RESEARCH

A Study of Rural and Native-American College Students' Military Identities, Military Family History, and Reading Interests

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This study addresses college students in a Southwestern, 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 investigate within this sociocultural dynamic to what extent students with a military identity, a military family history, and/or no military-related affiliation associate with this background and also enjoy reading and writing about military topics, especially within the composition classroom. The students sampled enrolled in a first-year-composition class based upon an experimental course model formulated to be military-friendly and military-theme focused, which assisted them in reading about military topics connected to their personal family background and writing about their military-related identity. The article discusses a three-year, mixed-methods study and involves the following student types: seven service-members/veterans and 57 nonveterans, with 15 being the child of a parent(s) with military service. As instruments, the author utilized surveys, interviews, and course papers. The study resulted in several findings. A majority of students reported having strong connections to their personal and/or family military history as factors correlating with their enjoyment of reading about military topics and writing about their military-related backgrounds, including those who served as role models. 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 first-year-writing classroom featuring military-themed readings and writings. Furthermore, in addressing the call to identify and accommodate student groups and their academic needs, this article has implications for instructing Native American students of the geographical area.

Introduction

Recently, writing researchers have discussed the topic of what college students should read in first-year composition (FYC). In response to this question, some writing program administrators and teachers have examined the value of topics they believed would interest students. Within this dialogue about themed classrooms, some teachers are exploring the potential for establishing military-friendly classrooms where students read military-related subjects as a curricular design strategy linking students who are military cadets, service-members, and veterans to the course material and improving their persistence factors and outcomes in undergraduate writing courses (see Conference on College Composition and Communication [CCCC], 2015; Hart & Thompson, 2016; Hembrough, 2017; Hembrough & Dunn, 2019). Still, researchers have not addressed how military-friendly, FYC classes utilizing military-oriented readings and writings might interest various student demographics including not only service-members/veterans, but also military dependents and others with a self-emphasized, family military history. For example, specific to additional racial/ethnicity factors, in the state of Oklahoma, tribal populations value a military culture within their larger backgrounds (see VA, 2016), with Oklahoma boasting the second highest number of tribal residents (National Congress of American Indians, 2019).[1]

Hembrough: A Study of Rural and Native-American College Students' Military Identities, Military Family History, and Reading Interests

47

Many Native American groups express a "warrior's" characteristics as being "strength, bravery, pride, and wisdom," traits aligned with military service goals (U.S. Navy, 2017). By joining the military, tribal service-members may define themselves according to an important cultural role, allowing their society to designate them as "valued members" (2017). In Oklahoma, Choctaw Nation service-members achieved fame as "code talkers" deciphering messages during the World Wars. Today, the Choctaw Nation acknowledges its veterans as part of "a tribe of artists, professionals, musicians, storytellers, innovators, leaders, athletes, warriors, and caregivers" (Choctaw Nation, 2018). Still, Native Americans have been called the United States' most subjugated population (Smith, Stinson, Dawson, Goldstein, Huang, & Grant, 2006), and many tribal student service-members/veterans and nonveterans, impacted by intergenerational trauma factors, meet with unique educational challenges in attending college. Notably, most tribal students require assistance in completing their general coursework, including the subjects of reading and writing,[2] and in growing more critically literate (Brown & Begoray, 2017).

Mindful of this sociodemographic context, writing teachers serving institutions with tribal populations must be ready to meet their students' unique requisites, including those of service-members/veterans, military dependents, and others identifying a strong family military history. For this study, I addressed students residing in a rural, economically depressed region of the country,[3] with Oklahoma possessing a high number, per capita, of service-members (active duty, reserve, and National Guard) (Trilling, 2017) and veterans of recent wars (National Conference of the State Legislatures [NCSL], 2017), as well as being home to the second largest number of Native American veterans (VA, 2017). This article discusses a three-year, exploratory, mixed-methods study at an Oklahoma university involving the following student types: seven service-members/veterans and 57 nonveterans, with 15 of the nonveterans being children of parents with military service. Additionally, many students were tribally affiliated. All students were enrolled in a FYC class based upon an experimental course model formulated to be military-friendly and military-theme focused. The study's purpose was to investigate to what extent students with a military identity, a recent military family history, and/or no military-related affiliation, associate themselves, especially in this region, with their personal and/or family military background and also enjoy reading and writing about military topics.

Literature Review
This section provides information about tribal service-members/veterans and college students. It also explores designs for cohort and themed classrooms in discussing students' college transition patterns, as well as the benefits for students in establishing their identity and telling personal stories.

Service-member/veteran and Native American students
Student veterans have unique "academic, health, and psychosocial stressors" (Shore, Orton, & Manson, 2009, p. 29) that may lead them to falter in transitioning from a rigid military environment to an open university setting (Bellafiore, 2012).[4] Comparably, nationally, and within the study's region, Native American service-members/veterans face compounded geographic and sociodemographic concerns related to their health, education, work, and housing factors, prompting them to require greater assistance in navigating college life.[5] Of any racial group, tribal populations experience the most diseases, early death factors, mental health needs, and substance abuse issues (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [HHS], 2018), and of the psychological disorders, tribal veterans suffer most from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and trauma (National Center for PTSD, 2018). Meanwhile, many 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), so that tribal students may face additional difficulties in transitioning to university life, securing mentors, and aligning their worldviews with the institutional ethos (Guillory, 2009).

Because students who leave college possess a lowered risk of socioeconomic attainment than graduates, locating the causes of academic failure among service-members/veterans is crucial (Horn, Berger, & Carroll, 2004). Likewise, students' initial college year most often determines whether they will graduate, yet studies involving tribal students' first year of university life, especially, are almost unknown (Tachine, Cabrera, & Yellow Bird, 2017).[6] In the last decade, 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 tribal veterans going virtually unnoted.[7]

As a curricular design, some institutions have created writing courses for veterans offering an inclusive classroom and potentially a military-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) service-member/veteran cohorts placed in open classrooms to facilitate students' college transition and engender an inclusive atmosphere where the university itself becomes a potential space for discussing military-related topics (Hart & Thompson, 2013). Of these models, which can be seen as fluid, instructors could opt to offer military-related readings to students in any format.[8] Specific to the third model, a "service-member/veteran-focused course" cohort design (see Hart & Thompson, 2016), Hembrough founded a Composition II course with a service-member/veteran cohort in which students read and wrote about military-themed subjects (Hembrough & Dunn, 2019), and veteran-friendly and service-member/veteran-focused cohort courses can attract

both service-members/veterans and other students, including military spouses and war survivors. The literature describes obstacles to all three course models' implementation, namely facilitating debates about the term "veteran" that disturb a classroom's student demographic (Hart & Thompson, 2016). Nevertheless, service-member/veteran courses signify a "promising" trend (Hart & Thompson, 2013, p. 10), and the potential value of implementing service-member/veteran-focused cohort classes particularly can be discussed in larger terms, including ones that are military-themed.[9]

Cohort classes, themed classes, and constructing one's identity

In entering college as marginalized groups, service-member/veteran and Native Americans students can benefit from high-impact, curricular designs. Three strategies for helping students to persist, especially in lower-level courses, are establishing cohorts based upon students' common identity, constructing themed classes accounting for their interests, and assisting them in their identity's construction. 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).[10] Comparatively, as another strategy for bolstering students' persistence patterns in the writing classroom, some FYC programs have utilized thematic courses (Rinto & Cogbill-Seiders, 2015). Through topical classes, teachers may prompt students to learn more deeply, gain greater analytical abilities, and hone their writing skills by addressing issues of personal value (Heiman, 2014).[11] Largely, curricular themes can address social issues toward which students may gravitate (Aitchison, 2015), including in the case with interest-based courses involving military subjects (Hembrough, 2017; Keast, 2013).[12]

Similarly, Native American culture affects how some students define their experiences (Shotton, Oosahwe, & Cintron, 2007), so they require a community of learners' support and culturally pluralistic pedagogies (Bowman, 2003), with an inclusion of values tailored to their needs, as opposed to reflecting Western educational styles and objectives (Fletcher, 2008). Tribal students also enjoy group-learning approaches (Larimore & McClellan, 2005) and engaging with and instructing others (Conley & Bryan, 2009). Even as tribal cultures are unique in background (Fletcher, 2008), formulating peer relationships based upon common subjects, building community, and orchestrating a constructive relationship with one's locale are valuable student practices (Espino & Lee, 2011), as well as premises for orchestrating academic cohorts and themed classes.

As another tenet associated with interest-based cohorts and themed classes, service-member/veteran and tribal students can profit additionally from having the space in which to express their identity, such as through building a sense of belonging with peers, employing family role models, gaining a sharper understanding of their Native identity, and sharing their background with others as college retention factors (Jackson, Smith, & Hill, 2003).[13] Notably, Native Americans often express a relationship to their genealogical heritage in order to represent their identity, and because most tribal students are the first in their families to attend college (American Indian College Fund Data, 2011), having role models is central to their success.[14]

The importance of storytelling

The act of storytelling differs culturally (Nguyen, Stanley, Rank, Stanley, & Wang, 2016), yet storytelling is universally valued, and people share stories in order to educate and entertain their audiences, preserve their ideas, and convey values and knowledge. Marginalized groups utilizing storytelling to their benefit in reaching larger communities include veterans and Native Americans. Often, veterans tell stories to explore traumatic and post-traumatic events related to both their war and home experiences in order to understand how the past affects the present. Additionally, sharing narratives assists veterans in dealing with "painful, vivid, and hidden" memories; discussing regrets; identifying life meaning; and reflecting upon their situation (Mowatt & Bennett, 2011, p. 302). Moreover, through storytelling, veterans can present pictures of themselves to civilians conveying the former as individuals instead of as stereotypes and also diminish the utilization of platitudes attached to war remembrances (Travis, 2017).[15] Comparably, storytelling is key to most Indigenous groups (Tachine, Cabrera, & Yellow Bird, 2017) because narratives establish Native ways of being and place them in tribal terms, with storytelling and knowing/meaning being congruent terms (Tachine, Yellow Bird, & Cabrera, 2016).[16] Stories are also important to many Native veterans because they allow them to relay past conflicts they overcame, as well as those with which they continue to deal. In return, audiences of these tales can show "respect and appreciation to those who have served to ensure" everyone's "freedom and security" (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [DHHS], 2012).

Most teachers do not utilize storytelling as an instructional practice (Pyne & Means, 2013), and only recently have educators investigated employing digital storytelling in their classrooms (Holtzblatt & Tschakert, 2011). However, storytelling can be utilized as a student-centered approach suitable for deep learning, as well as meeting the needs of students with diverse learning styles (Kortegast & Davis, 2017). Additionally, it is important to include student's personal narratives in writing courses because employing storytelling assists students in entering academic discourse communities (Parmegiani, 2014), developing their composition strategies (Mlynarczyk, 2014), and contextualizing their

Hembrough: A Study of Rural and Native-American College Students' Military Identities, Military Family History, and Reading Interests

49

experiences within larger social settings (Weis, Benmayor, O'Leary, & Eynon, 2002).[17] Largely, for students, including Native Americans, sharing one's identity with others is a vital practice that can affect one's college persistence levels overall (Patterson, & Butler-Barnes, & Van Zile-Tamsen, 2017).

Addressing a gap in the research

In the classroom, some veterans wish to remain silent about their military identity (Thompson, 2014), and others wish 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 possessing a family military history or a fascination for military topics. Although recent researchers have focused on helping service-members/veterans feel welcome within a military-friendly course model (Hart & Thompson, 2016), almost nothing has been written about attempts to include other students with a military-related identity or interest. Overall, the results of establishing service-member/veteran-focused, military-themed composition classes, especially for racial minorities, remain an area for investigation. Thus, utilizing a service-member/veteran-focused course model at a university with tribal students, I designed a Composition II 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 engage with military readings related to their background, as well as writing assignments about their personal and/or family military identity. For the study, I asked these research questions: First, to what degree do students with a military identity, a recent military family history, and/or no military-related personal or family affiliation possess a strong link to this identity? Second, to what extent, if at all, do students enjoy reading and writing about military topics related to their potential military identity?

Method

Institutional context

Outlining one's institutional background and the services available for military-affiliated students is vital to implementing service-member/veteran-friendly classes and evaluating their impact (Hart & Thompson, 2016). From 2016 through 2019, I conducted the study at an Oklahoma university serving the state's lowest income county. The university town is also home to the Choctaw Nation.[18] Many undergraduates have first-generation, low-income backgrounds, and 30% are Native American, mostly from the "Big Five" tribes.[19]

The institution provides some services for military-affiliated students, including financial-aid and housing counselors for service-members/veterans. It is a "military-friendly school" with a high service-member/veteran enrollment of approximately 5% (Southeastern Oklahoma State University, 2018). Despite its small population, Oklahoma also has the second highest rate of military participation per capita ("Military Statistics," 2018). Nevertheless, faculty had offered no classes geared toward service-members/veterans in the past, and departments and institutional partners had held few dialogues about strategies to aid them.

Composition II

Over three years, I offered three military-friendly, Composition II sections with military reading and writing topics. Cohorts founded upon student traits provide many remunerations and assume numerous forms, but I will discuss the cohort as bounded by the collection of students enrolled in the 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.

At the university, Composition II is a required, argument-based, research course. In the class, students wrote about topics related to their major, background, or interest, with many covering subjects connected to their and/or their family's military history. To meet the class's reading objectives, students read texts revolving around war and peace theories and completed writing assignments where they might introduce military-oriented matters, included a Description of a Personal Role Model and a related Profile Essay, with some students conducting an interview with a veteran, and a Personal Identity Essay.[20] (See Appendices III and IV for essay prompts.)

Research methods

I engaged the study, with Institutional Review Board approval, as an exploratory, mixed-methods study (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2017) about students' potential reading and writing preferences for military-themed topics in FYC. For the study's aims, I investigated whether service-members/veterans desired military-friendly courses, one another's companionship, and military-oriented reading and writing options, as well as whether nonveteran students with an interest in or connection to military-oriented matters would benefit from this course format.[21] I utilized a mixed-methods, explanatory design with a multiphase-combination timing consisting of two distinct phases, with the quantitative research followed by the qualitative research (Morse & Neihaus, 2009) collected each year.[22]

In creating a mixed-methods study, one collects data utilizing multiple methods to describe the study and its themes (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2017); I utilized surveys, interviews, course papers, and university webpages about services available for military-connected students (see Yin, 2009). The surveys provided quantitative data (Merriam, 1998), and the interviews (Boyce & Neale, 2006) gave qualitative data. Altogether, participants included service-members/veteran, military-dependents, and nonveteran students. Moreover,

I collected information from a 68-year-old, male, area Choctaw tribal elder. In filing the data, I gave participants pseudonyms and kept the list of pseudonyms and associated names in a password-encrypted file.

The study's instruments included surveys, interviews, and a rubric. For the surveys, I posed a series of Likert-style questions, with answers ranging from 1 "strongly disagree" to 5 "strongly agree." Additionally, some questions were open answer, allowing for student commentary (Allen & Seaman, 2007). I surveyed students about their course format preferences, including the phenomenon of cohort classes; reading and writing interests, including the potential for military topics; possible personal and/or 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. (See Appendices I and II for select survey questions.)

The service-members/veterans also engaged in a semi-structured interview to provide further information related to the survey. Additionally, I interviewed the tribal elder about region-specific, tribal veterans' participatory history in military conflicts. For the interviews, I utilized semi-structured questions to give a small number of participants the opportunity to discuss their ideas on a particular topic, program, or situation, and through the interviews, the participants elaborated upon their survey answers (see Boyce & Neale, 2006). Separately, in line with the research questions, another researcher and I evaluated papers that the Composition II 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). Additionally, I created a rubric to measure students' academic outcomes for their personal identity narrative.

Providing for flexibility and adaptation, I implemented grounded theory methodology to collect data and identify study themes (Strauss, 1987). To explore common strands in the materials, the other researcher and I applied a thematic analysis to the data by annotating the documents, locating themes, creating a coding scheme, and coding the data (Bricki & Green, 2007).[23] Then, utilizing the existing literature on the topic, and the themes generated, we created an analytical framework and orchestrated a storyline for the study (Yin, 2009).[24] We analyzed data tied to the study's setting, participants, and chronology to describe the study's details (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2017) connected to the overarching research question regarding what type of course format and reading and writing topics service-members/veterans, as well as nonveterans, might prefer in Composition II. Separately, acting as raters, the other researcher and I assessed students' personal narratives utilizing the rubric. On a five-point scale, we rated each essay's organization; development and clarification of ideas; diction, style, and voice; audience and genre features; and synthesis of information and cohesion.[25]

Sample demographics
In the study, there were seven service-members/veterans and 57 nonveterans, with 15 of the nonveterans being the children of parents with military service. 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). Compared with these statistics, the study's service-members/veterans' rates of conformity in these categories aligned relatively closely in most areas, with a greater percentage of the latter group working full time. Nonetheless, almost all 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). As a separate factor, 41% ($n = 26$) of student participants were Native American.[26] See **Table 1** for the demographic characteristics of the service-member/veteran and nonveteran students.

Findings and Discussion
This study revealed a few findings. Most students reported the positive impact upon themselves of their military background, their family's recent military history, or both, as a connective factor(s) arguably contributing to their expressed interest in reading and writing about military-associated topics. Of these students, the service-members/veterans identified the largest benefit in participating in a veteran-friendly, FYC course with military readings. However, many nonveteran students also perceived the value of exploring their military-family history. Additionally, while the Caucasian students were interested in uncovering and documenting details of their extended military family background, the Native American students also especially appreciated their ability to portray tribal family military role models, as well as problematize existing veteran stereotypes. 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 and writings. Furthermore, this article has implications for instructing Native American students, especially of the geographical area.

Identifying students with a military identity, a military family history, and an enjoyment of military-themed readings
In formulating a military-friendly, Composition II course, I needed to determine whether the university's student demographic, including both service-member/veteran and nonveteran populations, would be interested in the class based upon its format and topic. As the first finding, most students did report the positive identifiable impact upon

Hembrough: A Study of Rural and Native-American College Students' Military Identities, Military Family History, and Reading Interests

51

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

	Veterans/Service-members	Nonveterans
Military branch	Army, $n = 3$; Marine, $n = 2$; Navy, $n = 1$; Air Force, $n = 1$; Combat veteran, $n = 5$	NA
Sex	Men, $n = 6$; Women, $n = 1$	Men, $n = 24$; Women, $n = 33$
Race	Caucasian, $n = 2$; Native American, Choctaw, $n = 5$	Caucasian, $n = 22$; Native American, $n = 18$; African-American, $n = 6$; Hispanic/Latino, $n = 7$; Asian, $n = 1$; mixed, including a Native American race, $n = 3$
Marital Status	Married, $n = 3$; Single, $n = 4$	Married, $n = 12$; Single, $n = 45$
Children living in the home	1–3 children, $n = 3$; 4–6 children, $n = 1$	$n = 40$
Age	18–24, $n = 3$; 25–34, $n = 2$; 35–44, $n = 2$	18–24, $n = 37$; 25–34, $n = 13$; 35–44, $n = 7$
Rurally located or from a rural location	$n = 7$	$n = 57$
PTSD diagnosis	$n = 6$	NA
TBI	$n = 4$	NA
Works 20 plus hours weekly	$n = 5$	$n = 45$
Major	Business, $n = 2$; Safety, $n = 2$; Criminal Justice, $n = 3$	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, $n = 2$

$N = 7$ Service-members/veterans.
$N = 57$ Nonveteran students, with 15 being the child of a parent(s) with military service.
Note: Some students listed more than one major.

themselves of their military background, their family's military history, or both. Additionally, a majority expressed interest in military-associated reading topics. Thus, the course possessed an audience of students who might benefit from enrolling in it.

In responding to survey questions, 97% ($n = 72$) or most service-members/veterans reported that their military service made a "positive impact" on their "identity," with all also delineating a "recent" or "close family military history." Specifically, all service-members/veterans ($n = 7$) not only reported that their military service rendered a positive effect on their identity, but they also affirmed that they possessed a "recent" or "close family history," having at least two family members with military service. In cataloguing their family military history, students listed one or more of the following family member types with military participation: (step) parents, siblings, cousins, aunts, uncles, (step)grandparents, (step)great-grandparents, and (ex-)spouses. Additionally, students listed each family member's name and described, as possible, "the person's service, including the military branch, military duties, and any conflict(s)/war(s)" undergone. Moreover, students noted whether they believed that their family member's service was a factor contributing to the student's forging of an intergenerational relationship with the person.

Next, pertinent students reported whether their relationship(s) with their family member(s) with military service proved "positive" for the former, with the member(s) acting as a "role model." Notably, all service-members/veterans identified their family member(s) with military service as having acted as a large and positive role model to them. Indeed, none of the Composition II service-members/veterans possessed a close family member(s) with a military history who the students "did not know well" or who "served as a negative role model" or "no role model." In the interview, service-members/veterans shared further information about their said family member(s). For example, service-members/veterans dated their family military history back to the Revolutionary War, the Spanish-American War, and the Alamo, as well as noting how they had visited monuments associated with these military conflicts as commemorative journeys, sometimes making the trek with their family member(s) with a military participation history.

To a somewhat lesser extent, the nonveteran students also reported the beneficial impact on their personal identity's construction of the military participation of a family member(s), with this person(s) acting as a positive role model. Overall, all ($n = 57$) nonveteran students possessed a close family member(s) with recent military participation, with 84% ($n = 48$) indicating that this person(s) served as a valued example for them. For the nonveteran students, this rate of positive identification with a family member(s) with military participation was higher than it might have been in other comparable student populations, foreseeably because the former chose the military-themed section for its positive associations. Additionally, within the larger nonveteran category, 26% ($n = 15$) of students were

also children of a parent(s) with military service, with all ($n = 15$) identifying their respective parent(s) as a central figure to them.

The small number of students indicating that their family members with military service did not function as models explained that this result was because of the students "not knowing" these family members "well" for reasons of distance or death. Meanwhile, one international German student expressed ambivalence about his German grandfathers' World War II participation, while two other Caucasian nonveteran students remarked on their possessing a family member with military participation who was an "alcoholic."

Overall, within the class, the students enjoyed having the opportunity to investigate their genealogy and present their relationships with family members with a military family history to others. Some students drew family trees in order to depict their lineage, as well as inserting pictures, and others recorded interviews with their family members, including making trips to the nursing home. Indeed, one student even created a website allowing her relatives to view their shared ancestry, while another visited nearby graveyards and abandoned house sites to photograph tombstones and important locations for his forebearers. Likewise, students were more excited about conducting research for their work than usual, and some investigated the wars and major battles in which their family members fought, with the class also making a trip to the library to learn about historical conflicts in which area tribes participated. One Choctaw veteran claimed in an interview, "I spent more time telling my family story than I did on my résumé for another class due this week." See **Table 2** for students' family military history and relation to their military family role model(s).

Reading military-themed works related to students' identity

In the study, nearly all service-members/veterans identified the positive impact on themselves of their military background, and all reported the valuable effect that possessing a relationship with their family member(s) with military service produced on them likewise. Comparably, a majority of nonveterans acknowledged the important outcome upon themselves of having a family role model(s) with a military history, with the children of veterans representing the highest percentages for this factor. Subsequently, having determined this first study finding, I wished to ascertain how many students showed an interest in reading about military-associated topics in or outside of the classroom.

As the second finding, I discovered that nearly all service-members/veterans and nonveterans did enjoy reading about military subjects. At the course's end, students were surveyed, and of these, all veterans/service-members ($n = 7$) and those with parents with military service ($n = 15$) reported an interest in reading about military topics, as did 95% ($n = 40$) of the nonveterans without parents having military service. These interest rates seem understandable, as, presumably, students selected the course by topic. Still, students' high rate of interest in reading military-related works is compelling

Hembrough: A Study of Rural and Native-American College Students' Military
Identities, Military Family History, and Reading Interests

53

Table 2: Students' potential family military history and military family role models.

	Veterans/Service-members	Nonveterans and Children of Veterans/Service-members	Nonveterans Without Parents with Military Service
(Step)great-grandparent(s) in the military	$n = 7$	$n = 10$	$n = 45$
(Step)grandparent(s) in the military	$n = 7$	$n = 9$	$n = 47$
(Step)parent(s) in the military	$n = 4$	$n = 15$	$n = 15$
Uncles/Aunts/Cousins in the military	$n = 5$	$n = 9$	$n = 32$
Sibling(s) in the military	$n = 2$	$n = 4$	$n = 10$
Family member(s) served as a positive role model	$n = 7$	$n = 15$	$n = 48$
Participant has a military family history but did not know or know well those who participated in the military	$n = 0$	$n = 0$	$n = 5$
Family member(s) served as a negative or no role model	$n = 0$	$n = 0$	$n = 4$

$N = 7$ Veterans/service-members.
$N = 57$ Nonveterans, with 15 being the child of a parent(s) with military service.

Table 3: Students' military-topic-related reading preferences.

	Veterans/Service-members	Nonveterans and Children of Veterans/Service-members	Nonveterans (without Parents with Military Service)
Likes Biographies of Military Leaders and Personnel	$n = 7$	$n = 52$	$n = 45$
Likes Military History	$n = 7$	$n = 54$	$n = 40$
Likes Military-related Fiction	$n = 7$	$n = 40$	$n = 48$
Likes Military-related Nonfiction	$n = 7$	$n = 39$	$n = 39$
Likes News/Other Information Facing Veteran College Students Concerning Jobs, the Economy, Families, etc.	$n = 7$	$n = 53$	$n = 53$
Believes that Military-related Readings Are Too Graphic or Depressing to Read	$n = 0$	$n = 0$	$n = 1$
Does Not Like to Read about Military Subjects	$n = 0$	$n = 0$	$n = 2$

$N = 7$ Service-members/veterans.
$N = 57$ Nonveterans, with 15 being the child of a parent(s) with military service.

because it depicts a population who might or actually did value the enactment of military-themed classes. See **Table 3** for students' military-topic-related reading preferences, with the interest rates for the different genres noted.

As seen, a majority of students reported their expressed interest in reading about military-associated topics. Likewise, at the course's end, both the service-members/veterans and nonveterans also reported appreciating the class's military-themed readings as contributing to FYC's curricular objectives. Specifically, all service-members/veterans ($n = 7$) and 85% ($n = 48$) of the nonveterans surveyed found the readings "strengthened their reading skills," and all service-members/veterans and 95% of the nonveterans ($n = 54$) believed that the readings assisted them in "developing critical thinking skills." Additionally, all service-members/veterans ($n = 7$)

and 75% ($n = 43$) of the nonveterans found the course's "readings to be relevant to their interests and experiences," and looking to the future, all service-members/veterans ($n = 7$) and half of the nonveterans ($n = 29$) also "planned to read more military-related works on their own," including histories, biographies, and commentaries on current issues.

For some tribal service-members/veterans particularly, they claimed in the interview, exploring military-themed readings is relevant because mainstream culture depicts Native Americans as a separate, warring population having been 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 in this population also believed that the course readings assisted them in understanding their own past military

role in greater detail. Notably, 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 and how to cope with it." Of the nonveterans surveyed, some who did not find the course's reading to be relevant to their interests and experiences reported that they would have rather covered fewer military readings and more from some other topic in order to gain greater variety. Proceeding, two students reported a disinterest in reading further military-based works, as they preferred covering texts concerning their "major." Additionally, one nonveteran student surveyed found some material we studied to be too "graphic" and "depressing," even though she did not want alternative readings.

Whether or not students enjoyed reading about military topics, all found it useful to discuss the definitions of a "veteran" that the readings raised, as well as stereotypes that society utilized to describe veterans (see Hembrough & Dunn, 2019). In a recent national survey, most participants reported having "only respect" for veterans by ranking their social merit on par with firefighters and even above that of teachers and police officers (Jordan, 2019). Nevertheless, stereotypes about veterans abound. Not only is this context problematic, but it also can affect veterans' ability to transition successfully into society and hamper civilians' ability to recognize veterans' potential in the community, school, and workplace (Sherbo, 2011), a situation that some of the study's students found familiar, citing examples concerning their family members.[27]

In discussing stereotypes that purport to compare veterans with civilians, a majority of participants surveyed nationally report believing that veterans are more likely to "love war"; be "broken"; have a mental health issue; have a substance abuse issue; be imprisoned; be homeless; commit mass murder; be unemployed; be unable to think for themselves; be less educated or lack options other than the military; marry and have children only so that they can utilize additional military benefits, such as having a bigger housing allowance; and be "heroic" (Shane, 2014; Sicard, 2016). However, on average, in describing relationships between veterans and civilians, the reverse may be true,[28] and the students' approach to the Composition II class prompted some to research ways in which veterans as a group defied such stereotypes.

Writing about one's military identity and the academic outcomes

For the study, I had desired to determine how many students would show an interest in writing about military-associated topics and what the academic outcomes would be. As the third study finding, I discovered that almost all students did enjoy writing about their personal and/or family members' military history, and they and the raters of their work agreed that the students achieved various gains in composing military-related texts for Composition II. Additionally, students were able to address stereotypes about veterans through their texts (see Hembrough & Dunn, 2019).

In the survey and reflective essay, students identified having realized numerous outcomes upon engaging with the course assignments. More than three-fourths ($n = 57$) surveyed believed that the course "promoted their educational and personal interests," and more than half ($n = 43$) agreed that they might write "future accounts about their military-related background on their own." Specifically, many Native American students agreed that it was important for them to describe their concerns, as well as the people and places relevant to them, in writing about their military-oriented identity in order to preserve a record. This finding affirms the position of the Choctaw elder, who was interviewed, on storytelling's importance for area tribal members in constructing their background. Some of what the Native American students wrote also conformed with larger tribal histories and the literature about tribal veterans' military participation goals. Notably, students described how during the second part of the 20th century, many Native Americans were made to assimilate, and their ceremonies disappeared or went underground. Likewise, some were forced to move away from their reservations in order to secure work. Thus, gaining military service became a "rite of passage" for various young tribal men and women (DHHS, 2012). Many tribal members join the military out of a tradition of "protecting the community," as some tribes find "service, sacrifice, and courage" to be significant characteristics, as well as being necessary to a person's assumption of the traits of leadership, courage, and the enacting of change for the family or tribe. Likewise, other Natives participate in the military in order to see the world, provide for their families, obtain a college education, and gain new experiences (DHHS, 2012).

Today, Native stories have been devalued by storytellers' attempts to conform them to Caucasian-style narrative patterns (Tachine, Yellow Bird, & Cabrera, 2016). However, the personal narrative assignment allowed tribal students to relay their tales in their preferred ways. Additionally, some tribal students possess an uncertain cultural identity because they have never learned about Native American traditions, a context that leaves the students lacking confidence and feeling depressed (Mihesuah, 2004). Yet, researching their background for the personal essay and other assignments assisted Native students in learning more about tribal contexts and discussing them as part of their identity. "When I tell my story, I don't feel invisible," explained a Choctaw veteran (see Fryberg, & Stephens, 2010). "Plus, in the class, I got to tell my narrative the way I thought it should go."

Besides proving interesting in topic, the class also assisted students in addressing various course outcomes. At least 77% ($n = 49$) surveyed reported that the course facilitated advancements in their reading and writing, critical thinking, researching, reflecting, and collaborating practices in all categories. See **Table 4** for students' self-reported outcomes via the survey upon completing Composition II.

As another measure to provide study results, as the method section describes, another rater and I assessed students' Personal Identity Essay for academic outcomes. We

Hembrough: A Study of Rural and Native-American College Students' Military
Identities, Military Family History, and Reading Interests

55

ascertained that students performed highest in the areas of 1) "synthesis of information and cohesion" and 2) "development and clarity," with 90% ($n = 58$) fulfilling these objectives. Findings suggest that the assignment also aided most students in addressing the essay's other components, too, with 85% ($n = 54$) meeting outcomes for "diction, style, and voice" and "audience and genre requirements." See **Table 5** for raters' assessment of students' outcomes for the Personal Essay.

As another course outcome, having discussed veteran stereotypes in class, some students relayed through their writing assignments how they themselves or their family proved them to be untrue. Notably, according to a national survey, outside study participants believed that the media portray veterans negatively rather than as being community assets (Shane, 2014). Indeed, the obstacles with which veterans, including tribal veterans, meet today include homelessness, unemployment, healthcare access, substance abuse, and mental health issues, including PTSD (DHHS, 2012). However, according to the National Veterans Foundation (2016), most veterans are "dependable, committed, self-sufficient, and able to perform successfully under stressful conditions," and many of the study's students mentioned that they believed that society must work to transmit this message.[29] Indeed, in Composition II, the students themselves helped to alleviate some lingering stereotypes of veterans by discussing, through their assignments, the positive impact that the military had made on them and/or their family. Nonetheless, some tribal students also described instances of institutional racism that they or their family members had

Table 4: A survey of students' self-reported outcomes upon completing the course.

Students' Self-Reported Academic Outcomes for Composition II	
Strengthened critical thinking skills	94% (60)
Strengthened research skills	93% (>60)
Strengthened reading skills	96% (61)
Strengthened writing skills	96% (61)
Proved useful in learning more about personal narratives as a genre	84% (54)
Strengthened collaborative practices	77% (49)
Strengthened reflective skills	92% (59)
Promoted educational and personal interests	89% (57)
Prompted student to consider writing future accounts about their military-related background on their own	67% (43)

$N = 7$ Veterans/service-members.
$N = 57$ Nonveterans.

Table 5: Raters' assessment of students' academic outcomes for the Personal Identity Essay.

Writing Outcomes for the Personal Essay	Percentage of Assignments Associated with Each Outcome, with "1" Being the Lowest and "5" the Highest				
	Fails to Meet Requirements	Fair	Meets Requirements	Good	Excellent
	1	2	3	4	5
Synthesis of information and cohesion	5%	5%	20%	50%	20%
	$n = 3$	$n = 3$	$n = 13$	$n = 32$	$n = 13$
Development and clarity	5%	5%	25%	25%	40%
	$n = 3$	$n = 3$	$n = 16$	$n = 16$	$n = 26$
Diction, style, and voice	10%	5%	35%	35%	15%
	$n = 6$	$n = 3$	$n = 21$	$n = 22$	$n = 9$
Audience and genre requirements	5%	10%	25%	25%	35%
	$n = 3$	$n = 6$	$n = 16$	$n = 16$	$n = 22$

$N = 7$ Veterans/service-members.
$N = 57$ Nonveterans.

suffered, a context that can exacerbate a service-member's potential for or rate of PTSD (see DHHS, 2012). For example, one student veteran described being given names including "chief," and another mentioned how she was thought to have "innate" or "magical powers" that would protect her.[30] See **Table 6** for students' mention of a service-member/veteran stereotype in their Descriptive Writing of a Personal Role Model; Profile Essay; or Personal Identity Essay. Each mention of a stereotype is counted once per paper.

Study Limitations, Future Directions, and Conclusion

The literature indicates that students who do well in FYC possess higher college persistence rates overall. Indeed, of the first-year courses, passing FYC represents the biggest indicator in predicting graduation (Garrett, Bridgewater, & Feinstein, 2017). Yet, in transitioning to college, non-traditional students, including service-members/veterans and minority students, must possess support. Students who participate 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 cohort course's service-members/veterans showed a positive capacity to shift from the military to academia, at least in the Composition II class. As adult learners, student veterans divide their time amongst school, careers, and family obligations (Blaauw-Hara, 2017). Likewise, many Native American students face difficulty in placing their school commitments above family members' demands (American Indian College Fund, 2011). Nonetheless, the class assisted these student groups in finding their place at the university. As study findings, most students reported having a strong connection to their personal and/or family military history as factors correlating with their enjoyment of reading about military topics and writing about their military-related backgrounds. Additionally, most students enrolled in the class perceived that in doing so, they took advantage of the opportunity to read and write about military-oriented materials connected to their military-related identity, including those who served as role models for them. Overall, the class's framework bolstered many students' engagement with FYC's reading and writing objectives, with a population including both service-member/veterans and nonveterans, and aided the former demographic's college shift. Additionally, students, including tribal participants, valued opportunities to discuss identity related issues linked to their personal and/or family military history.

For the study, I should address a few limitations. The biggest involves 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. Although this study involved participants at a regional university, subsequent researchers could also address comparable scenarios at comprehensive research universities and community colleges. 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.

Military-oriented and Native American students desire to know that the university respects their cultural traditions and values (Blauu-Hara, 2017; Mosholder, Waite, Larsen, & Goslin, 2016). Thus, instead of asking students to conform to a university's worldview, schools should find ways to uplift and acknowledge military-oriented and tribal students via

Table 6: All students' mentions of a service-member/veteran stereotype.

Stereotype Treated Concerning Veterans' Perceived Nature	Number of Times Discussed per Papers
Loves war	9
Is heroic	11
Is "broken"	17
Has a mental health issue	14
Has a substance abuse issue	3
Is likely to be imprisoned	2
Is homeless	14
Is unemployed	12
Is less educated or lacked options besides joining the military	23
Is likely to commit mass murder	6
Is unable to think for himself/herself	13
May marry and have children only to utilize more military benefits	8

N = 7 Veterans/service-members.
N = 57 Nonveterans.

Hembrough: A Study of Rural and Native-American College Students' Military Identities, Military Family History, and Reading Interests

57

the curricula, and to rethink the manner in which they envision veterans and their families as a diverse group (Shane, 2014). Additionally, military oriented and tribal students should be given opportunities within their coursework to disclose their cultural identity. Curricula can be developed that assists and encourages students in telling their stories, since student validation is an educational goal. Indeed, even small changes in the university environment can bolster military-oriented and tribal students' feelings of self-relevance and contribute to their academic success, especially during students' first two college years (Blauu-Hara, 2017; Fryberg, Covarrubias, & Burack, 2013). Of all races, tribal students experience the most difficulty in navigating the distance between their previous home life and their college existence since they feel pressured to assimilate to the university (Clark, 2013; Larimore & McClellan, 2005). However, military-oriented and Native American students who connect with their cultural identity and feel that it is affirmed are more likely to obtain their academic goals.

Notes

[1] In the Americas, Native Americans have participated in military conflicts since the colonies' formation (Calloway, 1995). Until the late 1800s, they served in segregated units, and during World War I, they were drafted even though many could not claim national citizenship. Despite such obstacles, in WWI approximately 12,000 Native Americans served, and in WWII more than 44,000 served, the latter in an era when the combined tribal population was only 350,000 members. Later, with the Vietnam conflict, 42,000 Native Americans served, with over 90% volunteering for their posts (U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs [VA], 2012). Likewise, in the Pre- and Post-9/11 wars, more Native Americans have participated in the military per capita than any other race (VA, 2017). Presently, there are 1,275 (0.6%) Native American officers and 14,559 (1.4%) enlisted personnel (Department of Defense [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).

[2] For a discussion of Indigenous college student writers and Indigenous rhetoric, see Thieme & Makmillen, 2017.

[3] For a discussion of rural, student service-members/veterans, see Hembrough, Madewell, & Dunn, 2018.

[4] Dealing with health, psychological, and substance abuse issues can be problematic not only for student veterans but also for their families (Elbogen, Wagner, Fuller, Calhoun, & Kinneer, 2010), a context creating obstacles to the former's post-secondary educational goals (Grossbard, Widome, Lust, Simpson, Lostutter, & Saxon, 2014). Compared with their nonveteran counterparts, 60% of student veterans identify issues in acculturating to college. As nontraditional students who may be older, working, and have partners and children, veterans may feel alienated from their traditional student peers and separated from staff and faculty (Blaauw-Hara, 2017; Navarre Cleary & Wozniak, 2013). Additionally, 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 some 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).

[5] Today there are more than 150,000 tribal veterans (U.S. Government, 2013), and most report having a "positive veteran identity," a descriptor that can be applied to the study's tribal veterans likewise. Nevertheless, 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 (Harada, Villa, Reifel, & Bayhylle, 2005). Tribal veterans are also more likely to have a disability, service-related or otherwise, than those of other races (VA, 2017).

[6] The first-year retention rate for tribal students at four-year colleges is 70.5%, one lower than the rates for Caucasian (82.2%) and African-American (75.1%) students (Consortium for Student Retention, 2015).

[7] Indeed, according to Smith (2012), the area of composition and rhetoric itself places veterans outside of the university and denies them instructors' and classmates' acceptance. Valentino (2010) urges writing faculty to undergird and respect student veterans as an emerging population. Likewise, other writing scholars have requested that teachers foster all-encompassing classrooms where veterans can share their backgrounds (see Grohowski, 2013; Hart & Thompson, 2016), with efforts being made toward this end.

[8] As an example of the "military-only" model, Hembrough (2017) initiated FYC classes for service-members, veterans, and cadets utilizing military-themed materials, a setting to which students responded positively, with the course matching their interests. For the open, "veteran-friendly" prototype, Keast (2013) 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.

[9] Not all service-members/veterans will want to join a military-friendly or military-related class, but having options profits all students.

[10] As further benefits, cohort students may engage with course topics more readily than other students and possess a higher regard for learning (Mello, 2003).

[11] In one Composition I study, students reported that writing about topics of relevance played the biggest factor in their experiencing of enjoyment and successful class outcomes. However, to become better writers, students

must relate to course topics both locally and broadly (Sommers & Saltz, 2004).

[12] 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 (Friedman, 2013; Hembrough, 2017).

[13] Many tribal students find difficulty in transitioning to a post-secondary institution and acclimating to curricular and campus philosophies (Hunt & Harrington, 2010), as well as their experiencing feelings of inadequacy, isolation, and ostracism (Brayboy & Maaka, 2015). Indeed, while at the university, many Native students feel disconnected from their home communities and are also the victims of racial microaggressions (Tachine, Cabrera, & Yellow Bird, 2017), as well as their experiencing the pressure to alter their Native identity, a situation resulting in their display of identity conflicts and self-doubt (Reynolds, Sodano, Ecklund, & Guyker, 2012).

[14] Because most universities cater to Caucasian, middle-class students (Gusa, 2010), this scenario eliminates tribal students from academic consideration and renders them "invisible" (Fryberg & Stephens, 2010). However, tribal students with strong home connections are more likely to persist and more motivated to succeed in college than their counterparts (Minthorn, Shotton, Brayboy, & Davidson, 2018). Essentially, constructing interdependent relationships and mentoring partnerships, such as with family members, is a vital practice for tribal groups (Schooler, 2014).

[15] Veterans and civilians have different comprehensions of war-based trauma, the problems associated with the former's post-deployment transition time, and the celebration of Memorial Day. Yet, when veterans tell their stories to their communities, this practice can engender a better understanding between groups (Mamon, McDonald, Lambert, & Cameron, 2017).

[16] It is important not to stereotype tribal worldviews, as Anglo visions of Native Americans often delineate the latter (Aftandilian, 2011). Still, Western science foregrounds observation and experimentation while Native outlooks value observation and lived experience (Bahr, 2015), with many tribal groups relying on narratives to depict their concerns (Brown & Begoray, 2017).

[17] Leaving home to attend college can provide students with new experiences that lead them to redefine themselves, and this period of transition may also offer them tales that they wish to share (Azmitia, Syed, & Radmacher, 2008). In one study tribal students found that by sharing their cultural backgrounds through storytelling, they could combat labeling, too (Brown & Begoray, 2017).

[18] As part of the Five Civilized Tribes, the Choctaws were the first to be relocated to Oklahoma on the Trail of Tears in 1830. Once there, the Choctaws created a self-governing republic. Of today's federally recognized tribes, the Choctaw are the third biggest, and the largest number of Choctaws live in Oklahoma. Beginning in the 1950s, the Choctaw Nation created institutions in current use, including a tribal college, housing authority, and justice system. Important continuing Choctaw traditions include singing, storytelling, craft making, participating in the Green Corn ceremony, and playing stickball, a game similar to lacrosse (Choctaw Nation, 2018).

[19] As other demographic descriptors, the freshmen retention rate is 64%, below the national average of over 72% (Deidentified University "Factbook," 2018). According to these numbers, at the study's university, like elsewhere, some students, including service-members/veterans and Native Americans, face persistence issues as marginalized groups.

[20] Military-related readings covering the concerns and portrayals of Native Americans included Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried* (1990) and Sherman Alexie's story "What You Pawn I Will Redeem" (2003).

[21] Exploratory research is conducted to obtain new perceptions, gain new ideas, and widen the knowledge of phenomena (Schutt, 2014). A mixed-methods study involves utilizing both quantitative and qualitative research methods, as "one data source alone is insufficient, results need to be explained, exploratory results need to be further examined, a study needs to be enhanced through adding a second method, [and] a theoretical stance needs to be advanced through the use of both types of methods" (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2017, p. 60). Quantitative research deals with formal, objective information about the world and mathematical quantification, and can be utilized to test relationships (Given, 2008), while qualitative research engages with phenomena that are difficult to quantify mathematically, including meanings, beliefs, symbols, and attributes (Babbie, 2014).

[22] Researchers can implement multiphase combination timing when employing multiple phases that include sequential and/or concurrent timing over a program of study. According to the study's design, each year I collected and analyzed the quantitative data first. Then, I collected and analyzed the qualitative data to help explain the quantitative results obtained. Thus, the qualitative data was constructed upon the quantitative data, with the two datasets being connected at the study's end. The basis for this approach is that the quantitative data and their succeeding analysis provide a basic understanding of the research problem. Then, the qualitative data and their analysis assist in illuminating the quantitative results by viewing participants' ideas in greater depth (Creswell & Cresswell, 2017). Each year, the study questions and protocols remained the same, but data was collected over a three-year period in order to obtain a sufficient number of participants.

Hembrough: A Study of Rural and Native-American College Students' Military
Identities, Military Family History, and Reading Interests

59

23 In identifying preliminary themes and findings, we developed codes linked to the research questions and coded each data set to create internal consistency.

24 An analytical framework suggests that data from all participants, with their different viewpoints may be important (Strand, Cutforth, Stoecker, Marullo, & Donohue, 2003).

25 To provide credibility to the study's claims, I immersed myself in prolonged field engagement by contemplating the research questions over a long period and offered thick descriptions of some military-affiliated students' backgrounds to provide a sense of reality for readers (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2017). Likewise, I triangulated the data by relying upon multiple data types and various instruments to validate the study's emerging findings, and in all areas, correlation coefficients used to assess inter-rater reliability within the dataset ranged from good to adequate.

26 However, as is common in this area, where various tribal nations have their capitals, almost all Caucasian and African-American students also identified having at least one Native American blood relative or ancestor and called themselves "Native American" even though they were not legally tribally affiliated. Largely, these non-tribally affiliated students associated themselves strongly and positively with this self-emphasized, ethnic aspect of what they characterized as their "larger" identity, regardless of how other groups might categorize them. Indeed, many of the tribally affiliated students attended tribal events, while others were in the belated process of establishing their legal tribal affiliation. (As background information, within the area, in the 1800s, some Native Americans placed themselves on the Dawes Roles, while others did not due to fear, shame, and/or the enactment of economic sanctions upon their property).

27 Notably, of the top existing military issues noted in a separate national survey, 19% of active duty spouses, 24% of active duty members, and 41% of veterans reported feeling a sense of disconnect between the military and civilians (Institute for Veterans and Military Families, 2014). Indeed, because of veteran stereotypes, some veterans and their families even hide their former military status in public (Shane, 2014).

28 For instance, instead of "loving war," because some veterans have seen combat themselves, they are more inclined to consider other ways to solve conflicts besides engaging in warfare, with top civilian officials being more in favor of utilizing military force and for more occasions than are military heads (Sicard, 2016). Next, less than 10% of Post-9/11 veterans have had PTSD at any point, with many having fully recovered, and veterans have a lower PTSD rate than civilians generally (Shane, 2014). Furthermore, veterans possess a higher employment rate, a higher earnings level, and a higher rate of education than do their civilian counterparts, and veterans are also a stable group, with many being married and having good jobs (Sherbo, 2011). Additionally, 96% of veteran respondents report that their reason for joining the military was to serve their country, and 74% also explained that they joined to "improve their life circumstances" (Institute for Veterans and Military Families, 2014).

29 According to Sebastian Junger (2016), people should be more cognizant of the burdens that veterans shoulder and make them feel valuable. For instance, people can show their interest in veterans by engaging them in conversations and asking them about themselves, such as why they opted to engage in military service and how they experienced military life.

30 In similar contexts, the power of tribal stereotypes has caused other Native soldiers to be given "hazardous combat duties, such as walking the 'point,'" and to be more exposed to more enemy fire than one's unit cohorts (DHHS, 2012).

Additional Files
The additional files for this article can be found as follows:

- **Appendix I.** Select Survey Questions for Composition II Students about the Class. DOI: https://doi.org/10.21061/jvs.v6i1.142.s1
- **Appendix II.** Select Survey Questions for Composition II Students about Their Personal and/or Family Military History. DOI: https://doi.org/10.21061/jvs.v6i1.142.s2
- **Appendix III.** Descriptive Writing of a Personal Role Model and Profile Essay. DOI: https://doi.org/10.21061/jvs.v6i1.142.s3
- **Appendix IV.** Personal Identity Essay. DOI: https://doi.org/10.21061/jvs.v6i1.142.s4

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The author has no competing interests to declare.

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61

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Identities, Military Family History, and Reading Interests

63

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