coaching programs emphasizing good communication and relationship-building skills, schools may help experienced educators. In addition to fostering

strong connections amongst educators, encouraging staff cooperation and teamwork may also help to make the school atmosphere more inclusive and inviting (Keeling et al., 2018).

Recommendations

Based on the reviews of literature, findings and discussion, the study makes the following recommendations:

Enhancing Mental Health Support for Educators

It is essential to provide and execute extensive mental health training and services for school workers to address the mental health difficulties experienced by educators, especially veterans with PTSD. Findings show that many military veterans still struggle to integrate into teaching because of the past traumatic experiences. This training should be specifically designed to address concerns with PTSD, anxiety, and depression, giving educators the information and abilities, they need to support their mental health as well as the mental health of their students (Riedy et al., 2016). A safe place for educators to deal with the pressures they experience in the educational setting may also be provided by establishing support programs and counseling services inside educational institutions (Morrissette et al., 2021). Veterans with PTSD must be given the assistance they need to succeed as educators; thus, these programs must be inclusive and easily accessible. In addition, it is crucial to ensure that veterans have easy access to mental health care while serving in the military and after they leave the military and enter civilian life. The effectiveness of therapy may be enhanced by early identification and intervention for PTSD and other mental health conditions with seamless and all-encompassing care (Riedy et al., 2016). To treat veterans with PTSD more holistically and ensure that they get the care and support they need as they make their way toward recovery, military and civilian healthcare institutions should work together more closely.

Targeted Assistance for Veterans in Transition

It may be difficult for veterans to transition from military duty to civilian life, particularly if they have invisible wounds like PTSD, traumatic brain injury (TBI), or military sexual trauma (MST) (Mobbs & Bonanno, 2018). I recommend specialized transition programs should be created to meet their specific requirements to aid their effective absorption into civilian life. These initiatives must provide all-encompassing aid, including help with education and employment, access to job prospects, and mental health services. It is crucial to pay close attention to the requirements of female veterans throughout this transition phase, as they may experience extra obstacles and difficulties that call for specialized care (Lewis et al., 2020).

Increasing Employer Awareness and Support for Disabled Veterans

To create a more diverse workforce, I recommend that it is essential to educate companies on the advantages of employing veterans with disabilities, including PTSD (Albright et al., 2019). Employers will be better able to appreciate the unique talents and experiences that veterans with disabilities bring to the workplace if misunderstandings and preconceptions about their abilities are dispelled. Veterans with disabilities may more easily enter the workforce if companies are encouraged to provide inclusive and hospitable work environments. It is possible to guarantee that these veterans receive the assistance they need to carry out their responsibilities efficiently and contribute by providing the required resources and acceptable accommodations.

Combating Veterans' PTSD Symptoms

Results show that more veterans seeking mental health care may be influenced by promoting group psychotherapy as a viable PTSD treatment. Veterans may share their stories and feelings in a safe setting during group therapy, which promotes healing and personal development. Veterans who have received education on self-efficacy (SE) and its function in

enhancing psychological well-being may be more motivated to participate actively in their rehabilitation (Albright et al., 2019). By emphasizing the potential advantages of group psychotherapy, one may encourage veterans' participation in it and make use of their resiliency and coping skills.

Encourage Involvement and Support from the Community

Enhancing social support and lowering feelings of loneliness among veterans requires cultivating a sense of community is important for my recommendation. Encouragement of forming support networks and organizations may provide veterans a forum to discuss their experiences and find sympathy with others who have dealt with comparable difficulties. A network of support beyond official healthcare settings may be developed by involving community groups and resources in helping veterans with PTSD and their families, strengthening a community's dedication to caring for these veterans.

Increasing Research, Education, and Awareness of PTSD

Understanding veterans' unique difficulties with invisible wounds, such as PTSD, throughout postsecondary education and occupational transitions calls for more research (Cusack et al., 2019). Data shows that developing more efficient support systems may be aided by collecting thorough data on the incidence and effects of PTSD among veterans. Furthermore, destigmatizing PTSD and fostering empathy and support for soldiers and educators who are coping with this disease need the implementation of public awareness initiatives. The public may better understand the difficulties experienced by persons with PTSD by encouraging open discussion and disseminating accurate information about the disease (Lewis et al., 2020). Communities and workplaces may benefit from educational materials and training to help people

identify and react to PTSD symptoms, fostering a more understanding and caring environment for those impacted.

Conclusions

In this research, the effects of military trauma, notably post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), on the professional careers of military veterans transitioning into educational settings, particularly as educators, were examined. The goal of the study was to identify possible support systems to enhance these veterans' general well-being and success in the area of education as well as how military experience impacts them in their duties as instructors. The examination of the literature offered an in-depth understanding of the frequency and consequences of PTSD among military veterans, emphasizing their difficulties when working in the education field. While some veterans struggle to adjust to the civilian work environment, feel isolated, or build healthy connections with students and coworkers, others have shown perseverance and a deeper sense of purpose in their new careers as educators. It became clear that veterans need access to proper mental health care, including therapy, peer support, and coping mechanisms, to succeed as instructors.

Three participants who were educators with military experience gave helpful insights via the semi-structured individual interviews used in the qualitative study approach. The interviews provided insight into the difficulties and achievements veterans in teaching face. They underlined the need for compassionate and understanding administrative assistance to accommodate the distinctive requirements of veterans, particularly those suffering from invisible conditions like PTSD. The study showed how crucial it is to educate veterans about mental health issues and provide supportive environments within schools and other settings. The participants' experiences confirmed the need for administrative assistance, adaptability, and

resources to meet the unique demands of veterans in the educational system. In addition, the research illuminates the experiences of former soldiers who become educators and emphasizes the need to offer them full assistance.

The school system may better assist veterans transitioning from military duty to teaching positions by acknowledging the potential advantages they can offer to the classroom, such as resilience, leadership skills, and distinctive viewpoints. Research implications go beyond the field of education. The results highlight how important it is to treat the mental health issues veterans experience in various professional contexts, including corporate settings. Veterans may be better prepared to thrive in their chosen jobs by encouraging businesses and organizations to support mental health awareness and sensitivity training. Ultimately this research advances knowledge of how military experience affects veterans who become educators. It emphasizes how crucial it is to provide sufficient assistance, including mental health services, administrative awareness, and a flexible work environment. These suggestions may help organizations and school districts create a more welcoming environment for veterans, promoting their success and well-being in their personal and professional lives. In the end, this study intends to lessen stigma, raise consciousness, and enhance the support system for veterans, guaranteeing that they may succeed as teachers and make valuable contributions to society.

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VITA

Jason Jerome Opalinski was born on October 22, 1979 in Hinsdale, Illinois. He attended High School in the San Antonio, Texas area. He graduated from James Madison High School in 2000. After completing high school, Jason joined the United States Army as a transportation specialist. He received two Army Commendation Medals and one Army Achievement Medal for noteworthy services while deployed to the Middle East as well as the National Defense Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Armed Forces Service Medal

Upon completion of military service with an honorable discharge, he attended San Antonio College and received his associate degree in general studies. He continued his education and received his bachelor's degree from Texas A&M-San Antonio in Early Childhood Education. After graduating he was a teacher at a charter school for three years receiving such honors as teacher of the week, teacher of the month and a finalist for Alamo City Moms Teacher of the year. Jason began his pursuit of his master's degree in curriculum and Instruction from Texas A&M University San Antonio in January 2021. While enrolled Jason Opalinski had the privilege to present his thesis topic "how has military experience affected veterans who become teachers" at the 2023 American Education Research Association Conference (AERA) in Chicago Illinois.

Appendix A



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
SAN ANTONIO

Office of Research and Health Sciences

Central Academic Building, Suite 411
One University Way, San Antonio, Texas 78224
Phone: (210) 784-2317 | irb@tamusa.edu

To: Dr. Michael Boucher
From: Dr. Dawn Weatherford
Date: June 9, 2023
Re: Exempt Determination: Protocol 2023-37

The IRB protocol application submitted by you titled, **“How Has Military Service Affected Educators?”** has been reviewed. This application falls under the Exempt Review, Category 2, as listed under the Code of Federal Regulations, title 45 part 46. Any changes to the Exempt research must be reviewed by the IRB in advance of implementation.

The determination for this Exempt research expires June 8, 2028.

Before the determination expires, the research will be due for renewal if it is still ongoing. Please notify the IRB Office by May 8, 2028, to avoid a pause in data collection.

Upon completion of the research, a completion report must be submitted to irb@tamusa.edu.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dawn Weatherford".

Dawn Weatherford, PhD
IRB Chair

PLEASE NOTE: It is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to amend their IRB protocol to add any future investigators or research team members who will be collecting or handling research data before they join the research. These individuals must be added to the approved protocol via a protocol amendment and must complete the CITI online training before they can collect and handle research data or interact with human subjects. If new individuals are not added to the protocol and trained **PRIOR TO ANY HUMAN SUBJECTS CONTACT**, the IRB may revoke the Principal Investigator’s approval to conduct the research.

Texas A&M University-San Antonio
Curriculum and Instruction - College of Education
CONSENT FORM



TITLE OF STUDY: How has Military Service Affected Educators?

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 2023-37

DEAR STUDY PARTICIPANT:

You are invited to participate in a research study of how military service has affected educators. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a veteran who is also an educator. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by: Mr. Jason Opalinski, Department of Curriculum and Instruction at Texas A&M University-San Antonio and Michael L. Boucher, Jr., Ph.D., Associate Professor of Curriculum and Instruction at Texas A&M-San Antonio.

Background Information

The purpose of this study is: to describe, discover, and understand if military service has affected the professional careers of educators.

Procedures:

If you agree to participate in this study, we will ask you to do the following things:

- Semi-structured Individual Interviews- You will be interviewed by Mr. Opalinski for approximately 30 minutes.
- The interviews will be conducted via an individual zoom link in a convenient and private location away from your place of work.
- You will be asked a series of questions to gauge the impact of your service in the military on your civilian career as a teacher.
- You can choose where to conduct the interview anywhere that is private where no one else can see or hear you, for example, in your home.
- The interview will be recorded, and Mr. Opalinski will not use your name or place of employment on the recording.
- Mr. Opalinski will provide interview questions in advance so you know what will be asked. Some follow-up questions will also be asked, however if you are not comfortable with any question you are not required to answer.
- You may end the interview at any time without consequences.

Risks and Benefits of participating in the Study

The study includes the following risks:

Some of these questions may be uncomfortable. Mr. Opalinski understands that being a veteran some questions could feel invasive. Mr. Opalinski will ensure that he will make sure that you are in the most comfortable mindset and will do his best to make sure that you are in a mentally comfortable space. Feel free to tell Mr. Opalinski at any point if you would like to conclude the interview due to discomfort or anxiety. Veterans can access mental health care through the Vet center (www.vetcenter.va.gov), through the Cohen Veterans Network of clinics (www.cohenveteransnetwork.org), or the Veterans Crisis Line (<http://www.veteranscrisisline.net>). The Veterans Crisis Line: The Veterans Crisis Line connects Veterans in crisis and their families and friends with

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qualified, caring Department of Veterans Affairs responders through a confidential toll-free hotline, online chat, or text. Veterans and their loved ones can dial 988 and Press 1. Veterans can also visit www.veteranscrisisline.net. Vet Center: Vet Centers across the country provide a broad range of counseling, outreach, and referral services to combat Veterans and their families regardless of discharge status. You can reach their around-the-clock confidential call center at 1-877-WAR VETS (1.877.927.8387). You can also visit www.vetcenter.va.gov.

The benefits to participation are:

It could be beneficial to you to talk about your experiences of being a veteran and your transition to becoming an educator. If changes to the potential or actual risks or benefits to you occur, you will receive a report of significant new findings and/or be asked to re-consent.

Compensation:

You will not receive any payment.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private. Reports resulting from this study will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you as a participant. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers will have access to the records.

The recordings will be password protected on zoom. Only the investigators/researchers for this study will have access to the account. All field notes and written reflections will be scanned using A&M-SA secure scanner. Any documents scanned will then be immediately shredded after scanning. All recordings will be deleted after 10 years.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Texas A&M University-San Antonio. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or to withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:

If you have questions, you are encouraged to contact the Co-Principal Investigator, Jason Opalinski, or the IRB of Texas A&M University-San Antonio, at the following address: One University Way, San Antonio, Texas 78224

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), **you are encouraged** Mr. Jason Opalinski, at 210-978-4819 or JasonJ.Opalinski@jaguar.tamu.edu or Michael L. Boucher, Jr., Ph.D., at Mboucher@TAMUSA.edu.

Statement of Consent:

The signature below affirms that you are at least 18 years old, have received a copy of this consent form, have understood the above information, and agree to voluntarily participate in this research.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Investigator: _____ Date _____

THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN REVIEWED BY THE
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY-SAN ANTONIO INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS.
Phone: (210) 784-2317, Graduate Studies and Office of Research



Appendix B

Hello, *Participant*

I am reaching out to you because I would like you to take part in my graduate research study.

I am in my final year of graduate school and will be conducting research and would like you to participate in a recorded zoom interview to provide a lesson plan for analysis.

Study Purpose: The purpose of this research study is to examine Teachers with military related trauma: Interrogating how schools respond to said trauma.

Time Commitment: The interview will take approximately 30 minutes. The dates in which this takes place will be flexible and you as the participant can choose whichever dates work best with you. The interviews will take place over zoom. If you agree to participate, you will receive an individual zoom link. Your responses will be recorded and stored securely. Your name will not be used and your privacy will be protected.

This research has also been approved by the Texas A&M University- San Antonio Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Sincerely,
Jason Opalinski
Graduate Student
Texas A&M University-San Antonio



Interview Questions

- Do you feel as if you are able to speak to your administration about anything that you need?
- Why did you want to become a teacher?
- How did you imagine your teaching/career?
- What did you want to accomplish as a teacher?
- How did your expectations meet the reality of teaching?
- What kind of support did you get while teaching?
- What type of support would be or would have been beneficial?