WARRIOR WOMEN: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF
FEMALE VETERANS TRANSITIONING INTO AND THROUGH COLLEGE

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in the Department of Educational and Human Sciences
in the College of Education and Human Performance
at the University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida

Summer Term
2018

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ABSTRACT

Current research and theory primarily focuses on identifying holistic challenges of the veteran student demographic and does not focus on challenges specific to female veterans when transitioning into and through college. Additionally, current research and theory does not focus on positive and negative experiences of female veterans within four key areas of academia: courseware, faculty, staff/administration, and student services. As a result, current research and theory do not adequately explain why female veterans may or may not successfully transition into and through college, resulting in a lack of resources available for female veterans, and Higher Education Institutes (HEIs). This phenomenological study investigated lived experiences of female veterans transitioning into and through college by identifying shared experiences within the Adult Transition Theory's Moving In, Moving Through, and Moving Out phases specific to participants' interactions with courseware, faculty, staff/administration, and student services. Nine female veterans participated. Data was collected via pre-interview questionnaires and audio-recorded one-on-one interviews and analyzed using Colaizzi's 7-Step method, yielding 6 emergent themes and 30 cluster themes. Results indicated female veterans utilize strategies such as time management, connecting with their instructors, and support of family to succeed in college. Additional factors important to female veterans when transitioning include options in delivery methods and how well a college understands veteran benefits.

All Women Warriors

In humble thanks for your service and honor of sacrifices and dedication.

In memory of my mawmaw, Alma West.

She will not be able to be at my graduation but would have been tickled to sit in the "special"

seats while I walk across the stage. While not here in person, I know she will always be with me

in my heart.

My parents: Jack and Joanne Sorensen

For always supporting me in my endeavors

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to thank all those who provided support, and kept me going, during the last several years. First, thanks be to God for being alive in my life and making it possible that I am here today. To my parents, who were always there for me no matter what I wanted to do with my life and offered support in any way they could. To my friend Luci, who watched my fur-babies during those times I had to stay late at school. To all my other friends at work, who prompted, pushed, and encouraged me to keep going. To the UCF research librarians, who helped me find existing literature on a shockingly difficult topic. To my major professor for not giving up on me and to my committee for excellent guidance and support.

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CHAPTER ONE:
INTRODUCTION

As veterans return from deployment, the number of veterans entering Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) is expected to continually increase (Perry, 2009). The National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics (NCVAS) identified that from 2009 to 2010 the number of education beneficiaries increased 42%, from approximately 550,000 in 2009 to 800,000 in 2010. The number of education beneficiaries continued to increase in 2011 and 2012, with approximately 925,000 and 950,000 beneficiaries, respectively. The number of veterans taking advantage of their education benefits continued to increase and as of September 30, 2014, 1.09 million veterans are collecting funds related to education (Department of Veterans Affairs, 2015). The VA attributes the increase in education beneficiaries to veterans enacting their Post-9/11 GI Bill Program (Department of veterans Affairs; 2015). With the increase in veterans entering college, HEIs have an opportunity to increase their student base and provide veterans an academic environment to succeed in post-military life. However, because the veteran student demographic is a unique, non-traditional student demographic, HEIs face challenges in attracting and then retaining veterans (Brown & Metzinger, 2009; Coll, Oh, Joyce, Coll, 2009; DiRamio, Ackerman, & Mitchell, 2008; Furtek, 2012; Perry, 2009; Radford, 2009; Rumann & Hamrick, 2009).

With the influx of veterans in higher education, HEIs need to focus on both luring veterans to their colleges and, once there, keeping them. To address the challenges HEIs face, they need to understand and make necessary adjustments specific the veteran student demographic (DiRamio, et al., 2008; Dunklin, 2012; Griffin & Gilbert, 2012). One aspect colleges need to understand and adjust for is how veterans are treated by instructors, staff,

administrators, and other students, which can influence a veterans' success in transitioning into college, affecting not only the veterans but also be a reflection on the college itself (Diamond, 2012). To help both veterans transition and to ensure colleges continue to attract and keep veterans, HEIs need to identify and address challenges faced by veterans transitioning. Unfortunately, addressing challenges of veterans is not something colleges excel in accomplishing (Diamond, 2012; Griffin & Gilbert, 2012).

Veteran Student Demographic

Veterans, through their travels, working relations, and interactions with diverse individuals, have unique experiences, skills, determination, maturity, dedication, leadership capabilities, resolve, and the drive to succeed within higher education (Diamond, 2012; DiRamio et al., 2008; Hassan, Jackson, Lindsay, McCabe, & Sanders, 2010; McGrevey & Kehrer, 2009; Rumann & Hamrick, 2009; Thompson, 2011). Veterans share similar characteristics with adult learners, who represent more than half of today's postsecondary students. Similar characteristics between veterans and adult learners include, but are not limited to, being independent, attending school part-time while working full time, and having familial obligations (Kazis et al., 2007). Veterans also have unique characteristics challenging their transition into college.

The challenges faced by veterans often cause them to become frustrated and exasperated with their college experiences (Diamond, 2012, Brown & Metzinger, 2009; 2009; Thompson, 2011). As adult learners, who are often older and more mature than traditional students, veterans have unique experiences such as being deployed into stressful and dangerous enviorment. It is lived experiences of veterans, so much different than traditional students, that can lead to challenges such as (a) feelings of isolation; (b) confusion navigating complex campus

administrative systems; (c) being sterotyped by campus communities, classmates, and faculty;

(d) inability to relate with classmates; (e) have habits that demonstrate coping techniques (i.e.,

selecting specific seats facilitating feelings of safety), (f) inability to find importance in non-

threatening experiences, and (g) health issues (Brown & Metzinger, 2009; Diamond, 2012;

DiRamio et al., 2008; Donahue & Tibbitts, 1946; Griffin & Gilbert, 2012; Hoge et al., 2003;

Kazis et al., 2007; Radford, 2009; Thompson, 2011). Additional challenges can be found by

distinguishing between the different types of individuals that make up the student demographic,

such as gender, age, and ethnicity. To date, the existing literature specific to veterans

transitioning includes female veterans, but only as a subset of the overall veteran student

demographic. However, researchers have identified that female veterans need to be the sole

focus of research related to transitioning due to unique challenges female veterans face, which

include dealing with the remnants of sexual violence and feeling mistrustful and anger (DiRamio

el al., 2008). In addition to identifying female veterans as a potential research focus, researchers,

such as DiRamio el al., (2008) and Wheeler (2012), have begun using the Adult Transition

Theory as their theoretical foundation when studying veterans transitioning from the military into

college.

Adult Transition Theory

The Adult Transition Theory (Schlossberg, 1975, 1981, 1984, 2011) is a counselor-based

transitional theory recently used in studies addressing veterans experience in transitioning into

college. Schlossberg (1975, 1981, 1984, 2011) used the theory to understand and help adults

facing inevitable but non-predictable transitions. The Adult Transition Theory has been refined

over the last thirty years by Schlossberg and additional researchers such as Chickering and

Schlossberg (2002) and Anderson, Goodman, and Schlossberg (2012). Transition, as defined by Schlossberg (1975, 1981, 1984, 2011), is change continually experienced often leading to new networks of relationships, behaviors, and self-perceptions. Transitions do not occur sequentially nor are they identical between individuals, have no patterns, and differ in terms of reactions and adaptions by separate individuals something applicable to veterans transitioning into higher education (Diamond, 2012; Schlossberg, 1975, 1981, 1984, 2011). The Adult Transition Theory contains a process and a model. The transition process has three transitional phases: Moving In, Moving Through, and Moving Out. The 4S Model represents the influences affecting an individual's moving from one transitional phase to another. The 4S Model consists of Self, Situation, Support, and Strategy. Chapter Two provides more in-depth discussion of the Adult Transition Theory.

Problem Statement

Current research and theory primarily focuses on identifying holistic challenges of the veteran student demographic. Existing research and theory does not focus on challenges specific to female veterans when transitioning into college. Additionally, current research and theory does not focus on positive and negative experiences of female veterans within four key area of academia: courseware, faculty, staff/administration, and student services. In other words, current research and theory do not adequately explain why female veterans may or may not successfully transition from the military into college. As a result, there is a lack of resources available to female veterans and HEIs to promote the successful transition of female veterans into college. Without these resources, there is an increase risk that programs offered to female veterans will

not address specific challenges, resulting in a difficult transition or, at worst, a failure to transition completely.

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

This research study focused on empowering female veterans to share their unique college experiences, so I could understand the context or settings in which they addressed challenges specific to their interactions in courseware, faculty, staff/administration, and student services when transitioning from the military into college. To achieve this, the study sought to answer two research questions:

1. What are common experiences of female veterans within each Adult Transition Theory transitional phase?

2. What experiences with courseware, faculty, staff/administration, and student services impact female veterans transitioning into and through college?

When transtioning from the military into college, veterans have multiple obstacles; these issues are often compounded by their military experiences (e.g., deployment to combat zones) and the possibility of psychological issues, physiological issues, individual perceptions, and social issues such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), or multiple physical injuries (Diamond, 2012; Ford, Northrup, & Wiley, 2009; Resnik, Plow, & Jette, 2009; Sammons & Batten, 2008; Silver, 1984). The research into the veterans entering college identified transition as a major issue requiring HEI's attention (Diamond, 2012). To focus on identifying how experiences during transition can affect veterans, researchers are using transitional-based theories like those posited by O'Donnell and Tobbell's (2007) on college

transition, Ross-Gordon (2003) and DeVilbiss (2014) on high school to college transition, and Schlossberg's (1975, 1981, 1984, 2011) Adult Transition Theory for counselors.

There exists within current literature studies focusing on the transition of veterans into higher education, but only a few incorporate the Adult Transition Theory. However, like the majority of studies that focus on veterans, those that incorporate the Adult Transition Theory do not focus solely on female veterans. As a result, there is no literature specific to female veterans. Additionally, of the current literature, no documented studies include solely identifying the transition process phase (as measured by Schlossberg) of female veterans. Finally, no documented studies combine both the Adult Transition Theory transition process phase identification with positive and negative experiences of female veterans within courseware, faculty, staff/administration, and student services with the goal to provide HEIs recommendations for addressing and supporting female veterans transition. The lack of research focusing on female veterans has the potential to negatively impact the ability of HEIs to identify and implement programs specifically designed to assist female veterans in succeeding in college. Without specific research focusing on female veterans' challenges and their transitional stages, HEIs and female veterans are at a disadvantage in ensuring availability of programs and other valuable assistance needed from the beginning of their transition through their ultimate graduation.

When identifying the gap in existing literature I discovered few of the studies that focus on veterans transitioning do not use the phenomenological research design. As a result, I selected a phenomenological research design for this study to capture the rich details associated with female veterans' experiences since phenomenological studies investigate various reactions to, or perceptions of, a specific phenomenon through participants' lived experiences (Creswell, 2013;

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Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012, Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). Additionally, I selected the phenomenological research design because it provided me the opporutnity to gain insight into the lives of the participants and identify and describe their individual perceptions and reactions, collected through in-depth interviews, to define commonalities (Creswell, 2013; Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012) which are the "essence" (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012) of the common experience. Using the phenomenological study design to answer the research questions and address the gaps in the literature, I collected data on female veterans' positive and negative experiences within courseware, faculty, staff/administration, and student services. Because I only focused on collecting data from female veterans, the result of the study is a focus on the perceptions of the participants experiences only and not perceptions of others, such as family members, instructors, and counselors. I also identified three internal variables to each participant. The internal variables for this effort are exposure to combat, length of service, and officer versus enlisted. I collected data specific to the internal variables via a pre-interview questionnaire and the external variables via audio-recorded one-on-one interviews facilitated through the use of a semi-structured interview protocol. Chapter three provides a more in-depth description of aspects of the study.

Significance of Study

The results of this study benefit three groups: HEIs, female veterans, and researchers. The significance of the study lies in identifying areas of improvement for HEIs that foster success of female veterans in their transition into and through higher education. I discuss the potential benefits for each group below.

HEI. The benefits to HEIs include the identification of positive and negative experiences of female veterans and common characteristics of female veterans that determine programs, activities, and services HEIs can provide to female veterans to increase their likelihood of a successful transition. By identifying positive and negative experiences of female veterans when dealing with courseware, faculty, administration, and student services, in conjunction with participants' transition process phase, the study provides areas where HEIs can address difficulties experienced by female veterans throughout their college experience. Additionally, identifying common characteristics of female veterans within the same transition process phase allows for the development of a framework promoting implementation of programs and services offering assistance to female veterans and provides HEIs data to prioritize programs that support and foster the successful transition of female combat veterans in college.

Veterans. The study benefits veterans by identifying the need, and potentially the development, of multiple and diverse programs and services specific to female veterans. These diverse programs and services designed toward assisting female veterans can assist in overcoming challenges the participants experienced. Additionally, benefits include identifying a support structure modeled to specifically address the challenges of female veterans.

Researcher. At its basic level, the study contributes to the growing body of literature focusing on assisting veterans in transitioning into and through college. When considered alongside existing research, the study provides a more comprehensive foundation for supporting the transition of female veterans. Additionally, the study offers guidance in future studies related to assisting female veterans transition into college, an area seriously lacking. Finally, there are no current studies focusing female veterans' experiences within aspects of college such as

courseware, interactions with faculty, interactions with staff/administration, and interactions with student services and adds a new layer of focus of transitioning into college.

Chapter One Summary

Chapter one provided an overview of the research study. The chapter discussed the veteran student demographic and the Adult Transition Theory. The chapter then discussed the problem statement, purpose statement, research questions, and research study design. The chapter concluded by identifying the significance of the research study. The next chapter discusses the review of literature for the study.

CHAPTER TWO:
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Chapter two discusses the theoretical foundation, reviews research and literature associated with the theoretical foundation, and synthesizes findings that guided the study. Chapter two also discusses the relationship between major variables of interest. Chapter two begins with a discussion on the method used to conduct the review of literature. Next, chapter two discusses the theoretical foundation: the Adult Transition Theory. Chapter two then provides supporting empirical research associated with the study and a synthesis and analysis of empirically supported research focusing on the study's topic and the Adult Transition Theory. Corresponding subsections on empirical support focus on identifying (a) populations/subjects, (b) research design, (c) key findings, and (d) issues/constraints. Chapter two concludes with a discussion on how the literature informed the study.

Method for Conducting Review of Literature

The review of literature required multiple consultations with the University of Central Florida's (UCF) research specialist identifying databases and search strategies to identify existing literature corresponding to the research study topic. Each consultation provided additional database resources available related to specific aspects of the study, such as identifying (a) veteran-based research related to transitioning into college, (b) Adult Transition Theory research (in general or specific to veterans), and (c) veteran-based research on returning to Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) (in general, on combat veterans and on female combat veterans). Search strategies conducted included the structured, organized use of terms/keywords to locate relevant literature in specific or multiple databases. Components of the search strategy

(i.e., structured, organized use of terms/keywords) were combined to retrieve the best possible

results. While some search strategy components worked for some databases, they were not

universal for all databases and required variations of the order of terms/keywords. Table 1.

provides a list of databases and search strategies conducted for the literature review. Just as

important as the method for conducting literature is the inclusion and exclusion criteria for the

literature review. After searching the databases and employing the search strategies, I identified

inclusion and exclusion criterial for the research studies found.

Table 1

Research Consultation Search Strategies

Databases	Search Strategies
Counselor Ed Psych Info	- Female veterans OR military veterans AND college students OR graduate students - School adjustment - Veterans AND school adjustment - College adjustment OR transition
Psych Info	- Military veterans AND college students OR graduate students - Schlossberg Transition Military Veterans - Schlossberg Military Veterans - Transition Military Veterans - School Transition Military Veterans
ProQuest	- Military veterans OR combat veterans AND college students OR school AND females OR women AND transition AND combat AND Afghanistan OR Iraq NOT PTSD OR TBI - Veterans AND transition AND female OR women AND school OR education OR colleges - Veterans AND transition AND female OR women AND school OR education OR colleges AND Schlossberg - Veterans AND transition AND female OR women AND school OR education OR colleges AND Schlossberg AND combat
ERIC	- Veterans OR veterans Education AND transition
EBSCO Host	- Adult AND transition AND veterans
Sociological Abstracts	- Veterans OR combat AND college AND transition
Social Sciences	- Military veterans OR combat AND transition AND college OR higher education OR university
Web of Science	- Veteran AND transition
Military and Government	- Veterans AND transition AND college OR higher education

Databases	Search Strategies
Higher Education	- Veteran AND transition
Science Direct or Anthropology	- Veteran AND transition
EBSCO Host	- Adult AND transition AND Veterans
Academic Primer	- Combat veterans AND transition and school OR education - Veterans AND transition AND school OR education AND combat
Cochrane	- Veterans AND transition AND school - Veterans AND transition AND school OR education
Sage Premier	- Veterans AND transition AND (school OR education) OR collage - Veterans AND transition AND (school OR education) OR collage AND Schlossberg
Business Source Premier	- Veterans AND transition AND school OR education OR college AND female OR women
Medline	- Veterans AND transition AND school OR education OR colleges - Veterans AND transition AND school OR education OR colleges AND female OR women - Veterans AND transition AND school OR education OR colleges AND female OR women AND Schlossberg
Veterans – Education (Higher)	- Veterans AND education AND transition
Veterans – Education	- Veterans AND education AND transition

Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria

The execution of search strategies within specific databases yielded research studies focused on veteran-based topics. To identify those studies applicable to this research study, I identified inclusion and exclusion criteria. Inclusion criterion is data determined relevant to the study which assists with promoting the research topic. Exclusion criterion is data determined irrelevant to the study as it does not assist with promoting the research topic. Table 2. identifies the inclusion and exclusion criterion. The inclusion and exclusion criteria identified included data such as veteran-based research and research on the planned theoretical framework, the Adult Transition Theory.

Table 2

Research Consultation Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
- Veteran-based research specific to entering, acclimating, and/or completing higher education - Adult Transition Theory research specific to veterans entering, acclimating, and/or completing higher education - Veteran-based research specific to female veterans - HEI-based research focusing on attempts to assist both male and female veterans when entering, acclimating, and/or completing higher education	- Veteran-based research focusing on - Disabilities - PTSD - TBI - Other health-related issues - Adult Transition Theory-based research focusing on any population other than veterans (nurses, high school seniors, etc.) - Adult Student transition-based research - High school seniors transitioning into higher education - Higher education seniors transitioning into workforce - Non-Veteran female-based research (i.e., female students adjustment to campus environment)

Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical foundation for the study builds from the Adult Transition Theory developed by Schlossberg (1975, 1981, 1984, 2011) and subsequently refined over the last thirty years by Schlossberg and additional researchers such as Anderson, Goodman, and Schlossberg (2012) and Chickering and Schlossberg (2002). When developing the Adult Transition Theory, Schlossberg (1984) defined a transition as "an event or nonevent resulting in change" (p. 43) be it to "relationships, routines, assumptions, and roles" (Anderson et al., 1995, p.39). Schlossberg (1984) stated a, "transition is not so much a matter of change as of the individual's own perception of the change" (p. 44). Simply put, if an action results in a change, then it's a transition (Schlossberg, 1984). Key components of the Adult Transition Theory include categories of transitions, types of transitions, context of transitions, and impact of transition (Anderson et al., 2012; Schlossberg, 1984). Table 3 identifies the Adult Transition Theory's key component and provides a definition and example for each. The Adult Transition Theory consists

of a transition process which has three phases: Moving In, Moving Through, and Moving Out.

The following section discusses the Adult Transition Theory transition process and each phase.

Table 3
Adult Transition Theory Key Components.

Key Component	Definition	Example
Categories	Obvious Subtle	Marriage Career goals
Types	Anticipated: normally occurring events Unanticipated: unscheduled, unpredicted events Chronic (or hassles): persistence reoccurrence Nonevent: expected but do not occur	Retiring Divorce Conflict with a coworker Not getting an expected promotion
Context	Relationship of the person to transition: personal, interpersonal, or community Setting in which transition occurs: self, family, work, or health Note: can start out personal but then affect interpersonal and community relationships as well as start additional transitions	Personal: Losing your job Interpersonal: disagreement with employer Community: humiliated by going on unemployment Self –receiving an award (community) Family –blending two families (interpersonal) Work – retirement (personal) Health – illness/injury (personal)
Impact	How the transition alters the individual's daily life	Promotion requiring geographical move

Transition Process

Within the Adult Transition Theory, the Transition Process, "occurs in phases and

involves leaving behind the old and moving on to the new through an emergent growth process"

(Anderson et al., 2012, p. 49). The transitional process includes "inner work and outer work"

(Anderson et al., 2012, p. 55), basically internal and external influences. The transition process

has three phases: Moving In, Moving Through, and Moving Out (Figure 1).
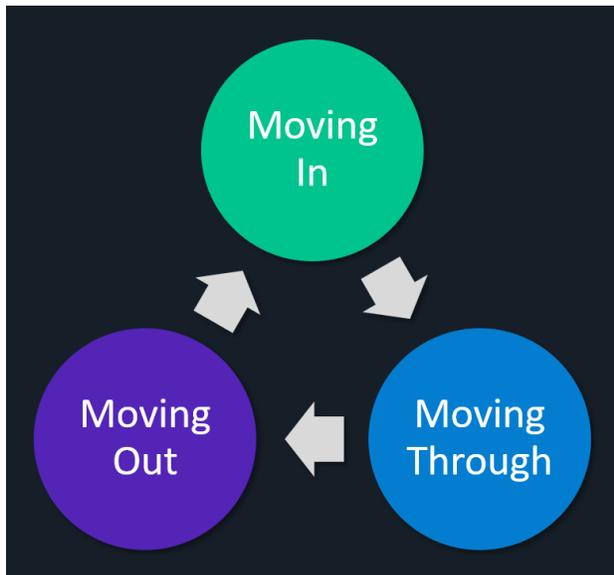
Figure 1: Transition Process

Moving In. The Moving In stage focuses on when individuals move into a new situation (Anderson et al., 2012; Chickering & Schlossberg, 2002). People experience new environments and must learn how to navigate them and find out what is expected of them (Wheeler, 2012). Anderson et al. (2012) identifies examples of a new situation as marriage, job, and educational environment while Chickering and Schlossberg (2002) focus on educational-based situations only. Anderson et al. (2012) state that, in the Moving In stage, individuals, "confront issues such as how to balance their activities with other parts of their lives and how to feel supported and challenged during their new journey" (p. 57). When an individual, "learns the ropes" (Anderson et al., 2012, p. 57), they transition into the next phase: Moving Through.

Moving Through. Chickering and Schlossberg (2002) state, "college is about learning…[and] moving through college depends on it [learning]" (p. 67). The Moving Through phase starts when an individual has become familiar with their environment (Wheeler, 2012). However, because the Moving Through phase may be long, individuals often need assistance in successfully transitioning through the phase (Anderson et al., 2012). Examples of assistance

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veterans often need include, but does not exclude, balancing academic and personal life, navigating through confusing Government processes, managing course scheduling conflicts, overcoming financial and time constraints, and being asked inappropriate questions (DiRamio et al., 2008; Griffin & Gilbert, 2012; Kazis, et al., 2007; Johnson & Lubin, 2000; Radford, 2009; Tanielian, & Jaycox, 2008). Within the Adult Transition Theory, the examples of challenges veterans often need assistance with during their transition from military to academia correspond to the 4S Model (i.e., situation, self, support, and strategies), discussed in the next subsection. The balance needed by an individual to successfully transition this phase is often accompanied by self-reflection such as asking themselves, "Why am I bored?" or "Did I do the right thing?" (Anderson et al., 2012; Wheeler, 2012). During the Moving Through phase, choices individuals make related to investment in time, energy, and emotion impact how well the phase is navigated (Chickering & Schlossberg, 2002).

Moving Out. The Moving Out phase occurs when a transition (or series of transitions) end (Anderson et al., 2012; Wheeler, 2012). The Moving Out phase marks the end of one transition while simultaneously marking the start of a new transition, which propels the individual back into the Moving In phase (Anderson et al., 2012). As an individual successfully transitions from one phase they enter the next. This is no difference between exiting the Moving Out phase and entering the Moving In phase; the difference is the transition (or change) itself. By nature, the Adult Transition Theory transition process is cyclical. An individual is always moving through the phases as they encounter new changes (i.e., the Moving In phase), learn to cope with the change (i.e., the Moving Through phase), and overcome the change (i.e., the Moving Out phase). The cyclical nature of the process is because individuals are continuously encountering transitions. As an individual adjusts to a transition and then exits the Moving Out

phase, they enter the Moving phase specific to another transition being experienced. For example, as a female veteran separates from the military and enters higher education, her experiences in separating from the military equate to her Moving Out phase of the transition process while her experiences specific to entering higher education correlate to the Moving In phase. Examples of the Moving Out phase include changing jobs, moving, and returning to school (Anderson et al., 2012).

In addition to the three phases of the transition process discussed above, the Adult Transition Theory includes the 4S Model. The 4S Model includes components that impact an individual's ability to transition between three transitional phases (Moving In, Moving Through, Moving Out). Within the 4S Model, coping resources are employed by individuals to assist in their transition during each phase.

The 4S Model

The 4S Model consists of four categories: Situation, Self, Support, and Strategies. Schlossberg (1975, 1981, 1984, 2011) and Anderson et al. (2012) identified a specific question associated with each category. Figure 2 identifies factors associated with each category (Anderson et al., 2012; Schlossberg, 1975, 1981, 1984, 2011). Table 4 identifies questions associated with each category (Anderson et al., 2012; Schlossberg, 1975, 1981, 1984, 2011). Research into transitions, regardless of whether an individual loses a job, moves, or returns to school, indicate people bring a diverse set of assets and deficits to each transition (Schlossberg, 1975, 1981, 1984, 2011) that must be addressed using the 4S Model.
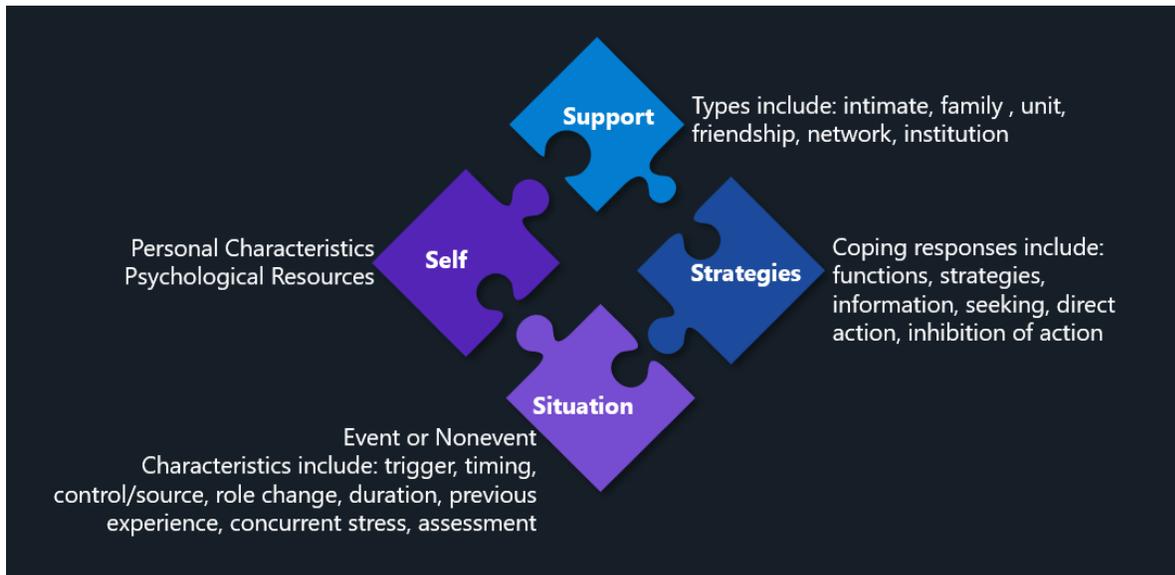
Figure 2: 4S Model

Table 4
The 4S Model Categories and Questions

4S Model Category	4S Model Category Question
Situation	What is happening?
	What kind of transition it?
Self	To whom it is happening?
	What kinds of strengths or weaknesses does the individual bring to the transition?
Support	What help is available?
	Does the person have a support from people like family, friends, co-workers?
Strategies	How does the person cope?
	Can the individual cope by changing the situation or self?

The previous subsections described the theoretical foundation, its transition process, and the coping resources that guided the study. Specifically, the discussion focused on describing the Moving In, Moving Through, and Moving Out phases of the transition process and the 4S Model. When transitioning, it is important to remember that regardless of which phase an individual is in, the larger the transition, the longer the disruption in the individual's life. Within each phase of the Transition Process, variables impact the length, the severity, and the potential success of the individual in transition.

Based on the Adult Transition Theory, the transitional process, and the 4S Model, I

focused the study on identifying the transitional phase of the participates and then collecting

experiences, both positive and negative, of female veterans corresponding to specific variables. I

identified both academic (i.e., external) and individual (i.e., internal) variables. The academic

(external) variables included (a) courseware, (b) faculty, (c) staff/administration, and (d) student

services. The individual (internal) variables included (a) gender, (b) exposure to combat, (c)

officer versus enlisted, and (d) length of service.

Academic (External) Variables

External variables are those items outside of an individual that have the potential to

influence the ability to transition from each phase of the Transition Process. The study identified

four external variables dealing with the academic environment: courseware, faculty,

staff/administration, and student services. Wheeler (2012), DiRamio et al. (2008), and Griffin

and Gilbert (2012) all identified at least one of the academic (external) variables that guided the

study as areas requiring improvement to ensure veteran success. Table 5 provides the operational

definitions of the academic variables.

Table 5
Key Academic (External) Variables Operational Definitions

Term	Operational Definition
Courseware	Courseware is defined as curriculum designed and delivered, synchronously or asynchronously, within an educational setting as well as interactions with other students when participating in the delivery of courseware
Faculty	Faculty is defined as teaching staff at a HEI.
Staff/Administration	Staff/administration is defined HEI employees aiding, maintaining and/or supervising separate from the faculty
Student Services	Student Services is defined as programs, departments, or divisions of a HEI that provide support and services to students.

Wheeler (2012) stated veterans are a "unique population with different needs than those of other adult student populations" (p. 790). Wheeler (2012) further explains that HEIs need to understand the veteran population and demonstrate commitment to serving veterans by initiating changes that ensure success. Wheeler (2012) and DiRamio et al. (2008) both identified faculty, staff/administration, and student services as areas needing improvement. Griffin and Gilbert (2012) collected data that asserted the, "likelihood of success for student veterans is improved by having faculty and staff who are aware of and sensitive to their needs" (p. 8) and that is it important for HEIs to "improve faculty, staff, and overall campus knowledge" (p. 9).

Prior studies identified faculty, staff/administration, and student services as key areas within HEIs that require improvement to facilitate veterans' success (DiRamio et al., 2008; Griffin & Gilbert, 2012; Wheeler, 2012). Both DiRamio et al. (2008) and Wheeler (2012) identified faculty, student services, and staff/administration while Griffin and Gilbert (2012) only identified faculty and staff as having the impact to successfully transition veterans. However, courseware, one of the four key academic (external) variables guiding the study, was not identified in any of the recommendations made by Wheeler (2012), DiRamio et al. (2008), or Griffin and Gilbert (2012). Study of the existing literature identified that prior research has been conducted on veteran experiences associated with faculty, staff/administration, and student services but not courseware.

Individual (Internal) Variables

Internal variables are those experiences specific to an individual that have the potential to influence the ability to transition from each phase of the Transition Process. The individual

(internal) variables I identified are gender, exposure to combat, officer versus enlisted, and length of service.

Gender. The study focuses on female veterans transitioning to higher education from the military. Therefore, the first key individual (internal) variable is gender. While previous research included female participants (Dunklin, 2012), none focused solely on the female veteran population. However, because experiences specific to an individual have the potential to influence the ability to transition through all three transition process phases, gender cannot be the only variable considered.

Exposure to combat. The second variable is exposure to combat. This variable focused on identifying if the participant experienced combat while in the military. Inclusion of this variable allowed the study to focus on potential differences between female combat veterans and female non-combat veteran. With Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) deployments coming to an end, the increased likelihood of veterans, male and female, deciding to transition from the military to academics requires HEIs to be ready to support veterans (Dunklin, 2012); this includes female veterans with combat experience. While all veterans share the title, it does not adequately represent the vast experiences they have based on their military service (Dunklin, 2012). As more veterans with combat experience enter academia, HEIs need to be prepared by having "capable staff trained to deal with complex issues that veterans may have returning from a war zone" (Dunklin, 2012, p. 10), which differ from those of veterans without combat experiences. Dunklin (2012) conducted research on veterans' transitions that included both male and female and combat and non-combat experienced individuals. Of Dunklin's (2012) 14 participants, half had combat experience during their military experience. Of those with combat experience, two were female. Dunklin (2012) stated

that has HEIs attempt to attract veterans, they need to understand the veteran, establish polices for combat veterans, create services that are inclusive to all veterans, and create a transfer student veteran orientation.

Officer versus enlisted. The next variable is officer versus enlisted. This variable focused on identifying if the participant was an officer or was enlisted while in the military. Inclusion of this variable allowed the study to focus on potential differences between female veterans who were officers and female veterans who were enlisted. Officers and enlisted service members receive different education and have different experiences, which has the potential to impact successful transition. Dunklin (2012) identified an instance where the training specific to officers negatively impacted a female veteran's ability to successful transition Officer University stating, "there is the real military and then there's Officer University" (p. 61). This impacted the participant's ability to engage socially in the HEI she ultimately attended. Existing literature does not tend to differentiate specifically between officer and enlisted experiences. Dunklin (2012) interviewed 14 participants, three of whom were officers. All three officer participants within Dunklin (2012) were female.

Length of service. The last variable guiding the study was length of service. Length of service focuses on the differences between participants who retired from the military or those who served but did not retire. When an individual enters the military, they are "indoctrinated into a unifying military culture composed of values, traditions, norms, and perceptions" (Coll et al., 2009, p. 3) that individuals often continues to rely on when they return to civilian life (Coll et al., 2009). The differences between career military (i.e., those who serve with the expectation of retiring from the military) and those individuals who serve a single or limited number of year tour and separate from the military (i.e., usually a minimum of four years) can impact how well

the veteran adapts to life outside of the military. Of the 14 participants Dunklin interviewed, three served more than 20 years, one between 11-15 years, five between 6-10 years, and 5 between 0-5 years. Three of the five female participants in Dunklin (2012) found transitioning from military to academia difficult; none of the male participants reported difficulty.

How Adult Transition Theory Informed Study

Multiple aspects of the Adult Transition Theory informed the study. Key components of the Adult Transition Theory such as category, type, context, and impact as well the three transitional phases (i.e., Moving In, Moving Through, and Moving out) informed the proposed research. As they transition through the phases of Moving In, Moving Through, Moving Out, the participants of the study experienced one or all the categories related to transitions, types of transitions, context related to transitions, and most assuredly the impact of the transition. Specifically, interactions with the academic (external) variables (i.e., faculty, staff/administration, student services, and courseware) were where the participants of the study experienced changes, both positive and negative, related to key components of the Adult Transition Theory. This is compounded even more when considering the individual (internal) variables.

Participants of the study experienced obvious and subtle transitions that are anticipated, unanticipated, chronic, and/or nonevent related. They also experienced transition contexts that are personal, interpersonal, and/or community based and are self, family, work, or health related. Next, moving from transition phase to the next transition phase was experienced by the participants since the change in environment, from a very rigid, regimental, military lifestyle to the more relaxed, less structured lifestyle, are on different ends of the spectrum. Since

Schlossberg (1975, 1981, 1984, 2011) and Anderson et al. (2012) stated the more a transition alters an individual's lifestyle the more coping resources required and the longer for the individuals to adapt, the logical deduction is that transitioning from military to civilian or collegiate lifestyle will drastically alter veterans and take them longer to adapt. This was demonstrated in the participants' varying levels of separation from the military before starting college; some were in the military when they started but out when finished while others started immediately after separating/retiring, while yet others started several years after separating.

As with the other key components of the Adult Transition Theory, the 4S Model is so interwoven into the transition process regarding how participants in the study successfully recognized, reacted, and conquered each transition, it is important to include those within the conceptual framework. Existing literature does not typically relate results to the 4S Model. Only two studies identified in the literature review (Normandin, 2010; Zinger & Cohen, 2010) mentioned the 4S Model. Normandin (2010) specifically was able to use the 4S Model to explain the results of the study as applicable to each category of the 4S Model and how the participants demonstrated these assets and liabilities through their transition. Zinger and Cohen (2010), however, only discussed the 4S Model at a high level and only in relation the participants demonstrating a balance of the four categories when Moving Out of their transition. For this research study, the 4S Model informed the study through the development of the one-on-one semi-structured interview protocol. I categorized each question asked during the one-on-one interviews into at least one of the 4S Model components. To categorize each of the one-on-one semi-structured interview protocol questions using the 4S Model, I asked specific questions related to each component of the 4S Model.

Self. Self is the first key component of the 4S Model. An example of a question asked related to the self component is, "Who is experiencing the change?" Self is important as it assists with identifying who within the study population benefits the most from the research results. Identifying the group of individuals experiencing a change specific to the study topic requires identifying potential population criteria that would allow for providing additional but new research specific to the topic. In addition to the military aspects of veteran's returning to civilian and college life, impacts on Self include the responsibilities experienced by veterans. As a non-traditional student demographic group, veterans returning to civilian and college life have additional responsibilities, such as family and work.

Situation. The second 4S Model key component discussed is situation. An example of a question asked related to the situation component is, "What is happening to the individual experiencing change?" Situation is important because it is critical to identify what is happening to the participants during their experience. Examples of types of situations experienced by the participants include separating from the military, starting college for the first time, re-starting after a long hiatus.

Support. The third key component of the 4S Model is support. An example of a question asked related to the support component is, "What assistance is available to the participant(s) during their experience?" The study focused on those support systems that positively and negatively affect the support of the participant's transition to identify improvements needed to facilitate effective and successful transition from military to academia and into civilian life. Types of support experienced by the participants included family, student services, and other students.

Strategies. The final key component of the 4S Model is strategies. An example of a question asked related to the strategies component is, "How is/are the participant(s) coping with change?" The strategies component informed the study because it focused on how participants experiencing a transition coped with the challenges. Examples of ways participants coped included prayer, crying, and reaching out for assistance from other students.

Empirical Support

As the Adult Transition Theory was developed within the counseling field, the research conducted supporting it is limited, to some degree, to the counseling field. Major proponents and researchers associated with the Adult Transition Theory include Schlossberg (1975, 1981, 1984, 2011), Sargent and Schlossberg (1988), Goodman and Pappas (2000), Chickering and Schlossberg (2002), Goodman, Schlossberg, and Anderson (2006), Schlossberg, Waters, and Goodman (2006), and Anderson et al. (2012). The seminal contributions of Schlossberg (1975, 1981, 1984, 1988) focus on identifying, describing, and positing what would become the Adult Transition Theory itself and is the first attempt at linking the theory with practical application. Sargent and Schlossberg (1975, 1981, 1984, 1988) offer additional practical application of aspects of the Adult Transition Theory.

Chickering and Schlossberg (2002) added to the application of aspects of the Adult Transition Theory, specifically, the Transition Process's Moving In, Moving Through, and Moving Out phases, by providing guidance specific to getting as much as possible out of college. Chickering and Schlossberg (2002) include multiple job aids within the book that allow for reflection through the transition of each transitional phase. Additionally, Anderson et al. (2012)

update Schlosberg's (1975, 1981, 1984, 1988) original works to include aspects of how the Adult

Transition Theory and its aspects are applicable in a more diverse method.

Research outside the counseling discipline recently began incorporating the Adult

Transition Theory. Education-based research is one of the disciplines that recently began using

the Adult Transition Theory. Additionally, the use of the Adult Transition Theory has begun

being used in research focusing on assisting with the transitions of veterans into academia.

Studies by DiRamio et al. (2008), Normandin (2010), Rumann and Hamrick (2010), Zinger and

Cohen (2010), Elliot, Gonzalez, & Larsen (2011), Diamond (2012), Dunklin (2012), Griffin and

Gilbert (2012), Maurin (2012), Wheeler (2012), DeVilbiss (2014), and Heineman (2016) focused

on transition of veterans. Of these studies, DiRamio et al. (2008), Normandin (2010), Zinger and

Cohen (2010), Elliot et al. (2011), Diamond (2012), Dunklin (2012), Griffin and Gilbert (2012),

Mauring (2012), and Wheeler (2012) also incorporated the Adult Transition Theory. However,

Dunklin (2012) did have female veteran participants.

Key Findings

Existing veteran empirical research does not typically focus solely on female veterans.

Additionally, existing empirical studies incorporating the Adult Transition Theory do not

typically focus solely on female veterans. However, recent use of The Adult Transition Theory in

HEI-based research studies focusing on veterans as whole has allowed for a review of those

studies found to identify common themes. Several empirical studies identify the need for HEIs to

understand the veteran student demographic to ensure success through improvements associated

with faculty, staff/administration, staff, and student services (DiRamio et al., 2008; Griffin &

Gilbert, 2012; Wheeler, 2012). This guided my determination to focus the study on the academic

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(external) variables (e.g., courseware, faculty, staff/administration, and student services). Of the research reviewed, all but one (i.e., courseware) were identified by the researchers as future areas of research. No research to date has focused on courseware as a variable for assisting veterans transitioning into higher education.

Review of the existing empirical studies guided the set of individual-based (internal) variables proposed. Of the veteran-based research discussed, one study included data collection related to combat experience, one study included data collection related to rank, and one study included data collection related to length of service. However, the data collected on these variables was more for demographic data than part of the research method and had no, or minimal, impact results, findings, and recommendations. As a result, I identified the following (internal) variables to include (a) gender (b) exposure to combat, (c) officer versus enlisted, and (d) length of service.

Continued review of existing empirical studies found additional areas of overlap as well as areas where the studies diverged. For the most part, aspects of each study such as population/subjects, research design, research questions/goals, the studies' results, and issues/constraints each has some level of mutual exclusivity. However, there were also commonalities found between the studies.

Populations/Subjects. The existing literature focused more on type of HEI as the populations/subjects than on the population of veterans. This is because, to date, research has not made a distinction between the varied types of veterans (i.e., male, female, officer, enlisted). I identified two main types of HEIs included in the existing literature: community colleges and universities. Of the existing literature, Diamond, (2012), Wheeler (2012), and Zinger and Cohen, (2010) conducted studies on veterans transitioning into community colleges. DiRamio et al.

(2008), Dunklin (2012) and Elliot et al. (2011) focused on veterans transitioning into universities. Two studies (Maurin, 2012; Normandin, 2010) included a combination of both community college and university.

Research Designs. The research designs used vary between case study (Dunklin, 2012; Maurin, 2012; Wheeler, 2012), grounded theory (Diamond, 2012; DiRamio et al., 2008), ethnography (Normandin, 2010), quasi-experimental (Elliott et al., 2011), and exploratory (Zinger & Cohen, 2010).

Research Questions/Goals. Most of the studies shared similarities in their overarching topic but tended to differ in research questions/goals. Diamond (2012), DiRamio et al. (2008), Dunklin (2012), Maurin (2012), Normandin (2010), Wheeler (2012), and Zinger and Cohen (2010) studied transitional experiences of veterans. Diamond (2012), Dunklin (2012), Maurin (2012), and Normandin (2010) asked specific research questions while DiRamio et al. (2008), Wheeler (2012), and Zinger and Cohen (2010) identified overall goals. Only Elliott et al. (2011) did not focus specifically on transition instead focusing on causes of campus alienation; no explicit research question was identified

Empirical Studies' Results. Overall, veterans tend to experience different transitional issues based on their service branch and exposure to combat (Maurin, 2012). When transitioning into higher education veterans tend to feel "unanimous gratitude" (Diamond, 2012, p. 100) for their military experience. It is through their military experience that veterans can apply skills, but they also find certain necessary changes in routines and roles difficult with the veterans often feeling overwhelmed (Diamond, 2012; Normandin, 2010; Zinger & Cohen, 2010). Interestingly, veterans also tend to be focused more on graduating than the college experience and have little HEI loyalty (Dunklin, 2012). Veterans also become uncomfortable when asked to share their

military experiences, especially when they sense feelings of reverence from other students or when they suffer from PTSD, depression, or other physical injuries (Maurin, 2012; Zinger & Cohen, 2010). Using the Adult Transition Theory as a theoretical foundation, both DiRamio et al. (2008) and Wheeler (2012) classified their respective study's participants into transitional phases but with different results. Wheeler found veterans transitions did not fit the "linear nature" (p. 786). Conversely, DiRamio et al. (2008) results showed that veterans' transition can be aligned without change.

  Issues/Constraints. Diamond (2012) and Normandin (2010) both identified time for conducting the research and locations of the studies as an issue/constraint. Additionally, Diamond (2012) identified access to the population, branch of service, and only focusing on non-combat veterans as issues/constraints. Normandin (2010) identified additional issues/constraints as sampling and interview methods; both were caused by the initial time issue/constraint. Normandin (2010) accepted participants on a first-come, first-served basis, did not follow-up with participants to discuss the results, conducted a limited number of interviews, and focused on interviews with a non-structured interview format, encouraging participants to verbalize their experiences but not offering a structured interviewer format. Dunklin (2012) identified location of study as an issue/constraint (i.e., southeast public university). However, Dunklin (2012) expressed concern regarding the foci of study, identifying it as an issue/constraint because it focused on gauging perceptions of college choice, transition, and satisfaction among transfer student veterans. Veterans with combat experience were identified as an issue/constraint between DiRamio et al. (2008) and Diamond (2010) studies when Diamond (2010) studied only non-combat experienced veterans while DiRamio et al. (2008) studied only combat experienced veterans. DiRamio et al. (2008) identified gender as an issue/constraint and specifically

identified a need for future studies specific to female veterans and their unique challenges. Finally, Zinger and Cohen (2010) identified the research design itself as an issue/constraint, stating qualitative studies have limited generalizability.

Informing the Study

Each of the empirical studies discussed guided the study. First, none of the empirical studies discussed focused exclusively on female veterans. Additionally, of the studies discussed, only four included female veterans: DiRamio et al. (2008), Dunklin (2012), Griffin and Gilbert (2012), and Wheeler (2012). However, none of the four studies that had female veteran participants differentiated the results based on gender. DiRamio et al. (2008) also specifically identified a future research need focusing on female veterans and their unique challenges. Existing research and theory tends to only focuses on identifying challenges of the veteran student demographic. DiRamio, Jarvis, Iverson, Seher, and Anderson (2015) did conduct a study focusing solely on female veterans. However, DiRamio et al. (2015) did not use the Adult Transition Theory as a theoretical foundation and was not discussed.

Because of the limited amount of empirical studies, current research and theory do not adequately explain why female veterans may or may not successfully transition from military service into higher education. specifically a four-year, public university. Additionally, current research and theory does not tend to focus on experiences of female veterans within academia (external) variables (i.e., courseware, faculty, staff/administration, and student services). As a result, at the highest level, there is a lack of resources available to both female veterans and HEIs that promote the successful transition of female veterans from military to higher education.

Without these resources, there runs the risk of programs available to veterans not being applicable, or beneficial, to female veterans.

Chapter Two Summary

Chapter two began with a discussion of methods used for conducting the review of literature. Next, it described the theoretical foundation: The Adult Transition Theory. Chapter two reviewed research and literature associated with the theoretical foundation, and synthesized findings that guided the study. Chapter two then discussed the major variables associated with the study and provided an in-depth synthesis and analysis of empirical studies related to veteran transition and the Adult Transition Theory. Corresponding subsections focused on identifying trends and issues associated with (a) populations/subjects, (b) research designs, (c) research questions/goals, (d) results, and (e) issues/constraints reported in the related studies. Chapter two concluded with a discussion on how the existing literature informed the study. Chapter three describes the methods of the study.

CHAPTER THREE:
RESEARCH METHOD

Chapter three discusses methods employed as part of the study execution. The chapter begins by identifying the problem statement followed by the purpose statement and research questions. Next, I discuss aspects of the research design such as the study setting, population and sampling, and confidentiality and heterogeneity. The next major section provides information on data such as the study's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval process (dates, approval), data collection instruments, data collection methods, and recruitment strategies. The final section of chapter three discuss the methods used in the analysis.

Problem Statement

Challenges faced by the members of the veteran student demographic is ambiguous. Current research and theory primarily focus on identifying holistic challenges of veterans. Existing research and theory does not focus on challenges specific to female veterans when transitioning into higher education. Additionally, current research and theory does not focus on experiences of female veterans within four key academia areas: courseware, interaction with faculty, interaction with staff/administration, and interaction with student services. The only research conducted that include female veterans are those focusing on veterans regardless of gender. However, from those studies, researchers have identified the need to explore the challenges of female veterans (DiRamio et al., 2008; Griffin & Gilbert, 2012; Wheeler, 2012). As a result, there is a lack of resources available for female veterans and HEIs to promote the successful transition of female veterans into and through college. Without these resources, there

is an increased risk that programs offered to female veterans will not address their specific

challenges, resulting in a difficult transition, or at worst, a failure to transition completely.

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

This research study empowered female veterans to share college experiences, so I could

understand the context or settings in which they addressed challenges specific to their

interactions in courseware, faculty, staff/administration, and student services when transitioning

from the military into college. To achieve this, the study sought to answer two research

questions:

1. What are common experiences of female veterans within each Adult Transition Theory

   transitional phase?

2. What experiences with courseware, faculty, staff/administration, and student services

   impact female veterans transitioning into and through college?

Research Design

The study's research design consisted on conducting a descriptive phenomenological

study. Phenomenological studies allow researchers to investigate various reactions to, or

perceptions of, a specific phenomenon through participants lived experiences (Creswell, 2013;

Fraenkel et al., 2012, Gall et al., 1996). Within a phenomenological study, researchers attempt to

gain insight into the lives of the participants to identify and describe perceptions and reactions,

collected through in-depth interviews, to define commonalities (Creswell, 2013; Fraenkel et al.,

2012) which is the "essence" (p. 432) of the experience. A phenomenological study focuses on a

single concept, or phenomenon, a group of individuals have experienced. Data collected about

those shared lived experiences, often done via one-on-one interviews, is organized into common themes. The themes, broad descriptions of the experiences, provide researchers data for documenting a rich, detailed narrative describing how the participants lived through the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). Because this study focused on solely the lived experiences of female veterans and collected data from those individuals only, results of the study provide the participants perceptions only and not perceptions of others such as family members, instructors, and counselors.

Study Setting

The setting for the study focused on female veterans who are attending, or at one time attended, a four-year, public, southeastern HEI located in Florida, specifically, the University of Central Florida (UCF). One of the 12 public universities within Florida, UCF is located 13 miles east of downtown Orlando, adjacent to one of the top research parks in the nation, and has more than 66,000 students enrolled, making it the largest university, by enrollment, in Florida and one of the largest in the nation (ucf.edu, 2018). UCF, founded in 1963, has 13 colleges, offers more than 200 degrees, has with 10 regional campus locations, and has a fully accredited college of medicine. Student enrollment for Fall 2017 totaled over 36,000 female students and over 29,000 male students. Additionally, for Fall 2017, the average age of UCF students enrolled was 22.8 years (undergraduate) and 30.7 years (graduate). UCF has over 800 students classified as military, which includes both active and former military (ucf.edu, 2017; Florida Department of Education, 2014). While the study focused on female veterans attending, or who are alumni of, UCF, I accepted participants from any of the other 11 universities and 28 colleges within Florida.

Additionally, I included female veterans attending out-of-state and online colleges (e.g., University of Phoenix).

In addition to the public colleges found within Central Florida, the area around UCF is an area rich with military and industry presence. To foster communication and collaboration, a group of organizations called Team Orlando (www.teamorlando.org, 2017), made up of military services, academic, industry, and other Government agencies, is an active resource within the area. Members of Team Orlando represent the largest collaborative environment of Modeling, Simulation and Training (MS&T) companies. Members of Team Orlando, many located within Research Park, include but are not limited to Program Executive Officer Simulation, Training and Instrumentation (PEO STRI), Air Force Agency for Modeling and Simulation (AFAMS), Naval Air Warfare Center Training Systems Division (NAWCTSD), Program Manager for Training Systems (PM TRASYS), and Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC). I included Team Orlando in the setting because of the connection to the military and the potential for a recruiting resource.

Population

The study's population of participants included female veterans. As of September 2015, the VA projected the veteran population at over 21 million, with two million (9%) being female. The three highest states with female veterans are California, Texas, and Florida, respectively. The number of female veterans in Florida is 1,533,306 (floridavets.org, 2017; va.gov, 2017). The numbers of female veterans are expected to continue to increase yearly by an average rate of 18,000 for the next decade, with the median age of female veterans identified as 50. Forty-four percent of female veterans had some college as their highest level of education. In 2015, 840,000

female veterans received at least one VA benefit or service; a statistic that has increased almost 10% between 2005 and 2015. However, of those benefits received by female veterans, only 149,375 were educational-based benefits. With less than 150, 000 female veterans receiving educational-based benefits, this means only 7.4 % of all female veterans have utilized any portion of their educational benefits. The 7.4% percentage of female veterans obtaining educational benefits is less than the total number of female veterans in Florida alone (154,820).

The operational definition of veteran is an individual who served in one of the United States Armed Services (e.g., Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corp, National Guard, Merchant Marine, and Reserves) but has separated from the military. To ensure a rich, diverse narrative, I identified criteria that provided heterogeneity. Table 6 identifies criteria that assist in providing heterogeneity. To assist with heterogeneity, I identified a goal of 15-21 participants as optimal. However, in phenomenological studies, quality is preferred over quantity and while my goal was 15-21 participants, getting data saturation from a lower number was deemed acceptable.

Table 6
Heterogeneity Criteria

Criteria	Different Types of Criteria Application
Students Status	Current and Former
	Graduates and Non-Graduates
	Full-time and Part-time
Adult Transition Theory Transition Process	Moving In
	Moving Through
	Moving Out
Military Ranking	Officer and Enlisted
Combat Experience	Combat and No Combat
Military Length	Career and Non-Career
Ethnicities	Caucasian, African-American, Asian, Pacific Islander
Ages	Late teens to Sixties

Sampling

I used purposive sampling for the research study. Hunt (2011) identifies the need for

researchers to "provide enough detail about the participants so that readers can determine if they

are the best people to address the phenomenon in question" (p. 298) when using purposive

sampling. Sampling criteria for the research study focused on two aspects of participants'

experiences: military and college. Table 7 identifies criteria specific to the sampling.

Table 7
Sampling Criteria

Sampling Criteria Type	Specific Sample Criteria
Military Experience	Served in one of the United States Armed Forces
	Retired, or separated, from military
College Experience	Accepted to a college
	Completed at least one semester
	Completed at least one face-to-face course

Confidentiality

Pseudonyms provide confidentiality for the study's participants. Confidentiality ensures

any and all data discussed within a study is not traceable to an individual where it may have

embarrassing or damaging consequences (Fraenkel et al., 2012). The pseudonyms used within

this study were selected by the participant themselves from a list provided during the one-on-one

interviews.

Heterogeneity

The group of participants represented a diverse group, providing heterogeneity to the

research. Specific criteria identified assisted me in determining the makeup of a diverse group of

participants. Table 8 identifies the heterogeneity criteria identified and if the participants

exhibited that criteria. The preceeding sections discussed the first major section of chapter four:

Data Collection. The next section begins the analysis discussion of data collected.

Table 8

Heterogeneity Criteria and Participant Exhibition Crosswalk

Criteria	Participant Exhibition of Criteria	Criteria Met
Current and Former Students	Current and Former students participated	✓
Representatives of each Adult Transition Theory	Moving Through and Moving Out No participants categorized in Moving In phase currently	✗
Enlisted and Officer during service	Both Enlisted and Officer during service participated	✓
Combat and Non-combat during service	Individuals with and without combat experience during service participated	✓
Career and Non-career during service	Individuals who retired and who served less than 20 years participated	✓
Full-time and part-time students when attending classes	Only full-time students participated. However, the time spent on school-based activities varied between those current student participants	✗
Difference between ethnicities	Four ethnicities participated: Asian or Pacific Islander, Black or African American, Caucasian (other than Hispanic), and Puerto Rican	✓
Different ages	Three age ranges participated: between 30-39, between 40-55, and Over 55+	✓

Data Collection

The Data Collection section of chapter three identifies the Institutional Review Board (IRB), instruments, data collection methods, the interviews and recruitment conducted. The IRB section identifies the process taken to gain IRB approval and is followed by a discussion of the data collection instruments used during the study. The data collection methods section documents how I collected data and the recruitment section provides an in-depth discussion of the various recruitment methods employed.

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

The IRB protocol was submitted to the UCF IRB on January 24, 2018. The IRB approved the protocol February 15, 2018. Appendix A contains the pre-interview questionnaire (see Appendix A). Appendix B contains the semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendix B). Appendix C contains the approved protocol notification letter (see Appendix C) via email. I began collecting data via interviews March 5. 2018. I subsequently submitted an IRB Addendum and Modification request on March 15, 2018. The IRB approved the addendum and modification request March 18, 2018. I concluded data collection March 27, 2018. Appendix D contains the approved addendum and modification letter (see Appendix D) via email.

Data Collection Instruments

I collected data using two main types of data collection instruments: a pre-interview questionnaire (Appendix C) and a semi-structured interview protocol (Appendix D). The pre-interview questionnaire was the first data collection tool used and collected specific experience data from each participant. The second aspect of data collection procedure included using a semi-structured interview protocol to conduct the interviews.

Pre-Interview Questionnaire.. Data collection began when I provided participants the pre-interview questionnaire via email. The pre-interview questionnaire consisted of three sections with 36 questions and included forced answers, multiple choice, single answer questions, and a section for additional information for each section. The pre-interview questionnaire sections focused on basic demographic data (age, ethnicity), military experience (military branch of service, years of service), and educational experience (current educational status, graduation date). The pre-interview questionnaire assisted in identifying the transitional phase of each participant. The pre-interview questionnaire also provided enough information to

write a short biography on each participant. Based on preliminary data, I identified 12 of 15 potential participants as meeting criteria for the study. Reasons individuals were excluded from participating included (a) not getting their degree after they left the military, (b) currently are in the military (i.e., active duty or reserves), and (c) have no college experience after military experience.

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol. The semi-structured interview protocol provided guidance during the one-on-one interviews and empowered each participant by providing them opportunities to focus on experiences of the phenomenon specific to the study (i.e., positive and negative experiences of female veterans transitioning into college). Each question on the semi-structured interview, traced to either a research question or one of the 4S Model's categories. Table 9 identifies the traceability between questions on the semi-structured interview protocol and the Adult Transition Theory 4S Model category.

Table 9

Traceability Between Semi-Structured Interview and 4SModel

Question Type	Examples of Semi-Structured Interview Protocol Questions/Prompts	Self	Situation	Support	Strategy
Ice Breaker	What is your age? Why did you join the military?	X			
College Timeline	When do you plan to graduate? How was your timeline for graduation based on when you originally planned to graduate?	X	X		
General Higher Education	Tell me about your experiences as a student. Describe a typical day, or week, you experienced.		X		
Reasons For Transitioning	What were the reasons you chose to attend your college? How did the tuition impact your decision?	X	X		
Experiences In Courseware	Describe your experiences taking courses. What kind of help is/was available to you while taking courses?		X		
Experiences Interacting With Instructors	Describe your experiences with your instructors. Are/Were you reluctant to approach your instructors? Why?		X		
Experiences With Staff/Administers	Describe your experiences approaching or communicating with staff or administrators. Are/Were you reluctant to approach staff or administrators? Why?		X		
Experiences With Student Services	Describe your experiences approaching or communicating with student services. What school resources do/have/did you use at your college?		X		
Support	Describe any other support you received while transitioning into and through college? Describe your support structure.			X	
Strategy	Describe any other strategies you use to assist in your experiences transitioning into and through college. How do you cope with positive/negative experiences you encountered?				X

Data Collection Methods

I conducted one-on-one interviews with participants. I audio-recorded all interviews, in accordance with the IRB protocol, for future transcript development to facilitate data analysis. I provided participants the pre-interview questionnaire and informed consent form via email prior to each one-on-one interview and asked them to return the documents at the time of their one-on-one interview. During each interview, I used the semi-structured interview protocol, developed to elicit data specific to the study's focus, to guide the discussion around each participant's experience transitioning into college.

Recruitment

Recruitment for participants began February 17, 2018. Recruitment continued for four weeks. Recruitment methods included posting on social media (e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn), mass emails (e.g., to UCF departments/agencies, VA Public Affairs Office (PAO), Orlando-based military agencies), posting on a listserv, and word of mouth.

Social Media Recruitment. I posted on social media, both Facebook and LinkedIn, initially on February 16, 2018 and February 17, 2018, respectively. I posted follow up requests for participants on both Facebook and LinkedIn on March 6, 2018. Facebook yielded individuals interested in participating while LinkedIn provided another avenue of recruitment for mass email recruitment. Of those who participated, three were recruited via social media: two via Facebook and one via LinkedIn. I also asked the UCF Veterans Academic Resource Center (VARC) and an Orlando-based military-based agency to post a request for participants on their respective social media outlets. No individuals expressed interest in participating via the UCF VARC or an Orlando-based military-based agency notification.

Mass Email Recruitment. I sent requests for participants to key points of contact (POC) at UCF, VA, and Orlando-based military-based agencies. I contacted, via email, 26 UCF departments/agencies (Table 10). Of the UCF departments/agencies, one forwarded the request to the UCF VARC, one responded saying they would pass the request to students, and one responded that it does not forward emails. The remaining 23 requests remained unanswered aside from automatically generated responses. I also sent email requests for assistance to the local VA PAO and an Orlando-based military-based agency. The VA PAO responded that they are unable to forward emails to veterans but pointed me to the Orange County Mayor's Veterans Advisory group. The Orlando-based military-based agency is a retirement group and did respond stating they provided the recruitment message to their members. Of those who participated, none were recruited via mass email.

Table 10
UCF Departments Sent Email from Primary Investigator

UCF Departments		
Academic Services for Student Athletes	Activity & Service Fee Business Office	Budget & Personnel Support
Career Services	Counseling Center	Admissions
Student Union	UCF Greek Council	LEAD Scholars Academy
Multicultural Academic and Support Services	Student Neighborhood Relations	Office of Student Involvement
	Registrar's Office	Social Justice and Advocacy
Student Academic Resource Center	Student Accessibility Services	Financial Aid
Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities	Office of Outreach & Engagement	First Year Advising and Exploration
Transfer Services	Student Support Services	Health Services
Wellness & Health Promotion Services	Creative School for Children	

Listserv Recruitment. I posted to the UCF Instructional Technology listserv twice: March 1, 2018 and March 9, 2019. Responses from the listserv included both individuals who

were or knew potential participants and individuals who represented an agency that had female veterans who may want to participate, such as an individual who worked for the United States Air Force Academy. The listserv yielded several interested participants. However, attempts to follow up with those individuals did not result in participation. Of those who participated, one was recruited via listserv and was a secondary participant through a family member who is a member of the listerv.

Word of Mouth Recruitment. I also utilized snowball, or word of mouth, to obtain participants. The potential participants were largely identified from the word of mouth recruitment strategy. Of those who participated, 5 were recruited via word of mouth. During the recruitment timeframe, I provided initial and routine follow up communiques to the recruitment methods and individuals who responded with interest in participating. Table 11 identifies the recruitment methods used and responses identifying potential participants.

Table 11
Recruitment Methods with Potential Participants Contacted

	Recruitment Method			
	Social Media	Mass Email	Listserv	Word of Mouth
Facebook	4			
LinkedIn	1			
Interested Individuals		1	5	22
Offers to Forward Request for Participants			1	
UCF Departments/Agencies		28		
Orlando-based Military-based Agencies	2	2		

Interviews

I coordinated all interviews via email. The choice of interview location was dependent upon the participant agreeing to the location. Each participant was allowed to offer and alternate location, if desired. Each participant and I reached mutual agreement on times for each interview. Per the IRB protocol, I audio-recorded each interview. Before concluding each interview, for the majority of interview conducted, I collected the signed informed consent form and the pre-interview questionnaire. Two participants provided the signed informed consent form and pre-interview questionnaire via email. Post interview, I kept in touch with the participants via email, providing them the semi-structured interview protocol and the Women Warrior Bio document to help with determination of pseudonyms. I conducted a total of nine interviews. I met with each participant only once. While I offered during recruitment, during the interviews, and in post-interview communications to meet with participants again, no one expressed an interest. As a measure to capture additional data, I always told participants to provide any additional information via email and provided them the semi-structure interview protocol after each interview concluded.

Data Analysis

Data analysis began with recording the answers of the pre-interview questionnaire and transcribing the interviews. Development of the interview transcriptions consisted of a mixture of by hand and using Trint.com for transcriptions, an online transcription service. Once complete, I used Colaizzi's 7-Step (Colaizzi, 1978; Sanders, 2014) method to conduct data analysis on each participant's transcription. Each step of the data analysis method is documented below.

Step 1: Acquiring A Sense of Each Transcript. First, I became familiar with each transcript. This included the interviews themselves. The act of conducting one-on-one interviews automatically helps identify a sense of the participant's experiences (Sanders, 2014). This was true for the interviews conducted for this study. The participant's facial expressions and body language, inflection in tones, helped to identify the depth of positive or negative experiences. During each interview I did not take a lot of notes. Instead, I focused on the participant. Following suggestions of Colaizzi (1978) and Haase & Myers (1988) I read the transcripts and listened to the audio-recordings. I listened to each interview, at least two times, making notes during each listening. Once transcripts were developed, I read them through three times.

Step 2: Extracting Significant Statements. Upon reading the transcripts, I began by just reading them in their entirety with no notes or significant statements identified. The second time I read the transcripts, I started identifying and recording significant statements, taken verbatim from the transcript. I identified significant statements on printed versions of the transcripts and then read the electronic versions and made notes there, without looking at the printed versions. Statements and/or phrases identified tell a story specific to each participant's experiences on transitioning from the military into college. I then read the transcripts one final time, referencing both the original printed version with notes and the first electronic version with notes. From this third reading, I ended up with my listing of significant statements. Each significant statement included traceability to the participant and research question.

Step 3: Formulation of Meanings. Development of formulated means from the significant statements included me identifying interpretation of each significant statement. The goal of this step includes developing a set of more general statements in an effort to acknowledge any preconceived expectations and/or potential bias (Colaizzi, 1978; Ashworth & Hagan, 1993).

My preconceived expectations or potential bias are discussed in chapter four. To develop the formulated meanings I kept asking, "What does this significant statement tell me about the participant's experiences?" I not only used the significant statement to develop the formulated means, but also read the preceding/succeeding sections of the transcript associated with the significant statement to ensure I did not lose any contextual meaning.

Step 4: Organizing Formulated Meanings into Clusters of Themes. After I developed the formulated meanings, I began to arrange them, based on similarities, into cluster themes and then into emergent themes. When developing the cluster themes, I read each formulated meaning, often tracing back to the original significant statements or transcript, to identify those that covered similar experiences. I then arranged the cluster themes, again based on commonalities, into emergent themes. After the first attempt at identifying cluster/emergent themes, I received feedback from my methods advisor, Dr. David Boote. This was a critical form of validation of the data to ensure I did not unintentionally add bias to the results. I ended up revising my cluster/emergent themes multiple times, refining them each time. I discuss the results of developing cluster/emergent themes in chapter four.

Step 5: Exhaustively Describing the Investigative Phenomenon. I completed step 5 of the Colaizzi 7-Step method by taking the cluster/emergent themes and using them to answer my research questions. I used the most prevalent cluster themes to answer the two research questions and supported those answers using my participant's own words, interspersing actual quotes from the interviews into the narrative. When using participant data to support the answers, I identified those participants that supported the answer and, if applicable, also mentioned those than may have different experiences. The output of Step 5, a detailed, rich, and robust descriptive narrative

specific to all data and results reached based on analysis by incorporating the formulated

meanings, cluster themes, and emergent themes, is in chapter five.

Step 6: Describing the Fundamental Structure of The Phenomenon. Using the

exhaustive description developed from Step 5 above, I drafted an overarching narrative of the

female veterans' who participated experiences transitioning into college. The narrative can be

reduced from the narrative developed in step 5 (Colaizzi, 1978) or include meaning derived from

the data analysis itself (Haase & Myers, 1988). My description of the fundamental structure of

the phenomenon is in chapter five.

Step 7: Returning to The Participants. The final step in Colaizzi's 7-Step method

allows for the participants to review the data analysis results. Colaizzi (1978) likens it to

validation of the data allowing participants to review and provide agreement that it represents

their experience. While Colaizzi recommends only the essential structure, or the narrative from

Step 6, Holloway and Wheeler (2002) recommend providing the exhaustive narrative developed

in Step 5. I provided chapters Four and Five to my participants. I have not received formal

feedback to date. I did hear from two who acknowledged receipt of the email.

Limitations

Sample Method

The sample method included a purposive sampling method and snowball sample method.

A purposive sampling method is a nonrandom sample chosen because of explicit

knowledge/experience which can only be provided by select individuals (e.g., experiences of

female veterans) (Fraenkel et al., 2012). Snowball sampling method focuses on identifying

participants of a study as needed during the execution of the study (Fraenkel et al., 2012).

Because the study focused on collecting experiences, positive and negative, of female veterans transitioning into college, a purposive sampling method was needed. This allowed a focus on gaining participants who met the initial criteria: women who served in the military and who attended college for a specific time. Because female veterans are a small sub-population of veterans, snowball sampling method assisted in identifying additional participants after the study began. Because of the small population, the sample size obtained was smaller than desired. Original sample size desired included 15-25 participants. However, only nine participants ended up contributing. There were over 20 individuals who expressed interest, but through elimination in not meeting the criteria and failure on the part of some of the individuals who expressed interest to respond to follow-up correspondence, the final count was eight. Extending the interview timeline and gaining a memorandum and addendum to the initial protocol allowed an additional participant to contribute. Mitigation factors for future research study identified include broader criteria for inclusion. The first protocol was very strict regarding criteria to participate. As a result, it excluded several participants immediately. Additionally, a lengthier data collection process has the potential to yield more participants. The data collection for this study was done in six weeks.

Generalizability

Because the research study focused on a small sample of a larger population and because the participants represent a specific, and small, geographical area, the concern exists that the sample is not representative of the same experiences as the larger population. A mitigation to this limitation existed based on the population selected because female veterans is a small population of the overall larger veteran demographic. Additional steps I used to mitigate this limitation

included using analytic generalizability. Analytic generalizability focuses on attempting to generalize the results of the data collection into a broader theory by providing evidence that supports but does not provide the theory. For example, the results of the study provide evidence that the experiences of female veterans support previous research on veterans and do vary but does not definitely prove any variant based on the sample, i.e., female veterans. Even more mitigation factors for the generalizability limitation includes expanding the number of participants as well as identifying participants from multiple geographical areas.

Episodic Data Collected

Data collection took place over a short amount of time. Complete data collection lasted less than one month from start to finish. Because of this, the data collected, while covering a larger timeframe for the participants (i.e., their college years post military separation), the answering of the questions in the data collection tools was limited. To address this limitation, I planned to conduct multiple, a minimum of two, one-on-one interviews with each participant. Conducting multiple one-on-one interviews allows for both me and the participants to reflect on the experiences provided during the previous interview(s) and gain additional insight to those experiences as well as identify additional experiences in subsequent interviews.

Lack of Inter-rater Reliability

While most often associated with quantitative research, inter-rater reliability within qualitative data should be done, especially if there are multiple researchers coding the data. While I was the only one coding the data, the lack of inter-rater reliably means the results reached in this study are based on one person's analysis results. To address this limitation, I provided the results of the study to the participants to identify if the final discussion was

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representative of their lived experiences. I also provided the study to four peer reviewers for them to provide comments on the method used to conduct analysis. I did not, however, plan on having anyone take the raw data and re-create the analysis effort to see if similar results were achieved. Because inter-rater reliability is critical for multiple researchers coding, this would have involved me providing additional researchers not associated with this study detailed data analysis tools corresponding to Colaizzi's 7-Step method process to ensure consistent application. I did attempt to mitigate the lack of other researchers coding the data by providing my cluster themes and emergent themes results to my methods mentor for guidance.

Lack of Triangulation of Data

This study focused on the lived experiences of female veterans. Pursuant to conducting a phenomenological study aimed at identifying experiences from individuals who lived them, I focused my data collection on female veterans only. I did not collect data from other individuals (i.e., husbands, children, instructors) who female veterans interacted with during their transition into and through college. As a result, the data results of this study are the perceptions of solely those female veterans during their transition into and through college. By including other individuals in my data collection, I could have triangulated the data provided by the female veterans with the other individuals leading to stronger data analysis results. I did not attempt to mitigate for this limitation as I did not consider it a limitation during data collection or analysis. It was only later through discussion with advisors that I understood the potential of the additional data.

Chapter Three Summary

Chapter three discussed the phenomenological research design methods. The chapter began with reiterating the problem statement, purpose statement, and research questions. Next, I discussed the research design and identified data collection aspects of the study. Specifically, part of chapter three focusing on the research design discussed the study setting, population and sampling, confidentiality, and heterogeneity. In the next major section, data collection, I discussed the IRB process, data collection instruments, data collection methods, recruitment methods, and interviews Chapter three's final section of chapter three documented the data analysis method used to get the results discussed in chapter four.

CHAPTER FOUR:
DATA ANALYSIS RESULTS

Chapter four discusses the data analysis process and trustworthiness. The chapter discusses the steps taken to analyze the data collected via the pre-interview questionnaire and semi-structured interview protocol. The structure of chapter four data analysis discussion follows Colaizzi's 7-Steps. Chapter four concludes by discussing trustworthiness methods employed as well as rationalities for trustworthiness methods not used. Findings of the data analysis conducted in chapter four are presented in chapter five.

Pre-Interview Questionnaire Data Analysis

Data from the pre-interview questionnaire assisted in determining if a potential participant met additional criteria (i.e., exposure to combat, length of service) after meeting the initial criteria of serving in a US military service, separating and attending college. Discussion on the pre-questionnaire data analysis details the sections of the pre-interview questionnaire and identifies the results of the descriptive statistics from each section. Each table identifies the number of participants who answered the corresponding selection along with the percentage the responses represent. Next, I provided participant biographies developed. Finally, I document the Adult Transition Theory transitional phase assigned to each participant.

Pre-Interview Questionnaire

I provided all participants the pre-interview questionnaire once the interview was coordinated. All participants returned the pre-interview questionnaire. The pre-interview questionnaire was not designed to have participants answer all questions. Based on the participant's current college status and their military experience, the participant skipped

questions. Of those questions that required an answer based on the participant's experience, all questions were answered.

The pre-interview questionnaire consisted of four sections: demographic, military experience, educational experience, and a section for additional data. All participants completed the pre-interview questionnaire; however, an error in the questionnaire directed those participants who did not plan to attend college again in the future to skip question #33, resulting in skewed data for that question.

Section I: Demographic Data Results. Section I focused on identifying participant demographic data. Section I assisted in ensuring heterogeneity. Section 1 had five questions, all requiring answering. Table 12 identifies data analysis results for Section I.

Section II: Military Experience. Section II focused on identifying participant military experience. Section II had ten questions. Not all Section II questions required answering. For example, if a participant answered that they were not deployed or did not experience combat, they were directed to skip certain questions. Table 13 identifies data analysis results for Section II.

Section III: Education Experience. Section III focused on identifying participant educational experience. Section III had 16 questions. Not all Section III questions required answering. For example, if a participant answered that they were currently in college, they were directed to answer specific questions different from those a participant was directed to answer if they are currently not in college. Table 14 identifies analysis results for Section III.

Section IV: Additional Data. Section IV provided participants the opportunity to expand on any question within Sections I-III and asked how participants learned of the study. Table 15 identifies analysis results for Section IV.

Table 12

Pre-Questionnaire Section I: Demographic Data

Question Focus	Potential Answers	Answers Provided
Age	19 or younger	
	20-23	
	24-29	
	30-39	3 (33.3%)
	40-55	4 (44.4%)
	Over 55	2 (22.2%)
Marital Status	Single, never married	1 (11.1%)
	Single, in a relationship, living separately	
	Single, in a relationship, living together	1 (11.1%)
	Single, divorced	
	Single, widowed	
	Married, living together	6 (66.6%)
	Married, separated	
	Divorced	1 (11.1%)
Ethnicity	American Indian or other Native American	
	Asian or Pacific Islander	2 (22.2%)
	Black or African American	2 (22.2%)
	Caucasian (other than Hispanic)	4 (44.4%)
	Mexican-American	
	Puerto Rican	1 (11.1%)
	Other Hispanic	
Dependents	0	1 (11.1%)
	1	5 (55.5%)
	2	2 (22.2%)
	3	1 (11.1%)
	4	
	5+	
Employment Status	Employed, for wages, part-time	
	Employed, for wages, full-time	8 (88.8%)
	Self-employed	
	Out of work, looking for work	
	Out of work, not looking for work	
	Retired	1 (11.1%)
	Unable to work	

Table 13

Pre-Questionnaire Section II: Military Experience Data

Question Focus	Potential Answers	Answers Provided
Branch of Service	Air Force	4 (44.4%)
	Army	2 (22.2%)
	Marine Corps	
	Navy	3 (33.3%)
Officer versus Enlisted	Officer	1 (11.1%)
	Enlisted	8 (88.8%)
Length of time in the military	Less than one year	
	1-4 years	3 (33.3%)
	5-10 years	3 (33.3%)
	11-15 years	1 (11.1%)
	16-20 years	1 (11.1%)
	21-25 years	1 (11.1%)
	25+ years	
Active versus Reserve	Active Duty	8 (88.8%)
	Reserves	
	Both	1 (11.1%)
Retired versus Discharged	Retired	2 (22.2%)
	Discharged	7 (77.7%)
Discharge Status	Honorable	9 (100%)
	General	
	Officer	
	Entry Level Separation	
Station/Deployed OCONUS	Yes	6 (66.6%)
	No	3 (33.3%)
Length of time Station/Deployed OCONUS	Less than 1year	
	1-2 years	5 (55.5%)
	3-4 years	
	5 years	
	5+ years	1 (11.1%)
Experienced Combat	Yes	3 (33.3%)
	No	6 (66.6%)
Location Combat Experienced	Iraq	2 (22.2%)
	Afghanistan	1 (11.1%)

Table 14

Pre-Questionnaire Section III: Education Experience Data

Question Focus	Potential Answers	Answers Provided
Currently Attending HEI	Yes No	2 (22.2%) 7 (77.7%)
Length of time attending current HEI	Less than 6 months Less than 1 year 2-3 years 4-5 years Other	 2 (22.2%) 15 months 18 months
Current HEI attending	University of Central Florida Valencia College Seminole State College Other	 2 (22.2%) Northern Arizona University Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University
Classification	Freshman/First Year Sophomore Junior Senior Graduate Student Unclassified	 2 (22.2%)
Timeline for graduation	Not sure My current semester Within a year Other (Please specify):	 1 (11.1%) 1 (11.1%)
Full-time versus Part-time	Full-time Part-time	2 (22.2%)
Major		1 (11.1%) Master's in educational technology 1 (11.1%) Masters in Aeronautics
Credit hours current taking	6 or fewer 7-11 12-14 15+	1 (11.1%) 1 (11.1%)

Question Focus	Potential Answers	Answers Provided
Hours working each week related to the academic program	5 or fewer hours a week 6-10 hours a week 11-15 hours a week 16-20 hours a week 21-25 hours a week 26-30 hours a week more than 30 hours a week	 1 (11.1%) 1 (11.1%)
Hours working each week on a job	None, I do not have a job 1-10 hours a week 11-20 hours a week 21-30 hours a week 31-40 hours a week more than 40 hours a week	 1 (11.1%) 1 (11.1%)
HEI attended if graduated	University of Central Florida Valencia College Seminole State College Other	1 (11.1%) 6 (66.6%) Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, FL Towson University, MD University of Nebraska Medical Center Omaha, NE Northcentral University Webster University Texas A&M
Why not currently attending HEI	I graduated I am taking a semester off I am taking a year off I no long have any GI Bill funding Other (Please specify):	7 (77.7%)
Length of attending prior HEI	Less than 6 months Less than 1 year 2-3 years 4-5 years Other	 2 (22.2%) 4 (44.4%) 1 (11.1%) 7 years
Plan to return to HEI	Yes No	2 (22.2%) 5 (55.5%)

Question Focus	Potential Answers	Answers Provided
Timeline for returning to HEI	Not sure	2 (22.2%)
	In less than a year	
	More than a year	
	More than 2 years	
Why not planning to return to HEI	Too much money	
	Too many obligations / No Time	1 (11.1%)
	Other (Please specify):	

Table 15

Pre-Interview Questionnaire Section IV: Additional Data

Additional data for Section I	
Additional data for Section II	
Additional data for Section III	Vera: I was in USA[F] for 2 years at Wilford Hall USAF hospital in San Antonio, Texas. My last year I was stationed at Rheim Main AFB outside of Frankfort, Germany.
	Mary: It was difficult making that transition from "military" to "civilian" status and going back to school. It got easier as time went on. Also had good support from my teachers and advisors, that helped out tremendously.
	Tamara: Discharged from the Navy Aug 2001. Started back to school in Charleston in 2009. Waited so long due to time and income constraints when having a young child, husband that was still going underway and lack of understanding resources that were available for veterans. Undergrad 2013: Columbia College, 1st master's 2015: UCF, 2nd master's: Embry-Riddle
How did you hear about the study	3 (33.3%) Co-worker
	1 (11.1%) Co-worker on Facebook
	1 (11.1%) Social media invitation
	1 (11.1%) Received an email
	1 (11.1%) My son is in program at UCF in Education Dept. He forwarded e-mail to me.
	1 (11.1%) LinkedIn Post
	1 (11.1%) Friend

Participant Biographies

The following section provides biographies of each participant. Data within each participant's biography comes from the pre-interview questionnaire and the face-to-face interviews. Each participant biography uses assigned pseudonyms. From this point forward, participants are referred to using their pseudonyms. Figure 3 identifies the timeline for each participant specific to serving in the military and attended college.

Participant	Timeline Order for Serving in Military and Attending College		
Tani	Received Undergraduate Degree	Served in Army	Received Graduate Degree
Lozen	Served in Air Force	Received Undergraduate Degree	Received Graduate Degree
Deborah	Served in Air Force	Received Undergraduate Degree	Received Graduate Degree
Vera	Received Undergraduate Degree	Served in Air Force	Received Graduate Degree
Mary	Served in Air Force	Received Undergraduate Degree	Received Graduate Degree
Cleopatra	Served in Navy	Received Undergraduate Degree	Received Graduate Degree
Mu-Lan	Served in Army	Received Undergraduate Degree	Received Undergraduate Degree
Harriet	Served in Navy	Received Undergraduate Degree	Received Undergraduate Degree
Tamara	Served in Navy	Received Undergraduate Degree	Received Graduate Degree

Figure 3: Participant Sequencing in Serving in the Military and Attending College

Tani. Tani obtained her undergraduate degree before enlisting in the United States Army (USA). After separating from the USA, she obtained her graduate degree. She is a 34-year-old African American female veteran. She is currently married and living with her husband. She has no children. She is employed, for wages, full-time. She served in the USA in an enlisted capacity and received an Honorable discharge. Her final rank was Sergeant (SGT). While serving in the USA, she participated in one deployment Outside Continental United States (OCONUS) in

Afghanistan where she experienced combat. She is not in college. She graduated from UCF. Currently, she plans to return to college but is not sure when. When asked during the interview why she joined the military, she responded it was something she had always wanted to do growing up. She originally planned to go to West Point but decided she did not want to miss the college experience so instead went to college for her undergraduate degree. However, joining the military was something that stuck with her and after she graduated from college, she enlisted. Her most important thing she wanted me to understand about her military career is that she was an airborne paratrooper, which is an elite unit. Because of this, she went through extensive training and that impacted her deployments. Because of the training regimen, she deployed only once during her service time. She most likely would have had career in the USA if she had liked where she ended up stationed, or her job, post-deployment. When asked about her rationale for entering college after separating from the USA she stated she knew she would always go back to college after serving because a graduate degree is needed to get a good job.

Lozen. Lozen enlisted in the United States Air Force (USAF) after graduating high school. After separating from the USAF, she obtained both her undergraduate and graduate degrees. She is a 37-year-old Caucasian female veteran. She is currently single, in a relationship, and living together with someone. She has two children. She is employed, full-time, for wages. She served in the USAF in an enlisted capacity and received an Honorable discharge. Her final rank was E-5. While serving in the USAF, she participated in one deployment OCONUS, where she did not experience combat. She is not in college. She graduated from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. She does not plan to return to college. When asked during the interview why she joined the military, she responded she did not want her father to pay for school. Her most important thing she wanted me to understand about her military career is it was a life-

changing catalyst event for her. She remembers feeling a great deal of pressure when getting out

of the USAF and thinking she needed a degree. She mentioned that when someone is in the

military, there is no outside world. For her, that outside world was very daunting to her and that

without a degree, she would not be able to do anything. She was dead set on getting her degree

post-military service.

Deborah. Deborah enlisted in the USAF after high school. After retiring from the USAF,

she received both her undergraduate and graduate degrees. She is a 43-year-old Asian or Pacific

Islander female veteran. She is currently single, never married. She has one adult child. She is

employed, full-time, for wages. She served in the USAF, in an enlisted capacity, and received an

Honorable discharge. She retired from the USAF. Her final rank was Master Sergeant (MSGT).

She participated in multiple deployments OCONUS but did not experience combat. She is not in

college. She graduated from Towson University in Maryland. She is unsure as to whether she

will return to college. When asked during the interview why she joined the military, she

responded it is somewhat of a family tradition. Both her father and brother also served, and

retired, from the military and her son is currently active duty. She stressed it was not expected

that she join the military. Another reason she joined the military related to lack of resources to

pay for college, as her father had recently re-married and there were step-brothers/sisters to

consider. She stated she really liked the fact joining the military could get her out of the house

and be self-supporting. Her most important thing she wanted me to understand about her military

career is she was blessed in her service, especially in her job. After starting in a couple more

service related jobs (driving a forklift and cooking), she was able to re-train for broadcast

journalism, which is not a typical military team-oriented career. She was able to travel to Turkey,

Russia, and Vietnam, among others, for the America Forces Network (AFN) doing broadcasts

overseas during a time few were able to do so. She feels blessed that she found a career in the military that fit her personality and allowed her to express her creativity. Her reason for transition into college was that constantly improving yourself is part of the military culture and from a financial point, it's 100% paid for so there is no reason not to go to college after retiring.

Vera. Vera obtained her undergraduate degree prior to entering the USAF. After separating from the USAF, she returned to college for her graduate degree. She is a 78-year-old Caucasian female veteran. She is currently married and living with her husband. She has one adult child. She is retired. She served in the USAF, in an Officer capacity, and received an Honorable discharge. Her final rank was First Lieutenant. She participated in one deployment OCONUS but did not experience combat. She is not in college. She graduated from the University of Nebraska Medical Center, located in Omaha, Nebraska. She does not plan to return to college. When asked during the interview why she joined the military, she stated that she had just graduated from college and had no other plans and believed it would be a good career path for her. Her most important thing she wanted me to understand about her military career is that serving in the 1970's meant there were not a lot of female veterans. Her service, and those like her from that time frame, have paved the way for the larger number of female veterans.

Mary. Mary entered the USAF immediately after high school. During her military career she began taking undergraduate degree courses but did not graduate until after she retired. She is currently getting her graduate degree. She is a 43-year-old Asia or Pacific Islander female veteran. She is currently married, living with her spouse. She has three children ranging in age from the early teens to early twenties. She is employed, for wages, full-time. She served in the USAF, in an enlisted capacity, and received an Honorable discharge. Her final rank was E-7. Mary participated in one deployment OCONUS in Iraq where she experienced combat. She is

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currently attending Northern Arizona University (NAU). She is a full-time student obtaining a master's degree in Educational Technology, taking between seven and 11 credits during the current semester. She has been enrolled for 15 months and is planning to graduate at the end of the current semester. She spends more than 30 hours a week on activities related to her academic program and more than 40 hours a week working a job. When asked during the interview why she joined the military, she responded she went to school for a year and did not feel ready. Additionally, she did not want to live at home and not do anything, so she enlisted. Finally, Mary wanted to travel. Her most important thing she wanted me to understand about her military career is it takes a lot of communication and adjusting and dealing with a lot of movement. It is difficult not only from an active duty member's perspective but from a mother's perspective and a wife's perspective. She had been progressing through college during her military career but when she decided to retire, she decided she also needed to finish her education.

Cleopatra. Cleopatra entered the United States Navy (USN) immediately after high school. She did not get her undergraduate or graduate degrees until she separated from the USN. She is a 43-year-old African American female veteran. She is currently married, living with her spouse. She has one child. She is employed, for wages, full-time. She served in the USN, in an enlisted capacity, and received an Honorable discharge. Her final rank was E-7. While serving in the USN she did not deploy OCONUS and did not experience combat. She is not in college. She graduated from Northcentral University. She does not plan to return to college. When asked during the interview why she joined the military, she responded for money and benefits. The most important thing she wanted me to understand about her military career is that her career did not just impact her. As an African American female in the USN, she remembers sailors crossing the street to say good morning to her. Where she works, when you look at the higher ranks, they

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are all males, all Caucasian males. For her, at the time when she served, it was sometimes the first time another, lower ranking service member saw someone who looked like them or someone who they felt they could identify with. It gave her a sense of purpose, even for those sailors who did not work for her. The sailors could ask her about her time in the USN and ask her about culturally unique questions. Her reason for transition into college was when people are younger, they are told you either go to college or you go to the military. So, for her, when she was separating from the military, it made sense to go to college. This was also assisted by the GI Bill, which paid for her college and one of the reasons she entered the USN originally.

Mu-Lan. Mu-Lan enlisted in the USA immediately after high school. She began taking college courses while still in the USA, but did not obtain her undergraduate or graduate degree until after she separated. She is a 44-year-old Puerto Rican female veteran. She is divorced. She has two children. She is currently employed, for wages, full-time. She served in the USA, in an enlisted capacity, and received an Honorable discharge. Her final rank was E-4. While serving in the USA, she participated in one deployment OCONUS and did not experience combat. She is not in college. She graduated from Webster University. She does not plan to return to college. When asked during the interview why she joined the military, she responded that being from Puerto Rico, to get a good job and to become successful, she needed to learn English, which was her main reason for joining the Army. Her most important thing she wanted me to understand about her military career is the challenges women, in a male-dominated field, face. As a woman in the military, there are not many opportunities for promotions and there is a threat of sexual harassment. However, there are good opportunities to be had in the military, such as assistance getting jobs later and physical wellbeing. Her reason for transitioning into college traces back to her reasons for joining the Army: she wanted an education and to become successful. She began

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college while in the military but had to postpone it and once she separated, she was able to return and complete her degree.

Harriet. Harriet enlisted in the USN immediately after high school. She did not get her undergraduate or graduate degrees until after she separated from the USN. She is a 56-year-old Caucasian (other than Hispanic) female veteran. She is currently married, living with her spouse. She has one adult child. Harriet is employed, for wages, full-time. She served in the USN, in an enlisted capacity, and received an Honorable discharge. Her final rank was E-5. While serving in the USN, Harriet did not deploy OCONUS and did not experienced combat. She graduated from Texas A&I (now Texas A&M). She does not plan to return to college. When asked during the interview why she joined the military, she responded to get away from home. Her most important thing she wanted me to understand about her military career is she wanted two things out of her military experience: to travel and to get an education. She entered the USN just after she turned 18, quitting high school to do so. She wanted to travel, and she did; she was stationed in Hawaii, where she met her husband. She wanted an education and she got that as well, partially through the use of the GI Bill. Education was a strong driver for her. She was the first of her family to get a degree. She has no regrets with regard to her military service. Her reason for transitioning centered on getting that degree and although it was delayed, she did succeed.

Tamara. Tamara began attending college classes to get her undergraduate degree after high school but enlisted in the USN before graduating. She did not get her undergraduate or graduate degrees until after she separated from the USN. She is a 38-yearl-old Caucasian (other than Hispanic) female veteran. She is currently married, living with her spouse. She has one child. She is employed, for wages, full-time. She served in the USN, in an enlisted capacity, and received an Honorable discharge. Her final rank was E-4. While serving in the USN, she did not

deploy OCONUS and did not experienced combat. She is currently attending college. She has been attending Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University for 18-months. She is classified as a graduate student and will graduate within one year. She is attending Embry-Riddle full-time, majoring in Aeronautics, taking six or fewer credit hours. She usually spends between 11-15 hours a week on activities related to her academic program while working between 31-40 hours a week at her job. When asked during the interview why she joined the military, she responded that she had originally gone to college after high school, into a high stress degree program, and was overstressed. She also knew a lot of military individuals and based on discussions with them and wanting to leave her small community, she decided to join the USN. Her most important thing she wanted me to understand about her military career is that the transition was rough on her. She did not have a good set of resources that helped her understand her benefits. It was up to her to figure out her benefits. Additionally, her transition was also tough as her husband was still in the military and was deployed while she was a new mother. A planned three-month separation turned into an 18-month separation. Her reason for going back to school to get her first master's degree was due to falling in love with a task she was asked to do at her job and research determined she could get a degree and get hired. Once she found that out, she was in school the following fall. Her reason for going back to get her second master's is a new-found passion for aeronautics. She works aviation projects and wants to be able to speak intelligently to her subject matter experts. She also has begun getting her pilots license. Going back to get an aeronautic master's degree was a simple decision for her. Her reason for transition into college was when people are younger, they are told you either go to college or you go to the military.

Transitional Phase Assignment

The pre-interview questionnaire also assisted me in preliminarily assigning each

participant into an Adult Transition Theory transitional phase: Moving In, Moving Through,

Moving Out. Data from the one-on-one interview assisted in finalizing the transitional phase

assignments. While an individual can be in each of the phases simultaneously as they progress

through various changes, I focused on the transition of female veterans from the military into

college when categorizing participants into a transitional phase. Table 16 identified criteria for

assigning participants to each transitional phase.

Table 16
Transitional Phase and Criteria for Assignment

Transitional Phase	Criteria for Assignment
Moving In	- Recently separated from the military (less than a year)
	- Enrolled in less than one year of college
	- Currently taking their first semester
	- Just recently finished taking their first set of courses
	- Planning to return to college soon
Moving Through	- Currently enrolled in college
	- Enrolled in college between 2-3 years
	- Have completed at least two semesters
	- Will graduate at the end of their current semester
Moving Out	- No longer attending college
	- No plans to return to college soon

Using the criteria identified in Table 16 and data from their one-on-one interviews, I

categorized each participant into a transitional phase. I did not categorize any participants within

the Moving In transitional phase. I categorized two participants into the Moving Through

transitional phase. The remaining seven participants, I classified into the Moving Out transitional

phase. Table 17 identifies each transitional phase and the participants categorized into it as part

of the data analysis.

Table 17

Transitional Phase Assignments

Transitional Phase	Participants								
	Tani	Lozen	Deborah	Vera	Mary	Cleopatra	Mu-Lan	Harriet	Tamara
Moving In									
Moving Through					X				X
Moving Out	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	

The second main section of chapter four discusses data analysis of the audio-recorded, one-on-on interviews conducted using the semi-structured interview protocol. I analyzed the interview data using Colaizzi's 7-Step method. In the following section I expand on the process, previously discussed in chapter three, and identify specific actions taken to complete each step.

Semi-Structured Interview Data Analysis

The discussion of the analysis on the semi-structured interview protocol data has three sections. First, I discuss the semi-structured interview protocol used for the one-on-one interviews. Next, I discuss the interviews themselves. Finally, I detail the actions taken for each phase of the Colaizzi 7-Step analysis method, providing actions taken to complete each step and the results of the actions. The findings from the data analysis discussed in chapter four are presented in chapter five.

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

The semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendix D) provided guidance in conducting each interview. The semi-structured interview protocol contained ten questions revolving around the research questions. Table 9 identifies the relationship between the 4S Model categories (Self, Situation, Support, Strategies) and questions on the semi-structured

interview protocol. The main questions on the semi-structured interview protocol were purposefully high-level to allow participants to answer as they felt best able to do so. There were additional follow-up questions utilized to facilitate additional discussion and also written to focus on obtaining more information about the participant to answer the research questions. The first aspect of data collection, and ultimately analysis and results discussed, revolves around the interviews.

Interviews

The total length of all interviews was 337.47 minutes or approximately 5 hours, 37 minutes of interview material. The longest interview lasted 1 hour and 3 minutes. The shortest interview lasted seventeen minutes and 30 seconds. The average length of all interviews was 37 minutes. Table 18 identifies the length of each interview by the participant.

Table 18
Interview Length and Participant Cross matrix

	Tani	Lozen	Deborah	Vera	Mary	Cleopatra	Mu-Lan	Harriet	Tamara
Interview Length	61.67	46.23	55.16	17.3	41.07	36.34	23.32	21.02	35.36

Colaizzi's 7-Step Method Data Analysis

I used Colaizzi's 7-Step method, discussed in chapter three, to conduct analysis on the one-on-one interview data. The following subsections discuss how I executed each step and, where applicable, provide statistical data corresponding to the number of significant statements (per participant and overall), number of formulated meanings (per participant and overall), number of cluster themes, and number of emerging themes. Figure 4 shows high level how the application of Colaizzi's 7-Step method reduces the data in a systematic process. The findings from the data analysis discussed in the following sections are presented in chapter five.
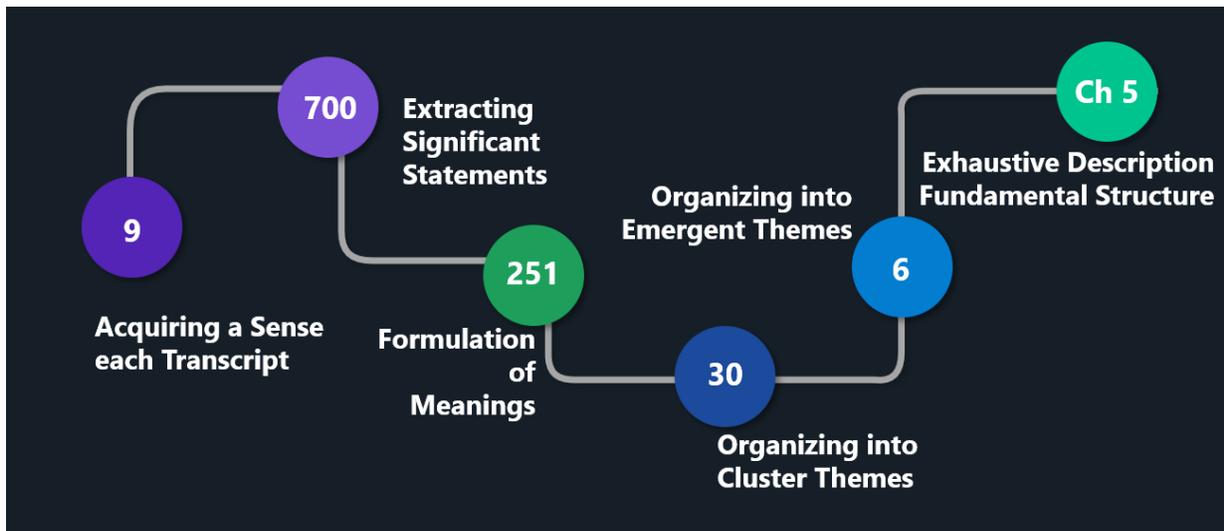
Figure 4: Colaizzi's 7-Step Method Analysis Results

Step 1: Acquiring A Sense of Each Transcript. I developed one transcription, in Excel, for each one-on-one interview, for a total of nine transcripts. The transcriptions traced the semi-structured interview protocol question number, the semi-structured interview protocol question, and verbatim what was said by both me and the participant.

Step 2: Extracting Significant Statements. I developed significant statements by taking phrases directly from the transcript of each interview. I recorded a significant statement when it seemed relevant to the research questions. When developing significant statements, I added a column to the original transcript Excel file allowing for traceability between participant, question, answer, and significant statement. As I developed significant statements, I assigned a numerical code to each significant statement to assist in traceability when completing the following steps. Figure 5 identifies the structure of the numerical coding.
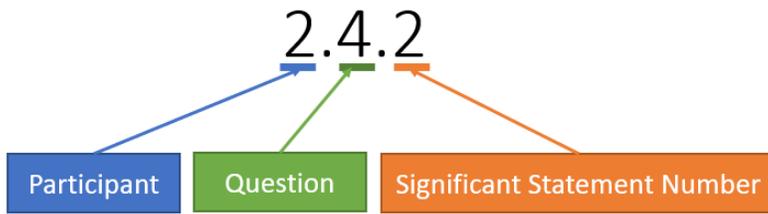
Figure 5: Significant Statement Numerical Code Legend

I provide an example of significant statements below. Table 19 identifies those

significant statements. Tani, when answering Question 1, "Why did you join the military?", an

icebreaker question, stated,

It is actually something I've always wanted to do growing up. I actually wanted to

go to West Point. I got everything up to my congress woman's recommendation,

and then at the last minute, I was a junior in high school, I just decided I would

miss the college experience. You know? So, I withdrew my application. Ended up

going to regular school, but it's something that stayed with me. And, so when I

graduated college, undergrad, I enlisted. Something I wanted to do. I do think

about that [not going to West Point] a lot and I kind of regret it, but at the same

time my whole life would be completely different. So, I don't regret it.

Table 19
Significant Statements and Numerical Assignment

Numerical Assignment	Significant Statements
1.1.1	"always wanted to do [join the military] growing up."
1.1.2	"decided I would miss the college experience [if I joined the military]"
1.1.3	"kind of regret it [not going to West Point]"
1.1.4	"my whole life would be completely different [if I'd gone to West Point]"

Table 20 identifies the number of significant statements documented by the participant by

an interview question. From nine transcripts, I identified 700 significant statements.

Table 20

Extracted Statements and/or Phrases Excerpts

Question	Participant								
	Tani	Lozen	Deborah	Vera	Mary	Cleopatra	Mu-Lan	Harriet	Tamara
1	8	2	16	2	9	9	7	11	5
2	9	8	9	3	16	1	3	7	6
3	38	20	8	7	4	7	16	4	19
4	38	14	11	4	13	14	15	3	6
5	18	0	26	7	15	8	10	4	5
6	5	0	21	2		4	2	8	12
7	5	4	10	0	6	2	2	3	4
8	19	10	8	3	3	4	4	2	9
9	6	1	0	1	4	9	5	5	11
10	6	1	5	2	7	11	4	2	3
Total	152	60	114	31	77	69	68	49	80

Step 3: Formulation of Meanings. I developed formulated meanings by restating, in my own words, the significant statements. I read each significant statement and then referred to the original transcript for additional context. I reviewed, if needed, the audio file of the interview. I did not develop formulated meanings for every significant statement. I assigned a number to each formulated meaning. The formulated meaning assigned numbers were consecutive throughout all nine transcripts to help with traceability between formulated meanings and emerging themes.

I provide an example of formulated meaning below. When Tani answered to Question 1, "Why did you join the military?," I identified four significant statements (see Step 1). From the four significant statements, I developed three formulated meanings. Table 21 identifies traceability between the significant statements and formulated meanings. Table 22 identifies the total number of both significant statements and formulated meanings I developed by participant. Appendix E identifies traceability between significant statements and formulated meanings. From the 700 significant statements, I identified 251 formulated meanings. The percentage of formulated meanings to significant statements is 35.

Table 21

Formulated Meanings and Numerical Assignment

Significant Statement (with numerical assignment)	Formulated Meanings (with numerical assignment)
1.1.1 "always wanted to do [join the military] growing up."	1 From an early age joining the military is a goal of children
1.1.2 "decided I would miss the college experience [if I joined the military]"	2 Individuals may not go into the military due to concerns about missing the college experience
1.1.3 "kind of regret it [not going to West Point]" 1.1.4 "my whole life would be completely different [if I'd gone to West Point]"	3 Individuals who delay going into the military for college tend to regret it later on in life but recognize they would not be the person they are today

Table 22

Significant Statements and Formulated Meanings Traceability to Participant

	Significant Statements	Formulated Meanings	Range
Tani	152	37	1-37
Lozen	60	22	38-59
Deborah	114	33	60-92
Vera	31	9	93-101
Mary	77	24	102-125
Cleopatra	69	33	126-158
Mu-Lan	68	30	159-188
Harriet	49	21	189-209
Tamara	80	42	210-251
	700	251	

Step 4: Organizing Formulated Meanings into Clusters of Themes. I organized the

251 formulated meanings (see Step 2) into 30 theme clusters and six emergent themes. To arrive

at cluster themes and emergent themes, I read each formulated meaning multiple times. Those

formulated meanings with a common meaning, regardless of the participant, led to the 30 cluster

themes. Then, I organized the cluster themes based on a common meaning, which led to the six

emergent themes. Emergent themes were not common to all participants' descriptions of their

experiences when transitioning into college. Five of six the emergent themes were common to all

participants. The one emergent theme not common across all participants was Military Troubles.

To identify how often the cluster themes were common among participants I developed a frequency table. Table 23 identifies each cluster/emergent theme and identifies if it was a typical, frequent, or variant theme among participants. Typical themes represent commonality between the majority of participants (i.e., between 7-9 participants). Frequent themes represent commonality between most of the participants (i.e., between 4-6 participants). Variant themes represent commonality between only a few of the participants (i.e., between 1-3 participants). Source data for Table 23 is in Appendix E and Appendix F. Appendix E traces the formulated meanings to originally extracted significant statements. Appendix F identifies traceability between formulated meanings, cluster themes, and emergent themes. .

Table 23

Frequency Table Between Participants and Cluster/Emergent Themes

Emergent and Cluster Themes	Typical	Frequent	Variant
Gaining Benefits of Being a Veteran			
Bettering yourself		X	
Gaining an Education		X	
Fulfilling a Dream			X
Becoming Successful			X
Escaping Home/College			X
Getting to travel			X
Military Challenges			
Military Family Dynamics		X	
Battling Gender Roles			X
Dissatisfaction with Military Job			X
Picking a College			
Location	X		
College Understanding of Veteran Benefits	X		
Options in Delivery Method		X	
Tuition		X	
Ability to Work with Family Needs			X
Word of Mouth			X
Problems Transitioning			
Feeling Alone	X		
Self-Doubt		X	
Understanding College Dynamics		X	
Figuring out GI Bill			X
Coping with PTSD/Medical Issues			X
Help with Transitioning			
Family	X		
Seeking Help		X	
Faith			X
Friends			X
Students			X
Succeeding in Transition			
Time Management	X		
Connecting with Instructors	X		
Handling Stress		X	
Breaking Stereotypes			X
Connecting with Staff/Administrators			X

Note: Typical = 7-9 participants, Frequent = 4-6 participants, Variant = 1-3 participants

Step 5: Exhaustively Describing the Investigative Phenomenon. I completed step 5 of

the Colaizzi 7-Step method by taking the cluster/emergent themes and using them to answer my

research questions. I used the most prevalent cluster themes identified in Table 23, specifically

those developed significant statements by taking phrases directly from the transcript of each interview. I recorded a significant statement when it seemed relevant to the research questions. When developing significant statements, I added a column to the original transcript Excel file allowing for traceability between participant, question, answer, and significant statement. As I developed significant statements, I assigned a numerical code to each significant statement to assist in traceability when completing the following steps. Figure 5 identifies the structure of the numerical five.

Step 6: Describing the Fundamental Structure of The Phenomenon. Using the exhaustive description developed from Step 5 above, I drafted an overarching narrative of the female veterans who participated and their experiences transitioning into college. According to Colaizzi (1978), this narrative should be reduced in structure from the narrative provided in Step 5. Haase and Myers (1988) recommend it include the processes and meaning derived from the previous steps in the data analysis. Results of Step 6 are in chapter five.

Step 7: Returning to The Participants. Colaizzi (1978) recommends sending the analyzed data to participants for validation. Following this suggestion, I provided exhaustive descriptions and fundamental structures of the phenomenon contained in chapter four and chapter five to all nine participants, via email. I requested feedback within two weeks. I received notification from two participants within 24 hours stating they received the email and had done a cursory review. Of the two participants who acknowledged receipt of the exhaustive descriptions and fundamental structures, only one identified an error, which was corrected. No other participants acknowledged receipt or provided feedback. Despite the lack of response in the participants' review of the exhaustive descriptions, the study results are still strong due to the nature of the analysis method. The systematic method of taking the data collected via the one-on-

one interviews, identifying significant statements, creating formulated meanings, and then organizing into themes allows for traceability to the raw data and does focus on experiences provided by participants of the phenomenon. The goal of step 7 in the Colaizzi method is to request the participants' views on how well the structure represents their experience. While not having that validation does weaken the results slightly, it does not weaken the overall results significantly.

4S Model Assignment

After developing the emergent/cluster themes, I assigned the emergent themes to categories of the Adult Transition Theory 4S Model: Self, Situation, Support, or Strategy. I assigned the emergent themes into categories of the 4S Model based on the cluster themes. I categorized the cluster themes using the characteristics of the 4S Model's categories discussed in chapter two. Figure 2 identifies those characteristics and Table 4 identifies questions asked within each of the 4S Model categories. Because I used cluster themes, some of the emergent themes are not definitively in one of the 4S Model categories. This is because cluster themes are more granular than emergent themes. I categorized three emergent themes into one 4S Model category: Gaining Benefits of Being a Veteran (Self), Picking a College (Situation), and Help with Transition (Support). Table 24 identifies the category/categories represented in each emergent theme based on the cluster themes.

Table 24

4S Model Assignment

Emergent Themes	4S Model
Gaining Benefits of Being a Veteran	Self
Military Challenges	Self/Situation
Picking a College	Situation
Problems Transitioning	Self/Situation/Strategy
Help with Transitioning	Support
Succeeding in Transition	Self/Support/Strategy

Trustworthiness

The final section of chapter four discusses trustworthiness of the study. Of the eight

frequently used strategies that improve trustworthiness in qualitative research identified by

Creswell (2013), I employed four: rich, thick description, audit trail, peer review or debriefing. I

also attempted to complete member-checking with little success. Creswell (2013) recommends at

least two be used in any given study. The following sections discuss the strategies I employed, or

attempted to employee, for this study. I then discuss rationale for not using some of the others.

Rich, Thick Description

A rich, thick description provides readers enough information to make decisions

regarding transferability since the writer provides in-depth discuss of the participants or

phenomenon under study (Creswell, 2013). Chapter five of this study provides this rich, thick

description. The results section provides readers the fundamental structure of the phenomenon

and then exhaustively describes the phenomenon, Colaizzi's 7-Step method, step 5 and step 6

respectively.

Audit Trail

An audit trail provides the process and product of the analysis (Creswell, 2013). The Colaizzi's 7-Step method is a very systematic method for conducting analysis for phenomenological studies. In chapter four I provide my actions to accomplish each step while clearly identifying inputs, outputs of each step as well as the results (i.e., number of significant statements, number of formulated meanings).

Peer Review or Debriefing

Peer review, or debriefing, provides an external review of the research process (Creswell, 2013). I provided the study to five peers reviewers. The focus of the peer reviews included reviewing the study for logical methods, identifying misunderstandings in data presentation, errors in writing, and ensure overall comprehension of the study's purpose, execution, and output. The peer review was not a review of the data analyzed I operationally define peers as individuals who have, at a minimum, a master's degree and a working knowledge of research. Two of my peer reviewers have a Ph.D. and two have a master's degree. Additionally, all peer reviewers were female, but none had prior military experience. However, two have a combine 20 years of civilian experience working for the military, Navy specifically. The other two have experience working for military contractors. To date, I have received feedback from one peer. Recommendations included reduce excessive wordy areas, change to use of pronouns "she" rather than repeat pseudonym in the bios, and a question about use of pronoun "I" in the document.

Member-checking

Member-checking involves the researching reaching back to the participants and having them review the data, analyses, results, and discussions for accuracy (Creswell, 2013). This strategy is also part of the Colaizzi's 7-Step method. I provided participants, via email, the exhaustive descriptions and fundamental structures contained within chapter four and chapter five. I identified specific sections related to data analysis results and asked each participant to review and provide feedback on the narratives. I asked for feedback within two weeks. I have received informal feedback from two participants. Based on participant review, I made one change to chapter four. While the lack of robust participant review of the exhaustive descriptions and fundamental structures does weaken the results slightly, the systematic method employed in data analysis using the other Colaizzi steps still identifies a strong study focusing on the lived experiences of female veterans transitioning into and through college.

Clarifying Researcher Bias

By clarifying researcher bias, readers understand the researcher's position and any biases or assumptions that may impact the study (Creswell, 2013). It is also important for the researcher to recognized inherent bias regarding the study scope and outcomes. The researcher positionality is commonly used to force the primary researcher to acknowledge preconceptions and expectations specific to the study topic. I discuss three aspects of my research positionality: how findings corroborated prior beliefs/assumptions; how findings contradicted prior beliefs/assumptions; and how unexpected findings emerged. First, however, below is my biography.

Researcher biography. I am a 44, Caucasian (other than Hispanic) female. I am single, never married. I have no human children but have two dogs who I consider my children. I am

employed, for wages, full-time. I have not served in the military but have been a civil servant, working for the USN, for almost 18 years. My mother was a civil servant for 29 years and retired after working with the United States Marine Corps (USMC) for 23 years. I have numerous family members, all male, who are/were veterans.

My father, paternal cousin, maternal uncle, and maternal great-uncle served in the military. My father, who served in the USA, deployed to Vietnam as did his brother. My paternal grandfather and maternal great-uncle served in World War II. Both my paternal grandfather and maternal great-uncle received the purple heart; my maternal great-uncle lost his leg. Two paternal uncles and my paternal grandfather served in the USMC. A maternal uncle served in the USA. I am a college graduate, one of the first on both sides of my family.

I am the only one on my mother's side to get a master's degree and will be only on both sides of the immediate and closely extended (aunts, uncles, first cousins) family to get a doctorate. I always wonder if I should have entered the military after high school but recognize I was not brave enough to do so at that time. I am not even sure I am brave enough now. I serve those who serve through my dedication in my job ensuring the Warfighter gets the necessary training they need to be safe and do their job. I always wanted to go to college and worked either part-time or full-time during all of my college years. Sometimes I worked three jobs to pay for school costs. I went back to school for my Ph.D., after an eight-year gap, because I wanted to learn more of the foundational knowledge of my career and be better able to help my customers, the Warfighters.

It took me my entire coursework time to determine what I wanted to do for my dissertation research. I struggled with it for semester after semester. I knew I wanted to focus on military, but that was it. It was not until I did a research assignment with a cohort member,

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focusing on PTSD affects, that I started to refine my topic. In working on that class project, I found literature focusing on the transition of veterans into different environments (civilian life, business, college). I learned of studies using the Adult Transition Theory, a simple but complex theory that has helped counselors for years. The commonality of the studies was the focus on veterans holistically. There were exclusion criteria dealing with aspects of military such as branch of service, but no exclusion criteria specific to gender. Then, when I read in one of the studies the researchers suggest future research on female veterans, DiRamio el al., (2008), I had my topic. I worked on the criteria for a while, the commonality being only female veterans would be the focus. Evidently, I settled on the variables (external and internal) specific to the population (female veterans) and I was off.

How findings corroborated prior beliefs/assumptions. This section focuses on what findings corroborated my prior beliefs/assumptions specific to female veterans' transition to college. First, I was pretty confident that one of the findings would be that female veterans have challenges dealing with family obligations, specifically child care, when transitioning out of the military and into college. Of those participants who had children during their transition, all indicated that, to some degree, it influenced them. Whether it was being unable to fully transition into college, resulting in a delay, or not being able to connect with fellow students, familial obligations came first to the participants and college second. Another finding I believed would be identified included a focus on the GI Bill and its impacts on their decision to go to college. All of the participants received GI Bill benefits. However, the application of those benefits were not universally optimal. Some were able to use their benefits fully, some lost them all together, while others used them too rapidly based on decisions such as which college to attend. Finally, I

expected to hear of the overall problems experienced in transition. The existing literature stated there were difficulties and the participants in this study confirmed those prior studies' results.

How findings contradicted prior beliefs/assumptions. This section focuses on what findings contradicted my prior beliefs/assumptions specific to female veterans' transition to college. One of the biggest findings that contradicted my prior beliefs/assumptions was the high number of participants who felt self-doubt. The majority of the participants mentioned they were daunted, or terrified, or intimidated by their experiences with instructors, other students, or going to college. These women are strong. They are women warriors. It did not occur to me they would be self-conscious or insecure. Another finding was the varied reasons for selecting a college and the willingness, for some, to pick a place and then move there to go to school relatively quickly. Maybe it is because I never traveled far from home for my degrees, but I thought that the participants would hesitate to move to go to a school. I think I felt this way because I thought, they just spent however many years of their life moving every two years, they will not want to move again after separating from the military. However, after talking to them, it makes sense in that it is precisely the fact that the military moves them every 2-4 years that it's so easy for them to move for college. The military imbues in them the nomadic lifestyle. Most times individuals are only in one location for 2-4 years, so they are familiar with leaving and moving and all that entails. Another item I found interesting while doing the research, which contradicted my preconceived notions, was the lack of issues with instructors the female veterans seemed to present. I thought, going in, there would be a large number of issues specific to the interactions between instructors and the participants. However, the opposite was true. For the most part, all participants were pleased with their instructor's knowledge, attitudes, and overall willingness to help them. I thought there may be more disconnect and tension between the two groups because

the female veterans are older than traditional students and have lived experiences that may lead them to argue with the instructor if their opinions varied. However, as long as the participant was treated respectfully, and the instructor open to communicating, problems were not typical or frequent.

Unexpected Findings. This section focuses on what unexpected findings I found during the study. One unexpected finding was the focus on options for delivery method. I did not expect that to be a frequent topic among the participants. Most participants had flexibility in selecting delivery modality (online, face-to-face, mixed-mode), however those are methods becoming common the last few years. Part of the options for delivery method included how participants were able to use prior military-based courses and CLEP out of classes. One participant, especially, was able to reduce her master's courseware requirements by 10 because she had taken applicable courses while in the military. This was one of the reasons she selected the university. Another interesting incident revolved around delivery method specific to campus. When the participant was re-stationed to an area where her university did not have a presence, the university allowed her to attend a local, smaller university and counted those classes toward her degree. I thought the ability of the college to be flexible in allowing a student to attend a local, non-affiliated college and provide them credit for their specific degree very proactive of the university. This flexibility also allowed them to retain one of their students.

Trustworthiness Strategies Not Used

Of the eight strategies, that improve a study's trustworthiness, identified by Creswell (2013), I used five (a) rich, thick description, (b) audit trail, (c) peer review or debriefing, (d) member-checking, and (e) clarification of researcher bias. Identification and rationale for not

using the remaining three strategies (triangulation, negative case analysis, and prolonged engagement and persistent observation is below.

- Triangulation: I was not able to perform triangulation, which uses "multiple and different sources, methods, investigator, and theories to provide corroborating evidence" Creswell, 2013, p 251), because I only collected data from interviews with female veterans who met my inclusion criteria for participants. The lack of multiple sources of data is also a characteristic of phenomenological studies.

- Negative Case Analysis: I was not able to perform negative case analysis, the refinement of "working hypotheses as the inquiry advances in light of negative or disconfirming evidence" (Creswell, 2013, p 251), because I conducted data analysis after all interviews completed and was not able to perform follow-on interviews as planned. Additionally, negative case analysis is typically used for grounded theory studies, not phenomenological studies.

- Prolonged Engagement and Persistent Observation: I was not able to perform prolonged engagement and persistent observation, because the study did not focus on observing the female veterans as they experienced the selected phenomenon. Additionally, like negative case analysis, prolonged engagement and persistent observation is not a typical form of improving trustworthiness in phenomenological studies.

Chapter Four Summary

In chapter four, I discussed the data analysis and trustworthiness of the study. I first discussed the data analysis of both the pre-interview questionnaire and the semi-structured interview protocol. When discussing the pre-interview questionnaire, I provided descriptive

statistics for the sections of the questionnaire and provided participant biographies. Within the semi-structured interview protocol data analysis section, I discussed the interviews themselves, providing overall time, longest/shortest interview, and average interview time. I then moved into detailing how I conducted the analysis in a systematic method using the Colaizzi 7-Step method. I discuss each step of Colaizzi's 7-Step method and document the actions taken to complete the step and provided data such as numbers of significant statements, formulated meanings, and themes. I also provided examples of my analysis process and results through tables containing data. I ended chapter four with a discussion on trustworthiness. I identified the eight methods of improving trustworthiness within a study based on Creswell (2013). I then explained how I implemented five of the eight method. Next, I discussed rationalities for why I did not implement the other three methods. All of the data provided in chapter four is the source for the findings discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE:
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Chapter five discusses data analysis results detailed in chapter four correlating to step 5 and step 6 of Colaizzi's 7-Step method. Chapter five sections present the findings of the data analysis and then discuss the findings by answering the research questions. Chapter five concludes with recommendations for future research and implications of the study.

Findings

Overall, by focusing only on female veterans I identified several factors common among the participants related to the Moving In and Moving Through transitional phases. While not the original point of the study, the results focus predominately on themes found within the Moving In and Moving Through transitional phases. This is because no themes were associated with the Moving Out transitional phases. Rationale for no themes associated with the Moving Out transitional phases relates to the semi-structured interview protocol questions. The questions, as was determined during data analysis, focus on experiences transitioning into and through college. There are no questions associated with experiences post-graduation. As a result, the commonality of themes within the transitional phases pertain to Moving In and Moving Through. Common themes within Moving In included feeling self-doubt and isolated, colleges understanding veterans' benefits, and location of colleges as a criteria for selection. Moving Through included common themes such as seeking help from others, utilizing skills in time management, obtaining support from family, and connecting with instructors.

Regarding the external variables of courseware, interactions with faculty, interactions with staff/administration, and interactions with student services, participants shared common

experiences for all four. Courseware experiences revolved around participants feeling alone and unable to connect with their fellow students, utilizing specific time management techniques to maintain a work, life, and school balance, and focusing on attending courses that provided them options in delivery methods (i.e., online versus face-to-face courses or varying modality of deliveries). Interactions with faculty focused on the theme connecting with instructors while interactions with staff/administration focused on the theme connecting with staff/administration. Interactions with student services experiences revolved around the college understanding the veterans' benefits.

From a holistic level, the study's typical factors identified as important to participants included colleges understanding veteran's benefits, time management, support of family, connecting with instructors, feeling alone, and location of a college as a selecting factor. Of the typical factors, all but location have been identified in prior research as factors impacting veterans transition. Frequent factors important to participants of this study included feelings of self-doubt, seeking help, and options in delivery methods. Of the frequent factors identified in this study, only options in delivery methods has not been identified in previous research studies. Finally, one theme, connecting with staff/administrators, which was a variant response from participants, was identified as a factor based on the inclusion of the external variable of interactions with staff/administration. However, prior literature has included this as a factor and was not an unexpected finding like location of a college or options in delivery method.

In answering each research question, the applicability of the theoretical framework was addressed. To discuss the applicability of the theoretical framework, i.e., the Adult Transition Theory, each research question addressed one aspect. Research question one addressed

applicability of the transitional phases (Moving In, Moving Through, and Moving Out). Research question two address applicability of the 4S Model.

Research question one's discussion demonstrates the applicability of the Adult Transition Theory's transitional phases as a guiding factor in the study. The transitional phases were used as a guide to categorizing participants into one of the three transitional phases. The transitional phases also assisted me in explaining common experiences of the participants within each transitional phase. The use of the transitional phases to categorize participate is also supported in literature, as researchers have used the transitional phases to classify their participants as well. However, comparison with the existing literature does indicate the application of the transitional phases as a classification mechanism is subjective between researchers.

In contrast to the applicability of the transitional phases in guiding the study and answering and discussing research question one, the use of the 4S Model related to the external variables did prove as reliable as expected. Other than assisting in identifying the types of questions to ask during the one-on-one interviews which represent, in Table 9, each of the 4S Model categories (Self, Situation, Support, Strategies), the use of the 4S Model was not a guiding factor in answering or discussing research question two. Specifically, the use of the 4S Model has a potential to bias the data analysis should the category be used as a pre-determined method for classification. The existing literature, except for one study, does not use the 4S Model as a way to classify the data, which leads me to think this was something prior researchers found out or determined prior to conducting their study. The only study that uses the 4S Model does not classify the data but discusses it in contextual relation to the 4S Model categories. This was not done in my study.

Discussion: Research Question One

The first research question asks, "What are common experiences of female veterans within each Adult Transition Theory transitional phase?" The three transitional phases are Moving In, Moving Through, and Moving Out. This research question really has two parts. First, classify each participant into a transitional phase. To classify each participant into a transitional phase, I used criteria identified in Table 16 to categorize each participant into each transition phase. The classification of each participant into a transitional phase focused on their status as a student at the time of data collection. Based on the criteria identified in Table 16, I did not classify any participant within the Moving In phase. I classified two participants within the Moving Through phase. I classified the remaining seven participants within the Moving Out phase.

The second aspect of the research question focuses on those common experiences of female veterans within each transitional phase. The common experiences of participants within each transitional phase does not directly align with their transitional phase assignment at the time of data collection. Because of the types of questions asked during the one-on-one interviews focused on experiences when transitioning into and through college, I identified common themes for participants within the Moving In and the Moving Through transitional phases. Because the one-on-one interview questions did not ask about experiences specific to exiting college, I did not have data specific to existing college. Therefore, I identified no common themes among the participants for the Moving Out transitional phase.

Moving In

None of the participants are currently in the Moving In transitional phase. No participants fell into the Moving In transitional phase because none have recently left the military, began attending college less than one year ago, are currently in their first semester of college, just recently finished taking their first semester, or planning to return to college soon. However, because all of the participants have transitioned out of the Moving In transitional phase, the one-on-one interviews did identify experiences when they were entering college after military service which means they can contribute to aspects of Moving In transitional phase.

Overall, all participant experiences while transitioning from the military into college can be placed into Moving In transitional phase. A major factor for the Moving In transitional phase includes finding a college that understand veterans benefits. Experiences conveyed during interview ranged between the ability of colleges to assist female veterans in this area. Two additional factors specific to the Moving In transitional phase included feeling self-doubt and isolated. Several participants experienced self-doubt related to their ability to meet the challenges of college live. They felt they were not at the same level as the other students because the other students had experience with the college environment. Feelings of isolation tended to revolve around not having family close by or not really connecting with other students. Finally, location was a factor that played into the Moving In transition phase. There was a mixed response when discussing location. Several participants did not mind that they had to move to attend college while others selected colleges primarily because they were close by. Challenges identified during the Moving In transitional phase tended to focused on trying to figure out their GI Bill benefits and not understanding fully their program/college requirements, which caused issues with their GI Bill.

The following sections discuss some of the following cluster themes surrounding those experiences: self-doubt, feeling along, location of college, and college understanding of veteran benefits. Self-doubt and feeling alone were frequently mentioned among the participants (between 4-6 participants). The importance of a college understanding veteran benefits and location of their college were typical responses among the participants (between 7-9).

Self-Doubt. Self-Doubt was a frequent (between 4-6) response from participants when transitioning into college. Deborah, who is a self-confirmed introvert, talked about her difficulty reaching out for help. Often, because of her introverted personality, Deborah would reach out to others for assistance as a last resort. She was thankful for her father as a source of comfort for her since he, also being former military, was familiar with some of the challenges she was experiencing. When talking about her father helped alleviate her self-doubt Deborah said, "he was help in that…that I wasn't crazy." Deborah mentioned some of her challenges with self-doubt revolved around her interpretation of situations and if she was misconstruing interactions with other students because she "couldn't relate to other students because they were civilians," something also made even harder by her introvert personality.

Lozen and Mu-Lan also indicated they suffered from self-doubt. However, their self-doubt was more related to their courseware. Lozen shared how she did not feel she was capable enough to succeed, or that she belonged in college:

> a lack of feeling like a real college student….felt like [I] was, kind of faking
> it…like [I] wasn't qualified enough or smart enough….I was thinking, mainly I
> was concerned about by performance and whether or not how well I was going to
> do in that environment.

Mu-Lan also struggled with self-doubt related to courseware. It was so severe that she withdrew from a course twice because she suffered from panic attacks and lack of confidence in accomplishing the assignments. The first time she withdrew, she did not even make it to the second class. The instructor was at the board writing math equations and she felt so overwhelmed that she left. The second time she made it to a few more classes but still had to withdrawal due to self-doubt. The final time she took the class she met with the instructor and persevered.

Feeling Alone. Feeling alone was a frequent (between 4-6) response among participants. Deborah, who attended college traditionally (i.e., face-to-face) talked about not having family close by during her transition and that it did cause a struggle:

My support structure, they actually live in northern Virginia. It was about an hour/two hours away. They weren't there for the day to day going to school or anything….Because it was a whole new world for me, now as a real deal civilian so I needed to adapt to that.

Feeling alone, however, did not just stem from not having family close by. Cleopatra, who took an online program for her Ph.D. expressed how "it's easy to feel isolated," when in an online program. Tamara echoed this feeling of isolation:

…since that's online its [all] communication. Since they don't see you they don't know if you're having a hard time or you're doing fine. I'm also an ISD [instructional systems designer] in aeronautics which is not common. I'm the only one that I have met the entire time. A couple instructors but that's as close as I've gotten. Some of the concepts, especially like aerodynamics, which is very math intense. I've had some really good one-on-ones across video, examples of having

to go through know some math problems that I was like....I don't know what we're

talking about the combustion of a jet engine to figure out the mach. I was like Ok.

Location. Location was a typical (between 7-9) response among participants. Deborah

stated, her three main factors were no GRE, close to home, and full Basic Allowance and

Housing (BAH). Both Tani and Lozen selected their college first, then moved to the area to

attend classes. Lozen talked about how it was not a big deal for her to move to where her college

was located:

I literally just up and moved, found an apartment, and you know, kind of literally

drove down the week school started and just hoped for the best. But in the

military you're used to [that]. You never have anybody helping you with anything.

So, it's like you get orders and you just up and move somewhere. So, it wasn't

anything weird to me, you know? I'd done it a million times before.

Vera, Mu-Lan, and Harriet also mentioned location as a factor in their transition.

However, this was about being able (or not able) to attend college due to their husbands being re-

stationed by the military. Vera selected her college of its location to her husband's duty station.

Mu-Lan was able to continue her degree, but at a different college, after her husband was re-

stationed to an area that did not have a satellite campus. Harriet was not able to continue her

degree at all since there were no colleges near her husband's duty station and online programs

were not available at that time. Tamara shared that when she selected her first master's program,

she picked the school because it was located near her work and there was a strong relationship

between her company and the college she attended.

College Understanding of Veterans Benefits. College understanding of veterans'

benefits was a typical (between 7-9) response among participants. Deborah stated she was very

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particular as to the research she did for her college experience because of the GI Bill. The GI Bill provides "100% financial assistance" including tuition, a stipend for living, and BAH. Having such great benefits, and understanding her benefits, allowed Deborah to go to college full-time and she did not have to work while getting her degree. Additionally, because the college Deborah selected understood her benefits, she did not have issues with her GI Bill. Deborah said, "I was trying to pack my classes, so I could have the full BAH, so I could pay my mortgage and to class and not worry too much about finding a job right away."

However, no other participants had such great success with using their G. I. Bill. Mary, for her master's degree, selected a college out of state, but because that college was not familiar with veterans' benefits, it was not communicated to her this would cause her to use her GI Bill sooner. Expending her GI Bill benefits quicker than expected required her to take out a student loan to continue school. Mary shared how this was different from her first college experience where the college understood veterans' benefits:

> The only thing I can really think of that I would say mixed about is the financial aid. I don't know if it's because of the process or I've had two different experiences since I retired. The first school that I attended…they were very smooth, their process was streamlined for individuals, for individuals, with the post 9/11 so it went just like *finger snaps* that and they had one section that was dedicated but you know it was like something I could physically go to. Now with [second college] [I] went back and forth a lot between the financial aid office and the VA office. Just because the information was mixed sometimes, and I would say I didn't get the hang of the process or it wasn't consistent until after my second semester…. Nobody really explained to me the process...

Tani also experienced similar incidents with a college understanding veterans' benefits. The error caused her to enroll in dual master's programs to ensure she did not lose her benefits. Similar to Mary, Lozen discussed how she used her GI Bill up sooner than expected because she chose a private institute, causing her to take out student loan debt. When asked about her student loan, Lozen stated at the time she got it:

> Oh, it's just a student loan. Everybody gets them. You have a low interest rate. By the time, you know, you pay a hundred bucks a month for the rest of your career, you know? And what's the big deal, you know? So that I, I was not reluctant. I wish somebody would have made me more reluctant.

Support/Contradict Existing Literature Discussion. The finding from this study indicated female veterans transitioning into college have common experiences that can influence their successful transition. The above discussed frequent and typical responses from the participants that included feelings of self-doubt and isolation, focusing on the location of a college as a factor for selection, and an important for colleges to understand veterans' benefits.

The factors discussed above support prior literature. Specifically, existing studies on transition of veterans found veterans experience positive and negative aspects of transitioning into college. When classified in the Moving In transitional phase, prior studies found that veterans experience self-doubt (Diamond, 2012; Normandin, 2012), feel isolated (Dunklin, 2012; Maurin, 2012; Normandin, 2012; Wheeler, 2010), often have issues with getting their benefits (DiRamio et al., 2008; Dunklin, 2012; Griffin & Gilbert, 2012; Wheeler, 2010; Zinger & Cohen, 2010), have difficulties connecting with peers (DiRamio et al., 2008), feeling uncomfortable sharing experiences (Maurin, 2012), try to blend in (DiRamio et al., 2008), experiences differ based on service (Maurin, 2012) and often connect easier with other veterans (DiRamio et al.,

2008). The results of this study support previous study results, as it identified female veterans also feel self-doubt and isolation, have difficulties with their benefits, and use location as a selecting factor for college. Of the themes discussed above, several were more prominent in prior studies than others. The most common theme identified in this study and prior studies was the importance of colleges understanding veterans' benefits. DiRamio el al., (2008), Dunklin (2012), Griffin and Gilbert (2012), Wheeler (2012), and Zinger and Cohen (2010) all identified experiences with veterans' benefits within their studies. The next most common theme between this study and prior studies was feeling alone (i.e., isolation). Dunklin (2012), Maurin (2012), Normandin, (2012), and Wheeler (2012) identified isolation as factors impacting veterans transition. Both self-doubt and location were also mentioned in previous studies; self-doubt by Diamond, (2012) and Normandin (2012) and location by Dunklin (2012) and Wheeler (2012).

While there are several results from this study that support existing literature, there are also several that either are found in existing literature but not major factors in this study, are found in existing literature but this study contradicted, or not found in existing literature but were factors in my study.

Found in literature but not major factors. First, DiRamio et al. (2008) identified that veterans try to connect with peers, connect with other veterans, and try to blend in. While some of my participants did mention connecting with peers and other veterans the mentions were variant (between 1-3) responses among participants and did not represent major incidents specific to their being in the Moving In transitional phase and no participant mentioned they tried to just blend in.

Found in literature but contradicted. Maurin (2012) identified veterans are uncomfortable sharing experiences and that experiences can differ based on branch of

service. My study participants expressed appreication for being able to include prior experiences into their assignments. Additionally, my participants represented three military branches: USA, USN, and USAF. Unlike the findings of Maurin (2012), the common experiences between participants in this study did not differ based one specific military branches.

Not found in existing literature. The one major factor my study identified which I could not find in existing literature related to location of a college playing a factor in it selection. Location was a typical (between 7-9) response among participants and was critical in the majority of the participants selecting a college to attend.

Moving Through

As part of the study, I categorized each participant into one of the three Adult Transition Theory transitional phases. Two participants are currently in the Moving Through transitional phase. However, as I categorized the other seven participants within the Moving Out transitional phase, all participants shared experiences applicable to the Moving Through transitional phase.

Overall, participants shared common experiences during their time within the Moving Through transitional phase. These common experiences revolved around the themes of seeking help, time management, family support, and connecting with instructors. Some participants had trouble seeking help due to their personality, but overall most were able to seek help from guidance counselors, professional counselors, and other students. Time management was a key factor for the participants in the Moving Through transitional phase. Nearly all identified it as a crucial aspect of their success in this phase. The support of family was also important, as it often let the participants focus on their schoolwork and made the transition smoother. Finally,

connecting with instructors turned out to be a key and a mostly positive experience for participants. Challenges during the Moving Through phase focused more on instructors needing to be aware that female veterans are a unique student demographic and not always capable of doing the same thing as traditional students. Participants shared positive experiences with developing skills related to time management, seeking help, family, and connecting with instructors. Of the four themes discussed, participants had negative experiences specific to seeking help and connecting with instructors. Time management, family, and connecting with instructors were typical (between 7-9) responses among participants. Seeking help was frequent (between 4-6) among participants.

Seeking Help. Seeking help was a frequent (between 4-6) response among participant. Sources of help sought by the participants include advisors/guidance counselors, peers, professional counselors, and student services-based assistance (i.e., disability, child care). Tani, Mu-Lan, and Tamara spoke of the importance of an advisor/guidance counselor who could assist them in selecting courses and navigating college. Tani, who did not speak with an advisor/guidance counselor expressed the repercussions during her interview:

> My original plan was to graduate with a Master's in Education and I didn't know when I enrolled, I didn't have an advisor. I mean you know you are assigned an advisor, but I never met with my advisor prior to beginning my college courses. I ended up missing my cohort by a year. So instead of a 2-year master's program, I had to wait, after I finished my first year, an entire year before I could get my prerequisite courses that were required to complete the remainder of my courses. So, in the meantime, I enrolled in a second master's program.

Lozen, Deborah, and Mu-Lan identified reaching out to peers as a successful method used to help the transition. Lozen identified her student peers as a source for helping her conquer her self-doubt:

> I kind of had to seek that out from my peers….none of my peers were in the same boat as me. All of my peers had done their undergraduate in place, sat through school; they knew the drill. You know, your college professor sends out a syllabus. You sit through a lecture. You team up and do projects together….so, as I fostered relationships with the students in my class, and you kind of got a feel for what their level of performance and expectations were you kind of realize you're on the same playing field and you don't have to worry as much.

Professional counseling is also an option available to female veterans and one avenue Deborah availed herself of during college. Being very spiritual, Deborah chose to get professional counseling to help her deal with the changes her transition into college had on her:

> I actually sought out counseling just to deal with, the you know, transition but I sought out a Christian counselor because it was a really tough transition for me. I am an introverted and didn't have a lot of people to reach out to even to find a job, because I am such an introvert. So, I took advantage of going to counseling just to process on what was going on and get suggestions on how to deal with some of the issues I was dealing with.

Time management. Time management was a typical (between 7-9) response among participants. Surprisingly, no participant connected their time management skills with discipline learned from their military experience. The majority of the comments on time management revolved around how the participants had enough time to do their school work while balancing

personal lives. This was especially true for Cleopatra and Mary who especially focused on time management due to their online programs. Having never attended a completely online school and not having children, it was to me, very innovative and proactive strategy when Cleopatra explained how she managed her time because it was important for her to be there for her children:

Every day, for lunch, I would go read in the car….It was important to me that I was there [for my children]. My son played basketball and it was very important…for me to be there. So, if he had a game, that day was going to be lost. So, I had to make sure I got the stuff done ahead of time…[or] do after his game. But, I just, I wanted to be there, and I didn't want him to look up in the stands and I'm looking down at paper….making sure I was present for the children.

Mary in contrast developed a very strict schedule,

I work from 7:00 to 4:00….So, my typical day, and this is faithfully every single day, I come home from work [and] go straight into my room and do my homework until about 11:00….this is every day and my husband takes care of the kids. I mean, he makes dinner [and] he helps them.

Tamara also experienced time management issues when she was getting her first masters,

Just taking extra time to go to the school after working already. Going to the school and making sure I had childcare. Making sure that my husband wasn't on travel. Just keeping it all planned out. That was a little bit more difficult versus just doing homework is time-consuming.

Time management was also important for those participants who attended a more traditional (i.e., face-to-face) college. Tani and Lozen, who did not have children when in

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college, expressed time management was a skill needed to succeed and juggled working or managing their studies between classes, labs, and research work. Lozen described how she ensured she met her curriculum responsibilities through time management:

> I set a schedule up to where all my six days a week I was working on either homework assignments, or you're in class, or you're in the office. So typically, the graduate courses there's like three-hour courses, and you take like maybe….four. So, a few days a week you'd be sitting in courses, and then outside of that you're doing homework. And the homework, the length of time to input for graduate work was way higher than what undergraduate was. I mean, you can knock out some undergraduate homework in like 30 minutes sometimes, you know or an hour; maybe spend a day working on a paper that's due across the whole semester. Our graduate coursework homework was extensive…. So, yeah, it was, um, get up, go to class. Maybe go to the gym, eat, and then you'd spend the evenings doing all your homework.

Family. Support of family was a typical (between 7-9) response among participants. Family support includes husbands, fathers, brothers, sisters, and children. The majority of the participants identified their husband as the first line and, in some cases, their only support. Mary shared how she is able to express her frustrations to her husband but also has gained the support of her children in helping her through her tough moments, sometimes through humor:

> I vent to him all the time and my kids…you know it's so funny when I explain to my kids at the same time, you know you guys go to college and get to graduate degree level and such you can't get bad grades. *in gest they say* "Oh my God, mom got a B and that's bad," I was like you don't understand in the program that

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I'm in a C is bad ya know. My kids, they always, they've always been supportive

of me and they're like, 'Mom you can do this, Mom really? You can do this.' And

my husband as well, they are a big factor in that.

Lozen relied on her sister while Deborah was able to rely on her father and sanity checks.

Deborah when she would start second guessing herself:

My dad was retired military, from a retired military perspective he knew what it

was like and had the same thing….He was like I totally get what you are saying.

There is a difference when you wear the uniform and when you don't. It is

glaringly obvious. He was help in that - that I wasn't crazy for thinking that.

when she felt she was overthinking or interpreting something off since he had been.

Connecting with instructors. Connecting with instructors was a typical (between 7-9)

response among participants. Overall, participants were able to rely on their instructors for

assistance when needed, either regarding schoolwork or when they were unable to relate with

other students. The connection with instructors was critical, and successful, if the instructors

recognized they were teaching not just the traditional student demographic. Deborah expressed

that while she ended up liking her instructors, there were sometimes ones that she did not think

considered their classroom demographic and that would often cause her frustration:

…some were just really tough and tough for no reason….there was this time I got

dressed down by one of my instructors. In my 20 years in the military, I never had

someone talk to me the way [the instructor talked]….I think I liked honestly, like

two of the older professors, but the ones I really liked were the younger and

energetic, they were younger than me and that was hard to deal with and they

were like doctor holders and they were like 10 years younger than me…but they

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were fun and relevant and one guy the first time I was like his teaching style, I

think he was adjusting his teaching style, he would ask you questions and he

would be like no you're wrong and people were liked too scared and then he just

realized that after we took a couple courses with him that he just really smart….

His intention was good, but he was just so smart I grew to like him, and he was

another younger guy.

Cleopatra mentioned similar frustrations when she shared she often got the impression

that her instructors tended to focus more attention on the more traditional student demographic.

She thought that maybe the instructors felt those students needed the attention more than she did

since she was older and had lived a more variety of experiences thanks to her military

experiences:

Some of my instructors, I believe, were used to teaching college students….like

an undergrad straight outta their mama's house or they related to them that way.

Me, being an adult, having experienced the world more, having lived on my own

or whatever, they seemed to just kinda be really, really hands off.

These experiences were similar to an experience Harriet had with a Spanish teacher who

told her to learn Spanish fluently she needed to go to Mexico for the summer, something a

single, young student could perhaps do but not a married, pregnant mother of one.

Support/Contradict Existing Literature Discussion. The finding from this study

indicated female veterans transitioning through college have common experiences that can

influence their successful transition. The above discussed frequent and typical responses from

the participants that include seeking help, utilizing time management skills, having support of

their family, and connecting with instructors. Existing studies in transition of veterans found

veterans experienced these four factors when transitioning through college. Connecting to instructors was a factor most often mentioned in prior research (Diamond, 2012; DiRamio el al., 2008, Dunklin, 2012; Griffin & Gilbert, 2012; Normandin, 2012; Zinger & Cohen, 2010). DiRamio et al. (2008) stated participants of their study hoped instructors would acknowledge veterans as different student population. The experiences discussed in prior research related to connecting with instructors vary in type (i.e., positive or negative) and are similar in experiences detailed by Deborah (i.e., rude instructor) and Harriet (i.e., not recognizing she is not a traditional student) (Diamond, 2012; Dunklin, 2012; Griffin & Gilbert, 2012; Zinger & Cohen, 2010).

The results of this study also support previous study results regarding seeking support. However, while most of the experiences in this study are positive, prior studies indicant the majority of experiences with seeking help were negative and can often cause frustration (DiRamio et al., 2008; Griffin & Gilbert, 2012). Time management was a common experience between this and prior studies that yielded positive experiences in that it assisted veterans in completing assignments (Normandin, 2010; Wheeler, 2012). Support was a final commonality between prior studies and this one. Wheeler (2010) stated, "support is crucial for those making a transition as difficult as the one the veterans are making" (p. 787). In the discussion above of commonalities between participants in the Moving Through transitional phase, support of family was stressed. However, while being supported in prior studies, the previous studies included within support not just family but other students (DiRamio et al., 2008; Normandin, 2012). Support of other students was a theme in this study but received only variant (between 1-3) responses among participants.

Moving Out

Moving Out is an "ending one series of transitions and beginning to ask what comes next" (Anderson et al., 2012). I categorized the majority of the participants into Moving Out based on criteria in Table 16. Because the focus of the study was on participants' experiences coming into and during college, I set criteria specific to current educational experience: just entering college (Moving In), in college for a pre-determined length of time (Moving Through), and no longer in college (Moving Out). Additionally, the instrumentation used to collect data focused on experiences starting (Moving In) and during (Moving Through) college. The semi-structured interview protocol did not ask questions specific to experiences focusing on participants exiting (Moving Out) college. Because the study focused on experiences common while just starting and during college, there are no common themes identified between participants for experiences exiting (Moving Out) college. The closest themes related to the Moving Out transitional phase common among the participants are those associated with their transitioning out of the military. There were two themes common to the participants as they transitioned out of the military: bettering yourself and gaining an education. However, as the focus of the study was on the transition into (Moving In) and during (Moving Through) college, those themes are not discussed here.

Support/Contradict Existing Literature Discussion. The finding from this study did not identify common experiences of female veterans transitioning out of college. There was no data collected specific to the Moving Out phase as the focus of the study was on the transitioning into and through college. There were themes applicable to the Moving Out transitional phase (i.e., bettering yourself and gaining an education), but those were common among participants as they exited (Moving Out) of the military and are not discussed here. When compared to previous

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studies the one commonality is that there is no clear definition or classification of participants into the Moving Out (or any) transitional phase. Maurin (2012) categorized participants based on college classification (i.e., freshman, sophomore, junior, senior). Maurin (2012) categorized those classified as seniors into the Moving Out transitional phase. DiRamio et al. (2008) and Wheeler (2010) categorized participants into Moving Out by based on the participants leaving the military and entering college. Diamond (2012) collected Moving Out transitional phase data but specific to questions asked of the participant, not their status as a student or military member. Diamond (2012) asked questions about participants' willingness to assist others and where they saw themselves in a specific timeframe in the future.

Supporting Adult Transition Theory

Because the Adult Transition Theory has only just starting being used in veteran-based transitional research, it is important to discuss the results of the study as they relate to advancing the Adult Transition Theory. Anderson et al. (2012) define theory as "a set of abstract principles that can be used to predict facts and organize them within a particular body of knowledge" (p. 4). My findings, in general, supported using the Adult Transition theory as a theoretical framework. The theory helped me in two specific ways: identifying transitional phase criteria and identifying classification of themes for discussion.

Identifying transitional phase. The Adult Transition Theory guided me in identifying the participants I wanted to include in my study. Once I identified the criteria for each transitional phase (see Table 16), I hoped to interview at least one participant from each transitional phase. Because of the structure of the theory I was able to easily classify all participants into a transitional phase without there being overlap or blurring of lines between phases.

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Identifying classification of themes for discussion. The Adult Transition Theory also guided me in how I structured and discussed the results of my study. As research question one focused on the common experiences of participants within each transitional phase, it made sense to structure my discussion in a similar fashion. Using the transitional phases as a structure for my discussion also helped me explain the common experiences of my participants and selection optimal examples to support my discussion.

While I was able to use the theory to help guide my study, there is inconsistent use of the transitional phases within existing literature that can be traced back to the lack of clear distinct entrance/exit criteria for each transitional phase. Anderson et al. (2012) state, "a transition has no end point; rather, a transition is a process over time that includes phases of assimilation and continuous appraisal as people move in, move through, and out of it" (p. 58). The inconsistency in research is in assigning the transitional phases to participants or data collected because there is no clear delineation when a person moves from the Moving In into the Moving Through and from the Moving Through into the Moving Out.

Moving In is often started when individuals confront a new situation and they go into Moving Through when they learn the ropes and to Moving Out when one series of transitions end (Anderson et al., 2012). Because of this blurring of the lines between transitioning between one phase and the other, the application of the transitional phases within research studies is, like my study, often based on criteria set by the researcher. For example, Maurin (2012) based research on veterans but based on student classification (i.e., freshman, sophomore, junior, senior). This contrasts DiRamio et al. (2008) and Wheeler (2012) who focused on individuals getting out of the military and started the transitional phases at Moving Out (i.e., out of the military). Finally, Diamond (2012) took a different route and classified data collection questions

by transitional phase rather than individuals. While all of the existing studies and mine used a circular process for the transitional phases, the starting point, the participant experience, and the uniform use of criteria were different among all.

Discussion: Research Question Two

The second research question states, "What experiences within courseware, faculty, staff/administration, and student services impact female veterans transitioning into and through college." Overall, factors identified as important to female veterans transitioning and related to the external variables include time management, feeling alone, options for delivery method, connecting with instructors, connecting with staff/administration, and colleges understanding veterans' benefits. Within the external variable of courseware, major factors include time management, feeling alone, and options for delivery method. Within the external variable faculty, I identified the theme connecting with instructors. For the external variable staff/administration, I identified connecting with staff/administration theme. Finally, for the external factor interacting with student services, the data shows experiences of female veterans revolve around college understanding veterans' benefits. Of the themes identified for the external variables, options for delivery method is unique to studies, as the other factors have previously been discussed within existing literature. Typical (between 7-9) responses included time management, feeling alone, connecting with instructors, and colleges understanding veterans' benefits. Frequent (between 4-6) responses included options for delivery method. Variant (between 1-3) responses included connecting with staff/administration. The following sections will identify experiences within each of the external variables within the research question: courseware, faculty, staff/administration, and student services.

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Courseware

Experiences with courseware entail descriptors such as delivery of courseware, homework, and interactions with other students. Overall, the participants had relatively positive experiences related to courseware. There were some instances where the participants experienced negative interactions with other students, but nothing substantial among the group as a whole. Experiences between students that tended to stick with the participants were those that disrespected or did not appreciate military service or applied stereotypes to the military as a whole. Some of the more prevalent areas where the participants had similar experiences include time management, feeling alone, and options in delivery method. Options in delivery method was a unique identified theme. The number of participants who indicated it was a factor for them was higher than expected but made sense when considering the constraints a female veteran is often under in attempting to balance family, work, and school responsibilities. Time management and feeling alone was a typical (between 7-9) response from participants while options in delivery method was a frequent (between 4-6) response.

Time Management. Time management was a typical (between 7-9) responses among participants. Tani stated, "time management personal thing that you've got to learn." For those participants working while going to school and who have husbands and children (the majority of the participants), a key aspect of that time management is balancing both school responsibilities with work and family responsibilities. Mary has a strict schedule that revolves around her working full time nine hours each weekday, returning home and doing schoolwork between 4 and 5 hours, all while her husband takes care of the children.

Additional ways that the participants manage personal lives without allowing their schoolwork to suffer, or vice versa, is finding unique ways to complete assignments, like

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Cleopatra reading in her car during lunch so that when she was with her children, she was able to dedicate that time to them. Often, the ability to juggle work, husband, children, and schoolwork has an added complexity when the participants' husband was either deployed or on travel for his job. Both Cleopatra and Tamara expressed the need to manage the time-critical aspects of their life due to their husbands' absence: Cleopatra's deployed, and Tamara's on travel. Cleopatra stated, "…because we were dual military, my children needed a stable parent….the children needed somebody there that they would be able to have there the whole time…"

Feeling Alone. Feeling alone was a typical (between 7-9) response among participants. The theme feeling alone often revolved around those participants who had no family near them or those participants whose husbands were in the military, or struggled with understanding coursework, feels unable to connect with other students. Harriet particularly felt alone, especially, when she looked around at her fellow students:

> So here I am pregnant, right? Most kids in college aren't and maybe a little bit
>
> older because I was about 22-23 kind of timeframe….. I'm just not getting it. I
>
> mean all these other kids they do study groups together they party together. Now
>
> that's not me right. I'm married and expecting….I just don't feel like I fit in….that
>
> part was a little awkward for me. I didn't' really fit in with what you would
>
> consider a college life and living in the dorm kind of thing.

Options in Delivery Method. Options in delivery method was a frequent (between 4-6) responses among participants. Options in delivery method revolved around both overarching programs (i.e., online, traditional) and options within a program of study (i.e., mixed mode, online classes, face-to-face). For Cleopatra and Tamara, online option was very important. Cleopatra expanded on why she feels there is a need for online programs:

online classes, online programs, there's definitely a place for them, there's

definitely a need for them, because as you're going through and working, taking

care of yourself, you still gotta provide a living…there is something to be said for

not having to be sitting in class Tuesday and Thursday nights at 6 when your child

has volleyball practice, so I do understand the role online learning plays…

Other participants who liked options in delivery method include Tani and Tamara. Tani

liked the options at her college of online, face-to-face, and mix mode courses and how having the

options helped her since she was working full-time while getting two master's degrees:

I like the fact that they offer both online, face-to-face and mix mode….where they

decreased the number of face to face hours and allowed you to do more stuff

online. Which was very beneficial to me, I was working full time, that especially

came in handy during my last two years cuz I was working…and you're on a

rotating schedule so every other week you work a different day of the week. So,

it's very difficult to have weekly face to face classes. So, I did appreciate the

options for learning.

Support/Contradict Existing Literature Discussion. The finding from this study

indicated female veterans transitioning through college have common experiences specific to

courseware that can influence their successful transition. The above discussed frequent and

typical responses from the participants that include feeling alone, time management and options

in delivery methods. Existing studies in transition of veterans into college also, to some degree,

identify two of these factors: feeling alone and time management. Normandin (2012) and

Wheeler (2012) identified that veterans recognized the need, and utilized skills, for time

management when completing their courseware assignments. Normandin (2012) and Diamond

(2012) also identified that veterans feel alone when interacting with other students, an aspect of this study classified under courseware. Diamond (2012) specific identified veterans being older than classmates inhibited their connecting with them. Maurin (2012) also discussed interactions with students and identified negative stereotypical reactions from other students regarding the veteran's military service. This study did identify a factor critical to female veterans that prior studies did not discuss: options in delivery method. Participants in this study identified frequently (between 4-6) that the different delivery options available to them (i.e., online, face-to-face, mixed mode) were important to their transition.

Faculty

The second aspect of research question two dealt with interactions with faculty. The faculty is so important to the participants that the analysis results indicated connecting with instructors as one of the largest cluster themes representing typical (between 7-9) responses from participants. Of the nine participants, seven indicated faculty as a factor in their transition.

Connecting with Instructors. For the most part, the interactions between the participants and their instructors were positive. While not negative or a positive experience, Cleopatra mentioned her instructors seemed more "used to teaching college students, you know, maybe like an undergrad" and instructors appeared to do "a lot more reaching out, a lot more engagement, to younger, less experienced students." However, Tamara shared how her positive experiences with the instructors who have helped her during her transition:

> I had great instructors. I don't know if I just lucked out, but anytime there was an
>
> issue as long as we had communication open with them they were great….Some
>
> of the concepts, especially like aerodynamics, which is very math intense. I've had

some really good one-on-ones [with instructors] across video, examples of having

to go through know some math problems that I was like....I don't know what we're

talking about the combustion of a jet engine to figure out the mach. I was like Ok.

There were a couple of instances such as the experiences where an instructor berated

Deborah and where Harriet's instructor did not attempt to take into account she was not a

traditional student demographic (18-year-old, no job, no kids) recommending she go to Mexico

for the summer to learn Spanish. The one true negative evolved around instructors who, while

knowledgeable, seemed to be poor instructors. Deborah experienced this aspect:

I actually found some of those instructors not prepared to teach. Really good at

their jobs just not great at explaining it. But some were great, they were

encouraging trying to get the best out of you and some were just defensive...or

trying to be people who know it all and I was like that it just not feasibly possible.

You can't be a person who knows it all because things a) change so rapidly and b)

you're talking to adults here in a master's program who have some life experience

who probably know a thing or two about what you are teaching. So, to always

have this authoritative like I know it better than you, I don't think that is the best

way to approach thing in an adult environment.

Support/Contradict Existing Literature Discussion. The finding from this study indicated

female veterans transitioning through college have common experiences specific to interactions

with faculty that can influence their successful transition. Existing studies in transition of

veterans into college also identify, to some extent, interactions with faculty as factors in

veterans' transition. DiRamio et al. (2008) stated one participant would like instructors to see

veterans as a different type of student; one recognized for their experiences. This is similar to

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Diamond (2012), who stated that instructors who can relate to veterans should teach veterans. Diamond (2012) also recommended training for staff, and others, on psychological, physiological, and social constraints of veterans. There were examples of negative experiences in previous literature, like discussed above. Griffin and Gilbert (2012) stated, "faculty, staff, and other employees have a strong impact on the experience of student veterans" in their report on helping veterans. Finally, Dunklin had a participant who had a very negative experience with an instructor very similar to Deborah from my study who got "dressed down" by an instructor more severely than she ever did in the military. Diamond (2012) and Zinger and Cohen (2010) also had participants who experienced negative interactions with instructors, this time more related to their prior military service and the instructors' political views against.

Staff/Administration

The third aspect of research question two dealt with interactions with staff/administration. Staff/Administration was explained to the participants as any individual other than an instructor. Examples of staff/administration include a dean, a program aid, or a secretary. However, it was not about student services as there is a separate part of research question two specific to student services. The theme associated with interactions with staff/administration, connecting with staff/administration, had variant (between 1-3) responses.

Connecting with staff/administration: For the most part, most of the participants did not have interactions with staff/administrations. Of those that did interact with staff/administration, both Lozen and Tamara shared positive experiences while Tani shared a frustratingly negative experience. Tamara stated that her main point of contact who is her "bellybutton for anything admin…makes it easy…she's great" while Lozen still communicates

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with the administrator she met while getting her degree. Lozen attributes the ability of the administrator to help her was her personality as well as personal experience going through the same program of study as Lozen, making her aware of where others may have been having difficulty. As mentioned above, Tani shared to only negative experience with staff/administrator. This episode was highly stressful for Tani and is still quite vivid in her mind:

> I did a non-thesis, but you had a comprehensive exam….there was one particular thing that wasn't working with the site and I needed administrative assistance. She wouldn't respond to me and I had 1 week to complete this….I emailed her as soon as I knew of the issue….Two days went by she didn't email….I emailed her again on the third day….she came back at me all stank and snotty [saying] you don't need to email me multiple times…very rude….. She just didn't respond, and she was mad at me that I was so persistent.

Support/Contradict Existing Literature Discussion. The finding from this study indicated female veterans transitioning through college have common experiences specific to interactions with staff/administration that can influence their successful transition. Existing studies in transition of veterans into college also identify, to some extent, interactions with staff/administration as factors in veterans transitioning. The likelihood of veterans' success increases if staff/administration are cognizant and appreciative of the unique requirements the demographic (Griffin & Gilbert, 2012). Existing literature that discuss interactions with staff/administration specifically include Dunklin (2012), which identified positive experiences between the study's participants and staff/administration. Wheeler (2012), in contrast, documented frustrations by a participant, similar to Tani, when answers to questions or requests for assistance were not timely.

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Student Services

The final aspect of research question two focused on the participants' interactions with student services. Student Services is different from the previous staff/administration because there are often specific veteran-based student services available to female veterans as well as the traditional ones, like financial aid and disabilities. The theme most applicable to interactions with student services was colleges understanding veterans' benefits, which had typical (between 7-9) participant responses.

Colleges understanding veterans' benefits. For the most part, of those participants that used student services, the only student service the majority of the participants interacted with was their college's veterans-based student services. Cleopatra also used a disability-based student service. Cleopatra was also one of the participants who used a veterans-based student service and seemed to have luck with the services always being able to help her:

> The student services, they, thankfully everywhere I went, they had experience
>
> with veterans. And so, questions that I would have, concerns that I would have,
>
> issues that I would have, if my GI bill payment didn't come through, they would--
>
> they have seen that before. And they would help you.

When the participants did have negative experiences, it inevitably revolved around their GI Bill and veteran benefits. Issues encountered usually related to their tuition not being paid on time or their benefits running out sooner than anticipated because of unknown restrictions to their benefits (out-of-state tuition cost, not enough face-to-face classes). The cause of these negative experiences seemed to point to a lack of understanding of the college/veteran-based student service of veteran benefits or execution of the GI Bill. While those that did express

negative experiences with veterans-based student services did not really expand on those issues, Tani was very specific on what her experience entailed:

…you have to go in and ask the question….there's no seminars, no courses, there's no this is how you use your GI Bill, there's none of that. It's basically if you don't know what question to ask, you're not going to get the information….my biggest thing with VARC is if you do not know the right question to ask you will not get the right answer….Because these are things that you, who has never been a student in higher education you wouldn't thank to ask because why would you….interactions with VARC needed to be more comprehensive…I shouldn't have to know what to ask you, you should know what I need based on what I'm telling you….the people they have working in the office I think is great, they're usually veterans but they're often veterans who have never gone to school or they just started. So, if you don't know about school, you can't help someone who also doesn't….they need FAQs like quick resources for them to know what information needs to be provided when students come in with a certain issue or whatever….I'm not saying they were unwilling. They just didn't provide 100% of the information that they should have. They didn't know they needed to. The same way I didn't know I needed to ask the question.

Supporting Contradicting Existing Literature. The finding from this study indicated female veterans transitioning through college have common experiences specific to interactions with student services that can influence their successful transition. Existing studies in transition of veterans into college also identify, to some extent, interactions with student services as factors in veterans' transitions. DiRamio et al. (2008) and Zinger and Cohen (2010) identified financial

assistance or assistance with getting their veterans' benefits as issues consistently frustrating participants with DiRamio et al. (2008) also adding that low staffing levels for disability services was another issue. Normandin (2010) stated that student services, especially those focused on providing support to veterans, should have veterans working there and who are knowledgeable in the process. Normandin (2010) also mentioned that the study's participants suggested veterans be contemporary to the students, so they can relate and connect better. This supports the need from my discussion with Tani about a veterans-based student service having individuals who can help but also have veteran experience. Dunklin (2012) also discussed student services interactions but not a lot of the study's participants had experiences interactions and those that did liked what they saw, experiences, or where the veterans-based student services was heading.

Supporting Adult Transition Theory

It is important to identify how well the Adult Transition Theory served as a theoretical foundation for the study. Research question one focused on the transitional phases of the Adult Transition Theory and, in general, supported the use of the theory. However, for research question two my findings, in general, do not support using the Adult Transition theory as a theoretical framework.

To be useful as a theoretical foundation, the Adult Transition Theory needed to guide me in my data analysis and assist me in structuring my discussion of the data results. The Adult Transition Theory, specific the 4S Model which was used for research question two, did not guide me in my data analysis and the identifying themes or assist in my structuring and classification of themes for my discussion. The only aspect specific to research question two the Adult Transition Theory helped with was the correlating the semi-structured interview protocol

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questions to 4S Model (see Table 9). In an attempt to guide my study further using the Adult

Transition Theory 4S Model, I also attempted to assign the 4S Model key components to the

emergent themes discussed in chapter four.

Overall, using the Adult Transition Theory 4S Model to categorize the emergent themes

is possible. However, this was not a one for one classification as the classification was depended

upon the emergent themes' individual cluster themes and I was not able classify any of the

themes into just one of the 4S Model categories. Additionally, the attempt to apply the 4S Model

this way introduced bias. The first attempt at determining themes ended up almost identical to

the question classification from the semi-structure interview protocol which were developed

using the 4S Model. Because I attempted to align everything with the 4S Model as I developed

my themes, I ended up biasing the data and developing themes close to or within the variables of

question two (courseware, faculty, staff/administration, student services) and specific to one of

the 4S Model categories (self, situation, support, strategies). Additional review of existing

literature using the Adult Transition Theory identified, however, that is it not uncommon for the

4S Model to not be used to guide data analysis.

Based on the existing literature, it does seem that while not able to guide data analysis,

the 4S Model can explain results. When comparing prior research using the Adult Transitional

Theory, only two studies (Normandin, 2010; Zinger & Cohen, 2010) identified in their findings

any relation to the 4S Model. Normandin (2010) specifically was able to use the 4S Model to

explain the results of the study as applicable to each category of the 4S Model and how the

participants demonstrated these assets and liabilities through their transition. Zinger and Cohen

(2010), however, only discussed the 4S Model at a high level and only in relation the participants

demonstrating a balance of the four categories when Moving Out of their transition.

<center>**Recommendations for Future Research**</center>

Focus on Student Services Assistance for Female Veterans Only

The research study showed that, for those who used them, student services is not a robust area for HEIs when dealing with female veterans. The majority of the participants of this study either did not use or had negative experiences with colleges' student services. The negative experiences centered around student services specific to veterans and their benefits. Specifically, the lack of knowledge of college veteran-based student services caused challenges to the female participants of this study. I suggest future research focus on the capability of student services ability to assist female veterans. Executing this recommended study could address the sample method limitation discussed in chapter three while adding much needed specificity on veterans-based student services available or needed for female veterans.

Study Incorporating a Larger Geographical on Experiences of Female Veterans.

This study focused on a small sample of a larger population and only included participants in a small geographic area. It is suggested that future research include a variety of geographical areas and include more participants. These future research studies could then be used, along with this one, to compare the data results to determine if it is a geographical area that has a problem with assisting female veterans transitioning into college or if it is a systemic national problem. The future research should ensure all three transitional phases are addressed (i.e., Moving In, Moving Through, Moving Out). Executing this recommended study could address the sample method limitation discussed in chapter three.

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Longitudinal Study of Female Veterans

Another potential future research recommendation is a longitudinal study following one or a small number of female veterans. Ideally, the participants would be identified before separation from the military and the study would include multiple interviews each semester to identify challenges and successes. The additional data from executing a longitudinal study would strengthen the results by allowing a comprehensive and extended timeline for data collecting. The future research should ensure all three transitional phases are addressed (i.e., Moving In, Moving Through, Moving Out). Executing this recommended study could address, in part, the generalizability and episodic data collected limitations discussed in chapter three.

Single or Multiple Case Study on Single Female Veteran

Another potential future research recommendation is a single or multiple case study on a female veteran. The future study would follow one female veteran through her transition from military to college graduation. As with the longitudinal study, the participant would be identified before her separation from the military and several meetings would take place between her and the researcher over her entire college experience. It is recommended that interviews include not only the veteran, but also her family, instructors, co-workers to identify a holistic perspective of challenges and successes experienced by the participant. The future research should ensure all three transitional phases are addressed (i.e., Moving In, Moving Through, Moving Out). The additional data from family, instructors, co-workers would strengthen the results of the study by identify from multiple aspects the experiences of female veterans in college. Executing this recommended study could address, in part, the generalizability and episodic data collected limitations discussed in chapter three.

Comparison Study Between Male/Female Veterans

The next recommended future research potential is a comparison between male/female veterans. Since female veterans are a minority within the veteran population, their inclusion in research is seldom representative. To date, I only know of one other research study that focuses solely on female veteran's experiences. Because of this, challenges experienced by male veterans tend to be applied to female veterans unanimously. However, a research study comparing challenges and/or successes between male and female veterans would add valuable data to the literature, potentially identify areas where both sets of veterans could benefit. The future research should ensure all three transitional phases are addressed (i.e., Moving In, Moving Through, Moving Out). Executing this recommended study would address the sample method limitation discussed in chapter three.

Comparison in Transitional Experiences Between Veterans and Non-Veteran Adult Learners

The final recommended future research study focuses on conducting a comparison between transitional experiences between veteran and non-veteran adult learners. The proposed study can include both male and female participants. The veteran student demographic shares commonalities with the adult learner student demographic. However, the additional experiences of veterans often cause them to have unique challenges. The existing literature, when studying veteran transition, has not, to date, focused on how those unique challenges impact transition. The future research should ensure all three transitional phases are addressed (i.e., Moving In, Moving Through, Moving Out). Executing this recommended study would address the generalizability limitation discussed in chapter three.

Focus on Experiences During Undergraduate/Graduate Experiences

The next recommended future research study focuses on the experiences of female veterans specific to either undergraduate experiences or graduate experiences. The level of attention provided to undergraduate versus graduate may have an impact on the success of female veterans. While the totality of the participants of this study provided experiences while completing graduate degrees, there was data provided that indicated when there were courses or interactions with instructors that included both undergraduate and graduate students, there seemed to be more structured assistance for or focus on undergraduates. Identifying how HEIs can assist female veterans specific to the degree classification can have the potential to assist female veterans consistently and continually through their education. The future research should ensure all three transitional phases are addressed (i.e., Moving In, Moving Through, Moving Out). Executing this recommended study would address the episodic in data collected limitation discussed in chapter three; especially if the study followed the same female veteran(s) from undergraduate through graduate programs.

Implications of Study

Implications of this study benefit three groups. First, this study benefits future researchers as it adds to the existing literature by focusing on female veterans transitioning into and through college. While there does exist literature on veterans transitioning into college, there is limited data focusing solely on female veterans. The study also supports future researchers by identifying which aspects of the Adult Transition Theory support application as a theoretical foundation (i.e., transitional phases) and which aspects do not (i.e., 4S Model). For this study, I was able to use the Moving In, Moving Through, and Moving Out transitional phases of the

Adult Transitional Theory to guide and structure the research. However, the 4S Model was not useful in guiding and structuring the research and in fact introduced bias.

The second group who benefits from this study are HEIs. To ensure that female veterans select their institution and ultimately stay at it and succeed in their transition by graduating, HEIs need to understand the challenges female veterans experience. By understanding the challenges of female veterans, HEIs can initiate programs that help female veterans overcome these challenges. This study identifies challenges affecting female veterans that HEIs can address. The actions to address the challenges of female veterans can be relatively simple to start with and fully develop over time by continued feedback from users.

The final group who benefit from this study are female veterans. As the recipient of those programs HEIs initiate, female veterans would have a larger support base, increasing their likelihood of success by providing assistance in overcoming their challenges. Those challenges identified by the female veteran participants of this study for the most part revolve around support, or lack of support, provided by and HEI veteran-based student services. While not all HEIs have veteran-based student service organization, those that do continually need to address newer challenges identified by studies that focus on veterans. Because this study focused on female veterans, a demographic of the larger veteran student demographic research is only now beginning to focus on, this means HEI's veteran-based student services are often not supporting female veterans as effectively as they could. Based on the input from the female veteran participants of this study, areas where HEI's veteran-based student services need to better support female veterans include providing structured frequently asked questions, suggestions for students based on academic calendar deadlines and programs of study, and flexible schedules. These are areas HEI's veteran-based student services are struggling, specific to female veterans,

due to the unique challenges female veterans face. The challenges unique to female veterans

Include juggling husband and personal fulltime work schedules, keeping up with their children's'

school and extracurricular activities, and their coursework. To help provide HEIs and their

veteran-based student services address the unique challenges of female veterans, Figure 6

identifies topics and structure for a framework designed at promoting the development and

implementation of activities and development and access to resources that enable success of

female veterans.

Figure 6: High Level Model for HEI Veteran-based Student Services Support

The recommended framework consists of five topics. Each topic supports the others and

as a whole identifies methods to address challenges identified by the female veteran participants

of this study. The topics offer only a high-level structure and can be nested within each other as

the data contained with each topic supports activities of the other topics.

- Orientation: A yearly orientation for female veterans clearly articulating what to expect

    the upcoming academic calendar year based on college or program. This orientation

    should be offered both during the day and evening times as well as be video recorded and

uploaded onto the organization's website. The multiple times and options for attending or viewing will ensure maximum exposure by female veterans who often have difficulty attending more traditional timed events. The focus of the yearly orientation should include recommended meetings with counselors to schedule courses to ensure female veterans are better informed regarding their courseware registration and program of studies.

- Repository: A centralized repository containing well-structured data pertinent to female veterans' success in college. Data the repository should provide include schedule of event by college or program, list of individuals through the college who can assist with information (i.e., financial aid, parking, VA, and internships). The repository should be searchable and allow female veterans to download documents as needed.

- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs): A clearly organized list of FAQs not only specific to college or program but including information on benefits available due to veteran status. Clearly identified points of contact who can further assist should be identified with each FAQs as well as key terms associated with the FAQs. The FAQs should be searchable and printable. FAQs should be available via the veteran-based student services website and on the repository identified previously.

- Timeline: A detailed timeline of key dates and events, by semester, showing critical deadlines for academic and college and program. The timeline should be clearly marked using consistent symbols and colors, articulated in a legend, and be available via the veteran-based student services website and on the repository identified previously. The timeline should be sortable based on required data needed by the female veteran (i.e., support group meetings, registration deadlines) and should identify where additional data

can be found for information contained on the timeline. The timeline should be

downloadable and printable.

- Group Discussions/Support: Development and scheduling of group discussions or

    support groups focusing solely on female veteran participants will help female veterans

    interact with individuals who have similar challenges and experiences. These meetings

    should be offered during normal business hours but also during the evenings and if they

    are facilitated or included any data specific to female veterans, transcripts or video should

    be provided for those female veterans who cannot attend. Online blogs or video group

    discussions or support groups also are recommended to allow for those female veterans

    who are unable to attend during the week.

Chapter Five Summary

Chapter Five discussed the results of the data analysis conducted in chapter four. Chapter

five has four sections: discussion on research question one, discussion on research question two,

limitations, and recommendation for future research. Within each discussion on research

question one and research question two there is detailed discussion specific to answering the

research question supported by the data analysis results. For research question one, the

discussion revolves around the three transitional phases of the Adult Transition Theory: Moving

In, Moving Out, and Moving Through. For research question two, the discussion revolves around

the four key external variables of college: courseware, faculty, staff/administration, and student

services. After each answer and supporting data, a section focuses on identifying if the answer to

the research question supports or contradicts existing literature discussed in chapter two and if

the research question answer supports the application of the theoretical foundation: Adult

Transition Theory. Recommendations for future research include HEIs focusing on finding out specific areas where student services can support the unique challenges of female veterans, veterans research focusing on multiple geographical areas, and researchers conducting studies such as a longitudinal, single individual case study, and/or comparison of male/female veteran experiences.

APPENDIX A:
PRE-INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

Instructions: This questionnaire consists of **four (4)** parts. Prior to beginning each part, please read the instructions provided carefully. Please complete all parts as much as possible. You are able to not answer any question(s) you prefer not to answer. If you have any questions, please contact the investigator for clarification.

STARE HERE.

Part I Instructions: For each item below, place an 'X' in the corresponding answer as it applies to demographic data such as age, marital status ethnicity, employment status, and number of dependents.

1. Please indicate your age.
   ☐ 19 or younger
   ☐ 20-23
   ☐ 24-29
   ☐ 30-39
   ☐ 40-55
   ☐ Over 55

2. Please indicate your marital status.
   ☐ Single, never married
   ☐ Single, in a relationship, living separate
   ☐ Single, in a relationship, living together
   ☐ Single, divorced
   ☐ Single, widowed
   ☐ Married, living together
   ☐ Married, separated
   ☐ Divorced
   ☐ Other (Please specify): _____

3. Please indicate your Ethnic background.
   ☐ American Indian or other Native American
   ☐ Asian or Pacific Islander
   ☐ Black or African American
   ☐ Caucasian (other than Hispanic)
   ☐ Mexican-American
   ☐ Puerto Rican
   ☐ Other Hispanic
   ☐ Other (Please specify): _____

CONTINUED ON THE BACK.

CONTINUE HERE.

4. Please indicate the number of dependents you have.
   After answering, if you indicated you have zero dependents, please proceed to question 6.
   ☐ 0
   ☐ 1
   ☐ 2
   ☐ 3
   ☐ 4
   ☐ 5+

5. Please indicate if they are children, adult, or both.
   ☐ Children
   ☐ Adult
   ☐ Both

6. Please indicate your employment status.
   ☐ Employed, for wages, part-time
   ☐ Employed, for wages, full-time
   ☐ Self-employed
   ☐ Out of work, looking for work
   ☐ Out of work, not looking for work
   ☐ Retired
   ☐ Unable to work
   ☐ Other (Please specify): _____

Part II Instructions: For each item below, place an 'X' in the corresponding answer, or fill in the blank, as it applies to your military experience.

7. In which branch of service did you serve?
   ☐ Air Force
   ☐ Army
   ☐ Marine Corps
   ☐ Navy
   ☐ Other (Please Specify): _____

8. Where you an Officer or Enlisted?
   ☐ Officer, Please identify final rank: _____
   ☐ Enlisted, Please identify final rank: _____

CONTINUED ON THE BACK.

CONTINUE HERE.

9. How long were you in the military?
   ☐ Less than one year
   ☐ 1-4 years
   ☐ 5-10 years
   ☐ 11-15
   ☐ 16-20 years
   ☐ 21-25
   ☐ 25+ years

10. Did you serve active duty or in the Reserves?
    ☐ Active Duty
    ☐ Reserves

11. Please indicate your military status. After answering, if you indicated you retired, please proceed to question 13.
    ☐ Retired
    ☐ Discharged

12. Please indicate your discharge status.
    ☐ Honorable
    ☐ General
    ☐ Officer
    ☐ Entry Level Separation
    ☐ Other (Please specify): _____

13. When serving, were you stationed/deployed OCONUS?
    After answering, if you indicated you were not stationed/deployed OCONUS, please proceed to question 17.
    ☐ Yes
    ☐ No

14. Please indicate how long you were stationed/deployed OCONUS.
    ☐ Less than 1 year
    ☐ 1-2 years
    ☐ 3-4 years
    ☐ 5 years
    ☐ 5+ years

CONTINUE HERE.

15. Please indicate if you experienced combat.
After answering, if you indicated you did not experienced combat, please proceed to question 17.
☐ Yes
☐ No

16. Please indicate where you experienced combat.
☐ Iraq
☐ Afghanistan
☐ Other (Please specify): _____

Part III Instructions: For each item below, place an 'X' in the corresponding answer, or fill in the blank, as it applies to your educational experience.

17. Are you currently attending a Higher Education Institute (HEI)?
After answering, if you indicated you are not currently attending a HEI, please proceed to question 27.
☐ Yes
☐ No

18. How long have you attended your HEI?
☐ Less than 6 months
☐ Less than 1 year
☐ 2-3 years
☐ 4-5 years
☐ Other (Please specify): _____

19. Please indicate your HEI?
☐ University of Central Florida
☐ Valencia College
☐ Seminole State College
☐ Other (Please specify): _____

20. What is your classification?
☐ Freshman/First Year
☐ Sophomore
☐ Junior
☐ Senior
☐ Graduate Student
☐ Unclassified

CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

CONTINUE HERE.

21. When do you plan to graduate?
   ☐ Not sure
   ☐ My current semester
   ☐ Within a year
   ☐ Other (Please specify): _____

22. Are you full-time or part-time?

   ☐ Full-time
   ☐ Part-time

23. What is your major, or your anticipated major? _____

24. How many credit hours are you taking this term?
   ☐ 6 or fewer
   ☐ 7-11
   ☐ 12-14
   ☐ 15+

25. About how many hours a week do you usually spend outside of class on activities
   related to your academic program, such as studying, writing, reading, lab work, etc.?
   ☐ 5 or fewer hours a week
   ☐ 6-10 hours a week
   ☐ 11-15 hours a week
   ☐ 16-20 hours a week
   ☐ 21-25 hours a week
   ☐ 26-30 hours a week
   ☐ more than 30 hours a week

26. About how many hours a week do you usually spend working on a job?
   After answering, please proceed to question 33.
   ☐ None, I don't have a job
   ☐ 1-10 hours a week
   ☐ 11-20 hours a week
   ☐ 21-30 hours a week
   ☐ 31-40 hours a week
   ☐ more than 40 hours a week

27. When you attended a HEI, please indicate its name?
   ☐ University of Central Florida
   ☐ Valencia College
   ☐ Seminole State College
   ☐ Other (Please specify): _____

CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

28. Why are you not currently attending a HEI?
    After answering, if you indicate you graduate, please proceed to question 29.
    ☐ I graduated
    ☐ I am taking a semester off
    ☐ I am taking a year off
    ☐ I no long have any GI Bill funding
    ☐ Other (Please specify): _____

29. Prior to stopping attending your HEI, how long were you a student?
    ☐ Less than 6 months
    ☐ Less than 1 year
    ☐ 2-3 years
    ☐ 4-5 years
    ☐ Other (Please specify): _____

30. Do you plan to return to a HEI at some time in the future?
    After answering, if you indicated you do not plan to return to a HEI sometime in the future, please proceed to question 33.
    ☐ Yes
    ☐ No

31. When do you plan to return to a HEI in the future?
    ☐ Not sure
    ☐ In less than a year
    ☐ More than a year
    ☐ More than 2 years

32. Why are you not planning to return to a HEI sometime in the future?
    ☐ Too much money
    ☐ Too many obligations / No Time
    ☐ Other (Please specify): _____

Part IV Instructions: In the space provided below, please add any additional information you would like related to any of the questions/answers in the previous three (3) sections.

33. Section I

34. Section II

35. Section III

36. How did you hear about the study?

STOP HERE.
**THIS COMPLETES THE QUESTIONNAIRE.
THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO PROVIDE YOUR RESPONSES; THEY ARE GREATLY APPRECIATED!**
STOP HERE.

APPENDIX B:
SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Data	Question	Prompts & elicitations
1. To break the ice and provide some background.	Spend a few moments at the start of the interview asking a few icebreaking questions. The questions should be low-threat but does not bias later answers. It could be as simple as "Please tell me about yourself."	- Age - Why did you join the military? - What is/are the most important thing(s) for me to understand about your military service time?
2. Verify Currently Attending or college attended (and timeframe)	For current students: You are currently attending [insert college] correct? -OR- For graduated participants or those not currently attending a college: You attended [insert college] from [insert	All - Were you still in the military when you began thinking about attending college? If still attending college: - When do you plan to graduate? For graduated participants or those not currently attending a college: - How was your timeline for graduation based on when you originally planned to graduate?

Data	Question	Prompts & elicitations
	date] to [insert date], correct?	For those not currently attending college: - Why do you think you left college?
3. Experiences in higher education, generally	All Tell me about your experiences, as a student, at [insert college].	All - Positive experiences - Negative experiences - Describe a typical day, or week you experienced
4. Reasons for transitioning into college, as a student	All What were the reasons you chose to attend [insert college].	All - What made you choose [insert college]? - Where there any specific programs offered that interested you? (programs offered) - How did the tuition impact your decision? (low tuition) - Were you a local returning or did you move here for [insert college]? (close to home, family, work)
5. Experiences in courses	All Describe your experiences taking courses [insert college].	All - Positive experiences - Negative experiences - What kind of help is/was available to you while taking courses? - Who help(s/ed) you?
6. Experiences interacting with instructors	All	All

Data	Question	Prompts & elicitations
	Describe your experiences with your instructors.	- Positive experiences - Negative experiences - Are/Were you reluctant to approach your instructors? (Describe why.) - What kind of help is/was available to you regarding your interactions with instructors? - Who help(s/ed) you?
7. Experiences with staff/administrators	All Describe your experiences approaching or communicating with staff or administrators [insert college].	All - Positive experiences - Negative experiences - Are/Were you reluctant to approach staff or administrators? (Describe why.) - What kind of help is/was available to you regarding your interactions with staff/administrators? - Who help(s/ed) you?
8. Experiences with student services	All Describe your experiences approaching or communicating with student services at [insert college].	All - What school resources do/have/did you used at [insert college]? - Positive experiences - Negative experiences - Are/Were you reluctant to use student services? (Describe why.) - What kind of help is/was available to you regarding your experience with student services? - Who help(s/ed) you?

Data	Question	Prompts & elicitations
9. Support	All Describe any other support you've received while transitioning from military to college, as a student.	All - Describe your support structure? - Who help(s/ed) you? - Who do you vent to about concerns, issues, etc.?
10. Strategies	All Describe any other strategies you've used to assist in your experiences transitioning from military to college, as a student	All - How do you cope with the positive experiences you've encountered? - How do you cope with the negative experiences you've encountered?
11. Member-checking	Paraphrase what I heard about the main data: 1. Academic experiences at [insert college]. 2. reasons for transitioning into higher education. 3. Experiences in courses. 4. Experiences with instructors. 5. Experiences with staff/administrators.	

Data	Question	Prompts & elicitations
	6. Experiences with student services. Ask for a response.	

Generally useful prompts and elicitations:

Silence: Pauses suggest to the interviewee that you want them to continue talking.

Seeking elaboration: 'What did you mean...?' or 'Can you give more detail...?'

Probing for details: 'Do you have any examples?' or 'Could you say more about...?'

Specifying questions: 'What happened when you said that?' or 'What did he say next?'

Reflecting meaning: 'Do you mean that...?' or 'Is it correct that...?

Reflecting emotion: 'You sound [emotion] when you say that?' or 'Is it correct that you feel [emotion]...?

Correlation to 4S Model:

Self (S1): Q1, Q2, Q4

Situation (S2): Q2, Q3, Q4, Q5, Q6, Q7, Q8

Support (S3): Q9

Strategy (S4): Q10

APPENDIX C:
IRB APPROVAL LETTER

Approval of Human Research

From: **UCF Institutional Review Board #1**
FWA00000351, IRB00001138

To: **Alma M Sorensen**

Date: **February 15, 2018**

Dear Researcher:

On 02/15/2018 the IRB approved the following modifications / human participant research until 02/14/2019 inclusive:

Type of Review:	UCF Initial Review Submission Form
	Expedited Review Category #6 and #7
	Adult Participants; n=21
Project Title:	Warrior Women: A Phenomenological Study of Female
	Veterans Transitioning from the Military into College
Investigator:	Alma M Sorensen
IRB Number:	SBE-18-13792
Funding Agency:	
Grant Title:	
Research ID:	N/A

The scientific merit of the research was considered during the IRB review. The Continuing Review Application must be submitted 30days prior to the expiration date for studies that were previously expedited, and 60 days prior to the expiration date for research that was previously reviewed at a convened meeting. Do not make changes to the study (i.e., protocol, methodology, consent form, personnel, site, etc.) before obtaining IRB approval. A Modification Form **cannot** be used to extend the approval period of a study. All forms may be completed and submitted online at https://iris.research.ucf.edu .

If continuing review approval is not granted before the expiration date of 02/14/2019, approval of this research expires on that date. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in iRIS so that IRB records will be accurate.

Use of the approved, stamped consent document(s) is required. The new form supersedes all previous versions, which are now invalid for further use. Only approved investigators (or other approved key study personnel) may solicit consent for research participation. Participants or their representatives must receive a signed and dated copy of the consent form(s).

All data, including signed consent forms if applicable, must be retained and secured per protocol for a minimum of five years (six if HIPAA applies) past the completion of this research. Any links to the identification of participants should be maintained and secured per protocol. Additional requirements

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APPENDIX D:
UPDATED IRB APPROVAL LETTER

University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board
Office of Research & Commercialization
12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501
Orlando, Florida 32826-3246
Telephone: 407-823-2901 or 407-882-2276
www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html

Approval of Human Research

From: **UCF Institutional Review Board #1**
FWA00000351, IRB00001138

To: **Alma M. Sorensen**

Date: **March 18, 2018**

Dear Researcher:

On 03/18/2018 the IRB approved the following minor modifications to human participant research until 02/14/2019 inclusive:

Type of Review:	IRB Addendum and Modification Request Form
	Expedited Review
Modification Type:	Modified inclusion/exclusion criteria. Revised Protocol and consent were uploaded.
Project Title:	Warrior Women: A Phenomenological Study of Female Veterans Transitioning from the Military into College
Investigator:	Alma M. Sorensen
IRB Number:	SBE-18-13792
Funding Agency:	
Grant Title:	
Research ID:	N/A

The scientific merit of the research was considered during the IRB review. The Continuing Review Application must be submitted 30days prior to the expiration date for studies that were previously expedited, and 60 days prior to the expiration date for research that was previously reviewed at a convened meeting. Do not make changes to the study (i.e., protocol, methodology, consent form, personnel, site, etc.) before obtaining IRB approval. A Modification Form **cannot** be used to extend the approval period of a study. All forms may be completed and submitted online at https://iris.research.ucf.edu .

If continuing review approval is not granted before the expiration date of 02/14/2019, approval of this research expires on that date. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in iRIS so that IRB records will be accurate.

Use of the approved, stamped consent document(s) is required. The new form supersedes all previous versions, which are now invalid for further use. Only approved investigators (or other approved key study personnel) may solicit consent for research participation. Participants or their representatives must receive a signed and dated copy of the consent form(s).

All data, including signed consent forms if applicable, must be retained and secured per protocol for a minimum of five years (six if HIPAA applies) past the completion of this research. Any links to the identification of participants should be maintained and secured per protocol. Additional requirements may be imposed by your funding agency, your department, or other entities. Access to data is limited to authorized individuals listed as key study personnel.

In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the Investigator Manual.

This letter is signed by:

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APPENDIX E:
FORMULATED MEANINGS DEVELOPED ORIGINALLY EXTRACTED SIGNIFICANT STATEMENTS

Significant Statements	Formulated Meanings
1.1.1 "always wanted to do [join the military] growing up"	1 From an early age joining the military is a goal of children
1.1.2 "decided I would miss the college experience [if I joined the military]"	2 Individuals may not go into the military due to concerns about missing the college experience
1.1.3 "kind of regret it [not going to West Point]"	3 Individuals who delay going into the military for college tend to regret it later on in life but recognize they would not be the person they are today
1.1.4 "my whole life would be completely different [if I'd gone to West Point]"	
1.1.5 "considered kind of an elite unit"	4 Individuals may leave the military not because they didn't like the military any longer but didn't like where or what they were doing in the military
1.1.6 "long period of training because of my military specialty occupation"	
1.1.7 "didn't feel as though I was assigned to the best job or the best unit because I probably would have been career"	
1.1.8 "wasn't the military I didn't like anymore, it was where I was serving"	
1.2.1 "original plan was to graduate with a Master's in Education and I didn't know when I enrolled, I didn't have an advisor"	5 Not knowing about or meeting with an advisor prior to starting courses cause issues with identifying the correct sequence of courses due to availability
1.2.2 "I never met with my advisor prior to beginning my college courses"	
1.2.3 "ended up missing my cohort by a year"	6 A delay caused by not taking courses is a correct sequence causes delay in graduation causing a student to enroll in another program to continue enrollment
1.2.4 "instead of a two year's Master's program, I had to wait after I finished my first year, an entire year before I could get my prerequisite courses"	
1.2.5 "in the meantime I enrolled in a second Master's program"	
1.2.6 "actually worked out for me"	
1.2.7 "updated my Master's to be the applied learning and instruction which was geared more towards adult education"	
1.2.8 "that little year delay. So that was kind of a big deal"	
1.2.9 "once I decided I was getting out of the military I knew I would have to go back to school because you can't do anything with that low-level degree"	
1.3.1 "difficult for me to learn campus"	7 It is difficult to learn a new campus, find buildings, and orient oneself when there are no support structure or services available to a graduate student
1.3.2 "finding buildings was difficult"	
1.3.3 "orienting myself"	
1.3.4 "had no familiarity with the school"	8 Unfamiliarity with a new school, new faculty, new staff can be the biggest issue female veterans have to get use to
1.3.5 "different [between undergrad] here was [I] was in graduate	9 Female veterans are sometimes not sure of what they need in

school now, out of my military service, and then I was coming to a brand new area"
1.3.6 "don't know why those things are no longer offered at my level"
1.3.7 "or maybe I didn't know what resources to seek"
1.3.8 "unfamiliar with the school, unfamiliar with the faculty staff, all of it was brand new"
1.3.9 "do have the VARC so I feel like maybe that is a gap in the thing they are broadcasting and announcing and services being offered"
1.3.10 "biggest issue was just getting used to things"
1.3.11 "that was something I didn't even think I needed [an advisor]"
1.3.12 "something should be advocated for outside people to say hey you know you're really need to get with so and so"
1.3.13 "core classes that should be offered every year"
1.3.14 "needs to be big warning signs like guys pay attention"
1.3.15 "scheduling of some of the courses was a problem"
1.3.16 "getting around was a problem"
1.3.17 "working full time the whole time I was carrying my two Master's programs so that was kind of a challenge"
1.3.18 "time management personal think you've got to learn"
1.3.19 "people were so smart"
1.3.20 "leaps and bounds beyond normal people"
1.3.21 "people I interact with. They were so much more worldly"
1.3.22 "school of education are so closed and bubbled"
1.3.23 "don't know anything outside their little world'
1.3.24 "my world view was clearly skewed, if you will, by military service"
1.3.25 "would have the same bubble world that normal people have had I not had the exposures and the interactions"
1.3.26 "huge factor in the way that I view people and how people think and that kind of thing"
1.3.37 "here comes the group projects, and you have no work ethic"
1.3.38 "that was a very big challenge - having to manage other people while managing my own stuff, that was a challenge"

order to transition into higher education and this can cause additional challenges
10 Time management is something that needs to be learned to be successful as working full time and going to college is a challenge

11 Those in the military have a different vision of the world that others do due to their experiences
12 Working in groups when others have no work ethic is hard for individuals who have to now manage others in addition to their own responsibilities

1.4.1 "location"
1.4.2 "move to Central Florida first and then I picked a school"
1.4.3 "didn't have limited options on what I wanted to study"
1.4.4 "it's a recognized name"
1.4.5 "wasn't just a little nobody college or anything"
1.4.6 "knew I wanted to do education"
1.4.7 "definitely always going to do education"
1.4.8 "substituting and that was enough"
1.4.9 "knew it would be boring"
1.4.10 "living the same day, every year would get exhausting"
1.4.11 "could not spend my career doing that"
1.4.12 "become a person that I wasn't before from the combination of my experiences and the military is a big part of that"

1.4.13 "turned 23 during basic"
1.4.14 "had the GI Bill"
1.4.15 "using my GI Bill as supplemental income"
1.4.16 "doing full time work and then it was kind of like having a second job"
1.4.17 "not like it was enough for it to make a difference when it came to bill paying"
1.4.18 "enrolled in the second master's so I could continue take the school"
1.4.19 "only been part time and I wouldn't have gotten my GI Bill and I would have exhausted it sooner"
1.4.20 "just double up and take two Master's"
1.4.21 "second master's helped me out financially"
1.4.22 "[GI Bill info] all on me"
1.4.23 "they [military] do offer transitional services"
1.4.24 "mandatory part of check out procedure"
1.4.25 "have to go to all these offices, get all these signatures, do all these mandatory training. One of them was transitional services"
1.4.26 "separate one that is education services not mandatory"
1.4.27 "introduced to some education people in the office and I had conversations with them of my own accord"

13 Location and size of the college/university is a factor when picking a college when transitioning

14 Female veterans by virtue of serving in the military are a different person than they were original due to the combination of their experiences

15 The GI Bill is used to supplement income while transitioning as well as work full time
16 The GI Bill helps but does not help that much when it comes to paying bills often requiring getting a job
17 Going to school full time on a GI Bill is better as the GI Bill exhausts itself regardless of if the student is full or part time

18 Learning how to use the GI Bill is the responsibility of the student
19 The military offers transition classes, some mandatory, but does not completely prepare someone for college

1.4.28 "VARC does do stuff but you have to go in and ask the question"
1.4.29 "there's no seminars, no courses, there's no this is how you use your GI Bill"
1.4.30 "If you don't know what to question to ask, you're not going to get the information"
1.4.31 "transitional services it needs to be mandatory, but it also needs to be targeted at what you need on your road out"
1.4.32 "shouldn't be the last thing you do. This should have happened every year"
1.4.33 "offered multiple times a year for every service member so you can plan for your future"
1.4.34 "shouldn't wait until I'm going to be out in a month"
1.4.35 "one of the problems we had moving here was I was not a resident, so they were not going to cover my tuition"
1.4.36 "I start work, literally as soon as I could"
1.4.37 "take away from my GI Bill and they were going to charge me out of pocket the rest of the tuition that the GI Bill didn't cover"
1.4.38 "I would have applied for residency before I moved here"
1.5.1 "they offer both online, face to face, and mix mode"
1.5.2 "decreased the number of face to face and allowed you to do more stuff online"
1.5.3 "beneficial to me, I was working full time"
1.5.4 "appreciate the options for learning"
1.5.5 "problem with that become, under the GI Bill you have to take a certain percentage fact to face else you don't get full benefits. You only get half benefits"
1.5.6 "issue when it comes to scheduling working"
1.5.7 "GIs that are going back to school they're adults. They probably have families, they have responsibilities, they have jobs."
1.5.8 "if you don't allow them to take online or remote classes it can potentially interfere with them going back to school in a very big way"
1.5.9 "met a lot of good instructors"
1.5.10 "really enjoyed my face to face classes"
1.5.11 "on think I don't like about online classes is all the bs busy

20 Using the student services are good but often the student has to know what questions to ask in order to get the answers needed
21 There are no tutorials, or guides, on using veteran benefits like the GI Bill
22 The transition classes offered by the military are not offered often enough to make a difference in assisting veterans separating

23 If a female veteran were to have full knowledge of the requirements of the college planning to attend, such as residency, it would help them prepare better for their transition
24 Having mix mode classes are beneficial if working full-time
25 Variety in different course delivery options is an advantage to selecting courses
26 The GI Bill limits the number of online courses and can cause financial strain later on
27 Individuals really enjoy face-to-face classes but feel frustrated about "busy work" for online classes such as responding to others posts

work they make you [do] like they make you have to respond to two people's posts"

1.5.12 "if you're not my instructor and you're not saying anything that means anything I don't want to comment because that's a waste of my time"

1.5.13 "VARC was vocal about offering tutoring"

1.5.14 "got emails from them about tutoring assistance"

1.5.15 "person or people in the office that could help you with like editing and that kind of thing"

1.5.16 "we had our advisors assigned depending on what school you were in"

1.5.17 "did not know how important it was to take advantage of that [advisors] early on"

1.5.18 "didn't really use any of the assistance resources"

1.6.1 "positive experiences with my instructors"

1.6.2 "information, the assignments that we worked on, they all seemed relevant to my programs"

1.6.3 "only one instructor I had a real issue with"

1.6.4 "gave me a bad grad. I gave a very, very in-depth argument as to all the reasons why her grade was invalid"

1.6.5 "she replied with line an on-line email and that made me so angry because the time that I took to research"

1.7.1 "there was one in particular that had a different idea about, you know the professionalism behind when you respond to something"

1.7.2 "she just didn't care. Days would go by"

1.7.3 "did a non-thesis but you had a comprehensive exam. And there was one particular thing that wasn't working with the site and I needed administrative assistance. She wouldn't respond to me and I had 1 week to complete this."

1.7.4 "two days went by and she didn't email me back. I emailed her again on third day cuz I had 7 days. And she came back at me all stank and snotty"

1.7.5 "I called her too. Not just sent her an email and nothing, no I called the office and everything. She just didn't respond, and she was mad at me"

28 Student services geared towards veterans are vocal about offering assistance, but it takes more than just being vocal about the services for veterans to be able to benefit from them

29 Instructors who provide information and assignments relevant to programs and who respect veterans' experiences is an advantage

30 Staff/Administrators who don't take into consideration time constraints the veteran are under cause stress when trying to meet courseware requirements

1.8.1 "biggest think with VARC is if you do not know the right question to ask you will not get the right answer"
1.8.2 "my experience in undergrad helped me a lot to know what questions to ask and that branched out to helping my husband"
1.8.3 "things that you, who has never been a student in higher education you wouldn't think to ask because why would you?"
1.8.4 "interactions with VARC needed to be more comprehensive as far as, I shouldn't have to know what to ask you, you should know what I need based on what I'm telling you"
1.8.5 "people they have working in the office I think is great, they're usually veterans but they're often veterans who have never gone to school or they just started"
1.8.6 "blind leading the blind"
1.8.7 "need more in-depth training program, they need FAQs like quick resources for them to know what information needs to be provided when students come in with a certain issue"
1.8.8 "always wanted to help. I'm not saying they were unwilling. They just didn't provide 100% of the information that they should have"
1.8.9 "get a handout [POS] and it tells you what semester courses are offered in. It does not say every other year. So, it says Spring semester. So, when I read that, and I see that I think that its offered in Spring semester or Fall semester, was the case. Why would I assume it's not every year?"
1.8.10 "VARC had a writer lab"
1.8.11 "computer lab that had the statistical software"
1.8.12 "did use the graduate lab all the time"

31 The biggest issue with student services such as a VARC is that those that work there tend to know the right answer IF the veteran asks the right question
32 Student services for veterans should have in-depth training, FAQs, quick response guide that covers a broad range of college areas to help transitioning female veterans
33 The Plans of Study provided to students should include if any courses are only offered every other year to assist transitioning veterans better understand the requirements needed each year of their program

1.8.13 "only reason it was useful for me was because I had a life"
1.8.14 "where the audience is right but the applicable of transitional services is terrible"
1.8.15 "come out of the military and you gave up 5+ years of your life and all of a sudden nobody cares. It doesn't matter anymore"
1.8.16 "they [joes] need to understand that people won't understand your experience, they just can't wrap their head around it and they don't care about your experience"
1.8.17 "public places when they ask are you a veteran, what's your points, whatever it doesn't mean anything as far as the job is concerned. It means maybe guaranteed an interview but that's it"
1.8.18 "they don't care because for the most part your skill set is not going to match what's on my job posting. It doesn't matter that you are disciplines, know how to listen, follow orders and adapt to change..."
1.8.19 "importance of education is not stressed highly enough when it comes down to transitioning out of the military"

1.9.1 "was married and transitioned with my husband so he was my biggest advocate, my biggest support"	34 Spouses are often the biggest advocate and support for transitioning female veterans
1.9.2 "he was my support system."	
1.9.3 "we don't have family here, we don't have friends here when we first moved"	
1.9.4 "it was just me and him"	
1.9.5 "have periodic groups but it was only for group assignments"	35 It is difficult to have study groups or cohorts during college when working full-time due to time constraint
1.9.6 "It was never a group that followed me or that went with me from class to class"	
1.10.1 "biggest strategies I had to come up with had to do with time management"	36 Time management is a necessary skill for transitioning female veterans
1.10.2 "matter of planning my weeks in order to meet my deadlines"	37 Promptly addressing issues with instructors provide clarity when there is an error or disagreement
1.10.3 "strategy was always to address the instructor and address the material as far as I find an error with what you have presented and this is why, what do you think?"	
1.10.4 "couldn't really do anything about my groups"	
1.10.5 "only strategy I have for that is if I know you're not going to do the work I'm not letting you bring me down so I'll do it for you"	
1.10.6 "not a good strategy but it is a necessary strategy when you're	

in that environment where if they don't do their part you're going to fail"	
2.1.1 "didn't want my dad to pay for school"	38 Reasons for joining the military include not wanting family to pay for school
2.1.2 "it was a life-changing catalyst event for me"	39 Military is a life-changing catalyst
2.2.1 "went from undergrad all the way through the master's program"	
2.2.2 "didn't graduate when I planned to cause I had a lag between undergraduate and graduate that I was not anticipating"	40 Delays in graduation are caused by errors in processing military training-based credits for a specific program
2.2.3 "error on the school's part of counting college credits"	
2.2.4 "credits from the Air Force to my undergraduate program"	
2.2.5 "I thought I was ahead when I needed, like, two more classes to graduate"	
2.2.6 "by not finishing those credits, you know I didn't graduate with my undergrad until later in the school year which did not allow me to apply to graduate school until the following year"	41 Errors in including military training courses as part of their college courses can cause up to a year delay in graduation
2.2.7 "the stipulation is not all universities will accept all credits, and the program, the undergraduate program that I went under I specifically chose because I was able to CLEP out of almost 30 hours of courseware"	
2.2.8 "there was a mistake in what I had thought I was qualifying for and CLEPPED out of that they did not count"	42 The ability of a college to accept military-based and apply it to their respective program allowing them to graduate sooner by skipping courses is an advantage
2.3.1. "initially I did my undergrad all virtual, so I didn't really have any college campus experience, very limited interactions with other students"	
2.3.2 "didn't really have anything to compare it to"	
2.3.3 "handling all of that virtually I got pretty comfortable fairly quickly, but I had support from my sister to come and help me"	
2.3.4 "one thing I've notice with other veterans, too, college is very daunting if you've never done it before"	
2.3.5 "you chose a completely separate route to go after high school"	
2.3.6 "the idea of passing or failing and writing, you know, stuff that you're just not used to is all very daunting"	
2.3.7 "so, me being able to do it virtually I was comfortable with"	
2.3.8 "I knew I wanted to get a Master's program and that was going to be in person, and I had a lot of anxiety about that"	43 Challenges to attending college after transitioning is there is often nothing to compare it to

2.3.9 "a lack of feeling like a real college student"	
2.3.10 "felt like I was kind of faking it"	44 Feelings of inadequacy, or that they are faking it, can be challenges after the military
2.3.11 "like I wasn't qualified enough or smart enough"	
2.3.12 "I was concerned about my performance and whether or not how well I was going to do in that environment"	45 Not feeling qualified enough or smart enough to complete college and worries about their performance can be a challenge
2.3.13 "had to seek that out from my peers"	
2.3.14 "none of my peers were in the same boat as me"	
2.3.15 "fostered relationships with students in my class"	
2.3.16 "you kind of got a feel for what their level of performance and expectations were you kind of realized you're on the same playing field and you don't have to worry as much"	46 Seeking assistance from peers and fostering relationships with other students can help in transition and feelings of inadequacy
2.3.17 "I got one semester under my belt, got a feel"	
2.3.18 "going to school full time and they had in the department open opportunities for you to work with the professors and do research with them"	
2.3.19 "needed to be able to focus on school"	
2.3.20 "set a schedule up to where all my six days a week I was working on either homework assignments, or you're in class, or you're in the office"	47 Setting a schedule specific to days that pertained to courses, studying, writing, etc. is important for success
2.4.1 "GI Bill"	
2.4.2 "helped me through undergraduate and part of graduate"	
2.4.3 "chose [the college] because they accepted most of the college credits"	
2.4.4 "chose [the college] for my graduate program was I knew I wanted to get into Human Factors and there's a very limited subset of schools that offer that program"	48 Reasons for choosing a school include its acceptance of military-based training credits in additional to specific program the student is looking for
2.4.5 "knew the exact requirements for [the college] and I felt I could meet 'em"	49 Moving to the location of a college quickly after being accepted or just prior is not considered a big deal due to the experience of moving periodically within the military
2.4.6 "moved to FL once I got accepted"	
2.4.7 "No, and I wish it would have [tuition], you know, cause cost is…[the college]is pricey"	
2.4.8 "not public, and I wish I would have factored that into the equation"	50 Tuition impacts decisions for choosing college due to restrictions associated with the GI Bill
2.4.9 "you exhaust your GI Bill no matter what you are doing, so that	

number doesn't ever change. But if I, I've could've been smarter about what...the way I used it"
2.4.10 "I literally just up and moved, found an apartment"
2.4.11 "drove down the week school started and just hoped for the best"
2.4.12 "in the military you're used to it"
2.4.13 "remember feeling a great deal of pressure getting out, and thinking I have to get my degree"
2.4.14 "there's a lot of veterans that get out and just start in the workforce, you know, but I was dead set on needing to have my degree"
2.7.1 "had a secretary in the department that was great"
2.7.2 "I still get emails from her about job postings"
2.7.3 "just a good person"
2.7.4 "very sincere and she cared, and she always helped out whenever she could"
2.8.1 "really hard to translate GI Bill stuff"
2.8.2 "financial aid was a pill at first"
2.8.3 "wish they would've done more to kind of have somebody to look at what you were looking at and go, 'Let's re-evaluate your student loan'"
2.8.4 "No, I wasn't at all, and I think that's the problem."
2.8.5 "I was not reluctant. I wish somebody would have made me more reluctant"
2.8.6 "I didn't know what I didn't know"
2.8.7 "veterans Affairs Department [at college] don't think was very, savvy. They didn't know what was happening and the GI Bill was kind of new"
2.8.8 "think that's why the program [GI Bill] worked so well is like, you know, a lot of people pay into it and not a lot of people use it"
2.8.9 "didn't deal with [the college] veterans Affairs Department"
2.8.10 "I dealt directly with the VA"

2.9.1 "me and my sister are really close"
2.10.1 "don't really feel like I had time to think about being self-reflective and trying to mitigate what was coming at me"

51 The act of moving to attend a specific school is not difficult due to prior experience in moving when in the military

59 When separating from the military there is a pressure to go to college and get a degree

52 Good, sincere staff/administrators, often going through the program themselves, can be of great assistance

53 The GI Bill is hard to translate which means financial aid is difficult if something is wrong
54 Colleges need to have someone help look at GI Bill benefits, the school's requirements to assist with financial aid

55 Non-reluctance to take student loans for the aspects of the GI Bill not covered can cause future stress

56 Reliance on the VA because a college doesn't understand the GI Bill is not uncommon
57 Support structures include family members who are close such as sisters
58 College is sometimes so overwhelming and requires so much there is no time to self-reflect and try to mitigate what is

	happening…they just react.
3.1.1 "data and my brother are both military" 3.1.2 "kind of been a family tradition" 3.1.3 "wasn't enough resources around to send me to college" 3.1.4 "I cooked burgers. It wasn't a terrible job. I actually kind of liked it. But, eventually I didn't see myself doing that for another however many years" 3.1.5 "retrained for broadcast journalism" 3.1.6 "quite an adventure for sure, that career field your so...it's more incumbent on you to be self-sufficient" 3.1.7 "covering stories by yourself" 3.1.8 "exciting and challenging and it wasn't your typical military team-oriented career field" 3.1.9 "definitely individualistic, more autonomous in nature" 3.1.10 "able to travel, even more than most" 3.1.11 "needed overseas because we worked for the America Forces Network that specific job is only needed for overseas" 3.1.12 "a time when you couldn't get American television overseas" 3.1.13 "I had a great time with my job and that is why I feel blessed" 3.1.14 "it was a career that was meant for me. I'm a creative person and any other career that was super military or super structure I probably would have gotten out" 3.1.15 "I think there is a place for all types of personalities in the military and I think it is a little bit divine direction of where this person should be when they are serving" 3.1.16 "I think people just need to find the right job for them" 3.2.1 "pretty much ingrained in you when you join" 3.2.2 "constantly improving yourself, pressing and volunteering to get an education" 3.2.3 "financially it makes sense" 3.2.4 "no reason not to" 3.2.5 ""didn't complete my bachelors until right before I retired' 3.2.6 "didn't really have a plan" 3.2.7 "taken college courses on and off throughout my career" 3.2.8 "came down to practically I was looking at retirement and I didn't have a bachelor's degree and I didn't want to struggle even	60 Reasons for joining the military can include family tradition as well as lack of family resources for college 61 A career in the military can be found by everyone and can lead to a career in the military itself, often lasting 20 years 62 Bettering yourself, or getting an education, is instilled in those who join the military almost from the beginning 63 Financially, not transitioning into college after serving in the military does not make sense

harder"

3.2.9 "I'm not a planner"

3.3.1 "had to move back to my house in Baltimore for practical reasons"

3.3.2 "not too far from my house"

3.3.3 " couldn't do anything online"

3.3.4 "three deciding factors: No GRE, close to my house, and full BAH"

3.3.5 "GI Bill give you tuition and depending on how many classes you are taking you get a stipend for living"

3.3.6 "pack my classes so I could have the full BAH so I could pay my mortgage and go to class and not worry too much about finding a job right away"

3.3.7 "really it was people of all ages. That was what was nice with the master's program"

3.3.8 "you had a wide range of people"

3.4.1 "HR from what I understand when I got out was kind of the catch all for everything and including training"

3.4.2 "HR seemed kind of the broad way to get a generalist kind of position so I could work anywhere just because I had been a trainer in the military it made sense to apply for a training position"

3.4.3 "didn't really start discovering what I really wanted to do until I started trying things"

3.4.4 "starting to fall in love with the technology part of training so I have been doing a lot - actually teaching myself code"

3.4.5 "never saw myself as a designer. I didn't think it was something you could do beyond a certain age"

3.4.6 "yeah, because if you go to the private school it is more expensive, so I went to a state school and it was fully covered"

3.4.7 "didn't have to worry about paying out of pocket"

3.4.8 "my support structure - they actually live in northern Virginia - it was about an hour/two hours away"

3.4.9 "weren't there for the day to day going to school"

3.4.10 "support structure came from the other students"

3.4.11 "whole new whole for me, now as a real deal civilian so I needed to adapt to that"

64 Reasons for going to college post military include no GRE, close of home, and full BAH

65 Self-awareness in recognizing what will and will not work such as an online program can benefit transition into college

66 When using full BAH, taking full-time classes allow for a focus on school and not having to find a job right away

67 Reasons for selecting a college can include finding a generalized program of study and then find out a specific career during their first few courses

68 Tuition impacts college selection because a private school is more expensive which would mean the GI Bill would expire sooner

69 Support when transitioning can be geographically separated such as family in another state

70 Family support is not always present in the day to day struggles

71 When family support is distant bonds develop with other students

	72 Challenges transitioning include learning to adapt to life as a civilian
3.5.1 "a lot of prayer and happen to be working with people who would give me a reference"	
3.5.2 "difficult for me to reach out to someone and ask for help"	
3.5.3 "as an introvert it was challenging it takes me a while to warm up to people"	
3.5.4 "force myself to be more outgoing"	
3.5.5 "I just picked her and decided who I was going to talk to"	
3.5.6 "we started talking. we started studying together"	
3.5.7 "met another lady who is actually the head of the HR at her bank. she was just really chill and open and supportive"	
3.5.8 "have the culture you have to get the mission done you got to do, do, do. I think that kind of conflicts sometime with the civilian mindset"	
3.5.9 "things are more relational. more concerned with building relationships"	
3.5.10 "challenging when you are trying to work in a group situation, you have different mindsets"	
3.5.11 "doesn't have to be perfect just needs to get done"	73 Having a strong faith and relying on that faith helps transitioning
3.5.12 "perfectionist to me means their way"	74 Personality traits, such as being introverted, can cause difficulties when reaching out and asking for help and can make someone seem standoffish to others, making it difficult for others to warm up to them
3.5.13 "mission centric you just have to let it go and get it done"	
3.5.14 "a team culture in general with the military in general you have a common goal"	
3.5.15 "loss of purpose that was greater than myself"	75 Use to the military culture of when there is a mission and you do what is needed to get that mission done sometimes conflicts with civilian mindsets
3.5.16 "that was what I struggled with when I was trying to find something I wanted to you. You are no longer serving your country, you are just you"	
3.5.17 "I didn't realize it was ingrained in me until I got out. Didn't realize how much it impact my whole life"	76 Once out of the military it is difficult to acclimate due to a loss in a purpose that was greater than themselves
3.5.18 "doing something at a higher purpose and working with people doing a higher purpose there is a deeper bond"	77 Struggling to find something to do other than serving their country is a challenge

3.5.19 "my dad was retired military"

3..5.20 "from a retired military perspective he knew what it was like"

3.5.21 "difference when you wear the uniform and when you don't"

3.5.22 "with a whole bunch of civilians and can't relate to them"

3.5.23 "I couldn't relate to other students because they were civilians"

3.5.24 "was an officer so there was no way he could relate to what I did as enlisted"

78 Having other family members who have transitioned from the military previously helps transitions

3.5.25 "sought out counseling just to deal with the, you know, transition"

79 Fathers, brothers, sisters, mothers who have experienced similar challenges upon separating from the military are able to relate with experiences and provide counseling when needed

3.5.26 "really tough transition for me. I am an introverted and didn't have a lot of people to reach out to even to find a job, because I'm such an introvert"

80 A transition can be made more difficult if the someone is an introvert

3.6.1 "awkward"

3.6.2 "some were just really tough and tough for no reason"

3.6.3 "got dressed down by one of my instructors. In my 20 years in the military I never had someone talk to me the way"

3.6.4 "was just really shocked. I was expecting that. My preconceived ideas were that, especially in academic, that everyone was going to be like yeah, whatever"

3.6.5 "impression with academia that everyone was chill"

3.6.6 "the ones I really liked were the younger and energetic"

3.6.7 "they were fun and relevant and one guy the first time I was like he teaching style"

3.6.8 "he was adjusting his teaching style, he would ask you questions and he would be like no you're wrong and people were like too scared and then he just realized that after we took a couple courses with him that he was just really smart"

81 Experiences with instructors can be awkward and tough unnecessary

3.6.9 "he really had a good heart and wanted us to be able to function in the real world and he was trying to structure it in a realistic way"

82 Getting berated by an instructor can shock and cause undue stress

3.6.10 "found some of those instructors not prepared to teach really good at their jobs just not great at explaining it"

83 Teachers who seem to change their teaching style and whom seem to really try help with transitions

3.6.11 "you can't be a person who knows it all because things change so rapidly and you're talking to adults"

84 It is difficult to take classes with instructors who are really good at their job but not good at instructing

3.6.12 "life experience who probably know a thing or two about what you are teaching"

85 Not recognizing one person cannot know everything and life experience may cause undue stress

3.6.13 "to always have this authoritative like I know it better than you I don't think that is the best way to approach things in an adult environment"

3.6.14 "my military be self-sufficient, be sufficient"

3.6.15 "I only approach them when they had a problem with me"

3.6.16 "never really communicating to them where I was working from so I would show up to class late, but I wanted to attend class"

3.6.17 "any graduate level or above you have to talk to the instructors yourself"

3.6.18 "usually from other students who had taken classes with them"

3.6.19 "kind of like the grapevine"

3.6.20 "it wasn't structured like I went to a student counselor or was like and it more like you know you just heard it in class"

3.6.21 "planning your schedules it was like oh no not that guy, this guy's ok"

3.7.1 "both experiences were probably any tuition issues"

3.7.2 "handling a GI Bill is such a specific think…so if you weren't trained for that you don't know how to handle it"

3.7.3 "when you're allowance for housing is dependent on whether you're enrolled and you're like waiting on it for to be approved you get really aggressive so I was constantly like hey I need this done"

3.7.4 "veteran support center even though I never taken advantage of it or never really participated with it, they made it a point to honor you for your service"

3.7.5 "actually tried to take advantage of it [veterans office at smaller college] when I was trying to get a job they had this lady come out ant talking about how to get a job with federal service and she was really dismissive"

3.7.6 "you could tell that she really liked this one person, he was a young good looking dude"

3.7.7 "veteran center [at larger university] they send me a thank you for your service pin"

3.7.8 "do something nice for our veterans that touched me"

3.7.9 "it was probably the most memorable most positive think I got was just a little pin that I wore on my lanyard until it feel off"

3.7.10 "nicest, sweetest thing that someone had done for me and they

	86 Being in the military imbues self-sufficiency and deter reaching out to instructors unless there is a serious problem
	87 Discussing instructor tactics, personalities, etc. with other students help plan schedules or be aware of requirements
	88 Handling the GI Bill to ensure tuition is paid is a critical issue

probably didn't even know who they were sending it to"

3.8.1 "not a big fan of being dressed down in public"

3.8.2 "not a good motivational tool"

3.10.1 "used my counsel who was paid to listen to me"

3.10. 2 "believer in the Lord, Jesus Christ"

3.10.3 "prayed a lot"

3.10 4 "know how dangerous to talk to about people over text or to be negative it can be very corrosive so if I had a feeling I would take it to prayer"

3.10.5 "did a lot of bible study and prayer and listening to messages and that really helped me"

3.10.6 "safest way to go because if I wanted to vent whenever I wanted to it would have destroyed a lot of relationships"

3.10.7 "introversion is something that isn't celebrated in America, you're assumed to be aloof or stuck up and to me I am just an observer"

3.10.8 "I like to observe people and I do that quietly and some people find that invasive"

3.10.9 "I turn it on when I need to but my natural default personality is to observe"

3.10.10 "wasn't like what your typical military person is"

3.10.11 " broadcasting is such a creative career, it attracts a certain type of personality real touchy feely…felt like that was freedom where military structure was at time so confining"

3.10.12 "they were surprised I wasn't more intense"

3.10.13 "keep yourself open to ideas because you have to"

3.10.14 "what they were expecting with me they didn't get which maybe was a tougher sterner personality"

3.10.15 "don't think they were expecting me to be as emotional as I was"

89 Religion is a common strategy used to cope

90 Going to bible study, prayer groups, listening to messages help cope with stresses and challenges

91 Seeking professional counseling during their transition to have someone there to just listen to them can help

92 Applying stereotypes base on military experience can cause issues and be direct opposite of a person's personality

4.1.1 "graduating college and had no other plans"

4.1.2 "thought it would be a good career path"

93 Reasons for entering the military can include not having other plans after graduating from college and believing it would be a good career path

4.2.1 "had no intention of going back for a graduate degree"

4.2.2 "when to teaching in a small Junior college and then I decided 'Hey you know what, I'd be better off if I had a master's Degree"

4.2.3 "we were going [transferred] somewhere where they had one [college]"

4.3.1 "take my child to the nursery"

4.3.2 "have to drive into town to the medical center to take classes"

4.3.3 "classes were research, a lot of classes were reading articles and things like that, writing papers"

4.3.4 "most of them were about my age"

4.3.5 "no other military"

4.3.6 "all female. I don't believe there were any males"

4.3.7 "had a lot of intensive nursing [from the military] and it helped in what I went into"

4.4.1 "It was there [where we moved]"

4.4.2 "just setting up the master's in nursing program so I was one of the few that was going through it"

4.4.3 "had good GI Bill benefits"

4.4.4 "when I applied they paid…they gave me money like a salary and I could use that for whatever I wanted"

4.5.1 "all very focused with what we wanted to do"

4.5.2 "nursing was in a lot of flux at that time"

4.5.3 "my baccalaureate program it had not reached the point where they had gotten all the requirements"

4.5.4 "when I went to get my Masters, they said well you gotta do this and this and this...so that you got your classes so that made it more difficult"

4.5.5 "most nurses were done through hospitals…it was a three-year nursing program"

4.5.6 "when class was over, we all took off, we all had another life, we dispersed"

4.5.7 "[son] keeps talking about study groups all the time. We didn't do that"

94 Not all those leaving the military plan to return to college but after working in a career they determine it would be best to get an advanced degrees

95 Location is a factor in choosing a college when if a female veteran's husband is still in the military and they are re-stationed

96 Children, especially small children, are factors that impact college selection

97 GI Bill helps with tuition in that it is like a salary

98 Going to a school that is not accredited is an additional layer of difficultly transitioning

99 Other responsibilities such as family tend to impede spending a lot of time with classmates outside class time

4.6.1 "guidance counselor, was a Doctor in Nursing and she…I expressed an interest in doing infection control, so she suggested for my electives"	
4.6.2 "there's always instructors that you like and those you don't like"	
4.8.1 "wasn't really like a regular university campus"	
4.8.2 "had very little interaction with anybody else"	
4.8.3 "none of that [student union]"	
4.9.1 "just my husband"	
4.10.1 "my husband was very supportive, and he would do a lot of things"	100 Husbands tend to be the main source of support
4.10.2 "because I had other family commitments. It took three years"	101 Family commitments can delay graduation
5.1.1 "went to school for a year and I wasn't ready for it"	102 Reasons for entering the service can be realizing they are not ready for college life
5.1.2 "didn't want to live at home and not do anything"	103 Reasons to join the military include not wanting to live a home and wanting to travel
5.1.3 "wanted to travel"	
5.1.4 "it's difficult not from an active duty member perspective but from a mother's perspective and a wife's perspective"	
5.1. 5 "I had to be the mom, the supporter when he deployed and then vice versa"	104 It is difficult being in the military, as a female, as active duty, as a wife, as a mother
5.1.6 "it takes a lot of communication and adjusting, dealing with a lot of movement"	105 Being in the military with a spouse takes a lot of communication and adjusting
5.1.7 "was through to school periodically throughout my active duty career"	
5.1.8 "wish I had gotten everything done a lot sooner but as you progress through the ranks and there's more responsibility and then you have kids, and you have deployments..."	
5.1.9 "as soon as I got out I said I need to go ahead and get this done"	
5.2.1 "had to take my elective classes I needed to finish [my undergraduate]"	
5.2.2 "started while I was in active duty [undergraduate]"	
5.2.3 "an acceleration more so because I was out, I mean I was just strictly going to school it was the only think that I was doing"	
5.2.4 "I was terrified to go back to school when I retired"	106 Returning to college after a career in the military can be terrifying
5.2.5 "saw myself as a, I call myself "green suitor" or a uniform"	

5.2.6 "I just felt I stuck out like a sore thumb"

5.2.7 "I'm the only one in uniform, but nobody cared"

5.2.8 "academically now I had fears about that as well. Just because military style writing is different from civilian style writing"

5.2.9 "took some adjustments but eventually you know I caught on to it and then I became more comfortable"

5.2.10 "graduating quicker than I expected"

5.2.11 "funding [was an] issue, it was only an issue in the beginning because I didn't plan for it and I didn't know about it, but I did have to take out a student loan

5.2.12 "had a wonderful advisor because that helped because I didn't understand"

5.2.13 "the student loan helped and what I did was I actually accelerated my schedule"

5.2.14 " never thought that I would get a bachelor's degree, I never thought I would be in a graduate degree program, soon to graduate and have my graduate degree"

5.2.15 "started off with two classes just because I didn't want to overwhelm myself"

5.2.16 "following semester I actually went full time and from then on I kinda just stuck with the schedule"

5.3.1 "attending right now is all online with [college] so I work from 7:00-4:00"

5.3.2 "faithfully every single day, I come home from work I go straight into my room and do my homework until about 11"

5.3.3. "my husband takes care of the kids, I mean he makes dinner, he helps them"

5.3.4 "it's just me and my husband"

5.4.1 "had no idea the amount of research I had to do in order to find a graduate program and I didn't realize how many program were out there"

5.4.2 "was also told from other military people that 'you need to make sure that you pick a school that's legitimate and they're accredited...'"

5.4.3 "narrowed it down to five different schools"

5.4.4 "periodically went down and then from the last five I contacted

107 The differences between military and civilian life extent into the classroom specific to writing styles, interactions, etc. which can be stressful

108 If funding issues come up where the GI Bill doesn't cover all tuition a student may take out student loans adding another challenge

109 Schedules for full-time working and full-time college students require dedication that take them away from their families, figuratively, five days a week and puts additional burden on their spouse

the school for more information and the person that I spoke with at NAU I was more interested in the curriculum"

5.4.5 "knew I wanted to do something in curriculum development side"

5.4.6 "learned about the open-network learning environment and I was like I would love to teach a course like this"

5.4.7 "the curriculum was set up and my options that I had was what mead me select the school"

5.4.8 "unfortunately we live in the area that here there aren't any face-to-face graduate programs"

5.4.9 "[tuition] did [play a role], but I did not find out till after the fact"

5.4.10 "m GI Bill did not cover my entire tuition"

5.4.11 "found out was that the, and I wasn't informed of this before I retired, that the GI Bill the 911 or excuse me or post 9/11 only covers the max rate for your in-residence or your in-state basically"

5.4.12 "the rate with [college] exceeded the max rate that it would have paid"

5.4.13 "would've been some good information, if I'd found that information out prior to retiring that surely would've affected my decision"

5.5.1 "positive experience with the students as well as with the instructors and advisors"

5.5.2 "every single student and teacher you know when we do our introductions they always start off by thanking me for my service"

5.5.3 "I don't expect it but it's nice to know that they do appreciate us, and they appreciate the experience"

5.5.4 "can actually apply some of my military experiences with the assignments"

5.5.5 "think what's kind of interesting for my civilian, you know classmates, cause you know a lot of them didn't realize that 'oh, you guys don't do this in the military or you guys do this'"

5.5.6 "my teachers have been very helpful as well. I don't know if it's because my military background"

5.5.7 "I have ADHD, I have anxiety, I have PTSD so a lot of times I get overwhelmed"

110 Discussing colleges with other military members helps identify dos and don'ts regard colleges to attend and criteria to include when researching

111 Not completely understanding the GI Bill can cause additional stress

112 Completely online curriculum and out of state tuition can have a negative impact on what the GI Bill will cover causing challenges

113 Curriculum that allow the application of military experience in assignments helps in transition success

114 Thanking someone for their military service is appreciated even though it seems like a small thing to some

115 Medical issues can be cause additional stress when transitioning

116 Communicating with instructors when there is a medical issue can alleviate potential negative consequences

117 There should be professionalism when discussing topic between colleges to avoid conflict

5.5.8 "turned in one assignment late, like it had to be turned in at midnight and I turned it in at 12:02 I freaked out and I just sent an email to my teacher"

5.5.9 "got an email the next day and the instructor was like 'calm down, you're ok'"

5.5.10 "would get distraught ever time and it sucked too because I have a lot of medical issues"

5.5.11 " sometimes I'm out for a day or two or you know three but I do let my teachers know in advance and they're more than willing to work with me"

5.5.12 "now group work, that's another story. I've been with some very good groups and some you know egh"

5.5.13 "had to contact my instructor one time, it was a group of three, and I did not know this that the other girl also contacted the instructor about the third party"

5.5.14 ""I was like we know we have academic freedom but there is a certain time and place for everything"

5.5.15 "let her [instructor] know and I'm not sure if she had talked to him about it or after that he did tone it down"

5.7.1 "only think I can really think of that I would say mixed about is the financial aid"

5.7.2 "don't know if it's because of the process or I've had two different experiences since I retired"

5.7.3 "first school [undergrad] they were very smooth, their process was streamlined for individuals with the post 9/11"

5.7.4 "now with [college] went back and forth a lot between the financial aid office and the VA office"

5.7.5 "I would say I didn't get the hang of the process or it wasn't consistent until after my second semester"

5.7.6 "nobody explained to me the process"

5.8.1 "started receiving more veteran's emails and other types of information, events, and stuff"

5.8.2 "it's kinda cool, it's nice to know they do support veterans and they have functions and stuff"

5.8.3 "although I couldn't go because I was geographically separated,

118 Difference colleges have difference understandings, processes, etc. specific to veterans' benefits which can be challenging

119 There should be processes explained regarding financial aid or the GI Bill

it was nice knowing that they did have functions for those individuals to come together and meet"	
5.9.1 "we have family per se here, they're a bunch of friends and our kids"	
5.9.2 "you know if anything happened we could send the kids over to their house and vice versa"	
5.9.3 "made a lot of friends that are here in the local area that are civilians that live here so we kind of sort have a per se supportive family system here"	120 Family does not always mean blood relations and includes friends that can help watch kids, etc.
5.9.4 "	121 Having extended family, such as friends, is a big help for those who don't have family in the area
5.10.1 "more so the support of my husband"	
5.10.2 "I vent to him all the time and my kids and you know it's funny when I explain to my kids at the same time"	
5.10.3 "my kids, they always, they've always been supportive of me"	
5.10.4 "my co-workers as well, I can talk to them anytime"	
5.10.5 "some of my co-workers are active duty, some of my co-workers are civil service like myself retired"	122 Husbands are the first line of support
5.10.6 "one think that I really, really appreciate about the military, regardless of active duty, retired is that you still have that closeness, you know that family vibe"	123 Older children can be a support structure by listening and being supportive
5.10.7 "I can talk to anyone at work about school and they will sit down and like 'oh'"	124 Regardless of active duty, there is always a closeness between veterans that feels like a family vibe
	125 Co-workers are another source of support
6.1.1 "money and benefits"	126 Reasons for entering the military include money and benefits veterans receive
6.1.2 "I was proud of it"	
6.1.3 "as a black woman there--I remember sailors that crossed the street to say good morning to me"	
6.1.4 "that representation…all you see is males. And all you see is white males."	
6.1.5 "even before I made Chief, I was a second class. For them to see someone who looked like them or someone who they felt they could identify with"	127 Important aspects of serving include the pride experienced, especially for minorities, as acting as a role model
6.1.6 "made me feel like I had a sense of purpose"	
6.1.7 "that was my favorite part of being in the service. It wasn't about me"	128 There is a sense of purpose in serving and acting as a role model

6.1.8 "we were dual military; my children needed a stable parent"	129 Families in the military can be duel military which means both parents are in the military
6.1.9 "felt like the children needed somebody there that they would be able to have there the whole time"	130 When military families are dual military it is important for the children to have a stable parent
	131 College is often started, and then military members are moved or re-stationed and feel they can make a long-distance journey to continue with their education but that doesn't always happen
6.2.1 " when I started my PhD., we got transitioned to Jacksonville and I honestly thought that I would be willing to make that two-hour trip to go to classes and I didn't, so I had to start all over again"	
6.3.1 "because I was an online student the assignments were due Sunday by midnight"	
6.3.2 "Monday I would look at, like, what I was supposed to do for the whole week, identify my reading, identify my posting requirements"	
6.3.3 "I did work full-time and I also had children, they were younger, and so I would have to figure out when I could get my reading one and when I could get my assignments done"	132 Online students who are female veterans and working would have specific time management needs to ensure work, school, children, and homework is completed
6.3.4 "every day for lunch I would go read in the car"	133 Strategies for completing school work when working full-time and raising children include reading during lunch, in a car
6.3.5 "it was very important to me that I was there"	134 Challenges faced include making sure children feel they are a priority and not missing out on their lives or extracurricular activities or giving the impression they are less important
6.3.6 "I had to either make sure I got the stuff done ahead of time or I got, you know, something that I could do after his game"	
6.3.7 "I didn't want him to look up in the stands and I'm looking down at paper"	
6.4.1 "I had to have money and benefits. So, I went into the military"	
6.4.2 "to find out [college] had an online program, I was very happy. I felt I could regain what I lost by going into the military"	
6.4.3 "I chose their master's program and then when I found out the prestige that they had in ISD, I was very happy"	135 Online availability of programs offers a way to regain what is often lost when entering the military instead of college
6.4.4 "when I chose the doctorate program, it was strictly because they were the only ones that offered Performance Improvement"	
6.4.5 "Not at the time because I had the GI Bill"	
6.4.6 "the school would cut out, um, 10% tuition"	136 Schools that offer a military discount can be attractive to female veterans
	137 Ability to go to school online full time can be attractive to female veterans
6.4.7 "online was full-time so, I mean, it was a great benefit"	
6.4.8 "because my military time was in Norfolk, I didn't have anybody to call and ask"	

6.4.9 "just kinda drive around and go by things you hear"

6.4.10 "remember going to the apartment on a Sunday because I worked and so I went on a Sunday and I walked through, and I saw it. I was like, ok we are going to say here"

6.4.11 "you're taught when you're younger, you either go to college or you go to the military"

6.4.12 "how else would you get a job? You can't meet the requirements with no formal education"

6.4.13 " when I was a junior sailor told me, when you get out of the Navy, there are gonna be hundreds of people getting out of the Navy the same day. What do you have that they don't"

6.4.14 "so you run immediately to education because you got the GI Bill. A lot of people go into the military because of that"

6.5.1 "courses were just there to meet a requirement but what you got out of it and what you did, I came to find, that was based on you"

6.5.2 "you are not there for them to open your head and pour things into it"

6.5.3 "a few people that would reach out, so they could connect"

6.5.4 "It's easy to feel isolated"

6.5.5 "asked the Dean why don't you have group assignments and their answer was that people were in different zones and people are in different work environments, family statuses, so to require all these people that may have these different requirements to work together in many ways could be setting them up for failure"

6.5.6 "think that school is more advanced than workplace because there is no negative connotation about virtual working or having different situations"

138 When transferring in the military word of mouth from others who have lived in the area help with finding schools, places to live

139 When transferring in the military there is often limited time to find places to live

140 Places that offer a military discount on rent are attractive to female veterans with children

141 Female veterans whose husbands are still in the military and who are re-stationed are often the main individual who finds new places to live, schools for the children, etc. at the new location

156 Reasons for going into higher education post military service is that sense that as someone grows up its either college or the military and when out of the military how are you going to get a job without formal education

157 veterans separate from the military daily and have that added challenge of differentiating from those veterans and education makes that possible

142 Universities have course requirements but what is achieved and gotten out of the program is up to the student

143 It is easy to feel isolated when taking a completely online program

144 Universities that recognized different group dynamics such as geographical location and include that in their courseware can be attractive to female veterans

6.5.7 "in every course that I had, though, somebody else was military. And you tend to engage with that person more in terms of answering their posts and stuff like that"

6.5.8 "given that I was in performance improvement courses, I think that, you know, the severity with which the military embraced our topics and in training, I feel like that we were always able to connect on that"

145 There is a tendency for former military individuals in a class to engage more with each other

6.6.1 "some of my instructors, I believe, were used to teaching college students"

6.6.2 "like an undergrad straight outta their mama's house or they related to them that way"

6.6.3 "me, being an adult, having experienced the world more, having lived on my own or whatever, they seemed to just kinda be really hands off"

146 Instructors that are experienced with teaching college students, i.e., 18-year-old, can cause challenges to female veterans

147 Instructors can be more hands off on the student who is more experienced in the world, i.e., female veterans

6.6.4 "if you needed them, they would answer you"

6.7.1 "faculty member there was a dean and she was very, like -- she would push you to do publishing, she would push you to do conferences"

6.7.2 "didn't make it mandatory, but really did push you there"

148 Administrators who guide students to publish or do conferences without making it mandatory can inspire students

6.8.1 "student services, they, thankfully everywhere I went, they had experience with veterans"

6.8.2 "questions that I would have, concerns that I would have, issues that I would have, if my GI Bill payment didn't come through, the would -- they have seen that before. And they would help you"

149 Student services that have individuals with experience with veterans is critical to assisting in answering questions about the GI Bill

6.8.3 "[I used] the disability services"

6.8.4 "was diagnosed with MS during school and one of the instructors pointed me to disability

158 Instructors who can help with other student services, like disability services, can be helpful in transitioning

150 Female veterans have to do a lot on their own because they will not always be close to family or people they consider friends and often adopt an attitude of just getting what needs to be done

6.9.1 " reality is that you're not always going to be with family, you're not always going to be with people with who you identify as friends"

6.9.2 "you just kinda have developed this 'I'm gonna do it' attitude"

6.9.3 "I ended up transitioning from active duty to Navy wife, so I have to be strong for him, I have to be strong for the children, I have to be strong for everybody"

151 Female veterans who husbands are still in the military become the one stable constant in the life of all those around her and have to be strong for everybody

6.9.4 "you just cry to yourself"

6.9.5 "you do a lot of self-talk"

152 Female veterans often internalize any stress they experience

6.9.6 "there was always be disparaging remarks like, "Why are you doing this?" and so therefore I learned to just rely on myself because if not, you'd hear so many reasons to quit"	
6.9.7 "online classes, online programs, there's definitely a place for them, there's definitely a need for them"	
6.9.8 "I do understand the role online learning plays, but at the same time, I also understand that immersion in an academic environment"	
6.9.9 "I think there is something to be said for not having to be sitting in class Tuesday and Thursday nights at 6 when your child has volleyball practice"	153 The advantage between online and face-to-face instruction for female veterans varies based on the individual and having the option is an advantage
6.10.1 "I didn't do counseling after I left [the military]"	
6.10.2 "I didn't' do a 'stop and deal with it' it"	
6.10.3 " you kinda stop and think about actually unpacking some of the stuff that you dealt with and that transition"	
6.10.4 " a great strategy would be counseling because you don't even know that you're dealing with that. you don't even know."	
6.10.5 "It's almost a PTSD to take that uniform off and you no longer have it"	
6.10.6 "not that the uniform was your identity, but it's a big part of who you were"	
6.10.7 " a strategy is definitely unpacking"	
6.10.8 "going through physical therapy and she said, 'you military people are the hardest people to deal with because you won't be honest about weakness or feeling bad, you're going to sit there and say 'I'm ok'"	
6.10.9 "in transition assistance, they talk to you about resources, but no one ever helps you deal with the emotional transition; no one ever helps you deal with the mental transition"	154 After leaving the military some female veterans don't get counseling because there isn't time, but counseling is a good idea to help with the transition
6.10.10 "Let me think what I got to do and I'm gonna do it. So that's a great coping strategy. Just relying on your training and things you've done."	155 Female veterans are provided transition assistance focusing on resources but no help for the emotional trauma experienced with separation
7.2.1 "coming from Puerto Rico and the jobs over there you need to have the English language in order to be more successful"	159 Reasons for joining the military include getting a better job to be successful
7.2.2 "to learn English"	160 Reasons for joining the military include learning English
7.2.3 "challenges probably as a woman"	161 Challenges of female veterans in the military include
7.2.4 "men have more opportunity to get promotions"	seeing men getting more opportunities to get promotions and

7.2.5 "also a lot of sexual harassment"	sexual harassment
7.2.6 "good opportunity for women to become successful and be physically in good shape"	162 Benefits of female veterans in the military include good opportunity for women to become successful and be in good shape and it opens doors after service has ended
7.2.7 "working in the service opens a lot of doors"	
7.2.1 "active duty I started working on my master's degree"	
7.2.2 "because I have two kids with disability and married to another soldier I had to postpone my graduate degree to take care of my family"	163 Challenges of female veterans can include being the caregiver for children with disability
7.2.3 "became a single mom after I got out of the service"	
7.3.1 "most of my experience going back to college after serving in the military was positive"	
7.3.2 "people see you in a different level"	
7.3.3 "more flexible with you and they take a lot of consideration that you're military"	164 When attending college after serving in the military people see veterans in a different level take that into consideration
7.3.4 "very stressful but I don't think it was stressful because the classes and the lifestyle"	
7.3.5 "about self-esteem issues"	
7.3.6 "I was doubting that I was…I wasn't able to pass the class"	
7.3.7 "I can manage the stress"	165 Self-esteem issues is a challenge female veterans face when entering college post service
7.3.8 "more an internal issue than anything else"	166 A university that is flexible and willing to work with the challenges a female veteran experiences is attractive
7.3.9 "very flexible"	167 Sole caregivers of children, with or without disabilities, with no family support rely on babysitters, etc. to watch their children during courses and can be stressful when that falls through
7.3.10 "family helped me watching the kids"	
7.3.11 "before my family came to Orlando, I had to pay a babysitter"	
7.3.12 "really hard because sometimes a babysitter can call me like at the last minute to cancel"	168 Having options for child care makes a difference in the transition of female veterans with children
7.3.13 "that part was also really stressful"	
7.3.15 "had to cancel the entire class because it was really hard for me to find another babysitter"	169 Having to withdraw from classes due to inconsistent child care can lead to a more difficult transition with the female veteran feeling a sense of disappointment
7.3.16 "had to withdraw the class put me in…not a really depression, but I was very disappointed of what I was going through"	
7.4.1 "started back in Puerto Rico. Right after I finished my bachelor's degree. But then I joined the Army and that class that I took in college that I graduated it was not valid anymore. So, I had to start from scratch"	170 Location of a college is an important fact for female veterans

7.4.2 "school was right there on post"

7.4.3 "easy for me to get off from work and just walk to the classroom. And then I lived on post so right from classroom I go straight to home"

7.4.4 "very convenient"

7.4.5 "a lot of people that I work were attending [university] and they spoke highly about [university[]"

7.4.6 "guidance counselor, he provided me a lot of information"

7.4.7 "processed my tuition assistance really quick"

7.4.8 "I started with duel master's degrees"

7.4.9 "big time"

7.4.10 "receive tuition assistance and that covers also the books"

7.4.11 "he was an Army officer, so he got deployed to Iraq and we moved to Fort Campbell….they didn't have [university]"

7.4.12 "[university] allowed me to go to the local university"

7.4.13 "I took classes there and they validated the transcripts into my [university] program"

7.4.14 "something that I wanted to do right from the get-go"

7.4.15 "life affects you so that everything you're doing everything that you plan doesn't go according to your plan. I kept going until I got it"

7.5.1 "build teams to work on the courses"

7.5.2 "a negative experience but it wasn't [university] fault. It was more internal"

7.5.3 "really hard class…in the first two classes that I attended when the instructor was putting math formulas on the wall...I panic because I couldn't understand why he was going it and I got out of the class"

7.5.4 "I withdrew from the class and almost…I was refuse to go back to school because of that for a long time"

7.5.5 "something was telling me you need to finish what you started"

7.5.6 "confronted my fears"

7.5.7 "if I give him the opportunity of the third class I would understand what he was explaining...but my fears took over and I couldn't finish the class"

7.5.8 "the third time because the second time the same thing happened"

171 Former or current student endorsement, specifically other veterans, of a university is important for female veterans

172 Universities able to process tuition assistance correctly and quickly are important to female veterans

174 A university that allows a student to take courses at another college and then validate the transcripts for their program is attractive to a female veteran who may have to move due to military requirements after starting college

175 Going to college is something that female veterans but they need to realize that things don't always go as planned

176 Internal struggles, such as panicking when not understanding something, can cause difficulties during transition

177 Female veterans repeat classes sometimes due to internal struggles such as panic attacks but press on and confront their fears on their own

7.5.9 "I was praying a lot. I mean I was praying!"	178 Female veterans pray a lot when transitioning and are experiencing internal struggles
7.5.10 "they build teams and if you don't understand something whoever understands more will explain to the ones that don't see things clear"	179 Working in teams can help with transition as it allows peer mentoring
7.6.1 "most of professors and instructors they had military background, or they work in the Department of Defense contracts or contractors"	180 Instructors with military or Department of Defense backgrounds can relate more with experiences of female veterans
7.6.2 "always was asking questions"	181 A female veteran needs to be willing to always ask questions during their transition
7.7.1 "when I was already working with the Navy that they were paying for that classes that paperwork wasn't processed correctly, and they contact me to rectify"	182 Having a staff/administrator who can process paperwork for course payment help with transition
7.7.2 "very proficient"	
7.8.1 "didn't have to use the VA because GI Bill in that beginning that was a letter"	
7.8.2 "they process all the paperwork"	
7.8.3 "don't have to do anything"	
7.8.4 "didn't have many resources but I didn't have to use them because [university] helped me through all the steps"	183 Having student services that know the process for getting courses paid through GI Bill help alleviate stress on female veterans
	184 There are no assistance programs available for single moms
7.9.1 "only support that I had was the caregiver that I was paying from my pocket"	185 Female veterans who need child care have to use personal funds to pay for that child care which can impact transition due to unexpected expenses
7.9.2 "couldn't find any other veteran's assistance for single moms"	
7.9.3 "found [university]…they have a program for disabled children"	
7.9.4 "offer training for parents when they are new into the disability with their children"	186 Universities with programs for children, with or without disabilities, are benefit to female veterans
7.9.5 "also offer for services or information about services"	
7.10.1 "very frustrated. You know, I feel powerless at one point I feel like, you know, it's over for me"	187 Female veterans who are single moms can feel frustrated and powerless often wondering if they'll be able to continue with their education
7.10.2 "recuperate from…that kind of thoughts"	
7.10.3 "whole experience was giving me strength to keep you know moving forward and not quitting"	188 Crying is often a cathartic way of venting because female veterans may not have a venting outlet and need to empty themselves of their negative feelings before going on
7.10.4 "more like crying because you know you go through so much and you don't have an outlet to go to, so you have to empty your	

system of that feeling and then you get energy to keep going"	
8.1.1 "get away from home"	189 Reasons for entering the military include getting away from home
8.1.2 "always tell everybody remember why you went in the military"	
8.1.3 "two reasons, I wanted to travel, and I wanted to get an education"	190 Reasons for entering the military include wanting an education and wanting to travel
8.1.4 "got everything from the military I wanted"	
8.1.5 "no regrets about going into the military"	
8.1.6 "was different for females because we had difference criteria than the males"	191 Criteria for female veterans is different than that for male veterans, in the past
8.1.7 "it's your hair and your jewelry, and that we couldn't go to sea"	192 Women at one time were not allowed to go to sea and had to have a shore billet which limited their potential
8.1.8 "had to have a shore-based billet"	
8.1.9 "my rate we were all pretty much equal as far as men and women"	
8.1.10 " would have stayed in but at the time the military didn't have it, I mean they tout it now, but they really don't do it, and they didn't have...trying to keep spouses together"	
8.1.11 "think because of the times, I was in the 70's, they didn't really want women to stay in the military"	
8.2.1 "when I got out I really wanted to go to school because I got my GI Bill"	193 Female veterans want to go into college after the military because they get their GI Bill and they want to use it
8.2.2 "goal was to get a degree because nobody in my family had ever done that before"	194 A reason for going into higher education after military is because no one else in a person's family had achieved a degree
8.2.3 "delayed but it was because my husband was in the military"	
8.2.4 "all through college I had kids while I was in college"	
8.2.5 " all that stuff [kids, etc.] didn't affect my college time, but transferred to California did"	
8.2.6 "when I lost that job I realized that I started civil service and that I needed to get my education"	
8.2.7 "a boss that said I don't care what your degree is you've got to finish school"	195 Female veterans who are married to men still in the military have to delay their education due to kids, transfers, etc.
8.3.1 "had veterans throughout the school that helped us with our transition"	
8.3.2 "with our GI Bill, and for the most part, our teachers were really accepting of the fact I been in the military"	196 Instructors who are accepting of military experience helps with transition
8.3.3 "went in the Reserves. So that was a stressor because in the	197 Female veterans who left the military but then went into

reserves they used to do two weekends"
8.3.4 "it's always a weekend that you got something else you'd rather do"
8.4.1 "you don't usually go where there's a nice based that's got a school"
8.4.2 "I went to school, it paid your tuition and you get a monthly check as long as you're going to school"
8.4.3 "GI Bill expired before I went back to school"

8.5.1 "went up to her, she was my English teacher. And I went up to her one day after school and said I'm just not getting it"
8.5.2 "all these other kids they do study groups together they party together. That's now me right. I'm married and expecting"
8.5.3 "told her it just I don't feel like I fit in"
8.5.4 "didn't really fit in with what you would consider college life and living in the dorm kind of thing"
8.6.1 "because your life is different"
8.6.2 "hard for me to relate to most of the people in my class"

8.6.3 "made such a positive influence on me. Right. And I think that's probably because she could relate to the military"
8.6.4 "he didn't quite grasp that idea of being married"
8.6.5 "negative experience but the positive outweighs the negative"
8.6.6 "you're a little intimidated"
8.6.7 "my background coming from the family and it wasn't educated even though the military kinda tries to help"
8.6.8 "still felt ignorant and uneducated and inferior to my instructors"
8.7.1 "working with the VA is difficult"
8.7.2 "there were times when the office would call me and say money hasn't shown up"
8.7.3 "had a VA rep out in town that worked with us"

8.8.1 "it would help me and the school to understand veterans"
8.8.2 "didn't have anything like that [VARC]"

the reserves had additional stressors because of the different requirements of the reserves, such as two weekend a month, which seem to conflict with other responsibilities
198 Transfers in the military do not always include a location with a college

199 Gaps in attending school after separating from the military cause the GI Bill to expire and result in out of pocket funds needed to go to college

200 Female veterans who are older and with children do not feel they fit in with their college class mates who are almost 20 years younger
201 Challenges female veterans face when attending college after serving in the military include not fitting in with their class mates or the entire college life style
202 It is hard for female veterans to relate to individuals in their classes
203 Instructors who do not appreciate the differences in their students and who don't recognize some students have responsibilities outside the classroom increase feelings of not fitting in

204 Female veterans feel intimidated, ignorant, and inferior by their instructors

205 Working with the VA is sometimes difficult if the college is not familiar with working with military benefits
206 It would benefit female veterans if the school understood the veteran student demographic
207 Not having a veteran's center on campus can cause

	challenges
8.9.1 "had a husband obviously" 8.9.2 "when you're in the military, your family becomes your friends right" 8.9.4 "support structure and that carries on through our military career" 8.9.5 "it was our neighbors and the people that we serve with in the military be it my husbands' squadron and my job or whatever. Those become your family" 8.10.1 "because my husband was still in the military that helped. Because you know you don't feel so awkward you're kind of still in that same environment" 8.10.2 "went in the reserves, that, that was hell"	208 Military friends often become family and a source of support for female veterans, even after separating from the military 209 After separating from the military, having a family member, like a husband, who is still in the military helps with the transition because there is not so much of an environment change
9.1.1 "overstressed" 9.1.2 "ready to get out" 9.1.3 "transition out is rough" 9.1.4 "wasn't any hard resources to go through and say you have this benefit" 9.1.5 "ends up being a service member to figure out what benefits they may have" 9.2.1 "was a long transition" 9.2.2 "had a military move" 9.2.3 "he was discharged we got stable" 9.2.4 "had a new baby" 9.2.5 "ended up going to stay with family" 9.2.6 "just kind of winging classes where I could" 9.3.1 "difficult because the mix delivery" 9.3.2 "making extra time to go to the school after working" 9.3.3 "making sure I had child care" 9.3.4 "making sure my husband wasn't on travel" 9.3.5 "keeping it all planned out" 9.3.6 "little bit more difficult versus just doing homework"	210 Reasons for joining the military include being overstressed in college and ready to get out of an isolated area 211 Transitioning out of the military is rough for veterans because it tends to be the service member leaving the military that has to figure out what benefits they have 212 Transitions can be lengthy for female veterans who husbands are still in the military and who have small children and experience deployments and transfers 214 Challenges in transitioning include having a new baby, husband is deployed, staying with family temporarily 215 When working full-time, having a husband, and children, even a mix-mode college program can be difficult for female veterans 216 Challenges female veterans face transitioning into college that require face-to-face courses include making time to go to class after work, getting child care, and coordinating with husband's work and travel schedule

9.3.7 "time consuming"	
9.3.8 "not as bad as it's all online"	217 Challenges female veterans face transitioning into college
9.3.9 "fit it where I can"	that are online can be less than traditional face-to-face because
9.3.10 "online has been the only reason that I've been able to get the	they can fit the work where they can and is often the only way
degree"	they can get a degree
9.3.11 "a lot of interviews and researching for the degree type"	
9.3.12 "it was close"	
9.3.13 "it was mixed mode"	218 Location is a criteria used to determine college
9.3.14 "kind of convenient"	219 Having a college close to where a female veteran work and
9.3.15 "considering the program and the relationship between work	in which there is a relationship between the college and the
and the school"	workplace helps with selecting a college
9.3.16 "masters in aeronautics"	220 A reason for going back to college after military is to gain
9.3.17 "more technical knowledge for work"	more technical knowledge specific to workload
	221 Budget is an issue when the GI Bill is no longer applicable
	222 A workplace that has tuition assistance helps with
	transition
	223 Having clear, distinct guidelines for tuition requirements
9.3.18 "stay within the financial guidelines"	helps decision making in returning to college
9.3.19 "put my plan together first and that's how I approached my	
supervisors"	
9.4.1 "I'm hooked. Sign me up."	224 Meeting with individuals who can assist in answering
9.4.2 "said you have to have a Masters. And I said Ok. That next fall I	questions about requirements and guidelines for career can help
as in school."	in selecting college
9.4.3 "I have an aviation 'passion'" I guess"	
9.4.4 "going for my pilot's license"	
9.4.5 "cramming as much as I can"	225 Reasons for going back to school post military include
9.4.6 "talking to technically savvy SMEs it would be much faster if I	wanting to be able to talk intelligently with technically savvy
actually understood them and could translate a little faster"	SMEs
9.5.1 "had a very good advisor"	226 Having a good advisor helps in transition completion
9.5.2 "a lot of one on one"	227 Having individuals, such as an advisor, take the time to
9.5.3 "would take the time that actually helped me explore better that	meet and talk and explore issues helps with successful
area"	transition
9.5.4 "time requirement was interesting to balance family	228 Strategies for completing transition to college requires time
responsibilities"	management to balance family responsibilities
9.5.5 "one person in the class say they would absolutely have nothing	229 Having individuals express negative views of military can
to do with the military project"	make a lasting impact on female veterans

183

9.6.1 "had great instructors"	
9.6.2 "anytime there was an issue as long as we had communication open with them they were great"	230 Instructors who are available to communicate and discuss issues help in transitioning
	231 Female veterans can feel reluctant or intimidated by their instructors
9.6.3 "reluctant or intimidated"	232 Female veterans reluctance to approach their instructors
9.6.4 "do I have time to research and discuss this list of questions on top of my schoolwork, on top of work, on top of family"	can stem from a perceived additional work assignment based on questions asked
	233 Difficulties in online courses include instructors don't know if you're having a hard time following along because they
9.6.5 "since they don't see you they don't know if you're having a hard time"	don't see you on a regular basis, or at all
9.6.6 "had some really good one-on-ones across video"	234 Strategies to cope with online difficulties in lessons include having one-on-one video chats
9.6.7 "my instructors…they've been really good"	
9.6.8 "set their guidelines"	
9.6.9 "if you need this email me, we'll try to schedule it"	235 Instructors who have set guidelines and whom the female
9.6.10 "as long as you kind of scheduled it"	veterans schedule times to meet seem to be a positive factor in
9.6.11 "kind of respected their time"	transitioning
	236 Difficulties in online courses include the female veteran
9.6.12 "being online, you're kind of isolated"	feeling isolated
9.7.1 "separate advisor…who's my go to bellybutton for anything admin….makes it easy"	237 Having a single person whom a female veteran can coordinate with regarding administrative issues can help relieve
9.7.2 "talk to my advisor and he made things happen"	stress about unknown requirements
9.7.3 "other than making sure my bill's pay it was talk to my advisor"	238 Advisors serve as a resource for administrative issues
9.7.4 "actually didn't speak to anybody"	
	239 Have a student service geared towards veterans allow for support in processing payments and making sure the right classes are being taken
	240 Female veterans do not always take part in all services available to them, such as tutoring, due to time issues
9.8.1 "process payments"	241 It can be difficult to fit work, class, homework, and family
9.8.2 "make sure that I was taking the right classes"	responsibilities and then go to tutoring at specific times
9.8.3 "didn't get into the tutoring"	provided by a student services organization
9.8.4 "just having the time"	
9.8.5 "trying to fit it in between classes and work"	
9.8.6 "if it could have been online that would have been a difference"	242 If student services such as tutoring were provided in

9.8.7 "just the time to actually physically be there"	multiple modes, such as online and face-to-fac, female veterans
9.8.8 "just couldn't make that work for my schedule"	may be able to use those types of services
	243 Female veterans tend be goal oriented and focus on getting
9.8.9 "got my degree and got out"	their degree and getting out
9.9.1 "by myself, small child and working"	
9.9.2 "end up in mommy clubs"	244 Support for female veterans can be limited if by
9.9.3 "not enough time to be able to work"	themselves with a small child in a new location
9.9.4 "had to work and if it wasn't working it was coming home and	245 Lack of support for female veterans can affect their ability
giving my son the time too"	to go back to college right after getting out of the military
9.9.5 "got restationed and you start over"	246 Getting restationed when a female veteran's husband is still
9.9.6 "new job, new house, get a new school set up"	military means not time to do much other than starting
9.9.7 "there was no time"	over…new job, new house, finding schools for kids, etc.
9.9.8 "don't understand deployment, the stresses of deploying, trying	247 It is frustrating to talk about stresses of being a military
to keep a household and working and kids"	wife to nonmilitary individuals
9.9.9 "husband is here even after getting out of the military for his	
civilian job"	
9.9.10 "still travels a lot"	248 Because military families tend to not have local family, the
9.9.11 "we pretty much do it a lot on our own"	sole support for the female veteran is her husband
9.10.1 "still go back to him [advisor] even now"	
	249 Coping strategies for female veterans can include just
	moving on after a bad experience
9.10.2 "move on"	250 Coping strategies for female veterans can include focusing
9.10.3 "get your grade and move on"	on getting your grade and just moving on after a bad experience
9.10.3 "you just deal with it"	251 Female veterans tend to just deal with issues as they arise

APPENDIX F:
FORUMULATED MEANINGS, CLUSTER THEMES, AND EMERGENT THEMES

Emergent Theme: Gaining Benefits of Being a Veteran
Bettering yourself
62 Bettering yourself, or getting an education, is instilled in those who join the military almost from the beginning **94** Not all those leaving the military plan to return to college but after working in a career they determine it would be best to get an advanced degrees **194** A reason for going into higher education after military is because no one else in a person's family had achieved a degree **220** A reason for going back to college after military is to gain more technical knowledge specific to workload **225** Reasons for going back to school post military include wanting to be able to talk intelligently with technically savvy SMEs
Fulling a Dream
1 From an early age joining the military is a goal of children **3** Individuals who delay going into the military for college tend to regret it later on in life but recognize they would not be the person they are today
Gaining an Education
38 Reasons for joining the military include not wanting family to pay for school **59** When separating from the military there is a pressure to go to college and get a degree **60** Reasons for joining the military can include family tradition as well as lack of family resources for college **63** Financially, not transitioning into college after serving in the military does not make sense **126** Reasons for entering the military include money and benefits veterans receive **142** Universities have course requirements but what is achieved and gotten out of the program is up to the student   **156** Reasons for going into higher education post military service is that sense that as someone grows up its either college or the military and when out of the military how are you going to get a job without formal education **157** veterans separate from the military daily and have that added challenge of differentiating from those veterans and education makes that possible **160** Reasons for joining the military include learning English **193** Female veterans want to go into college after the military because they get their GI Bill and they want to use it
Becoming Successful
61 A career in the military can be found by everyone and can lead to a career in the military itself, often lasting 20 years **93** Reasons for entering the military can include not having other plans after graduating from college and believing it would be a good career path **159** Reasons for joining the military include getting a better job to be successful **162** Benefits of female veterans in the military include good opportunity for women to become successful and be in good shape and it opens doors after service has ended
Escaping Home/College
102 Reasons for entering the service can be realizing they are not ready for college life **189** Reasons for entering the military include getting away from home **210** Reasons for joining the military include being overstressed in college and ready to get out of an isolated area
Getting to travel
103 Reasons to join the military include not wanting to live a home and wanting to travel **190** Reasons for entering the military include wanting an education and wanting to travel

Emergent Theme: Military Challenges
Battling Gender Roles
161 Challenges of female veterans in the military include seeing men getting more opportunities to get promotions and sexual harassment **191** Criteria for female veterans is different than that for male veterans, in the past **192** Women at one time were not allowed to go to sea and had to have a shore billet which limited their potential
Dissatisfaction with Military Job
4 Individuals may leave the military not because they didn't like the military any longer but didn't like where or what they were doing in the military
Military Family Dynamics
104 It is difficult being in the military, as a female, as active duty, as a wife, as a mother **105** Being in the military with a spouse takes a lot of communication and adjusting **129** Families in the military can be duel military which means both parents are in the military **130** When military families are dual military it is important for the children to have a stable parent **141** Female veterans whose husbands are still in the military and who are re-stationed are often the main individual who finds new places to live, schools for the children, etc. at the new location **151** Female veterans who husbands are still in the military become the one stable constant in the life of all those around her and have to be strong for everybody **163** Challenges of female veterans can include being the caregiver for children with disability **195** Female veterans who are married to men still in the military have to delay their education due to kids, transfers, etc. **213** Sometimes stability does not occur until both husband and wife are separated from the military **246** Getting restationed when a female veteran's husband is still military means not time to do much other than starting over…new job, new house, finding schools for kids, etc. **247** It is frustrating to talk about stresses of being a military wife to nonmilitary individuals

Emergent Theme: Picking a College
Location
13 Location and size of the college/university is a factor when picking a college when transitioning **49** Moving to the location of a college quickly after being accepted or just prior is not considered a big deal due to the experience of moving periodically within the military **51** The act of moving to attend a specific school is not difficult due to prior experience in moving when in the military **64** Reasons for going to college post military include no GRE, close of home, and full BAH   **95** Location is a factor in choosing a college when if a female veteran's husband is still in the military and they are re-stationed **139** When transferring in the military there is often limited time to find places to live **170** Location of a college is an important fact for female veterans **198** Transfers in the military do not always include a location with a college **218** Location is a criteria used to determine college **219** Having a college close to where a female veteran work and in which there is a relationship between the college and the workplace helps with selecting a college
Ability to Work with Family Needs
96 Children, especially small children, are factors that impact college selection **101** Family commitments can delay graduation
Word of Mouth
110 Discussing colleges with other military members helps identify dos and don'ts regard colleges to attend and criteria to include when researching **138** When transferring in the military word of mouth from others who have lived in the area help with finding schools, places to live   **171** Former or current student endorsement, specifically other veterans, of a university is important for female veterans
Options in Delivery Method
25 Variety in different course delivery options is an advantage to selecting courses **27** Individuals really enjoy face-to-face classes but feel frustrated about "busy work" for online classes such as responding to others posts **42** The ability of a college to accept military-based and apply it to their respective program allowing them to graduate sooner by skipping courses is an advantage **48** Reasons for choosing a school include its acceptance of military-based training credits in additional to specific program the student is looking for **65** Self-awareness in recognizing what will and will not work such as an online program can benefit transition into college **67** Reasons for selecting a college can include finding a generalized program of study and then find out a specific career during their first few courses   **135** Online availability of programs offers a way to regain what is often lost when entering the military instead of college   **137** Ability to go to school online full time can be attractive to female veterans **144** Universities that recognized different group dynamics such as geographical location and include that in their courseware can be attractive to female veterans **153** The advantage between online and face-to-face instruction for female veterans varies based on the individual and having the option is an advantage **166** A university that is flexible and willing to work with the challenges a female veteran experiences is attractive **168** Having options for child care makes a difference in the transition of female veterans with children   **174** A university that allows a student to take courses at another college and then validate the transcripts for their program is attractive to a female veteran who may have to move due to military requirements after starting college **186** Universities with programs for children, with or without disabilities, are benefit to female veterans

Emergent Theme: Picking a College

College Understanding of Veteran Benefits

15 The GI Bill is used to supplement income while transitioning as well as work full time **16** The GI Bill helps but does not help that much when it comes to paying bills often requiring getting a job **17** Going to school full time on a GI Bill is better as the GI Bill exhausts itself regardless of if the student is full or part time **18** Learning how to use the GI Bill is the responsibility of the student **20** Using the student services are good but often the student has to know what questions to ask in order to get the answers needed **21** There are no tutorials, or guides, on using veteran benefits like the GI Bill **26** The GI Bill limits the number of online courses and can cause financial strain later on **28** Student services geared towards veterans are vocal about offering assistance but it takes more than just being vocal about the services for veterans to be able to benefit from them **31** The biggest issue with student services such as a VARC is that those that work there tend to know the right answer IF the veteran asks the right question **32** Student services for veterans should have in-depth training, FAQs, quick response guide that covers a broad range of college areas to help transitioning female veterans **40** Delays in graduation are caused by errors in processing military training-based credits for a specific program **41** Errors in including military training courses as part of their college courses can cause up to a year delay in graduation **53** The GI Bill is hard to translate which means financial aid is difficult if something is wrong **54** Colleges need to have someone help look at GI Bill benefits, the school's requirements to assist with financial aid **56** Reliance on the VA because a college doesn't understand the GI Bill is not uncommon **88** Handling the GI Bill to ensure tuition is paid is a critical issue **97** GI Bill helps with tuition in that it is like a salary **108** If funding issues come up where the GI Bill doesn't cover all tuition a student may take out student loans adding another challenge **111** Not completely understanding the GI Bill can cause additional stress **112** Completely online curriculum and out of state tuition can have a negative impact on what the GI Bill will cover causing challenges **113** Curriculum that allow the application of military experience in assignments helps in transition success **118** Difference colleges have difference understandings, processes, etc. specific to veterans' benefits which can be challenging **119** There should be processes explained regarding financial aid or the GI Bill **149** Student services that have individuals with experience with veterans is critical to assisting in answering questions about the GI Bill **172** Universities able to process tuition assistance correctly and quickly are important to female veterans **182** Having a staff/administrator who can process paperwork for course payment help with transition **183** Having student services that know the process for getting courses paid through GI Bill help alleviate stress on female veterans **205** Working with the VA is sometimes difficult if the college is not familiar with working with military benefits **206** It would benefit female veterans if the school understood the veteran student demographic **239** Have a student service geared towards veterans allow for support in processing payments and making sure the right classes are being taken

Tuition

50 Tuition impacts decisions for choosing college due to restrictions associated with the GI Bill **55** Non-reluctance to take student loans for the aspects of the GI Bill not covered can cause future stress **68** Tuition impacts college selection because a private school is more expensive which would mean the GI Bill would expire sooner **136** Schools that offer a military discount can be attractive to female veterans **140** Places that offer a military discount on rent are attractive to female veterans with children **222** A workplace that has tuition assistance helps with transition **223** Having clear, distinct guidelines for tuition requirements helps decision making in returning to college

Emergent Theme: Problems Transitioning

Self-Doubt

44 Feelings of inadequacy, or that they are faking it, can be challenges after the military **45** Not feeling qualified enough or smart enough to complete college and worries about their performance can be a challenge **58** College is sometimes so overwhelming and requires so much there is no time to self-reflect and try to mitigate what is happening…they just react **80** A transition can be made more difficult if the someone is an introvert **81** Experiences with instructors can be awkward and tough unnecessary **106** Returning to college after a career in the military can be terrifying **107** The differences between military and civilian life extent into the classroom specific to writing styles, interactions, etc. which can be stressful **165** Self-esteem issues is a challenge female veterans face when entering college post service **169** Having to withdraw from classes due to inconsistent child care can lead to a more difficult transition with the female veteran feeling a sense of disappointment **176** Internal struggles, such as panicking when not understanding something, can cause difficulties during transition **177** Female veterans repeat classes sometimes due to internal struggles such as panic attacks but press on and confront their fears on their own **187** Female veterans who are single moms can feel frustrated and powerless often wondering if they'll be able to continue with their education **204** Female veterans feel intimidated, ignorant, and inferior by their instructors **231** Female veterans can feel reluctant or intimidated by their instructor

Feeling Alone

19 The military offers transition classes, some mandatory, but does not completely prepare someone for college **22** The transition classes offered by the military are not offered often enough to make a difference in assisting veterans separating **43** Challenges to attending college after transitioning is there is often nothing to compare it to **69** Support when transitioning can be geographically separated such as family in another state **70** Family support is not always present in the day to day struggles **143** It is easy to feel isolated when taking a completely online program **150** Female veterans have to do a lot on their own **167** Sole caregivers of children, with or without disabilities, with no family support rely on babysitters, etc. to watch their children during courses and can be stressful when that falls through because they will not always been close to family or people they consider **184** There are no assistance programs available for single moms **185** Female veterans who need child care have to use personal funds to pay for that child care which can impact transition due to unexpected expenses friends and often adopt an attitude of just getting what needs to be done **197** Female veterans who left the military but then went into the reserves had additional stressors because of the different requirements of the reserves, such as two weekend a month, which seem to conflict with other responsibilities **200** Female veterans who are older and with children do not feel they fit in with their college class mates who are almost 20 years younger **201** Challenges female veterans face when attending college after serving in the military include not fitting in with their class mates or the entire college life style **202** It is hard for female veterans to relate to individuals in their classes **203** Instructors who do not appreciate the differences in their students and who don't recognize some students have responsibilities outside the classroom increase feelings of not fitting in **212** Transitions can be lengthy for female veterans who husbands are still in the military and who have small children and experience deployments and transfers **214** Challenges in transitioning include having a new baby, husband is deployed, staying with family temporarily **233** Difficulties in online courses include instructors don't know if you're having a hard time following along because they don't see you on a regular basis, or at all **236** Difficulties in online courses include the female veteran feeling isolated **244** Support for female veterans can be limited if by themselves with a small child in a new location **245** Lack of support for female veterans can affect their ability to go back to college right after getting out of the military **246** Getting restationed when a female

Emergent Theme: Problems Transitioning
veteran's husband is still military means not time to do much other than starting over…new job, new house, finding schools for kids, etc.
Figuring out GI Bill
199 Gaps in attending school after separating from the military cause the GI Bill to expire and result in out of pocket funds needed to go to college **211** Transitioning out of the military is rough for veterans because it tends to be the service member leaving the military that has to figure out what benefits they have **221** Budget is an issue when the GI Bill is no longer applicable
Understanding College Dynamics
2 Individuals may not go into the military due to concerns about missing the college experienc**e 6** A delay caused by not taking courses is a correct sequence causes delay in graduation causing a student to enroll in another program to continue enrollment **7** It is difficult to learn a new campus, find buildings, and orient oneself when there are no support structure or services available to a graduate student **8** Unfamiliarity with a new school, new faculty, new staff can be the biggest issue female veterans have to get use to **9** Female veterans are sometimes not sure of what they need in order to transition into higher education and this can cause additional challenges **12** Working in groups when others have no work ethic is hard for individuals who have to now manage others in addition to their own responsibilities **23** If a female veteran were to have full knowledge of the requirements of the college planning to attend, such as residency, it would help them prepare better for their transition **33** The Plans of Study provided to students should include if any courses are only offered every other year to assist transitioning veterans better understand the requirements needed each year of their program **39** Military is a life-changing catalyst **72** Challenges transitioning include learning to adapt to life as a civilian **75** Use to the military culture of when there is a mission and you do what is needed to get that mission done sometimes conflicts with civilian mindsets **76** Once out of the military it is difficult to acclimate due to a loss in a purpose that was greater than themselves **77** Struggling to find something to do other than serving their country is a challenge **86** Being in the military imbues self-sufficiency and deter reaching out to instructors unless there is a serious problem **87** Discussing instructor tactics, personalities, etc. with other students help plan schedules or be aware of requirements **98** Going to a school that is not accredited is an additional layer of difficultly transitioning **175** Going to college is something that female veterans need but they need to realize that things don't always go as planned   **207** Not having a veterans center on campus can cause challenges
Coping with PTSD/Medical Issues
115 Medical issues can be cause additional stress when transitioning **155** Female veterans are provided transition assistance focusing on resources but no help for the emotional trauma experienced with separation

Emergent Theme: Help with Transition		
Faith		
73 Having a strong faith and relying on that faith helps transitioning **89** Religion is a common strategy used to cope **90** Going to bible study, prayer groups, listening to messages help cope with stresses and challenges **178** Female veterans pray a lot when transitioning and are experiencing internal struggles		
Family		
34 Spouses are often the biggest advocate and support for transitioning female veterans **57** Support structures include family members who are close such as sisters **78** Having other family members who have transitioned from the military previously helps transitions **79** Fathers, brothers, sisters, mothers who have experienced similar challenges upon separating from the military are able to relate with experiences and provide counseling when needed **100** Husbands tend to be the main source of support **122** Husbands are the first line of support **123** Older children can be a support structure by listening and being supportive **209** After separating from the military, having a family member, like a husband, who is still in the military helps with the transition because there is not so much of an environment change **248** Because military families tend to not have local family, the sole support for the female veteran is her husband		
Friends		
120 Family does not always mean blood relations and includes friends that can help watch kids, etc. **121** Having extended family, such as friends, is a big help for those who don't have family in the area **124** Regardless of active duty, there is always a closeness between veterans that feels like a family vibe **125** Co-workers are another source of support **208** Military friends often become family and a source of support for female veterans, even after separating from the military		
Students		
71 When family support is distant bonds develop with other student **114** Thanking someone for their military service is appreciated even though it seems like a small thing to some s **117** There should be professionalism when discussing topic between colleges to avoid conflict **145** There is a tendency for former military individuals in a class to engage more with each other		
Seeking Help		
5 Not knowing about or meeting with an advisor prior to starting courses cause issues with identifying the correct sequence of courses due to availability **46** Seeking assistance from peers and fostering relationships with other students can help in transition and feelings of inadequacy **74** Personality traits, such as being introverted, can cause difficulties when reaching out and asking for help and can make someone seem standoffish to others, making it difficult for others to warm up to them **91** Seeking professional counseling during their transition to have someone there to just listen to them can help **154** After leaving the military some female veterans don't get counseling because there isn't time, but counseling is a good idea to help with the transition **158** Instructors who can help with other student services, like disability services, can be helpful in transitioning **173** Female veterans use guidance counselors, if they know of them, to help gather information about their coursework **179** Working in teams can help with transition as it allows peer mentoring **224** Meeting with individuals who can assist in answering questions about requirements and guidelines for career can help in selecting college **226** Having a good advisor helps in transition completion **227** Having individuals, such as an advisor, take the time to meet and talk and explore issues helps with successful transition **238** Advisors serve as a resource for administrative issues		

Emergent Theme: Succeeding in Transition

Connecting with Staff/Administrators

52 Good, sincere staff/administrators, often going through the program themselves, can be of great assistance **148** Administrators who guide students to publish or do conferences without making it mandatory can inspire students **229** Having individuals express negative views of military can make a lasting impact on female veterans **237** Having a single person whom a female veteran can coordinate with regarding administrative issues can help relieve stress about unknown requirements

Breaking Stereotypes

11 Those in the military have a different vision of the world that others do due to their experiences **14** Female veterans by virtue of serving in the military are a different person than they were original due to the combination of their experiences **92** Applying stereotypes base on military experience can cause issues and be direct opposite of a person's personality **127** Important aspects of serving include the pride experienced, especially for minorities, as acting as a role model **128** There is a sense of purpose in serving and acting as a role model **164** When attending college after serving in the military people see veterans in a different level take that into consideration

Time Management

10 Time management is something that needs to be learned to be successful as working full time and going to college is a challenge **24** Having mix mode classes are beneficial if working full-time **30** Staff/Administrators who don't take into consideration time constraints the veteran are under cause stress when trying to meet courseware requirements **35** It is difficult to have study groups or cohorts during college when working full-time due to time constraint **36** Time management is a necessary skill for transitioning female veterans **47** Setting a schedule specific to days that pertained to courses, studying, writing, etc. is important for success **66** When using full BAH, taking full-time classes allow for a focus on school and not having to find a job right away **99** Other responsibilities such as family tend to impede spending a lot of time with classmates outside class time **109** Schedules for full-time working and full-time college students require dedication that take them away from their families, figuratively, five days a week and puts additional burden on their spouse **131** College is often started and then military members are moved or re-stationed and feel they can make a long distance journey to continue with their education but that doesn't always happen **132** Online students who are female veterans and working would have specific time management needs to ensure work, school, children, and homework is completed **133** Strategies for completing school work when working full-time and raising children include reading during lunch, in a car **134** Challenges faced include making sure children feel they are a priority and not missing out on their lives or extracurricular activities or giving the impression they are less important **215** When working full-time, having a husband, and children, even a mix-mode college program can be difficult for female veterans **216** Challenges female veterans face transitioning into college that require face-to-face courses include making time to go to class after work, getting child care, and coordinating with husband's work and travel schedule **217** Challenges female veterans face transitioning into college that are online can be less than traditional face-to-face because they can fit the work where they can and is often the only way they can get a degree **228** Strategies for completing transition to college requires time management to balance family responsibilities **235** Instructors who have set guidelines and whom the female veterans schedule times to meet seem to be a positive factor in transitioning **240** Female veterans do not always take part in all services available to them, such as tutoring, due to time issues **241** It can be difficult to fit work, class, homework, and family responsibilities and then go to tutoring at specific times provided by a student services organization **242** If student services such as tutoring were provided in multiple modes, such as online and face-to-fac, female veterans may be able to use those types of services

Emergent Theme: Succeeding in Transition	
Connecting with Instructors	
29 Instructors who provide information and assignments relevant to programs and who respect veterans' experiences is an advantage **37** Promptly addressing issues with instructors provide clarity when there is an error or disagreement **82** Getting berated by an instructor can shock and cause undue stress **83** Teachers who seem to change their teaching style and whom seem to really try help with transitions **84** It is difficult to take classes with instructors who are really good at their job but not good at instructing **86** Being in the military imbues self-sufficiency and deter reaching out to instructors unless there is a serious problem **116** Communicating with instructors when there is a medical issue can alleviate potential negative consequences **146** Instructors that are experienced with teaching college students, i.e., 18 year old, can cause challenges to female veterans **180** Instructors with military or Department of Defense backgrounds can relate more with experiences of female veterans **181** A female veteran needs to be willing to always ask questions during their transition **196** Instructors who are accepting of military experience helps with transition **230** Instructors who are available to communicate and discuss issues help in transitioning s **232** Female veterans reluctance to approach their instructors can stem from a perceived additional work assignment based on questions asked **234** Strategies to cope with online difficulties in lessons include having one-on-one video chats	
Handling Stress	
85 Not recognizing one person cannot know everything and life experience may cause undue stress **152** Female veterans often internalize any stress they experience **188** Crying is often a cathartic way of venting because female veterans may not have a venting outlet and need to empty themselves of their negative feelings before going on **243** Female veterans tend be goal oriented and focus on getting their degree and getting out **249** Coping strategies for female veterans can include just moving on after a bad experience **250** Coping strategies for female veterans can include focusing on getting your grade and just moving on after a bad experience **251** Female veterans tend to just deal with issues as they arise	

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