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A Study of Rural and Native-American Students' Military Identities, and Reading and Writing Interests in a Military-friendly, Military-themed Composition Course

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Abstract

The authors addressed first-year-composition students in an economically depressed, rural area, with their state of residence having a high number, per capita, of service-members and veterans of recent wars. Additionally, some students identified as Native American. The study's purpose was to explore whether offering a first-year-composition class, based upon an experimental course model formulated to be military-friendly and military-theme-focused, would promote a range of students' interaction with the design, including both service-members/veterans and nonveterans. The article discusses a three-year case study conducted at an Oklahoma university involving seven service-members/veterans and 57 nonveterans. The study resulted in several findings. Most students enrolled in the class perceived that in doing so, they interacted with a cohesive, relevant curriculum about military-oriented content. As additional curricular outcomes, the class's framework aided service-members/veterans' college shift and many students valued opportunities to discuss their personal and/or recent family military history. The study's results have implications for teaching students who are service-members/ veterans, have a military-affiliated identity, and/or possess a recent military family history within a military-friendly, first-year-writing course. Furthermore, in addressing the call to identify and accommodate student groups and their academic needs, this article has implications for colleges with high numbers of veteran/service-member, rural, and/or Native American students, who might benefit from military-friendly classes similarly.

Keywords: student service-members/veterans; military-affiliated students; students with a military family history; military-friendly classrooms; themed classes; cohort classrooms; first-year composition; persistence factors; Native American students; Indigenous students; rural students

Introduction

Over the past decade, college writing teachers and writing program administrators have begun to discuss offering military-friendly classrooms and military-related reading and writing topics as a curricular design strategy connecting students who are military cadets, service-members, and veterans to the class material and improving their persistence factors and outcomes in undergraduate writing courses (for instance, see Conference on College Composition and Communication [CCCC], 2015; Grohowski, 2013; Hart & Thompson, 2016; Hembrough, 2017; Keast, 2011; Navarre Cleary & Wozniak, 2013; Shivers-McNair, 2014). Nonetheless, researchers have not addressed how implementing a military-friendly, first-year composition (FYC) class utilizing military-oriented readings and potential writing subjects affects diverse student demographics, encompassing not only service-members/ veterans but also military dependents and others with a self-emphasized, family military history, including rural[1] and Native American students. Rural, impoverished areas in the Southwest often possess high military participation rates, with residents demonstrating a familiarity with military traditions and lifestyles; in Oklahoma, rural and tribal populations emphasize a military culture (VA, 2016). Nationwide, 44% of enlistees have rural origins and 30% of veterans live in rural areas (Gale & Heady, 2013), with approximately 33% of all rural veterans enrolled in the VA healthcare system serving in Post-9/11 wars (VA, 2016). Likewise, of veteran racial groups living

[1] Of those enrolled in college, 29% of those aged 18 to 24 are from rural areas (Pappano, 2017).

rurally, Native Americans represent the largest population per capita (Tsai, Desai, Cheng, & Chang, 2014).

Often overlooked, Native Americans represent a valuable racial population within the military (U.S. Department of Defense [DOD], 2014). As the nation's smallest pan-ethnic segment, signifying 1.6% of the population (Humes, Jones, & Ramirez, 2011), they possess the largest per capita military participation rate of any ethnic group (DOD, 2014), with one in three active in some capacity (US Census, 2010). In the Pre- and Post-9/11 Wars, more Native Americans have participated in the military per capita than any other race (VA, 2017). Today there are 1,275 (0.6%) Native American officers and 14,559 (1.4%) enlisted personnel (DOD, 2016), with tribal service-members comprising the youngest military racial cohort (VA, 2012), and tribal veterans acting as the youngest living racial group (VA, 2017).

Many tribes define a "warrior's" characteristics as "strength, bravery, pride, and wisdom," traits congruent with military service goals (US Navy, 2017). By joining the military, tribal service-members may perform feats necessary to fulfill a cultural role, prompting their society to view them as "valued members" (2017). In Oklahoma, Choctaw Nation service-members achieved prominence as "code talkers" deciphering enemy messages during World Wars I and II (Choctaw Nation, "Code Talkers," 2018; Greenspan, 2014). Today, the Choctaw Nation pays tribute to its veterans (Choctaw Nation, "Veterans," 2018) by describing itself as "a tribe" with some "warrior" members (Choctaw Nation, "History and Culture," 2018). Nevertheless, Native Americans have been called the United States' most disenfranchised population (Smith, Stinson, Dawson, Goldstein, Huang, & Grant, 2006) and many tribal student service-members/veterans and nonveterans, impacted by intergenerational trauma factors, face unique educational and social challenges. Many tribal students find difficulty in transitioning to a post-secondary institution (Brendtro, Brokenleg, & Van Bockern, 2005) and acclimating to curricular and campus philosophies (Hankes, 2002), as well as experiencing feelings of inadequacy, isolation, and ostracism (Guillory, 2009). Additionally, most Native American students require assistance in completing their general coursework, including the subjects of reading and writing, and in growing critically literate, evoking social change, and determining self-development approaches (Brown & Begoray, 2017).

Mindful of this sociodemographic context, writing teachers and writing program administrators serving institutions with rural and/or tribal populations must be ready to meet their students' unique requisites, including those of service-members/veterans, military dependents, and others identifying a family military history. The authors addressed FYC students residing in a rural, economically depressed region (for a discussion of rural student service-members/veterans, see Hembrough, Madewell, & Dunn, 2018), of Oklahoma. The state possesses a high number, per capita, of service-members (Trilling, 2017) and veterans of recent wars (National Conference of the State Legislatures [NCSL], 2017) and is home to the second largest number of Native American veterans (VA, 2017).

We present a case study conducted in Oklahoma at a regional university involving seven service-members/veterans and 57 nonveterans enrolled in a FYC class. Many of the students were tribally affiliated. The course featured military reading subject matter and emphasized the theme of "service" in order to facilitate service-members/veterans' shift to academia as well as introduce military-oriented and service topics to other interested students. The authors asked these research questions: (1) Would the offering of a FYC class based upon an experimental course model formulated to be military-friendly and military-theme-focused promote a range of students' reading and writing processes, with some emphasizing the idea of "service" within their careers more generally? (2) Furthermore, would tribal students, as a marginalized group located in a rurally depressed area with a strong military culture, be able to connect with the FYC course format in a

manner linked positively to their individual and broader identities and possible community and career service goals?

Literature Review

Information about rural and Native American service-members/veterans and college students, as well as how cohort and themed classrooms aid students' college transition patterns, are discussed.

Rural, Native American, and Women Service-members/Veterans

Student veterans present distinctive "academic, health, and psychosocial stressors" (Shore, Orton, & Manson, 2009, p. 29) that may lead them to struggle in transitioning from a structured military setting to an open university environment (Bellafiore, 2012). Compared with their nonveteran counterparts, 60% of student veterans identify obstacles in acculturating to college. As nontraditional students who may be older, working, and have partners and children, veterans may feel separated from their traditional student peers and disconnected from staff and faculty (Blaau-Hara, 2017; Navarre Cleary & Wozniak, 2013). Likewise, nationally, and within the study's region, rural and Native American service-members/veterans may address compounded geographic and sociodemographic concerns related to their health, education, work, and housing factors, leading them to require greater assistance in navigating college.

Today more than 150,000 veterans are Native Americans (U.S. Government, 2013) and most report having a "positive veteran identity" (Harada, Villa, Reifel, & Bayhylle, 2005), a descriptor that can be applied to the study area's tribal veterans similarly. Nonetheless, of any racial group, tribal veterans face the most violent acts and war atrocities and 46% have suffered a military-related health issue or injury (2005). Native American veterans are also more likely to have a disability, service-related or otherwise, than those of other races (VA, 2017). Overall, tribal populations experience the most diseases, early death factors, mental health needs, and substance abuse issues of any racial group (US Department Health and Human Services [HHS], 2018), and of the psychological disorders, tribal veterans suffer most from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and trauma. Comparably, rural veterans endure more health and psychological issues, including depression and PTSD, than do urban veterans (VA, 2018).

Dealing with health, psychological, and substance abuse issues can be tenuous for student veterans and their families (Elbogen, Wagner, Fuller, Calhoun, & Kinneer, 2010), a situation creating barriers to the former's post-secondary educational pursuits (Grossbard, Widome, Lust, Simpson, Lostutter, & Saxon, 2014). Post-deployment stress makes student veterans less able to pay attention and interact with nonveteran peers and faculty in the classroom (Ellison, Mueller, Smelson, Corrigan, Torres Stone, Bokhour, . . . Drebing, 2012). Additionally, student veterans present high hostility rates and possess many personal and family concerns (Johnson, Graceffo, Hayes, & Locke, 2014). Proceeding, 40% of student veterans have a lifetime mental health diagnosis and 33% report high-risk drinking (HRD) practices (National Center for PTSD, 2018), with the latter condition being especially problematic for tribal veterans (Sampson & Laub, 1996). As related concerns, during 2010, 10.4% of student veterans considered suicide "often or very often" (Rudd, 2011), as opposed to 3.9% of their nonveteran peers (American College, 2010).

Besides facing health concerns, rural and tribal service-members/veterans possess a lower educational attainment and income and a greater unemployment rate than other groups (VA, 2017; VA, 2018). Indeed, rural and tribal populations in depressed regions, such as Oklahoma, lack community resources and services (HHS, 2018; VA, 2018), with twice as many Native Americans veterans living rurally than in urban settings (VA, 2016). Of any race, tribal members also possess the smallest secondary and postsecondary graduation rates (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013). Nationally, 62% of all student veterans constitute first-generation college students, compared to 43% of their nonmilitary peers (NCSL, 2013). Additionally, because career realization and

educational achievement are intertwined, lower academic attainment for many tribal veterans leads them to take lesser occupational positions (Cohen, Warner, & Segal, 1992).

Within the service-member/veteran population, the unique status of Native American women must be considered also with 11.7% of tribal veterans being women (VA, 2017). Notably, per capita, there are more Native American women veterans than those of any other race (2017). Some women veterans with a history of trauma enlist to escape from violent environments (Sadler, Booth, Mengeling, & Doebbeling, 2004) yet may undergo military sexual assault while serving, with women suffering more acts of assault than men (Vanden Brook, 2019. Indeed, because of these experiences, some women transfer or quit the service (Sadler et al., 2004). Female veterans are exposed to trauma at higher rates than the general public and endure as much combat experience as do male veterans (Zinzow, Grubaugh, Monnier, Suffoletta-Maierle, & Frueh, 2007). Overall, women veterans face cumulative trauma exposure, work-related stress, and the accompanying psychological and bodily health issues (Zinzow, Grubaugh, Monnier, Suffoletta-Maierle, & Frueh, 2007). According to Lola Mondragon, a Choctaw veteran from the study's area, the discourse surrounding tribal female veterans' identity in combat represents one of "invisibility," and female veterans may lack a sense of "camaraderie" based upon their shared sex (Mondragon, 2015). In the military, female service-members may compete for respect because society views a single woman as representative of her sex, while a man signifies himself (2015). Subsequently, some Native American female veterans disregard their veteran identity upon exiting the military because their community devalues their "contribution," too (2015).

Student Veterans, Native American Students, and the Academic Transition Process

Today, many colleges are unable to meet returning veterans' needs because of their growing numbers (Grossman, 2009), and providing psychological counseling help, when appropriate, can be difficult due to military-affiliated students' reticence in seeking it (Pew Research, 2011). As other impediments that student veterans face, some with low GPAs believe that they receive less help from faculty than other students, and others show greater stress rates than their nonveteran counterparts (Grossbard et al., 2014). Because students who leave college possess a lowered risk of socioeconomic attainment than graduates, locating the causes of academic failure among service-members/veterans remains crucial (Horn, Berger, & Carroll, 2004). In the past few years, some colleges have begun informing students, faculty, and administrators about the roadblocks that service-members/veterans may encounter (Hart & Thompson, 2013). Despite the rising recognition of the pressures that service-members/veterans face, they remain marginalized in academia, with rural and tribal veterans going virtually unnoted. Indeed, according to Smith, the area of composition and rhetoric itself places veterans outside of the university and denies them instructors' and classmates' acceptance (L. G. Smith, 2012). Valentino (2010) urged writing faculty and administrators to undergird and respect student veterans as an emerging population. Likewise, other writing scholars have requested that teachers foster all-encompassing classrooms in which veterans can share their backgrounds (for instance, see Grohowski, 2013; Hart & Thompson, 2016; Leonhardy, 2009), with efforts being made toward this end.

As a curricular design, some institutions have created writing courses for veterans offering an inclusive classroom and interest-related curriculum to dispel the anxiety some may display concerning their military identity. These schools provide (1) military-only classes; (2) open-enrollment, military-themed courses; and (3) veteran cohorts placed in open classrooms to facilitate students' college transition and create an inclusive atmosphere in which the university itself becomes a space for discussing military-related topics (Hart & Thompson, 2013). As an example of the "military-only" model, Hembrough initiated a Composition I class for service-members, veterans, and cadets utilizing military-themed materials, a setting to which students responded positively, with the

course matching their interests (Hembrough, 2017). For the "veteran-friendly" prototype, Keast taught a military-themed, FYC course drawing veterans, students with a military lineage, and those fascinated with war narratives. He discovered veterans reacted well to this varied student environment (Keast, 2011). With the "veteran-focused course" design (see Hart & Thompson, 2016), Shivers-McNair founded an expanded composition I course with a veteran cohort and peer mentor. Having a positive result, she placed her cohort inside the general classroom to promote greater diversity (Shivers-McNair, 2014). Veteran-focused courses attract both service-members/veterans and other students, including military spouses and war survivors, and may offer students choices in completing classroom assignments, thematically and logistically.

The literature describes obstacles to these courses' implementation, namely facilitating debates about the term "veteran" that disturb a classroom's student demographic (Hart & Thompson, 2016). Nevertheless, veteran courses signify a "promising" trend (Hart & Thompson, 2013, p. 10), and the potential value of implementing service-member/veteran-focused, military-themed, cohort classes particularly can be discussed more largely. One strategy for helping students to persist, especially in lower-level courses, is formulating cohorts defined by student interest. As enrolling college students, many veterans undergo "individual changes" and face conflicting identities (Rumann & Hamrick, 2010, p. 434). Yet, when the teacher designs the FYC classroom as a cohort community or places students in semester-long peer groups to foster a convivial space, service-members/veterans may build complex and mentoring relationships; bolster their esteem; interact with a topic of interest; and develop their writing, critical thinking, and collaborative skills together (Blackwell-Starnes, 2018; Hembrough, 2017; Shivers-McNair, 2014).

Besides establishing student cohorts, as another strategy for bolstering students' persistence patterns in the writing classroom, some FYC programs have created thematic courses (Rinto & Cogbill-Seiders, 2015). Through topic-based classes, teachers may prompt students to learn more deeply, gain greater analytical abilities, and hone their writing skills by addressing issues of personal interest (Friedman, 2013; Heiman, 2014). In one Composition I study, students reported that having the chance to write about topics of importance to themselves played the biggest factor in their experiencing of successful class outcomes. Indeed, class themes can address social issues toward which students gravitate (Aitchison, 2015), as in the cases of the two aforementioned interest-based courses involving military subjects (Hembrough, 2017; Keast, 2011). In topical courses, students can participate in discussions, read texts, and/or research and write about a common area. Hence, during a semester, teachers may present a single theme from multiple sides, address larger questions, and assign scaffolded writing projects (see Beaufort, 2012; Friedman, 2013; Hembrough, 2017).

In entering college, as marginalized student groups, service-members/veterans and Native Americans can benefit from high-impact, curricular designs, including the establishment of cohorts based upon students' common identity and themed classes accounting for their interests. Because Native Americans suffer from the ongoing diminishment of their cultural traditions based upon historical actions involving genocide and tribes' legal and social marginalization (Hartman & Gone, 2014), tribal students may face additional difficulties in transitioning to university life, securing mentors (Brendtro, Brokenleg, & Van Bockern, 2009), and aligning their worldviews with the institutional culture found in the course curricula and the college's tenets (Hankes, 2002). Native American culture affects how some students define their experiences (Shotton, Oosahwe, & Cintron, 2007), so they require a community of learners' support; culturally pluralistic pedagogies (Bowman, 2018; Lipka, 2002); an inclusion of values tailored to their needs (Fletcher, 2008); and aid in expressing their cultural identities (Delpit, 1995). Even as tribal cultures are unique in background (Fletcher, 2008), formulating peer relationships based upon common subjects, building community, sharing power, and orchestrating a constructive relationship with one's locale are valuable student

practices (Cajete, 2005; Espino & Lee, 2011; Shotton, Oosahwe, & Cintron, 2007), as well as being premises for orchestrating academic cohorts and themed classes.

Findings summarized

The effects of implementing service-member/veteran-focused, military-themed classes, especially for rural and racial minorities, remain an area for investigation. Utilizing a service-member/veteran-focused course model at a university with rural and tribal student populations, Author 1 designed a FYC cohort course for military-affiliated students, including service-members/veterans, which was open for enrollment to nonveteran students interested in military subjects. The class format offered students the capacity to join a military cohort group, engage with military-related readings and writing assignments amenable to pursuing military topics, and focus on service within their career.

This study revealed a few findings. Of students enrolled in the course, most perceived that they interacted with a cohesive, relevant curriculum as they read and sometimes wrote about military-oriented class materials, as well as the kinds of service they intended to perform via their careers, with the idea of serving becoming a centralized topic. The class's framework bolstered many students' engagement with FYC's reading and writing objectives, including both service-members/veterans and nonveterans, and aided the former group's college shift. Additionally, students, including rural and tribal students, valued opportunities to discuss identity issues linked to their personal and/or recent family military history. The study's results have implications for teaching students who are service-members/veterans, have a military-affiliated identity, and/or possess a military family history within a FYC classroom featuring military-themed readings. Furthermore, this article has implications for instructing rural, veteran/service-member, and/or Native American students, especially of the geographical area.

Institutional Context and Course Rationale

Institutional context

Outlining one's institutional background and the services available for service-members/veterans and military-affiliated students is vital to implementing service-member/veteran-friendly classes and evaluating their impact (Hart & Thompson, 2016; Keast, 2013; Shivers-McNair, 2014). From 2015 through 2018, we conducted our study at a public university serving Oklahoma's lowest income county. The university, located rurally, draws many rural students. Many undergraduates have first-generation, low-income backgrounds, and 30% are Native American. As a demographic descriptor, the school's the freshmen retention rate is 64%, below the national average of 72% (Deidentified University "Factbook," 2018). Accordingly, at the study's university, like elsewhere, some students, including service-members/veterans, those with rural backgrounds, and Native Americans, face persistence issues as marginalized groups.

The university provides some services for military-affiliated students, namely financial-aid and housing counselors. It is a "military-friendly school" with a high service-member/veteran enrollment; G.I. Bill users represent 7% of students with more than half being service-members/veterans (Deidentified University "Factbook," 2018). The college possesses an aviation program attracting service-members/veterans, and Army and Air Force bases nearby contribute to a military presence. Despite its small population, Oklahoma also has the second highest rate of military participation per capita ("Military Statistics," 2018). Nevertheless, faculty offered no classes for service-members/student veterans, and departments and institutional partners had held few dialogues about strategies to aid them.

Composition II

Over three years, Author 1 offered three military-friendly, FYC sections with military reading topics. At the university, most service-members/veterans taking FYC transfer into FYC, so Author 1

established a cohort classroom within this course.[2] Cohorts founded upon student traits provide many remunerations and assume numerous forms, but we will discuss cohorts as bounded by the collection of students enrolled in a class based upon their common military affiliation, family history, and/or interest. In each section, two to three service-members/veterans participated, with a total of seven. The courses were student-selected, and students did not fulfill any additional requirements reflecting university culture outside the classroom. Additionally, the class offered the same structure as the standard sections, so students would receive a similar experience.

As a nonveteran instructor with some family military history, Author 1 envisioned her class, with its open enrollment design, as possessing one major advantage. Namely, by defining her classroom being military-friendly without involving student type restrictions, she welcomed not only military-affiliated students, but also those with a recent military family history and those who enjoyed reading about military topics within a protective space. In the classroom, some veterans wish to remain silent about their military identity (Thompson, 2014) and others hope to fit in (DiRamio, Ackerman, & Mitchell, 2008). Still, many service-members/veterans hope faculty and classmates will "acknowledge" and comprehend them (2008, p. 89), as might other students who also acknowledge a recent family military history or a fascination for military topics. Although researchers have focused on helping service-members/veterans feel welcome within a veteran-oriented course model (Hart & Thompson, 2016), almost nothing has been written about attempts to include other students with a military-related identity or interest, including rural students and Native American students.

At the university, FYC is a required, argument-based, research course. In the study, students wrote about topics related to their major, background, or interests, with many covering subjects connected to their own or their family's military-related history. Additionally, students tackled the idea of serving their community more generally. To meet the class's reading and composing objectives, students read texts revolving around war and peace theories and completed writing assignments where they could introduce military-oriented matters. Military-related readings covering the concerns and portrayals of Native Americans and women included Maxine Hong Kingston's *Veterans of War, Veterans of Peace* (2006), Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried* (1990), and Sherman Alexie's story, "What You Have Pawned I Will Redeem" (2003). Similarly, writing assignments allowing students to delve into military topics included a description of a personal role model and a profile essay, with some students conducting an interview with a veteran of a past military conflict.

Methods

Research methods

We engaged our exploratory case study (Cresswell, 2012) with Institutional Review Board approval, as an "opportunity to learn" (Stake, 1995, p. 6) about students' reading and writing preferences related to military-themed topics in FYC. Within a case study, one can analyze a programmatic approach holistically and fully to understand it and its relation to participants (Baxter & Jack, 2008). For the study's aims, we investigated whether student service-members/veterans desired military-friendly courses, the companionship of other service-members/veterans, and military-oriented reading and writing options, as well as whether nonveteran students with an interest in or connection to military-oriented matters would similarly benefit from the course format.

In creating a case study, one collects data from multiple sources to describe the case and its themes (Cresswell, 2007). We utilized surveys (see appendix for select survey questions), documents, and interviews (see Yin, 2009). As the FYC teacher, Author 1 also acted as a participant observer (Cresswell, 2012). Besides outlining our personal relationship to the study in the "Institutional

[2] Author 2 participated in all parts of the study except for teaching the classes.

Context" section, we presented a view of the university's background, the availability of services and courses for military-affiliated students, and the military-related, rural, and Native American student populations as elements affecting the study's design and outcomes. Altogether, participants included service-members/veteran, military-dependents, and nonveteran students. Moreover, we collected information from faculty who were veterans or who taught courses containing numerous military-affiliated students as well as an area Choctaw tribal elder. In filing the data, we gave participants pseudonyms and kept the list of pseudonyms and associated names in a password-encrypted file.

The study instruments included surveys, interviews, field notes, course papers, and university webpages about services available for military-connected students (see Yin, 2009). We surveyed students about their course format preferences, including the phenomenon of cohort classes; reading and writing interests, including the potential for military topics; family military history; major; occupation; and career plans. Service-members/veterans answered additional questions pertinent to their military background, positioning of their identity, relationships with teachers and student peers, and movement from military to civilian spheres. The survey consisted of Likert-scale and short-answer questions (see the appendix for select survey questions). All service-members/veterans also engaged in a semi-structured interview to provide further information related to the survey. Afterwards, in line with our research questions, we evaluated papers that the service-members/veterans composed referencing their military background and that the nonveteran students wrote revealing their interest in military topics and/or their military family history (see Merriam, 1998). The assignments gathered included students' description of a role model and a profile paper. Additionally, we interviewed faculty about their programmatic and course policies and how they affected student-members/veterans, as well as a tribal elder about region-specific, tribal veterans' participatory history in military conflicts.

Providing for flexibility and adaptation, we implemented grounded theory methodology to collect data and identify study themes (Strauss, 1987). To explore common strands in our materials, we applied a thematic analysis to the data by annotating the documents, locating themes, creating a coding scheme, and coding the data (Bricki & Green, 2007). In identifying preliminary themes and findings, we developed codes linked to our research questions and coded each data set to create internal consistency. Utilizing the existing literature on our topic, and the themes we generated, we created an analytical framework and orchestrated a storyline for the study (Yin, 2009). An analytical framework suggests that data from all participants, with their different viewpoints, may be important (Strand, Cutforth, Stoecker, Marullo, & Donohue, 2003). We analyzed the data tied to the study's setting, participants, and chronology to describe the case's details (Cresswell, 2007) connected to our overarching research question regarding what type of course format and reading and writing topics service-members/veterans, as well as nonveterans, might prefer in the class.

To provide credibility to the study's claims, we immersed ourselves in prolonged field engagement (Cresswell, 2012) by contemplating our research questions over a long period and offered thick descriptions of some students' backgrounds to provide a sense of reality for readers (Cresswell & Miller, 2000). Likewise, we triangulated our data by relying upon multiple data types and various instruments to validate our study's emerging findings, and in all areas, correlation coefficients used to assess inter-rater reliability within the dataset ranged from good to adequate.

Sample demographics

Seven service-members/veterans and 57 nonveterans, including 15 nonveterans with parents with military service participated in this study. Nationally, 85% of student service-members/veterans range in age from 24 to 40, almost 50% are married and/or have children (NCSL, 2013), 42% are employed full-time (American Council on Education [ACE], 2014), and a small percentage have PTSD, traumatic brain injury (TBI), or other conditions (National Center for PTSD, 2018).

Comparatively, the study's student service-members/veterans' rates of conformity in these categories aligned relatively closely, with a greater percentage of the latter group working full time. Comparably, more than half of the study's service-members/veterans also disclosed having a physical disability or psychological disorder, including an amputation, blindness, back and knee injury, PTSD, and/or TBI. As do student service-members/veterans nationwide, the study's participants pursued a range of majors (ACE, 2014). See Table 1 for the demographic characteristics of the service-members/veterans and Table 2 for those of the nonveteran students, faculty, and tribal elder.

Table 1. Service-member/veteran students' demographic characteristics

	Veterans and Service-members
Military branch	Army, *n* =3; Marine, *n* = 2; Navy, *n* = 1; Air Force, *n* = 1; Combat veteran, *n* = 5
Sex	Men, *n* = 6; Women, *n* = 1
Race	Caucasian, *n* = 2; Native American, Choctaw, *n* = 5
Married	Married, *n* = 3
Children living in the home	1-3 children, *n* = 3; 4-6 children, *n* = 1
Age	18-24, *n* = 3; 25-34, *n* = 2; 35-44, *n* = 2
PTSD diagnosis	*n* = 6
TBI	*n* = 4
Works 20 plus hours weekly	*n* = 5
Major	Business, *n* = 2; Safety, *n* = 2; Criminal Justice, *n* = 3

N = 7 Service-members/veterans

Note: Some service members/veterans served in more than one branch.

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of the nonveteran students, faculty, and tribal elder

	Nonveterans	Faculty	Tribal Elder
Military branch	N/A	Air Force (1); Army (1); Combat veteran (2)	N/A
Sex	Men, *n* = 24; Women, *n* = 33	Men, *n* = 2; Women, *n* = 1	Male
Race	Caucasian, *n* = 22; Native American, *n* = 18; African-American, *n* = 6; Hispanic/Latino, *n* = 7; Asian, *n* = 1; Mixed, *n* = 3	Native American, Choctaw (1); Caucasian (2)	Native American, Choctaw
Married	Married, *n* = 12; Single, *n* = 45	Married, *n* = 1; Single, *n* = 2	Married
Children in the home	*n* = 40	*n* = 1	N/A
Age	18-24, *n* = 37; 25-34, *n* = 13; 35-44, *n* = 7	18-24, *n* = 1 25-34, *n* = 3 ≥ 45, *n* = 2	68
PTSD diagnosis	N/A	N/A	N/A
TBI	N/A	N/A	N/A
Works 20+ hours weekly	*n* = 45	N/A	Retired
Major/Occupation	Business/Management, *n* = 21; Marketing, *n* = 2; Accounting, *n* = 2; Finance, *n* = 1; Aviation, *n* = 4; Criminal Justice, *n* = 5; Psychology, *n* = 4; Education, *n* = 6; English, *n* = 5; Journalism, *n* = 1, Chemistry, *n* = 1, Fisheries/Wildlife, *n* = 4; Undecided, *n* = 2	Faculty (2); Staff (1)	Retired

N = 57 Nonveteran students, with 15 being the child of a parent(s) with military service
N = 3 Faculty and staff
N = 1 Tribal elder

Findings and Discussion

The creation of the military-friendly cohort contributed to important academic outcomes for the students. Overall, the class's cohort framework aided the veteran/service-member students' college shift, led students to discuss acculturation issues and stereotypes, prompted the service-member/veterans and nonveterans to blend, and bolstered many students' engagement with FYC's reading and writing objectives. As study findings, most students enrolled in the class perceived that in doing so, they would read and sometimes wrote about military-oriented materials as well as the kinds of service they intended to perform via their careers, with the conception of serving becoming a central course topic. Additionally, students expressed an interest in and valued opportunities to discuss identity-related issues linked to their personal and/or recent family military history.

Establishing a military-friendly cohort for the service-members/veterans

To begin, the authors explored whether offering a FYC class formulated to be military-friendly would promote a range of students' interaction with the design, including both service-members/ veterans and nonveterans, with many students being Native American. As a first finding, in the course, the service-members/veterans and nonveterans succeeded in establishing a loosely but comfortably connected cohort as a setting that aided the former group's college shift.

While studies indicate that many student service-members/veterans prefer online courses to accommodate their work and family obligations (ACE, 2014), the service-members/veterans surveyed indicated a preference for brick-and-mortar courses, especially if they provided opportunities to interact with other service-members/veterans in person and to discuss their military backgrounds (see Hembrough, Madewell, & Dunn, 2018). Comparably, compositionist and veteran, Angie Mallory (2016), who created a FYC veteran cohort at Iowa State University, liked the easy, military "banter" her students introduced into discussions. In the study's FYC class, some students' reliance on a common language and discourse, as well as their posing of research questions related to a mutual topic of interest, also served as important cohort functions uniting the class members.

Concerning the course's configuration, each section only had two to three service-members/ veterans, yet all ($n = 7$) surveyed believed that the class offered them a "safe, caring space" to share their military background (see Hart & Thompson, 2016), a determinant they reported as being their primary reason for enrolling (see Hembrough, 2017). Replicating campus demographics, the service-members/veterans varied in age, race, major, and branch, but all enjoyed the course's communal setting, which some likened to the military's formulation of a family structure (see Bowen, 2003). Some writing teachers and administrators warn that acting within a military classroom cohort, participants may create a hierarchy, especially if both service-members/veterans and cadets are present (see Hembrough, 2017). However, in this course, the service-members/veterans saw themselves as located on a level-playing field, even if they hailed from diverging military branches; served different amounts of time, with some continuing in the reserves and Guard; and may not have deployed or seen combat.

Similar to the military's focus on addressing service-members within their larger group instead of paying attention to the single individual, many tribal populations, including the Choctaws, also adhere to a communal worldview (Choctaw Nation, "History and Culture," 2018), with this preference being a curricular design the cohort format promoted. Thus, within the course, the dually shared military and tribal tenets of thinking and acting collaboratively assisted some Native American service-members/veterans in benefiting from the cohort's model doubly. Discussing the overlapping military and Choctaw protocols of locating one's self in a larger, family-oriented structure, one Choctaw veteran argued in his survey,

> there is never a day that I would not like to spend some time with other vets.
> Imagine the feeling at Thanksgiving when the relative that can't tell a story to

> save a life starts going on and on, and your favorite cousin gives you a look so funny you nearly lose it. That is how I feel around vets. No matter what branch or what you did, we will instantly "get" each other.

The service-members/veterans who were racial/ethnic minorities, women, and/or who reported physical disabilities and/or psychological disorders asserted their desire for having service-member/veteran companionship in the classroom most strongly. In an interview, a Choctaw veteran recounted many significant experiences involving the Native Americans from area tribes in her unit. For example, the members held a pow-wow while deployed to Iraq. In telling her stories, the veteran explained that although she "loved her family at home," its members "could not understand" her. "I have to be around vets to have someone to talk to, including in my classes," she said. "I would be suicidal if I weren't."

Native American service-member/veteran students discuss acculturation issues and tribal stereotypes

As a second finding, tribal students expressed an interest in discussing concerns related to their military identity and/or recent family military history and their race/ethnicity as part of the cohort's function. Because past Native peoples underwent educational experiences that proved damaging, Author 1 hoped that the cohort course would provide not only the tribal service-members/veterans but also the nonveterans with a supportive space in which they felt empowered in college. Compositionist and veteran, Derek Handley, who attended a historically African-American undergraduate institution, argues that one advantage for student veterans in joining a veteran cohort class is their potential feeling of belonging to a group (Handley, 2016). Indeed, nationally, racial/ethnic minorities and women, as marginalized student populations, are more likely to join an academic cohort than other demographics (see Zhao & Kuh, 2004).

Transitioning to the university is an obstacle that many tribal students, including service-members/veterans, face. One Choctaw veteran interviewed explained that, despite the amount of time that has passed in our nation, attending school can be a "frightening" experience for some Native Americans, especially because of historical educational programs, an event contributing to many tribal peoples' record of substance abuse, poverty, and suicide (Tafoya & Vecchio, 2005). Still today, tribal students may face stressful contexts when asked to acculturate to largely Caucasian-populated schools associated with Caucasian values (Flynn, Olson, & Yellig, 2014). At the study's university, tribal students speak of receiving mixed messages about attending college from community members, who show both a sense of jealousy about and a hope for the former's academic and career success (Flynn, Olson, & Yellig, 2014). Despite the family and outside pressures, one tribal veteran explained that because he was older, attending school with his G.I. Bill, and supported by the Composition II course cohort, he had remained intent on pursuing his degree.

In addressing acculturative pressures, many tribal students suffer from racial discrimination at college, too, including instances in which instructors single them out for commentary on behalf of their race and a denial of Indigenous peoples' participation in their country's history and culture (Flynn, Olson, & Yellig, 2014). Stereotypes that Native American students combat include the belief that tribal groups have little to offer the community and that they receive undeserved governmental resources (Flynn, Olson, & Yellig, 2014). Comparably, many of the study's tribal student veterans, with their dual identity, reported facing a set of compounded stereotypes, including ones associated with alcoholism, homelessness, insanity, the display of a nonverbal nature, the portrayal of violent tendencies, as in being a "ticking time bomb" or a "savage" and the adherence to a collective culture. Nonetheless, discussing the significance of service-members/veterans to surrounding tribes, in an interview, the Choctaw elder explained that even today, the "warrior" figure is a high-standing, celebrated tribal member. Being enrolled in the FYC course, the tribal service-members/veterans (n = 5) surveyed all believed that the cohort class had resulted in positive outcomes for military-identified

students seeking a sense of camaraderie and acceptance. Reflecting upon the class's remunerations, one Choctaw veteran argued that it provided him with the same "sense of belonging" that he enjoyed in the military, an organization that many area tribal members joined to find companionship (Choctaw Nation, "Veterans," 2018).

Although the military offers its members possibilities for unity, most Native Americans do suffer racial and/or sexual discrimination in this setting, including their failing to be promoted or being called derogatory names, such as "chief" (Harada et al., 2005). For example, in an interview, two male Choctaw veterans explained that unit peers dubbed them "chief" and "Hiawatha," even if the students felt this "naming" was done in a "friendly, joking" manner. Other tribal service-members/veterans interviewed also faced instances of racism in the military but felt drawn to portraying their military identity in contexts such as college. Likewise, women students also suffered from sexism during their service. Historically, the tribal elder explained, Native American women warriors have represented a minority, yet Choctaw women have acted always as "family protectors" within the "Circle of Being." Through both cultural roles, women can "shield" and "protect" community members. Still, Mondragon (2015) contends, in the military, tribal women service-members rarely have access to the culturally relevant guidance or social structures they require (Mondragon, 2015). In an interview, a Choctaw veteran delineated how in the Army, she made an effort to "build relationships" with other enlisted women in configuring "a sisterhood." Despite the support this group provided, however, her male peers scoffed at her attempts to "break military records" and became angry when she proved "a better sharp shooter." Even amongst other Native Americans, women veterans may not receive the social acceptance for their military participation for which some yearn. Mitchelene BigMan, President of the Native American Women Warriors, states, "As a woman veteran, I felt like during my time we were not really given recognition for our hard work. Amongst our own people, it seemed like we weren't really accepted or even noted" (Gean, 2014).

Service-member/veteran students interacting with nonveteran students

Because in FYC the service-members/veterans expressed that they joined the cohort course to interact with other students possessing a military identity and engage with military-themed materials, the question arose concerning the study, as to whether the service-members/veterans and nonveterans would blend. Indeed, some veterans enrolled in lower-level courses become exasperated by "their less-mature civilian peers" (DiRamio et al., 2008, p. 87). Nevertheless, as the third finding, the service-members/veterans proved accepting of their nonveteran peers, with many being nontraditional students or adult learners similarly (see Blaauw-Hara, 2017; Navarre Cleary & Wozniak, 2013), and the groups collaborated to achieve the class's reading and writing objectives. Indeed, nationally, universities implementing a cohort course design draw nontraditional students more readily than other demographics (Zhao & Kuh, 2004). Perhaps because the study's service-members/veterans were few in number per section and did not figure as a majority, the two groups meshed, fostering symbiotic relationships (see Hembrough, 2017). In the class, a Choctaw veteran interviewed explained that during his Navy enlistment, he and other service-members forged valuable "mentoring" relationships. Consequently, upon entering college, he yearned to continue the "cycle of giving and receiving" by "learning with" and "teaching" his peers.

Together, the service-members/veterans and nonveterans collaborated by completing group-work assignments, peer reviewing their essays, and engaging in class discussions to identify common bonds, including those based on a military interest and other dynamics involving family, work, and hobbies. Similarly, Kingston (2006) argues that some women who were not military veterans but represented "veterans" nevertheless, having survived traumatic experiences. Indeed, both military veterans and trauma survivors possess a need to overcome stressful events, a rationale for calling

both groups "veterans." Like Kingston's women narrators describing domestic-related sufferings, a nonveteran in the FYC course discussed with others being victimized by an incident of online bullying similarly.

Overall, in the course, the service-member/veteran and nonveteran students were eager to discover more about one another and share their views of controversial topics. While all service-member/veterans ($n = 7$) surveyed believed that they developed a stronger bond with classmates in the course than in other classes that semester, interestingly, 81% ($n = 46$) of the nonveterans also indicated this statement to be true. Regardless of the extent to which students emphasized their military identity and/or military family affiliation in building bridges with their peers, the groups convened to tackle the class's curricular objectives.

Reading military-themed works

At the course's end, as the fourth finding, both the service-members/veterans and nonveterans reported appreciating the class's military-themed readings as contributing to Composition II's curricular objectives. Specifically, all service-members/veterans ($n = 7$) and 75% ($n = 43$) of the nonveterans surveyed found the readings to be relevant to their interests and experiences, as well as assisting them in building "critical thinking skills." As a further strategy to augment students' discussions of military-related matters, two veterans, a faculty member and Paul Reed, the author of *Kontum Diary* (1997), a Vietnam account, made presentations to students. Later, students identified these presentations as their favorite course aspect because the speakers spoke about broader definitions that could be applied to the term "veteran."

Within the curriculum students read essays, nonfiction, and novels by authors including veterans. Additionally, Alexie's story, "What You Pawned I Will Redeem," represented a key work assisting students in comparing stereotypes that both the protagonist, Jackson Jackson, a homeless, middle-aged, Spokane "Indian"; college drop-out; and self-appointed knight and today's service-members/veterans have faced. As one student described it, Jackson is "Alexie's version of a modern-day soldier," and students conflated both tribal and veteran populations with the following labels: a lack of education, homelessness, poverty, war, violence, silence, substance abuse, mental illness, and a focus on alternate realities, as connected to dream states or PTSD episodes. In viewing Jackson's character as a self-recruited soldier of sorts, students called attention to both Native Americans and service-members/veterans as invisible populations often acting to stay alive and deprived of a welcome on the lands that are their homes. Discussing Alexie's story, students commented upon the extent to which trauma has affected Native Americans and veterans alike, a factor that remains mostly unacknowledged in contemporary literature as well as society.[3]

Looking to the future, all service-members/veterans ($n = 7$) and half of the nonveterans ($n = 29$) surveyed planned to read more military-related works on their own, including histories, biographies, and commentaries on current issues. For some Native students particularly (as they claimed in the interview), exploring military-themed readings is relevant because mainstream culture depicts Native Americans as a separate, warring population in conflict with the United States throughout the country's history. Besides offering tribal veterans a chance to interrogate their groups' military portrayals, most interviewed also believed that the readings assisted them in understanding their own past military role in greater detail. One Choctaw veteran commented that it was "important [for him] to read [military-based material] during [his] transition. It reminded [him] that [he was his] own person and also explained from a psychological standpoint what [he] had done

[3] Even in O'Brien's novel, *The Things They Carried*, a segment of which the class read, the tribal veteran, Kiowa, is described as a traditionally superstitious, peripheral character.

and how to cope with it." Of the nonveterans surveyed, only two reported a disinterest in reading further military-based works, as they preferred texts concerning their "major." Additionally, one nonveteran student found some material we covered to be too "graphic" and "depressing," even though she had not wanted alternative readings.

Writing about a military identity and identifying a larger class topic of service

Although the authors determined that the students enrolled in the class desired to read military-related texts, the authors were unsure as to whether they would want to write about their military background, heritage, or interest also. Yet, as the fifth finding, many students valued opportunities to write about identity-related issues linked to their personal and/or recent family military history. Furthermore, the course's subject matter inspired students to compose texts about the community service they intended to perform via their careers, with the idea of serving becoming a central topic. Overall, enrolling in FYC aided all service-members/ veterans (n = 7) and 85% (n = 48) of the nonveterans surveyed in constructing a "foundational writing skillset." Likewise, being enmeshed in a cohort classroom assisted all service-members/ veterans (n = 7) in locating themselves in a comfortable academic environment and in relaying various personal experiences that they "might not have divulged" otherwise, as one noted in his interview, in order to make the road back to school less arduous.

Thompson advises teachers to approach topics that could trigger traumatic episodes for veterans with care (2014), Leonhardy warns that some veterans may not wish to write about war (2009), and Keast asks instructors to avoid some material related to war altogether (2011). Yet, in Composition II, all veterans (n = 7) chose to write about personal and larger military-related topics connected to the course readings, including by depicting their involvement in military conflicts, return to the community, and entrance into the university; delineating war's physical and psychological effects upon themselves and others; and describing instances of racism and sexism that they suffered in the military or elsewhere. Veterans who possess a firm comprehension of their mission while engaged in military service have less conflict in returning home than do those who were confused about "their duties or assignments" (77% versus 67%) (Morin, 2011). However, as a benefit of enrolling in the class, some veterans interviewed claimed that as they had begun to understand themselves and their prior military involvement more clearly as a result.

In FYC, the service-member/veteran and nonveteran students enrolled were not only interested in many of the course's military-oriented reading topics, but also connected to them on some level. Students tackled military-related topics in diverse writing assignments, including a description of a role model's influence and the larger profile essay. Despite having other options in portraying a role model, many students described the influence of a family member or friend who was a service-member/ veteran. Afterwards, students interviewed this person for the profile essay. Indeed, 90% (n = 58) of students spoke to family members with a military history and the rest communicated with friends, with one veteran interviewing someone from his unit and one nonveteran speaking to a friend with a criminal justice career. For the interview, the class generated a list of safe questions, with the student veterans assisting with this process.

In the profile essay, students wrote about the typical motifs one might expect concerning veterans: bravery, patriotism, testing one's limits, learning new cultures, and leaving and returning home. Nevertheless, the assignment also prompted students to generate a more personal understanding of military matters and events as well as dislodging veteran stereotypes. For instance, a nonveteran student identified that the media's images of soldiers returning with PTSD are applied indiscriminately. Comparatively, specific to some tribal service-members/ veterans' concerns, one Choctaw veteran explained that most Native Americans do not conceptualize themselves as isolationists, living in what was formerly known as "Indian Territory" and separated from the

country; instead, espousing a shared national identity, tribal veterans want to protect our nation, promote its interests, and take part in its conversations. In conducting interviews for the profile essay, students arrived at important conclusions, too. One wrote about how he considered entering the military in high school and interviewing his friend had allowed him to examine the many positive aspects of military life that he envisioned. Additionally, in composing the profile essay and other assignments, students gravitated to the idea of serving one's country and community as an overarching theme. Outlining their desires upon graduating from college, both the service-member/veteran and nonveteran students discussed pursuing careers as police officers, teachers, doctors, and other professionals to aid their locales.

Suggestions

Suggestions for writing administrators and faculty who might wish to implement military-friendly, cohort composition classes at their own institutions are as followed. First, it would be useful to survey students to ascertain how many might be interested in a military-friendly class before proceeding. If there is an interest, faculty might offer a single section in order to gauge its enrollment numbers as a determining factor for consideration in future semesters. Second, the instructor should decide whether or not to offer military-themed readings, as a class can be categorized as military-friendly without having a military-oriented reading list. As a related option, the instructor could relegate one course unit to military topics and the rest to other subjects in order to interest a broader array of students. Third, it is necessary to provide the course's details to school advisors in order to spread the word about this class option. Fourth, inviting veterans to make class presentations is one strategy that can create a personal interest element that students may enjoy.

Study Limitations, Future Directions, and Conclusion

The literature indicates that students who do better in FYC possess higher college persistence rates. Indeed, of the FY courses, passing FYC represents the biggest indicator in predicting graduation (Garrett, Bridgewater, & Feinstein, 2017). Yet, in transitioning to college, nontraditional students, including service-members/veterans, must possess support. Students participating in a college's "social and academic" culture may "learn and persist" to a greater degree, while those involved in cohorts persevere at higher levels (Tinto, 2003, p. 2). Within the study, the course's service-members/veterans showed a positive capacity to shift from the military to academia, at least in their enrollment in the FYC class. As adult learners, student veterans divide their time amongst school, careers, and family obligations (Blaauw-Hara, 2017). Likewise, Native American students face difficulty in placing their school commitments above family members' demands (Madison, 2007). Nonetheless, in the class, the service-members/veterans, including those being tribally affiliated, made a positive effect on one another, as well as the nonveteran students: Both groups took fewer absences than had previous classes and completed their assignments according to the guidelines, with students depicting their personal military identity, military family history, and/or other identity factors; discussing their graduation plans; and outlining their career aspirations, including a vision for service.

As course outcomes, both the student veterans and nonveterans interacted with a cohesive, relevant curriculum, as they read and sometimes wrote about military-oriented matters; identified military-involved family members who functioned as role models; and delineated the community service acts they would perform within their careers. Both the service-members/veterans and nonveterans also concurred that the class helped them to build the critical thinking, reading, and writing skills necessary for their academic success and that the class assignments were appropriate in meeting course objectives.

Still, for the study, we should address a few limitations. The biggest limitation is the limited number of sections involved. In the future, researchers' studies might include a greater number of

students enrolled in a military-friendly course possessing a similar function and format. Additionally, this study involves a large number of tribal students, but other minorities could be represented in the continuing research, along with the inclusion of students from tribal colleges.

Many rural and tribal service-members/veterans enlist in the military after high school due to the limited career possibilities available in their hometowns and reservations (Harada et al., 2005). Some tribal enlistees possess "mixed feelings" about joining, but most believe the military can present them with "opportunities" to travel, mingle with diverse people groups, receive training in an area of interest, and attend college (2005, p. 783). While subscribing to such rationales likewise, within our study, many rural and Native American service-members/ veterans also discussed enlisting in order to serve their country and follow in the footsteps of their family members with a military history. Most Native Americans believe that their communities idolize military participants (2005), and in Harada's study, one tribal veteran stated that "in [his] nation, . . . participation in military things goes back to the old-time warrior traits," and in enlisting, one is honored for "do[-ing] something for all of the people" (p. 784). In our study, many rural and Native American service-members/veterans interviewed reported their interest in having pursued a military career in order to serve others. Similarly, in selecting curricular designs and formats that may produce a high impact upon students, colleges must also make an effort to assist and accommodate diverse groups, including a consideration of those having a military identity or a recent family military history.

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Appendix

Select Survey Questions for Composition II Students

The available responses for each of the following questions were (a) Strongly Agree, (b) Agree, (c) Neutral, (d) Disagree, and (e) Strongly Disagree.

(For service-members/veterans only) 1. I enjoyed being part of a class that was comprised of some students with backgrounds similar to mine in that they were also service-members/ veterans.

2. I felt a stronger bond with my classmates in this class than I did in my other classes this semester.

3. This class helped me to better acclimate to the expectations and lifestyle of the university.

4. This class provided a safe place to discuss the experiences and frustrations of my classmates and myself.

(For service-members/veterans only) 5. The atmosphere in class was welcoming and appreciative of the military service time and experiences had by other service-member/veteran classmates and myself.

(For service-members/veterans only) 6. The community in this class helped me to form a stronger sense of self-identity outside of the military.

7. The readings related to military topics in this course were relevant to my interests and experiences.

(for service-members/veterans only) 8. Some of the reading assignments allowed me, as a service-member/veteran, to discuss my military identity and/or military-focused ideas/topics of importance to me.

9. The writing assignments in this course were relevant to my interests and experiences.

(For service-members/veterans only) 10. Some of the writing assignments allowed me, as a service-member/veteran, to discuss my military identity and/or military-focused ideas/topics of importance to me.

11. The number of reading assignments and class discussions in which I could refer to military-focused ideas, if I desired, was appropriate in meeting and achieving the course objectives.

12. The number of writing assignments in which I could discuss military-focused ideas, if I desired, was appropriate in meeting and achieving the course objectives.

13. The types of assignments in this course were appropriate in meeting and achieving the course objectives.

14. This class helped me to build up a solid set of foundational skills necessary for success in composition.

The following questions were short answer:
15. Do you have a recent or close family history of family members who participated or were participating currently in the military? This could include your parents, siblings, cousins, aunts and uncles, grandparents, and great-grandparents, as well as your spouse(s). Please list your family member(s) who have participated in the military and describe their service, including their branch, military duties, and any conflict(s)/war(s) in which they took part.

16. If you have any close family history, was the person(s) who served in the military a role model for you in any way? How so?

17. Do you like to read materials about military-based topics in general? Why or why not? If yes, what do you like to read about? Current military news? Military history? Biographies of military leaders and personnel? Current issues facing service-members/veterans/military dependents/other military-affiliated groups concerning the economy, jobs, family, and /or education? If you are interested in other military-related issues, please specify them here:

18. Why did you decide to become a college student, and what do you want from college?

19. What is your major(s) or, if undecided, what are your career interests?

20. What was your reason for selecting your major(s) or potential major(s) at college?

21. Can you tell me a little bit about your home community?

22. Briefly, how do you fit (or not fit) into your home community?

23. What kind of relation do intend to play in the future in your home community?

24. Can you tell me a little about your worldview or belief system affects your career goals?

(For service-members/veterans only) 25. What was your reason(s) for joining the military?

(For service-members/veterans only) 26. What type of impact, if any, has your military service had on your identity? If it had an impact, was this impact mostly positive or mostly negative?

(For Native Americans only) 27. What role, if any, does being Native American play in who you are?

(For Native Americans only) 28. What role, if any, does being Native American play in your career goals?

(For Native Americans only) 29. What role, if any, does being Native American play in your relationship with your community?