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Drawing on Experience: Ohio Troops to Teachers' Transition
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Daniel Bryan Coupland

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DRAWING ON EXPERIENCE: OHIO TROOPS TO TEACHERS' TRANSITION
INTO TEACHING

By

Daniel Bryan Coupland

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
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ABSTRACT

DRAWING ON EXPERIENCE: OHIO TROOPS TO TEACHERS' TRANSITION
INTO TEACHING

By

Daniel Bryan Coupland

This study looks at 10 Ohio Troops to Teachers participants and their transition from the

military into the classroom. Specifically, it explores the transfer and application of

experience in the form of skills, knowledge, and dispositions acquired in the military to

teaching. It also looks at non-military experiences that influence these participants'

identities and practices as educators. Results suggest that the participants draw upon their

military experience as teachers, but that they also draw upon other non-military

experiences such as teacher education course work, student teaching, and their own K-12

schooling. Results also suggest that participants need more training and support in order

to move beyond coping strategies that they develop as new teachers. The author

concludes that program supporter claims about veterans' success in the classroom only

hinders participants' ability to get the training and support they need.

For My Kari Lynn

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER 1

FINDING A FOCUS

As the 1990s came to a close, media outlets warned of a looming teacher shortage in this country. They told us that the teaching population was getting older and that large numbers of these educators would be retiring in the coming years. They said that schools were already struggling to fill teaching positions across the country and proclaimed that throughout the next 10 years the problem would only get worse (e.g., Kantrowitz & Wingert, 2000).

While some of this information was true, the threat of a widespread teacher shortage in the U.S. never materialized. Not only was there a revived interest in teaching as a career, thanks in part to a slow economy and a post-9/11 interest in "meaningful" lines of work, but the original warnings of a *general* teacher shortage were incorrect in the first place (Armour, 2003; Rotherham, 2003; Sappenfield, 2002). In reality, many school districts had plenty of applicants for job openings (MacDonald, 2001).

Instead of a general shortage, the problem that we now face in the first decade of the 21st Century face is one of teacher distribution. Across the country, many schools – especially those in urban and rural areas – struggle to find people who are qualified to teach specific subjects, such as, math, science, and special education (MacDonald, 2001; Recruiting New Teachers, 2000a). With the traditional source of teachers (i.e., high school-to-college-to-teaching recruits in their early twenties) not meeting the specific needs of schools, policymakers have begun to look elsewhere to fill in the gaps.

Mid-career Recruitment

One popular recruitment strategy targets a sector of the working population –
perhaps dissatisfied with their current occupation for one reason or another – which
would be willing to give up their present career to teach. The theory behind such efforts
is that these potential teachers have backgrounds in high-need subjects and perhaps, a
willingness to work in high-need geographic areas. But teacher recruitment is more than
just getting warm bodies into classrooms. Schools need quality teachers who can meet
the needs of a diverse student population.

In regard to teacher quality, supporters of mid-career recruitment argue that mid-
career professionals make good educators because of what they bring into the classroom:
real-world experience (Saltzman, 1991; Shannon, 1990; Tifft 1989). In other words, they
claim that prior work experience from non-teaching occupations somehow translates into
teaching success. In addition, because mid-career professionals have previous work
experience – something that traditional-source teachers do not have – supporters often
downplay the need for extensive training before these recruits enter the classroom.
Instead, they suggest that mid-career professionals should complete, at most, a scaled-
down version of what traditional-source teachers are required to take. After all, the
argument goes, why force these mid-career professionals to complete extensive, and
perhaps unneeded, training that would only make the transition into teaching more
arduous and could scare off recruits who would be very good teachers?

The question still remains: Does the work experience that one acquires in a
previous occupation – for example, as an accountant, chemist, lawyer, or pharmacist –
provide mid-career professionals with the skills, knowledge, and dispositions that they

need to teach in today's classrooms? But while supporters of mid-career recruitment seem to think that it does – indeed, their entire argument in favor of this kind of recruitment seems to depend upon it – I did not find any research concluding one way or the other.

For me, this question seemed worthy of exploration and analysis. To explore this question, I decided to look at practicing teachers from a model mid-career recruitment program: Troops to Teachers.

Troops to Teachers

Troops to Teachers (TTT) is a federally-funded recruitment program that assists military personnel in their pursuit of teaching as a second career. TTT is managed by the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Educational Support (or DANTES) in Pensacola, FL. Since 1994, TTT has helped place over 4,000 participants in over 2,000 school districts across all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and abroad. Currently, there are 25 state offices and action is underway to expand the network by establishing regional consortia to provide assistance to all states. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 provides for the continuation of TTT through 2006 (Troops to Teachers, 2002a).

Recently, the U.S. Department of Education published a literature review on teacher recruitment programs (Clewell, Darke, Davis-Googe, Forcier, & Manes, 2000) that proposes to "provide examples of effective models, strategies, and policies" (p. 1). The study identifies TTT as an example of and model for recruiting people from other professions into teaching. It says, "The most effectively publicized recruitment program in states has been Troops to Teachers, which has received attention from the national

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press. It is frequently cited as an example of an effective mid-career recruitment program" (p. 39). The study also mentions TTT numerous times under such headings as "Effective State Leadership and Partnership Structures" (p. 36), "Effective Strategies for Recruitment and Selection" (p. 37), "Effective Support Services" (p. 38), and "Effective Dissemination and Institutionalization" (p. 39).

In addition, some familiar names have held up TTT as an effective model for teacher recruitment. For example, U.S. Senator John McCain (R-Ariz.), a former military pilot and POW, says, "Since its inception, Troops to Teachers has been a resounding success" (Grier, 1999, p.29). On the other side of the aisle, Senator Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.) applauds, "Troops to Teachers is an ingenious idea. It harnesses a unique natural resource to meet a pressing national need" (p.29). During his tenure as Secretary of Education under President Clinton, Richard W. Riley praised TTT as a "new model" for recruiting teachers (Bradley, 1998).

One of the most vocal advocates of the program in recent years has been First Lady Laura Bush. Mrs. Bush has called TTT a "win-win" situation because it offers military personnel an opportunity for a second career and "schools get highly qualified people with proven track records" (U.S. Department of Air Force, 2002). The First Lady chose TTT as one of three models of teacher recruitment in her "Ready to Read, Ready to Learn: First Lady Laura Bush's Education Initiatives." In this publication, she says, "Troops to Teachers recruits talented, retired military personnel, whose experience and strength of character make a real difference in the classroom" (Bush, 2001). The First Lady has put action behind her words by promoting the program at military bases around the country.

Mrs. Bush captures the central reason why some people support the TTT program when she argues that veterans make good candidates for teaching because of their "experience and strength of character." The "experience" portion refers to the knowledge and skills that military personnel bring with them out of the service – such as backgrounds in math and science, leadership, and discipline. "Strength of character" suggests that these veterans have desirable dispositions – such as determination and a sense of service. As I hope to show in the next chapter, many of TTT's most vocal supporters use these same qualities to champion the program. They suggest that these traits allow TTT participants to be successful teachers in this country's classroom and see no need for further training.

Research Questions

Research Question #1: What experiences do TTT participants say that they draw upon when they teach? Much of the support for TTT – and mid-career recruitment in general – rests on the notion that participants draw upon their prior work experience when they teach. For this study, I wanted to explore this assumption by talking with those who have made the transition from soldier to teacher. I wanted to hear these practicing teachers describe the usefulness of their military experience in the classroom. In order to explore this issue further, I wanted to give these teachers the opportunity to discuss the non-military experiences that have contributed to their teaching as well.

Research Question #2: What do TTT participants look like when they teach? TTT supporters suggest that participants' military experience will translate into quality teaching. For this study, I wanted to see participants' military experience at work in the

classroom. I was interested in identifying specific areas of their teaching where they are somehow unique or different from their non-military colleagues.

Methods

In order to explore the transition and application of military experience in the classroom, I decided to study of a small group of TTT participants from a single state. I used interviews, classroom observations, and artifacts to explore my research questions and to construct an image of what the TTT transition looks like.

Theoretical Framework

To make sense of the issues surrounding this research, I draw on the following pieces as my theoretical framework. First, I used Reynolds' (1992) description of what teachers should be able to do in my exploration of teaching skills. Reynolds identifies seven skills including planning, interacting, managing, organizing, presenting, assessing, and reflecting. Second, I used Shulman (1987) to discuss the things that teachers need to know in order to do their jobs. Shulman's list of seven knowledge categories includes knowledge of subject matter, knowledge of other content, general pedagogical knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of learners, knowledge of educational aims, and knowledge of curriculum. Third, I used an amalgam of dispositions from the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (2002), National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (2000), Darling-Hammond, Wise, & Klein (1999), Feiman-Nemser and Remillard (1996), and Interstate New Teacher Support and Assessment Consortium (1992) to talk about what tendencies and inclinations that teachers should have. Common to these pieces are four dispositions including a commitment to students and their learning, a love of learning, a respect for

human dignity, and a careful approach to reasoning. Fourth, I used Lortie (1975) to look at what teachers identify as influences on their practice. In this work, Lortie says that educators often rely on teacher education coursework, student teaching, and especially, their own K-12 schooling when they teach. Finally, I used Cuban's (1993) indicators to guide my investigation of participants' teaching. In his research, Cuban looked at such things as the layout of the classroom; the ratio of teacher talk to student talk; the use of individual, small-group, and whole-class strategies for instruction; the use of learning stations; the degree of student movement; and the degree of reliance upon text. He concludes that most that teachers, especially those at the secondary level, often rely heavily on teacher-centered practices in the classroom.

Summary

In order to address specific areas of need, policymakers have tried to attract people into teaching who they think might make good educators. One idea has been to recruit people who are working in non-teaching occupations. TTT has been heralded as a model program for recruiting mid-career professionals into teaching. The program's supporters say that TTT participants bring skills, knowledge, and dispositions that will allow them to be successful teachers. Yet I have been unable to find any research on what experiences these servicemen and women use in their teaching. This study explores this issue by talking with a select group of veterans who have made the transition from the military into teaching. In the next chapter, I discuss the issues surrounding this topic in greater detail and review some relevant literature. In Chapter 3, I describe the methods I used to explore my research questions. In Chapters 4 and 5, I present and discuss the results relating to my research questions.

CHAPTER 2

FRAMING THIS STUDY

Introduction

In this chapter, I provide a framework for examining the TTT transition

experience as a case of mid-career teacher recruitment. First, I look at the need for

teachers at the beginning of the 21st Century. I argue that there is not a general shortage

of teachers in this country, but rather, specific areas of need that require the attention of

those interested in providing qualified teachers for our nation's classrooms. Second, I

describe a general framework for understanding recruitment efforts in this country. In

this section, I discuss some of the unique qualifications that mid-career professionals

supposedly have, and I present TTT as an example of this kind of recruitment. Third, I

provide some background on the TTT program. I review the program's history, goals,

function, and eligibility requirements. Fourth, I describe the nature and substance of

support for TTT. I review statistics on TTT's ability to recruit and retain teachers. I look

at recent research on TTT in areas where teachers are needed most and argue that TTT

has been moderately successful in some of these areas. I suggest that while recruitment

numbers are important, supporters often trumpet TTT participants for the skills,

knowledge, and dispositions that they bring with them into teaching. Fifth, I identify

some unanswered questions relating to TTT that were especially interesting for me to

pursue. Finally, I describe my theoretical framework for exploring these research

questions and understanding my results.

Teacher Shortage?

The Need

The U.S. Department of Education began the 21st Century with warnings of a looming teacher shortage in this country (U.S. Department of Education, 2000). After all, there were at least five signs that schools would be desperate for teachers during the next decade. First, the student population in the U.S. had been growing. It was estimated that by 2006, there would be 54.6 million children in this country's K-12 schools. This number is an increase of about three million students when compared with the school-aged population of 2000. Not only were the children of baby-boomers reaching school age, but the number of immigrant children was also increasing. All of this meant one thing for schools – more students. Second, the average age of teachers in America was increasing. In 2000, about one third of all teachers were 48 years old or older. As the average age increased, there were predictions that larger numbers of teachers would be retiring each year. This massive wave of retirement was coming just as the student population was increasing. Third, there had been a surge in reform efforts in recent years that promoted the idea of a larger teaching force. Most notable of these reforms was the push for smaller class sizes. Fourth, the booming economy of the nineties attracted many college graduates away from teaching and into well-paying jobs in private industry. School districts that needed people to teach were simply unable to compete with the high wages of the private sector. Fifth, new teachers were leaving their jobs at far higher rates than many other occupations. The "revolving door" of teacher turnover made it difficult for any recruitment efforts to make a significant impact (Ingersoll, 1999; RNT, 2000b; Kantrowitz & Wingert, 2000; NCES, 1997).

The media were quick to pick up the story. For example, across the October 2, 2000, cover of *Newsweek* magazine in large letters was the question, "Who will teach our kid?" Under this and to one side of the cover, there were two statements in smaller print that read, "Half of All Teachers Will Retire by 2010" and "What Schools and Parents Can Do." While these kinds of headlines are most likely designed to sensationalize the issue for the purpose of catching the reader's attention and ultimately sell magazines, the media seemed to be sounding the alarm of a general teacher shortage in this country.

States and districts went to drastic measures to recruit teachers. Many recruiters offered on-the-spot contracts to qualified teachers at recruiting fairs. School districts - especially in the South and West where the shortage appeared to be worse than the rest of the country - recruited teachers from out of state. For example, the city of Fort Worth, Texas, hired 600 new teachers, and about thirty-five percent of the new hires were from out of state (Blair, 2000). Some districts even recruited teachers from Europe, Africa, and Asia. Recruiters also tried using incentives such as low-interest mortgages and college loan reimbursements to attract teachers. The Houston (TX) Intermediate School District offered signing bonuses and stipends to teachers of high-demand subjects. In Silicon Valley, school districts even built affordable housing to attract new teachers (Kantrowitz & Wingert, 2000).

A More Focused Need

The threat of a widespread "teacher shortage" throughout this decade, however, has not materialized. In the last couple of years, there has been somewhat of a revived interest in teaching as a career. With the downturn in the economy, teaching has attracted those who are looking for work or who want a job with more security. In addition, some

speculate that in a post-911 U.S., people are attracted to jobs, such as teaching, that offer more meaningful work (Armour, 2003; Rotherham, 2003; Sappenfield, 2002). The need for educators still exists in this country, but there is not a *general* teacher shortage that the media jumped on in 2000. The shortage appears to be a problem of distribution. Specifically, this problem exists in low-income areas and in certain subject areas.

In January of 2000, Recruiting New Teachers (RNT) inc., a national non-profit teacher recruitment organization in Belmont, Massachusetts, released a study on the need for teachers in urban school districts. The Urban Challenge Report stated that most urban school districts have an urgent need for teachers – especially in specific subject areas (RNT, 2000a). For example, according to a 1999 report by RNT, the Council of Great City Schools, and the Council of Great City Colleges of Education, over 95 percent of urban school districts had immediate needs for math, science, and special education teachers. In this same report, only 15 percent of school districts said that they had a need for social studies teachers. The forty school districts that responded to the survey represent about 5.5 million students (10 percent of the nation's student population) and 325,000 teachers (RNT, 1999).

Carlos Ponce, director of human resources for the Chicago School District, the nation's third largest district, demonstrated the disparity of teachers among fields of study. In a panel discussion at the National Press Club called "The Urban Teacher Shortage: Will It Go Away?" Mr. Ponce reported that the Chicago School District hired about 3,000 teachers in 2001 – an increase of 34 percent from the 1999/2000 school year. He was quick to add that in certain subjects such as English, history, and elementary education, they had many more candidates than vacancies. Mr. Ponce said that in

English they had 281 candidates to fill 20 positions, in history they had 242 candidates to fill 8 positions, and in elementary education they had 1,474 candidates to fill 116 positions. At the same time, however, Mr. Ponce said that there were not enough candidates to fill the vacancies in physics and earth science (MacDonald, 2001).

School districts must deal with the shortage of teachers in particular subjects through drastic measures. Often, this means assigning teachers to teach out of their field. Roger Ingersoll (1999) studied this practice and concluded that the number of out-of-field teaching in the United States was "striking" (p. 26). Using a minimal standard for qualified teachers (i.e., if teachers even held at least a minor in the field in which they teach), he found that 24.1 percent of English classes, 31.4 percent of math classes, 32.9 percent of life science classes, 56.9 percent of physical science classes, and 53.1 percent of history classes were taught by "unqualified" educators. In high poverty areas, all of these percentages were higher.[1] Ingersoll also points to the fact that low-track classes are more likely to have out-of-field teachers. I understand that perhaps teaching high-track classes often requires the teacher to have a greater level of mastery of content. But questions of equality arise when unqualified educators teach so many low-track and high poverty children.

Some school districts are also interested in having a teaching staff that better represents this country's diverse population. Over 30 percent of students in U.S. schools are minorities. At the same time, only 13 percent of teachers are minorities (NCES, 1997). According to RNT, inc., the student population in urban districts is almost 70 percent minorities, while only 36 percent of teachers are minorities. Three out of every

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[1] High poverty percentages were: English 25.7 percent, math 42.3 percent, life science 40.1 percent, physical science 65.1, and history 60.0 percent.

four urban districts say that they have an immediate need for teachers of color. This number remains constant even though 70 percent of these districts have in place special recruitment programs targeting minorities and 95 percent already recruit at traditionally black and Hispanic colleges (RNT, 1999). Urban districts also like minority teachers because on average they are more willing than their white colleagues to stay in these areas (Quality Counts, 1998).

In a 1997 report titled "America's Teachers: Profile of a Profession," the U. S. Department of Education suggested that increasing the percentage of minority teachers might actually be beneficial for all students. Minority students would be able to see themselves represented within the structure of the school environment. By seeing more minorities in the faculty, it might help minority students make better and stronger connections within their schooling experience. Minority teachers could help white students as well. White students might be able to see that role models can come from groups of people that are outside of the majority. The report suggested that a teaching population that better represents our nation's population as a whole might present a more accurate picture to students of what this country really looks like (NCES, 1997).

Not only is the teaching population disproportionately white, it is also disproportionately female. About ¾ of the teaching force in this country is female. This number, however, varies across grade level. While about 88 percent of elementary teachers are women, this number shrinks to 56 percent at the secondary level. A general rule of thumb is that the higher the grade-level, the greater the percentage of male teachers (NCES, 1997).

While the disproportion of race in the teaching force is larger, the disproportion of

gender is no less important. This is especially true in a social environment where single-parent homes are so common. Following divorce, children often spend the majority of their time with one parent – typically their mother. If the majority of teachers are women – especially in early grades of schooling –, then some children would have very little exposure to a male "father-figure" in their lives. While a male teacher cannot completely fill the role of a father to his students, he might be able to exemplify the kind of mature, male role model that many boys and girls need to see.

Retention, Not Just Recruitment

Some researchers claim that the heavy focus on recruitment overshadows another critical issue: teacher retention. According to a study by the National Center for Education Statistics (1997), 91 percent of teachers stay in the occupation after their first year and 80 percent make it three years. And amazingly, only half return after five years in the classroom. Richard Ingersoll criticizes those who focus on recruitment alone for solving school-staffing problems and encourages policymakers to look at ways of retaining the teachers who are already in the classroom. According to Ingersoll (2001), retiring teachers and growing student populations have an impact on the number of teachers, but "…the overall amount of turnover accounted for by retirement is relatively minor when compared to that resulting from other causes, such as job satisfaction and teachers seeking better jobs or other careers" (p. 6). He argues that we should decrease the demand for teachers by decreasing teacher turnover. In order to accomplish this, Ingersoll argues for improvements in the job conditions for teachers including higher salaries, a greater voice in school decisions, and administrative support with issues such as student discipline.

Teacher Quality

While attracting people to teaching and getting them to stay in the classroom are important, schools are interested in more than just warm bodies. They want people who will help students learn. There is evidence to suggest that good teaching has a significant impact on student learning (McCabe, 2003; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 1998). Using value-added assessment procedures, Sanders & Rivers (1996) found that students taught by highly-qualified teachers made significantly greater learning gains than students who were taught by lower-qualified teachers.

While research suggests that good teaching makes a difference in student learning, there seems to be a great deal of disagreement on what "highly-qualified" teaching looks like. Some researchers have tried to measure inputs (e.g., academic degrees) that teachers have to measure teacher quality. Researchers have correlated student achievement to teachers' scores on basic skills test (Ferguson, 1998; Ferguson & Ladd, 1996; Strauss & Sawyer, 1986), deep content-area knowledge (Monk, 1994), and teaching experience (Fetler, 1999; Murnane & Phillips, 1981).

The teacher quality debate has been especially intense in the area of certification. While some reports claim that certification is an important part of teacher quality (Darling-Hammond, 2002; Laczko-Kerr & Berliner, 2002), others assert that uncertified teachers are just as successful as those with certification (The Abell Foundation, 2001; Imai, 2002). Both sides of this debate continue to look for research to support their positions.

As these issues continue to be controversial, policymakers push for high-quality educators. The No Child Left Behind act of 2001 requires all teachers to be "highly-

qualified" by the 2005-2006 school year. According to this piece of legislation, "highly-qualified" means that a teacher is certified and has demonstrated subject area proficiency by either completing a major in the subject that they teach or by passing a subject matter test.

A Framework of Teacher Recruitment in the U.S.

Those interested in meeting the needs of schools have developed a number of recruitment programs in recent years. In 2000, the U.S. Department of Education published a literature review on teacher recruitment programs (Clewell, Darke, Davis-Googe, Forcier, & Manes, 2000) that proposed to "…provide examples of effective models, strategies, and policies" (p.1). In one section of the review, the authors describe three broad strategies for recruiting teachers by duration.

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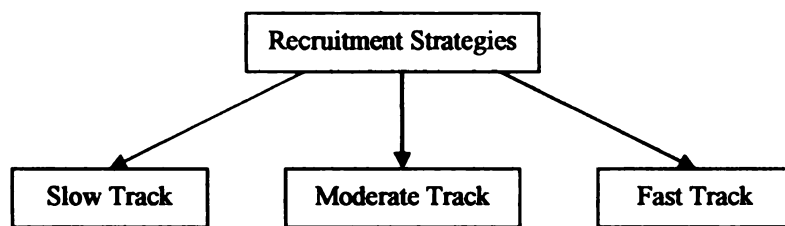
Slow track strategies are usually 5-8 years in duration and include some kind of teacher cadet program. This approach typically focuses on identifying middle and high school students who have potential for being teachers. Moderate track strategies are typically 3-4 years and include traditional baccalaureate programs, paraprofessional recruitment, and community college-based programs. These programs focus on traditional sources for teachers – college students and paraprofessionals. While moderate and slow track strategies deserve careful attention, the recent popularity of fast track strategies to teacher recruitment in conversations about education has captured my attention.

Fast track strategies are usually 0-2 years in duration and focus on such things as financial incentives, employment clearinghouses, and partnerships with undergraduate and graduate institutions. These programs often target candidates from three basic categories.

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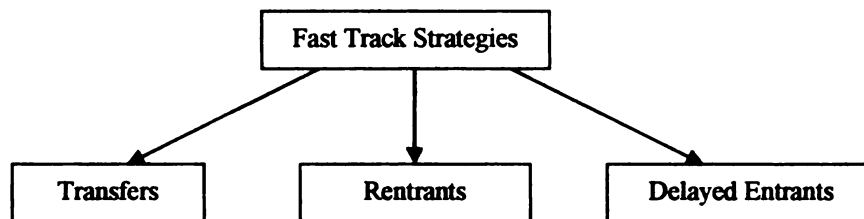
"Transfers" are those teachers who move from one school/district/state to another. Programs will use financial incentives, reciprocity agreements, and other carrots to encourage educators to leave their current positions and teach in another place. "Reentrants" are people who were teachers at one time in their lives and might be willing to come back after an absence. This category could include groups such as mothers or fathers who left teaching to care for their young children or people who wish to return to their former career as a teacher.

"Delayed Entrants" are those people who want to become teachers after spending time doing something else. Clewell et al. divide this designation into separate groups.

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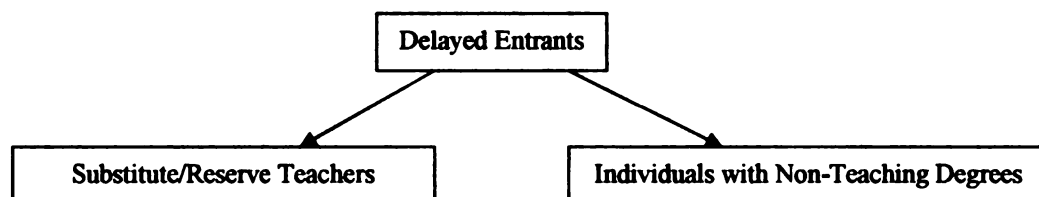
Substitute/reserve teachers are already working in schools, but either have not acquired the appropriate certification or as of yet have been unable to secure a teaching position. Individuals with non-teaching degrees are people who work outside the field of education

who might be interested in teaching. Potential teachers in this category are also known as "career-switchers," "mid-career changers," but most often, "mid-career professionals."

Mid-career Professional Recruitment

While only a label, the term "mid-career professional" speaks to why people support the notion of recruiting individuals who have experience in other lines of work. First, "mid" lets us know that this category does not include people who are at the beginning of their working life – like those who follow the traditional path to teaching (i.e., twenty-something college students). While a strict interpretation would suggest that these candidates would have as many working years in front of them as behind (i.e., the mid-point of their careers), my experience with this category of recruits allows for a much broader understanding. It would include those people with at least a few years working experience and at least a few years left to offer to teaching. Second, "career" suggests the notion that people in this category are in or have recently been in the workforce doing some kind of job. For example, I have never seen the phrase "mid-life" or "mid-adulthood" connected to this category of recruits. Some notion of "career," "job," "employment," etc. is always part of the label.

Finally, "professional" suggests the notion that this group of potential teachers includes people who have experience working as professionals. Once again, a strict interpretation of "professional" might lead one to believe that recruiters would target only people who work in traditionally high-status fields (e.g., lawyers and doctors). Based on my own experience reading about this topic, I would suggest a broader definition of the term. Perhaps, "professional" refers to a loose category for people working in occupations that require a college degree.

The cornerstone of support for recruiting mid-career professionals is the notion that these potential teachers have a certain level of experience from their previous occupation that would be useful to them as educators (Saltzman, 1991; Shannon, 1990; Tifft, 1989). As I show later in this chapter, supporters of the TTT program suggest that veterans have experiences from their military careers that will translate into successful teaching.

One might wonder whether or not soldiers should be considered professionals. The title "professional soldier" seems to identify an individual with extensive time and experience in military service. In other words, a professional soldier is someone who has made a career in the military. While higher education has become more common in the military and is often a prerequisite for moving up the chain of command, many professional soldiers never complete a college degree. At first glance, the professional solider seems to be a problem for my definition of "professional." After all, I suggested that a professional must have a college degree.

In reference to TTT, however, this discussion is irrelevant. As I describe in the next section of this chapter, TTT has eligibility requirements that include time, service, and, most important to this discussion, education. According to these requirements, applicants pursuing an academic teaching position must have a college degree in order to be eligible for TTT program services. This requirement means that TTT participants meet the definition of "professional" that I provided above.

TTT as an Example and Model of Mid-Career Recruitment

Later in their review, Clewell et al., (2000) identify Troops to Teachers (TTT) as an example of and model for recruiting people from other professions into teaching.

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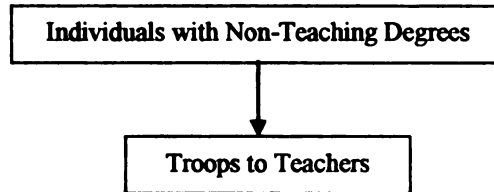
Clewell et al., say, "The most effectively publicized recruitment program in states has

been Troops to Teachers, which has received attention from the national press. It is

frequently cited as an example of an effective mid-career recruitment program" (p. 39). [2]

For example, notice how the following reporters use the TTT program as a

reference in this passage from the *St. Petersburg Times*:

> Rep. Jim Davis, D-Tampa, has won an important endorsement for his bill on the national teacher shortage. President Clinton has included $25 million in his 2001 budget to pay for Davis' Transition to Teaching plan. Clinton is scheduled to unveil the budget on Monday, but many details about it have been leaked already. Davis' program is *similar to the Troops to Teachers plan*, which provides incentives for military retirees to become math, science and technology teachers. Under Davis' bill, mid-career professionals in virtually any field would be eligible for grants of up to $5,000 to pay for courses and training to become teachers. In return they must agree to work in low-income schools for three years. "This is a very prudent investment," Davis said. "I think the three years of teaching we will get from people will more that pay for the grant we give then to make the mid-life career change." (Advair, Vanita & Fritz, 2000, p. 5A, emphasis added)

Richard Ingersoll, who has written extensively about teacher recruitment issues in recent

years, also makes the connection between TTT and mid-career professionals.

> As a result, the inability to staff classrooms with qualified teachers...has received national media coverage and has motivated a growing number of reform and policy initiatives. The prevailing response to this school-staffing problem has been to attempt to increase the supply of teachers. Over the past decade, a wide range of initiatives has been implemented to recruit new candidates into teaching. Among these are programs *such as Troops to Teachers*, designed to entice professionals into a mid-career change to teaching...(Ingersoll, 2001, p. 1,

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[2] Besides detailed descriptions of the TTT program (pp. 23, 103-4), Clewell et al. (2000) mention TTT numerous times under headings such as "Effective State Leadership and Partnership Structures" (pp. 36-7), "Effective Strategies for Recruitment and Selection" (p. 37), "Effective Support Services" (p.38), and "Effective Dissemination and Institutionalization" (p. 39). Notice the use of the word "effective" in each of the titles.

emphasis added)

Based on this kind of recognition, it appears as if TTT is at the forefront in conversations about recruiting mid-career professionals. TTT has it own special characteristics and circumstances, but it is also a highly visible example of mid-career professional recruitment.

Background on TTT

History

TTT can trace its origin back to two interesting employment trends of the mid-1980s. During that decade, policymakers at the Department of Education began to see signs of a teacher shortage in the U.S. At the same time, the Department of Defense was looking to downsize the military from its Cold War era numbers. Recognizing that their needs for people were headed in opposite directions, the two departments came together to address the situation. In a joint statement, Casper Weinberger, then Secretary of Defense, and William Bennett, then Secretary of Education, said:

> We are pleased to announce a new effort to encourage retired and retiring military personnel to consider second careers as teachers and administrators in the Nation's schools…In second careers as teachers or administrators, many former military personnel can make outstanding contributions…Their background, experience and character suit them to the challenge of teaching and administering. They have had year of experience; organizing, leading, instructing, and inspiring - what good teaching is all about (quoted in Jacobsen, 1990, p. 87).

This statement spurred further efforts to make a connection between the military and teaching.

Soon after, with the help of the National Executive Service Corps, the Army developed a program that encouraged and assisted active duty military personnel in enrolling in local teacher preparation programs. The program encouraged these

servicemen and women to begin their preparation before being discharged from the military. In 1988, the Navy developed the "Teaching as a New Career" program that made education courses available to military personnel on some bases and ships. Three years later, the Army established a toll-free number where military people from around the world could access information on becoming a teacher after their separation from the military. In 1992, the Army and the State of Texas came together to form the Texas Military Teacher Initiative. Once in place, this program screened candidates, established training centers, provided job placement assistance, and offered ongoing support for these teachers after placement. In 1994, the Army partnered with a number of state and local organizations to form the Fast Track Teacher Certification Program at Fort Gordon, Georgia. This program has a 120-day intensive training seminar where separating Army personnel can prepare for a second career in teaching.

In the early 1990s, two more developments encouraged former military personnel to consider a transition into the field of teaching. First, alternative certification programs were growing in popularity across the country. According to Feistritzer and Chester (1992), 40 states had permitted the establishment of alternative certification programs by 1992. These programs allowed former military personnel (and others) to complete the necessary requirements for certification in a relatively short amount of time. Depending on the program, former servicemen and women could be fully certified and teaching in a classroom in more or less than a year's time. Second, Congress passed the Defense Authorization Bill (Public Law 102-484) in October of 1992. Section 4441 of this legislation provides former service members with a $5,000 stipend that could be used in obtaining teacher certification. In addition, local education agencies (LEAs) could apply

for grants of up to $25,000 per year for two years if they hired former service members. These schools had to be (1) receiving grants under chapter 1 of Title 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965, and (2) experiencing a teacher or teacher's aide shortage. The former service members also had to have completed an alternative certification program (Keltner, 1994).

In 1994, Congress put the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Educational Support (DANTES) in charge of the educational aspects of this legislation. DANTES established a specific branch to manage its new workload and gave it the name Troops to Teachers (Keltner, 1994). That same year, Congress appropriated $65 million for the next two years. Although the stipend for individuals remained at $5,000, the incentive grant for LEAs to hire former military personnel was increased to $50,000 over five years.[3] This level of funding only lasted two years and Congress did not appropriate funds for this purpose in 1996.

Because teacher certification requirements vary across the country, much TTT work is done at the state level (I address these responsibilities later). State participation is voluntary. By 1995, sixteen states - including Ohio - had opened their own offices, and between 1998 and 2000, eight more states followed suit. Currently, Troops to Teachers has 25 state offices.[4] When Congress reauthorized TTT in 1999, it moved control of the program from the Department of Defense (DOD) to the Department of Education. DOD

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[3] Dr. John R. Gantz, director of the Troops to Teachers program, claims that incentive grants are not the biggest draws for districts. He says that districts hired TTT participants because "...they are very good people." (Bradley, 1998)
[4] This is a conservative number for a couple of reasons. Both California and Virginia have divided their state into two regions with two state-level TTT offices. And besides servicing people from their own states, Maine, Montana, and Colorado provide services to people in nine other states.

continues to manage the program, however, under a special agreement with the Department of Education (GAO, 2001).

On January 8, 2002, President George W. Bush signed into law the 'No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (Public Law 107-110). Part of this legislation - Title II, Part C, Chapter A - authorized TTT to continue for another five years. As part of H.R. 3061, the Education Appropriations bill, Congress provided $18 million dollars for running the national and state offices and for reinstating the stipend program. TTT participants can earn up to $5,000 for teacher preparation services or a bonus of $10,000 for teaching in a "high-needs" school district. A district is classified as "high-needs" if 50% or more of the students are from low-income families (Troops to Teachers, 2002b; U.S. Department of Air Force, 2002).

Goals

In 1994, the TTT program began with two stated goals. First, the program wanted to help military personnel who were affected by the downsizing of the military to find jobs as teachers. Second, the program aimed to provide educators – especially in math and science and in low-income area schools – during a teacher shortage. However, according to a report prepared by the General Accounting Office (2001), the focus has changed:

> The TTT program is currently functioning in an environment that differs greatly from when it began seven years ago. It first purpose, to place military persons affected by downsizing initiatives in the classroom, has essentially been eliminated while its second purpose, to address teacher shortages, has become a more critical national issue. (p. 12)

When the reduction of military force leveled off in 1998, attention to the first goal was greatly diminished. While service men and women are still in need of employment opportunities following military service, the leveling off of personnel reduction has

altered TTT's function. Supporters now champion TTT not because it helps former military personnel, but because it will help schools.

This change in focus is very important. Originally the focus of TTT was on two institutions – the military and schools. During the military downsizing, there was a kill-two-birds-with-one-stone idea behind the program – former military personnel get jobs and schools get teachers. But now that the downsizing has leveled off, the focus (i.e., program goal) is almost entirely on improving schools.

Function

The TTT program operates at both national and state levels. The national office, located in Pensacola, FL, has basically four functions. First, the national office is the program's voice in national conversations about teacher recruitment and other educational issues.[5] Second, the national office is a resource of information. The primary vehicle for distributing information is the TTT web site (http://voled.doded.mil/dantes/ttt/index2.htm) where interested military personnel can find general program information, links to job listings, model resumes, and other topics. Third, the national office offers support to those at varying stages of the transition process through a feature on its web site called the Mentor Connection. Through e-mail, interested individuals can contact experienced TTT participants who are available to answer questions relating to transition, classrooms, and other related topics. The more than 60 mentors represent a diverse group of individuals from all branches of the military and 25 different states. Fourth, the national office oversees the distribution of TTT funding. The state offices receive funding through the national office. According to the U.S. General Accounting Office, the state offices collectively received $12.1 million for

operation expenses between 1994 and 2000. The 'No Child Left Behind Act of 2001' authorized $18 million to maintain the state offices over the next 5 years.

The state offices have many similar functions. These offices – officially called State Placement Assistance Offices – are typically located at the State Departments of Education and are staffed by department personnel. Much of the state offices' responsibilities revolve around information. First, because teacher certification requirements vary from state-to-state, considerable advising of individual TTT participants occurs at this level. State-level directors can provide direction on how to complete certification requirements. Second, the state office promotes the program at the state-level including providing information for policy markers or notifying school districts of potential teachers. Finally, the state office collects and provides information for TTT participants of possible job opportunities. Often, the state web site will contain a frequently updated job list that participants can access at any time (Clewell, et al., 2000; Troops to Teachers, 2002c; GAO, 2001).

In short, TTT is all about making connections. Both the national and state offices want to connect interested servicemen and women with the knowledge, resources, and people they need to make the transition into teaching. Unlike programs like Teach for America or The New Teacher Project, TTT does not train participants. It helps people get connected to existing mechanisms that will allow them to be certified teachers in our nation's classrooms.

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[5] For examples, see Bradley (1998) and Clewell, et al. (2000).

Eligibility

Not all servicemen and women are eligible for the TTT program services. The eligibility requirements are specific and fall into three basic categories of education, service, and time.

Depending on the kind of the teaching position desired, TTT applicants must meet the following educational criteria. For academic (e.g., math, science, and special education) teaching positions, applicants must have a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution of higher learning. For vocational/technical (e.g., automotive repair, electronics, and construction trades) teaching positions, the applicant must have at least one year (or 30 credit hours) of college and six years of experience in a vocational/technical position.

Applicants must also meet a service requirement. The TTT program requires that applicants have an honorable discharge from military service. Those individuals applying to the program prior to separation from the military must have the characterization of "honorable" on their last period of service.

The final eligibility issue is time. Revised under No Child Left Behind, the guidelines are very detailed. Basically, service men and women have four years following military retirement to apply. The most obvious exception to this is a special provision for military personnel who were involuntarily discharged due to the Reduction in Force of the 1990s or some physical disability.

The No Child Left Behind legislation made some significant changes to the old requirements. New is the extension of financial assistance to 1) all eligible candidates one year prior to retirement, and 2) Guard and Reserve personnel who have at least 10

years of service and agree to serve an additional 3 years in the reserves. Active duty and reserve component personnel with six years of service are eligible for referral and placement assistance, but they are not eligible for financial assistance (Troops to Teachers, 2002d).

Support for TTT

TTT and Teacher Recruitment

According to the latest research on TTT, the program appears to be recruiting people that meet the specific needs of today's school districts (GAO, 2001; Feistritzer, Hill, & Willet, 1998). Notice the percentages for TTT teachers in the areas of specific need compared to a nationwide sample of public school teachers in Table 2.1.

TABLE 2.1: Nationwide Comparison of TTT Teachers to Public School Teachers

Demographic	Category	2000 DANTES Data on TTT Teachers from GAO Report	1998 NCEI National Survey of TTT Teachers	1996 NCEI National Survey of Public School Teachers
		%	%	%
Subject Areas	Math	15	29	13
	Science	11	27	11
	Special Ed.	20	10	5
Location	Urban	24	24	16
	Suburban	27	27	31
	Small Town	24	24	30
	Rural	24	24	23
Race/Ethnicity	Minority	33	29	11
Gender	Male	86	90	26

The data suggest that TTT recruits people into teaching who meet specific recruitment needs. According to the information in the Table 2.1, when compared with teachers nationwide, a higher percentage of TTT teachers 1) taught in high-need subject areas, 2)

taught in urban settings, 3) are racial/ethnic minorities, and 4) are male.

While this sounds quite promising for TTT, there are a couple of issues related to these recruitment numbers that are not completely clear. First, how many of the TTT participants who are teaching in high-need subject areas are "qualified" (using Ingersoll's minimal standard for qualified teachers from above) to teach math, science, and special education? Just because these TTT participants are teaching these classes does not necessarily mean that they are able to do so effectively. For example, perhaps TTT participants are teaching these classes because they have less seniority than their non-TTT colleagues do. Teachers with more seniority might have more clout when administrators decide who is going to teach what courses.

Second, the numbers on TTT participants who teach math and science is confusing. Notice that the percentages of TTT participants teaching math and science varies widely between the two studies (15 to 29 percent for math and 11 to 27 percent for science). If one were to compare the 1996 NCEI survey numbers for public school teachers to the 1998 NCEI survey numbers for TTT teachers, the difference between the two groups is quite substantial (29 percent of TTT participants teaching math vs. 13 percent of public school educators teaching math and 27 percent of TTT participants teaching science vs. 11 percent of public school educators teaching science). However, the 2000 DANTES data suggests that the percentage of TTT participants teaching math and science is much closer to the national average (15 percent of TTT participants teaching math vs. 13 percent of public school educators teaching math, and 11 percent of TTT participants teaching science vs. 11 percent of public school educators teaching science). Could it be that as the number of TTT teachers increased between1998 and

2000 in this country the percentage of TTT participants teaching math and science moved

closer to the national average? Perhaps, but it is difficult to believe that these numbers

would change so dramatically in such a short amount of time.

Third, while there is a higher percentage of males among TTT participants (86 to

90 percent for TTT teachers vs. 26 percent for all teachers), this does not necessarily

meet the need that I described earlier in this chapter. Remember that the need for male

teachers is especially great at the elementary level. According to the two reports on TTT,

only 20 to 25 percent of TTT teachers work at the elementary level. It appears that TTT

is successful in getting males to enter teaching. But with 75 to 80 percent of TTT

candidates teaching in middle and secondary schools, it is difficult to see what kind of

impact the program is having at getting male participants into elementary schools.

TTT and Teacher Retention

Data from DANTES suggest that the retention rate for TTT participants is a little

higher than the national average (See Table 2.2).

TABLE 2.2: Retention Comparison of TTT Teachers to Public School Teachers

Number of Years Teaching	2000 DANTES Data on TTT Teachers from GAO Report	1999 DANTES Survey on TTT Teachers from GAO Report	1997 NCES National Survey of Public School Teachers
	% retained as teachers	% retained as teachers	% retained as teachers
1 year	93	94	91
3 years	79	84	80
5 years	71	71	50

Using DANTES program data from 2000, the GAO found that 93 percent of TTT

participants taught for at least one year, 79 percent taught for at least three years, and 71

percent taught for at least five years. Comparing this to the national average, the

retention rate of TTT participants was slightly lower only for those who had taught for at

least three years (79 percent vs. 80 percent). The percentages at one year and five years were higher for TTT participants. The greatest disparity between TTT participants vs. all teachers is at the 5-year mark. While only about half of all public schoolteachers teach for five years, almost three-quarters of TTT participants reach that mark. The GAO warns that:

> These retention rates should be considered in light of the fact that TTT teachers who received stipends had to teach for 5 years to pay off their financial commitment. In addition, these data are based solely on teachers who received funding and do not include those who did not. (pp. 8-9)

But the GAO also provides results from a 1999 DANTES survey of 3,359 participants – some received stipends and some did not – in 662 school districts in 34 states that supports the earlier results. With a response rate of 79 percent, the survey found that 94 percent of TTT participants taught for at least one year, 84 percent taught for at least three years, and 71 percent taught for at least five years (GAO, 2001). If the numbers from the GAO report are accurate, it appears that TTT has had some success at recruiting people into teaching who beat the national retention rate for teachers at the 5-year mark.

Critics of TTT who see the program as a tool for recruitment rarely mention its success in recruiting teachers who stay in the classroom. In an interview for *Education Week*, Ingersoll said that supporting recruitment programs like Troops to Teachers and Teach for America (both of which he mentions by name) and not focusing on retention is "…like pouring water into a bucket with holes (Viadero, 2002, p. 2)." However, if 70 percent of TTT participants – compared to 50 percent of all other public school teachers – are staying in their teaching positions after 5 years, then TTT is having *some* success in

the area of retention.[6]

However, the jury is still out for TTT on the issue of retention. First, the only data that we have is at the 5-year level. How many TTT participants make it 10 years, 20 years, and beyond? With the program being only 9 years old, we do not know this yet. Another check at the 10-year mark might show a major drop in the number of TTT participants who are still in teaching. Second, there is a good chance that TTT participants will not have long careers (30+ years) in education because, after all, this is their second (or third, etc.) career. Some have already completed 20 years in military service before moving on to a teaching career and because of their age, their years as educators will most likely be limited.

TTT and Teacher Quality

While recruitment numbers and retention rates are often a part of any conversation about attracting people to the profession, schools are also concerned about the quality of their new recruits. As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, those who focus on recruiting mid-career professionals often talk about the experience that these recruits bring with them from their previous careers into teaching. Supporters of mid-career recruitment suggest that non-teaching work experience translates into successful teaching in the classroom. This appears to be especially true for TTT. In the following collection of quotes, notice how supporters attribute particular traits to TTT participants that they think will lead to success in the classroom (note: emphases added).

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[6] Dr. Ingersoll makes a common mistake of linking TTT with Teach for America (TFA). TFA is a national program that looks to place college graduates from prestigious universities into poor-performing schools for a 2-year period. After the 2-year commitment is over, most of the TFA cadets move on to other occupations. TTT looks to place military personnel into permanent teaching positions. The missions of these two programs are very different. By putting TFA and TTT in the same basket, Ingersoll suggests that the programs' goals and outcomes are somehow the same.

First Lady Laura Bush said that servicemen and women are "...tremendous role models with a *sense of duty, honor* and a *love of country* that our children would do well to emulate." (Holland, 2001)

Sam Swofford, the executive director of the California State Commission on Teaching Credentialing said, "There's a *sense of commitment* that instilled in them, when they come out, that is part of their internal mechanism for the ways they live...they make wonderful teachers." (Bradley, 1998)

Veronica Whetshell, coordinator of TTT office for South Carolina's Commission on Higher Education, said, "The schools absolutely love our veterans. They like qualities male veterans bring to the classroom, such as *discipline* and *leadership*. Military retirees, usually in their mid 40s, *understand discipline, teamwork, leadership, management skills* and *have traveled widely.*" (Robinson, 2001)

Bill Harner, retired lieutenant colonel and current Greenville County (SC) Superintendent, said that TTT participants "...bring to the table the highest degree of *character* and *guidance-based leadership* and an understanding of how to implement an accountability system in our schools and in our districts." (Holland, 2001)

Dr. John Gantz, director of TTT, said, "Many retired officers and noncommissioned officers are ideal teachers, having served as instructors in a variety of fields during their careers...The former service members also bring traits of *teamwork* and *shared values* into classrooms." (Department of Defense, 2001)

The Troops to Teachers web site says, "School districts that hire one military veteran through TTT almost always come back looking for more 'just like him/her.' Military veterans have established an excellent reputation as excellent teachers and exemplary role models for today's students. The *leadership skills, breadth of experience, dedication, commitment* and *maturity* that 'Troops' bring to the classroom are attributes sought by public school administrators and parents." (Troops to Teachers, 2002b)

Jennifer Holland, writer for The Associated Press, said, "Military personnel make great teachers because they have been taught how to *overcome challenges, set goals* and *achieve results.*" (Holland, 2001)

Lisa Hoffman, writer for *The Houston Chronicle*, said that TTT participants come from "...a pool of people motivated by a *sense of public service* and possessed of positive, *can-do attitudes.*" (Hoffman, 1999, p. 26A)

An official document from the U.S. Department of Air Force said, "They are *disciplined, smart, motivated, goal-oriented* and have a *disposition to serve.* Sounds like what makes good service members. It also sounds like what makes

good teachers..." (U.S. Department of Air Force, 2002)

The above quotes demonstrate at least two central features about the support for TTT: 1) supporters suggest that TTT participants possess all or most of the traits they identify, and 2) supporters suggest that those traits are useful or important for good teaching.

The first issue has to do with the origin of the traits – the military. After all, the only demographic feature common to all TTT participants is military experience. If supporters of TTT claim that participants possess these traits then they are suggesting that their military experience had some part in developing or solidifying these traits in the participants. The second issue has to do with the destination of the traits – the classroom. By identifying the traits as they did, these supporters suggest that these traits are important for teaching. In other words, a person with the above mentioned traits will be able to apply these traits in today's K-12 schools.

Looking across the comments above, I can see eight broad categories of traits that supporters associate with TTT participants. These categories include:

- Managing (from "management skills," "leadership skills," and "leadership")
- Planning (from "set goals" and "goal-oriented")
- General knowledge (from "breadth of experience" and "smart")
- Global knowledge (from "have traveled widely")
- Service (from "sense of duty," "sense of public service," "sense of commitment," and "disposition to serve")
- Determination (from "dedication," "overcome challenges...and achieve results," "can-do attitude," "disciplined," and "motivated")
- Teamwork (from "teamwork" and "shared values")
- Maturity (from "maturity")

Of these eight, I would say that "managing" and "planning" are skills categories, "general knowledge" and "global knowledge" are knowledge categories, and the remaining four categories are dispositions.

The Military

It is very difficult to identify skills, knowledge, and dispositions common to all soldiers because work experience in today's military is so diverse. During the Civil War, about 90 percent of soldiers served in a purely military capacity. Less than a century later, this number dropped to under 30 percent. The remaining 70 percent of soldiers were involved in a multitude of other support capacities (Janowitz, 1960). As the military enters the twenty-first century, the job description of the U.S. soldier – and its corresponding experiences – continues to vary widely.

The Destiny Group, an organization that helps veterans find work once they leave the service, has tried to identify traits common to soldiers who leave the military. This company says that former members of the armed services often come away from their time in the military with the following traits:

- *Management experience*: they have been in leadership positions during their time in the service.
- *Highly trainable*: they have adapted to multiple situations and environments.
- *Disciplined*: they have had to focus their abilities and efforts on the mission putting aside things that might detract from that purpose.
- *Mature*: they have lived long enough to know the value of moving beyond adolescent behaviors and perspectives.
- "*Stress-tested*": they have accomplished missions in the most severe conditions.
- *Team players*: they know that their mission will be better accomplished by relying on those around them, rather than as a single entity.
- *Motivated*: they know that the mission will be completed only if they get out there and get to it. (The Destiny Group, n.d.)

The Destiny Group's descriptions provide us with some general ideas that might be useful in identifying what skills, knowledge, and dispositions are transferable to future occupations. This is not to say that all soldiers are proficient in all of these areas.

However, the Destiny Group suggests that the above characteristics are often necessary in order to function effectively and survive over an extended period of time in the military.

Keith Nyman wrote one of the most cited books on applying military experience in the civilian world. In his book *Re-entry* (1981), Nyman lists a number of traits or "advantages" that he claims are common to retiring military personnel including:

- *Experience*
- *Leadership*
- *Survivability*
- *Ability to adapt*

Many of Nyman's traits have immediate connections to those that The Destiny Group describes.

Using both The Destiny Group (n.d.) and Nyman (1981) as resources, I compiled a list of traits that one might consider common to former members of the military. The list includes:

- *Managing skills* (from "management experience" and "leadership")
- *Maturity* (from "mature," "experience," "stability," and "stress-tested")
- *Determination* (from "motivated," "disciplined," "survivability," "stress-tested," and "stability")
- *Teamwork* (from "teamwork")
- *Trainable* (from "highly trainable" and "ability to adapt")

While these five categories appear to be a little broader than what The Destiny Group and Nyman identify in their descriptions, I believe that they capture the spirit of their ideas.

In order to understand the connection between what supporters of TTT say about the program and what traits are commonly associated with military service, I compared traits between the two in Table 2.3.

TABLE 2.3: Comparison of Common Military Traits to Support for TTT

Traits Common to Former Members of the Military	Support for TTT
Managing Skills	Managing Skills
Maturity	Maturity
Determination	Determination
Teamwork	Teamwork
Trainable	?
?	Planning Skills
?	Service
?	General Knowledge
?	Global Knowledge

Notice that both columns include "managing skills," "maturity," "determination," and "teamwork." This suggests that perhaps supporters of TTT have some level of support in saying that these four traits are common to former members of the military. But advocates for TTT identified four other traits that are not included in the first column. These include "planning skills," "service," "general knowledge," and "global knowledge." Whether or not former members of the military acquire these traits in the military remains to be seen, but from what I have seen, neither The Destiny Group (n.d.) nor Nyman (1981) say anything about such traits.

One might argue that "service" is a given by nature of who veterans are. After all, they chose to *serve* their country in the armed *services*. But this assumes that all members of the military become soldiers for altruistic reasons. I suggest that perhaps at least some people enter the armed services for other reasons – such as steady pay, job security, or travel.

In all materials that I read for this study supporting TTT, there was no mention of the fact that veterans are "trainable." Nevertheless, both The Destiny Group (n.d.) and Nyman (1981) suggest that it is trait common to former members of the military. This would seem like an important quality for someone who is switching from one career to

another. I can see only two possible reasons for its absence: either supporters of TTT have not thought of this trait or they do not believe that it is important in this context. Regarding the second possibility, some supporters (e.g., see David Keltner's argument below) of TTT suggest that former members of the military are ready for the teaching duties upon leaving the armed service (i.e., no further training necessary). If this is the case, supporters of TTT might simply find veterans' "trainability" irrelevant to their transition into teaching.

The Classroom

The above quotes supporting TTT also make claims about what kind of teachers veterans make. In connection to the traits they identify, supporters say that TTT participants make "wonderful," "ideal," "excellent," "great," and "good" teachers. For example, while TTT was still in its infancy, David Keltner (1994) wrote a brief history of the events leading up to the founding of the TTT. In this article, Keltner provided the following six statements to describe the fundamental argument for starting TTT:

1. American students were continuing to fall behind academically.
2. The decline of discipline in the classroom continued to make teaching more difficult.
3. Military personnel expressed a desire to continue to "serve their country."
4. The efficiency of the military training system would lend itself well as a model for use in civilian education.
5. Large numbers of college graduates (including minorities) would be leaving the military, many with math and science backgrounds.
6. These soldiers could become positive role models for students. (p. 182)

In sum, Keltner said something to the effect that American schools are broken (statements #1 and #2) and former military personnel are willing (#3) and able (#4, #5, and #6) to fix them.

Looking closer at these statements, I noticed that there is not even a hint at the

possibility that veterans would need further training before they reach their classrooms. Keltner's argument suggests that service members have all the training they need to be successful teachers. In fact, I would argue that Keltner's statements – especially #1 and #2 – imply that military experience would allow veterans to succeed where others have failed. It is almost as if he is saying that things have gotten so bad in schools that it is time to send in the military.

Unanswered Questions

Supporters of mid-career recruitment suggest that career-switchers will not only survive in the classroom, but that they will also succeed. At the center of this sentiment is the assumption that those who have spent time working in a non-teaching career have experience from previous occupations that will transfer and apply to their new career as teachers. As I demonstrated earlier in this chapter, much of the support for TTT – the "model" of mid-career recruitment – rests on this assumption. But while supporters of TTT have attributed a number of interesting traits to veterans, it is unclear whether participants of this program actually have such traits. And even if they bring these traits with them from the military, none of the research on TTT that I reviewed for this study says anything about whether or not these traits are useful to them as teachers.

In light of the present concern for recruiting – and retaining – quality people in the field of teaching, this area of study seemed ripe with opportunity for research. The need for a better understanding of these issues drove what I wanted to do with this study. I wanted to focus on research questions that I believed were fundamental to TTT, mid-career recruitment, and perhaps, issues of teacher recruitment in general.

Research Question #1: What experiences do TTT participants say that they draw upon when they teach? Much of the support for TTT – and mid-career recruitment in general – rests on the notion that participants draw upon their prior work experience when they teach. For this study, I wanted to explore this assumption by talking with those who have made the transition from soldier to teacher. I wanted to hear these practicing teachers describe the usefulness of their military experience in the classroom. In order to explore this issue further, I wanted to give these teachers the opportunity to discuss other experiences that have contributed to their teaching as well.

Research Question #2: What do TTT participants look like when they teach? Supporters of TTT also claim that participants' military experience will translate into quality teaching. For this study, I wanted to look at what participants are actually doing in their classrooms and, if possible, identify specific areas where military experience somehow plays a role in their teaching.

My hope was that addressing these research questions would lead to further insight into how policymakers will be able to attract good people to the profession and keep them in the classroom. In the next chapter, I describe my methods for exploring these research questions. These methods include selecting a group of TTT participants who have made the transition from the military to the classroom and spending time with each participant – interviewing, observing, and collecting artifacts – in order to get a better understanding of their transition experience.

Framework for Understanding Research Question #1

Professional teaching organizations – such as the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher

Education (NCATE), the Interstate New Teacher Support and Assessment Consortium (INTASC), and the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) – often break down the process of learning to teach into the acquisition of skills, knowledge, and dispositions. As Feiman-Nemser and Remillard (1996) say, "Thinking of the content of learning to teach in terms of knowledge, skills, and dispositions provides a rough analytical starting point" (p. 72). By this, the authors acknowledge that there are many more complex issues involved in learning to teach, but if one is interested in exploring teaching at any kind of meaningful level, these three features are a good place to begin.

Skills

In a review of research on effective teaching, Reynolds (1992) identifies a list of tasks that teachers must be able to do in their jobs. She argues that these skills are useful in teaching regardless of the audience, content matter, or educational philosophy.

- *Planning*: Teachers should be able to develop lessons that meet the needs of the students in their classroom.
- *Interacting*: Teachers should be able to develop and cultivate a professional rapport with the students who are in their care.
- *Managing*: Teachers should be able to develop and maintain an environment within the classroom through rules and procedures that is optimal for student learning.
- *Organizing*: Teachers should be able to arrange the physical and social conditions of the classroom for optimal student learning.
- *Presenting*: Teachers should be able to provide access to new learning in a manner that allows students to connect this learning to their prior understanding.
- *Assessing*: Teachers should be able to measure student learning and modify their instruction based on the results.
- *Reflecting*: Teachers should be able to look critically at their own practice and make adjustments in order to improve student learning. (Reynolds, 1992)

While individual teachers might need other skills based on a variety of factors (e.g., grade-level of students, classroom location, or time of day), Reynolds claims that these seven skills are often the "nuts and bolts" of what teachers do throughout their workday.

Knowledge

Many standards for what teachers need to know as educators can be traced back to Shulman's (1987) influential framework on teacher knowledge. In this article, the author describes the knowledge that teachers must develop as they learn to teach.

- *Knowledge of subject matter*: Teachers need to know facts, concepts, and basic structures of the content area that they teach.
- *Knowledge of other content*: Teachers need to know about ideas beyond the boundaries of the content area that they teach.
- *General pedagogical knowledge*: Teachers need to know about general principles and techniques that are effective for teaching all disciplines.
- *Pedagogical content knowledge*: Teachers need to know about the connections between content and pedagogy that is unique to a particular subject area.
- *Knowledge of learners*: Teachers need to know how students learn and ways to develop that learning.
- *Knowledge of educational aims, goals, & purposes*: Teachers need to know the reasons for education within a historical and philosophical context.
- *Knowledge of curriculum*: Teachers need to know about materials and programs that will assist them in offering content that is appropriate for their students. (Wilson, Shulman, & Richert, 1987)

These seven knowledge categories provide a way of looking at the things that teachers need to know to do their jobs.

Dispositions

As one might imagine, education "experts" debate whether the above skills and knowledge are necessary to be an effective teacher. Advocates of these ideas have built entire programs on the foundation that these skills and knowledge provide while critics point to cases where teachers perform their duties without having all of the traits on the above lists. But neither skills nor knowledge is as volatile an issue as dispositions. And perhaps there is a good reason for this.

When people talk about dispositions, they go beyond what teachers should know and should be able to do – both of which allow for us to avoid ideas that are overly

personal. When they turn the conversation to dispositions, they enter into ideas that are inherently personal. If knowledge focuses on "what teachers should know" and skills focus on "what teachers should be able to do," then dispositions are concerned with "what teachers should believe and value."

A review of educational literature demonstrates how the personal, and perhaps political, nature of dispositions makes it difficult to find consensus on what attitudes, beliefs, and tendencies teachers should have. Researchers seem very tentative to provide any kind of list of dispositions, and it is very difficult to trace ideas back to an influential piece or collection of literature. In the end, I am left to do what many authors have done: put together a collection of dispositions that will most likely make everyone unhappy. Based on a collection of pieces that discuss teacher dispositions (NBPTS, 2002; NCATE 2000; Darling-Hammond, Wise, & Klein, 1999; Feiman-Nemser & Remillard, 1996; INTASC 1992), here is my summary list.

- *A commitment to students and their learning*: Teachers should believe that all children can learn and should do their best to make learning accessible for their students.
- *A love of learning*: Teachers should be curious about new ideas and should look to further their own personal learning.
- *A respect for human diversity and dignity*: Teachers should value each student as an individual and tolerate divergent perspectives.
- *A careful approach to reasoning*: Teachers should collect multiple perspectives, question received wisdom, and adopt an experimental orientation in their teaching.

While some of the resources (e.g., INTASC, 1992) listed more than 30 dispositions that teachers should have, I believe that my list adequately captures many of the "big ideas" that are in the pieces above.

Experiences that Influence Teaching

Although there are other windows into the life of the American educator, none is so relevant to the issues of that I am discussing in this study as Dan Lortie's book *Schoolteacher: A Sociological Study*. In this work, Lortie (1975) provides an interesting picture of who teachers are, what they think about their jobs, and relevant to my study, what they draw upon in their work. Here are three major experiences that influence how teachers teach.

First, one of the central – and perhaps most referenced – conclusions of Lortie's study on teachers is that they often draw upon their own 13-year "apprenticeship of observation" in K-12 education. And whether they emulate what they thought was good, reject what was bad, or simply fall into habits that they believe are associated with schooling, Lortie says that this experience plays a major role in who teachers are as educators and how they do their jobs.

Second, Lortie also says that teachers offer qualified support for their teaching preparation experience.[7] While teachers claim that some of the course work was "repetitive," "boring," "too theoretical," and "intellectually thin," they were "…not prepared to say that specific preparation for pedagogical tasks is futile" (Lortie, 1975, p. 67).

Finally, Lortie echoes Mason's (1961) conclusion that teachers look back in their student teaching as one of the most formative experiences for them as educators. While the level of impact often depends on the skill, involvement, and awareness of the supervising teacher, apparently this experience is a major influencing factor on how teachers do their jobs.

Framework for Understanding Research Question #2

The discussion of teaching skills, knowledge, and dispositions means very little unless teachers actually make it into the classroom. Once there, they must put what they have acquired and developed into practice. In this study, I want to know if, and perhaps, how, TTT participants draw on their military experience in the classroom. As I describe in the next chapter, I not only talked with a group of TTT teachers, but I also observed them in the classroom. In order to understand this teaching in action, I wanted to have a framework for understanding what teachers actually look like when they teach.

Larry Cuban (1993) looked at classrooms over the past century or so and wrote a very informative and useful piece about teaching practice. He gathered data from photographs, textbooks, student recollections, teacher reports, research studies, and other artifacts to see how teachers did their jobs in the classroom. In these artifacts, Cuban looked at furniture arrangements, the ratio of teacher talk to student talk, the size of instruction groups, the presence and use of learning centers, the degree of student movement, and the variety of instructional materials used during classes. The author came to the conclusion that there are two major categories of teaching practice: teacher-centered-instruction and student-centered instruction. Other researchers have noticed similar patterns of instruction (e.g., Chall, 2000; Sfard, 1998; and Cohen, 1990). Cuban concludes that although both forms of instruction have long histories in American education, teachers often rely heavily on teacher-centered practices that include: teacher talk exceeds student talk during instruction; instruction occurs frequently with the whole class, while small-group or individual instruction occurs less often; use of class time is largely determined by the teacher; the teacher relies heavily upon the textbook to guide

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[7] See Grossman (1989) for further descriptions of teachers' opinion of teacher education coursework.

curricular and instructional decision making; and the classroom furniture is usually arranged in rows of desks or chairs facing a chalkboard with a teacher's desk nearby.

Summary

This chapter provides a framework for my study of TTT as a case for mid-career professional recruitment. At the beginning of the 21st Century, the need for teachers is not as broad as was earlier forecasted. The need is much more focused into areas such as math, science, and special education. Recruiting people from other professions to teach is one option of targeting these specific areas of need. Of the many mid-career recruitment efforts, TTT is heralded as a model program. According to recent research, TTT has had some success in the areas of teacher recruitment and retention. Interestingly, however, TTT supporters often focuses less on recruitment and retention and more on the traits – in the form of skills, knowledge, and dispositions – that veterans bring with them into teaching. Based on the nature of this support, there are some interesting questions that form the focus of this study.

CHAPTER 3

DESIGNING THE STUDY

Introduction

This chapter is a description of the methods that I used for my study. It begins with an explanation of the research design. The chapter continues with a brief discussion of the study's population, sample, and selection process. Following this, I provide an explanation of my methods for collecting and analyzing data. I then conclude the chapter by addressing concerns about generalization, reliability, and validity.

Research Design

The primary purpose of this study was to explore how military experience participates in the teaching of a select group of TTT participants. In exploring this issue, I wanted to hear TTT participants describe the skills, knowledge, and dispositions that they have brought with them from the military and applied to their new jobs as teachers. My intention was to explore the stories of those who have gone through the TTT transition. I also wanted to experience these participants' classrooms so that I could know what their teaching looks, sounds, and feels like. Towards this purpose, I used a variety of methods to gather data.

Case Study

Within the larger category of qualitative research, I decided to conduct a case study. According to Stake (2000), a case is any "bounded system" of interest (p. 436). The boundaries of the case could be the limits of an event, a social setting, a collection, a population, an institution, a responsibility, or a program. While the discussion of

population, sampling, and generalization will come later in this chapter, for now, I will

say that the "bounded system" is the Ohio TTT program.

To understand the bounded system and soldiers' experience within it, we need to

have

> ...descriptions that are complex, holistic, and involve a myriad of not highly
> isolated variables; data that are likely to be gathered at least partly by
> personalistic observation; and a writing style that is informal, perhaps narrative,
> possibly with verbatim quotation, illustration, and even allusion and metaphor.
> Comparisons are implicit rather than explicit. Themes and hypotheses may be
> important, but they remain subordinate to the understanding of the case. (Stake,
> 1978, p. 7)

Bassey (1999) offers some useful guidelines for case study research. He says that within

the natural context of the bounded system, the researcher should

- explore significant features of the case;
- create plausible interpretations of what is found;
- test for trustworthiness of these interpretations;
- construct a worthwhile argument or story;
- relate the argument or story to any relevant research in the literature;
- convey convincingly to an audience this argument or story;
- provide a trail by which other researchers may validate or challenge the findings, or construct alternative arguments. (p. 58)

Based on these descriptions, the case study, once again, seemed an appropriate method

for what I wanted to accomplish.

Choosing a Study

When I first started to think of this project, I realized that as a single researcher

with a limited amount of time and resources, I had to limit the size of my study. This

perspective works well with the TTT program. Because much of the organization's work

is done at the state level, it made sense to look at this mid-career recruitment program at

the state level.[8] Of the close to 5,000 TTT participants hired as teachers in this country over the last decade, about 150 (about 3%) got jobs in the state of Ohio. This might seem like as small percentage, but Ohio actually ranks about 10th on the list of 50 states that have hired TTT participants.

The main reason why so much of TTT's work is done at the state level is because each state has its own requirements for certification. In some states, TTT participants can be hired as a classroom teacher before ever completing a single teacher education course. In others, all classroom teachers (including TTT participants) must complete an entire teacher education program before they are deemed qualified for certification. While some states have similar requirements, the differences add a layer of complexity to a national study of the TTT transition that I was unable to address in my study. For this reason, I decided to limit my study to a single state.

Early in my thinking, I contacted Dr. Gantz, National Director of TTT, and told him of my plans. I told him that I would most likely have to limit my study to a single state. After hearing my idea, Dr. Gantz said that he was in close contact with all of the state TTT offices and that he would help me make connections with any of these state offices. I then asked him to suggest – based on his understanding of what I was trying to do – some possible locations that might be good for my study. He recommended three states – Texas, South Carolina, and Ohio – because all of them 1) had placed over 100 teachers in their state, 2) permitted alternative certification programs, and 3) had state TTT administrators who would be willing to work with me.

For over a decade, I have lived in Southeastern Michigan, about one hour from the Ohio border. While some locations in Southern Ohio could be as much as six hours

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[8] In Clewell et al. (2000), TTT is identified as an "Example of State Recruitment Programs" (pp. 19, 23).

away, any place in the state is still closer than Texas, South Carolina, and most other states. By being so close to Ohio, I thought that I would have better access to the study participants. In order to acquired depth and detail of the transition process that I wanted, I decided to choose a sample of 10 Ohio TTT participants from the population of 150.

Study Participants

Ideally, I wanted to diversify my choice of individuals in the sample so that I would be able to collect as much information as possible from a variety individuals who represent a wide range of perspectives on the transition experience (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). The selection process is often problematic for researchers because in choosing certain participants over others they might eliminate "alternative explanations of the phenomena observed" that could prove most valuable (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 71).

Selection Process

In the late summer of 2002, I gave a box of mailing-packets to the TTT program director in Ohio. In order to protect the privacy of the TTT teachers, the director agreed to address the envelopes and send out a packet to all 150 Ohio TTT participants. Each packet contained a recruitment letter, two consent forms, a one-page general information survey, and a stamped return-envelope.[9] In the recruitment letter, I introduced myself and instructed participants to read over the study description in the consent form. If after reading the description the TTT teachers were interested in being considered for the study, the letter instructed them to complete the survey and return it along with one signed copy of the consent form in the provided envelope.

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[9] See appendix for sample forms.

I received 26 responses to my request for potential subjects.[10] Because this study focused on former soldiers who spend most of their workday in a classroom teaching students, I decided to eliminate 7 respondents (4 administrators, 1 JROTC teacher, 1 on-line teacher, and 1 part-time substitute teacher) from the original 26. In the late fall of 2002 as the time for the study approached, I tried to contact the 19 remaining potential subjects again to begin the selection process. Of this group, only 12 teachers were still interested in participating in the study. Seven either were no longer interested in participating or did not respond to multiple attempts (i.e., telephone, e-mail, and "snail" mail) to contact them.[11]

Of the 12 remaining teachers, I chose 10 participants based on their demographic characteristics in order to get a diverse group of study participants (see next section for demographic details). I kept the remaining 2 potential participants as reserve subjects in case any of the first 10 teachers had to drop out. As it turns out, I had to use one of the reserve participants when one of the original 12 subjects lost his teaching job in December (before data collection began) due to budget cuts.

Demographics

The 10 participants of this study varied across many demographic categories.[12] Here is some basic information about the TTT teachers that I studied:

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[10] While this number is far lower than what I had expected to receive, I can understand the poor response. With a study like mine that looks so closely at educators and their practice, teachers - especially those who are new to the profession - might be a little timid about have such a curious visitor like me in their classrooms.
[11] The loss of interest in participating could be due to the fact that I originally contacted these teachers during the summer when the pressures of the classroom are often just memories. Perhaps, those who changed their minds did so because when I contacted them again – late fall – they were in the "thick" of the school year.
[12] See appendix for a description of each participant.

- *Age*: The average age of the participants is forty-four. The oldest is fifty-one and the youngest is thirty-four. Seven participants are in their 40s, two are in their 50s, and one is in his 30s.
- *Last/current military rank*: Seven were officers and three were/are enlisted.[13] The highest ranking participants (2) earned O-5 pay grade (i.e., Lieutenant Colonel) and the lowest ranking member was an E-5 (i.e., Petty Officer Second Class). The most common pay grade (3 participants) was an O-4 (i.e., Major or Lieutenant Commander).[14]
- *Branch of service*: Four participants served in the Air Force, two in the Army, two in the Navy, one in the Marine Corps, and one in the Coast Guard.
- *Years of active duty in the military*: The average length of service was about fifteen years. The longest was twenty-five years and the shortest was eight. Five of the participants retired from military service and five left active duty before they were eligible for retirement.
- *Teacher education experience*: Seven completed teacher education programs before entering their teaching job and three did not.[15]
- *Teaching location (community)*: Four teach in urban school districts, three in suburban school districts, and three in rural/small town school districts.
- *Teaching location (region)*: The participants teach in multiple regions of Ohio. Four participants teach in the northeastern region of the state, two in the central region, two in the southwestern region, one in the southeastern region, and one in the northwestern region.
- *Years teaching in K-12 education*: The average length of teaching experience is about four years. The longest time in the classroom is eight years and the shortest is two.

Before I continue, there is one issue in the demographic features of the study's participant that I would like to address. The limited number of women, minorities, and elementary school teachers in my study is unfortunate.

- *Gender*: Nine of the participants are males and one is a female.
- *Race*: Nine of the participants classified themselves as white and one said that he is white/Native American.
- *Teaching level*: Seven teach in a high school, two in a middle school, and only one in an elementary school. The elementary teacher also served as a "reserve" principal in his school.

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[13] Two of the participants are still in the military reserves.

[14] See appendix for a table of military ranks according to pay grade.

[15] The three who did not complete a preservice program were hired under the Veteran's Provision of 1997. Under this provision, school districts could hire former military personnel who had an honorable discharge, a bachelor's degree, and "meaningful" teaching experience in the military. This provision allowed veterans to enter the field without completing a teacher education program until 2000 when the state was able to design and implement more permanent legislation.

With the national average much higher for all three categories, I regret the fact that more Ohio TTT teachers were either unwilling to participate (their prerogative) or did not feel welcome (my problem) in this study. Either way, readers should be aware of these limitations when reviewing this report.

This is not to say that gender, race/ethnicity, and teaching level are the only categories that represent diversity. While I did not get the kind of representation that I wanted in these three categories, I suggest that the group that I studied varied widely across many other important and interesting categories. For this kind of case study research, the lack of these perspectives does not make the stories of those who chose to participate any less valid. Perhaps future studies - of mine or others - will be able to include the perspectives of more women, minorities, and elementary school teachers who have used TTT to find positions in education.

Data Collection

In qualitative research, there are three major techniques of collecting data: interviewing, participant observation, and artifact collection (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Bassey, 1999; Stake, 1995). For this study, I employed all three techniques to find corroborative evidence in order to test the soundness of my results and to "...illustrate inconsistencies or contradictions among findings of the same phenomenon" (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 1999, p. 305). By using multiple data-collection methods and data sources, this investigation of TTT participants has a stronger claim of triangulation and potentially offers deeper revelation of the TTT transition experience.[16]

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[16] I conducted a pilot study of 3 TTT participants from Michigan during the fall of 2002 using the same basic methods (i.e., interview, classroom observation, and artifact collection). This pilot study resulted in minor modification of research tools.

Initial Survey

I sent one-page surveys to all of the TTT participants in the state database. The survey asked for basic demographic information (e.g., age, gender, and military rank) and a few questions that pertain to the study's topic. I designed this survey with two purposes in mind. First, I wanted to acquire background information of all potential participants. Second, I wanted to use this information to select participants that represented diverse perspective. In the end, the low number of responses limited the effectiveness of the second purpose.

Classroom Observations

In total, I observed 65 class periods during the months of January and February of 2003. Most of the time, my visits to a teacher's classroom were on consecutive school days (e.g., I would spend Tuesday and Wednesday or Friday and Monday with a teacher). On two occasions, the visits were not on consecutive days because of unexpected conflicts with teachers' schedules. In addition to the hours of in-class instruction, I was able to observe many participants in other teacher-related activities (e.g., tutoring students before and after school, eating with colleagues in the faculty lounge, talking to administration in the main office, monitoring the hallways in-between classes, and participating in department meetings).

During these observations, I took detailed notes on what was happening in the classroom. Using Cuban's (1993) indicators as my guide, I looked at the layout of the classroom; the ratio of teacher talk to student talk; the use of individual, small groups, and whole-class strategies for instruction; the use of learning stations; the degree of student movement; and the degree of reliance upon text. In addition, I took notes on the

teachers' movement throughout the class period (e.g., at the front, at their desks, and out in the hallway), the visual aids that the teachers used in their teaching (e.g., chalkboards, overhead projectors, and handouts), the teachers' questioning techniques (e.g., closed vs. open-ended questions, whom the teacher called on, and how teachers reacted to students' answers), the teachers' management of students (e.g., how teachers acquired the students' attention, how the teacher dealt with disruptive students, and how the teacher kept students "on task"), and other features of these teachers instruction.

General Interview

I interviewed all of the participants of this study. The questions focused primarily on their military experience, their life as an educator, and the connections between being a soldier and being a teacher.[17] The majority of the questions were open-ended, in that they gave the participants a certain level of freedom to take our conversation in a direction of their choosing (e.g., most of the questions began with "Talk about...").

Most interviews lasted between one and two hours. I recorded all of the interviews on audiocassette and transcribed them later for further analysis. Often, I interviewed the participants at the end of the first observation day. By doing this, I was able to ask the teacher about things that I had seen in the first day of observation. I was also able to look for other things on the second day of observation that we discussed in the interview.

Artifact Collection

I collected artifacts of teaching from the participants in this study. I told them that I was interested in items that represented who they are as teachers and how they do their

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[17] See appendix for interview questions.

jobs. The choice and quantity of artifacts was at the discretion of each participant. As a result, the number and usefulness of the artifacts varied across the group. Participants either gave me artifacts during my visit or they mailed them to me at a later date.

Artifacts included originals or photocopies of lesson plans, unit plans, curriculum guides, textbook readings, maps, classroom posters, K-W-L charts, warm-up activities, in-class activities, student projects, homework assignments, graded assignments, student study guides, unit tests, semester reviews, semester exams, syllabi, school calendars, class rules, sample letters to parents, departmental newsletters, personal professional development plans, professional development assignments, resumes, Praxis score reports, teaching certificates, and even college transcripts. In total, I collected over 600 pages of artifacts from the study participants.

Follow-up Questions

Since my visits, I have contacted some of the study's participants with follow-up questions. In these exchanges, I often ask them to provide further details or clarify an issue that came up during my analysis. While the response time varies, most of the participants got back to me with answer in a matter of days.

Data Analysis

Interview Transcripts

After my visits to the participants' classrooms, I transcribed all of the audiocassettes myself. By doing this, I was able to not only able to put the interviews into a readable form, but I was also able to revisit the interview experiences and make notes about things that are perhaps not as obvious to someone who was not present at the

conversation (e.g., the teachers' mannerisms, the physical objects that teachers used to make a point, and the students who interrupted the interview).

As I analyzed the transcripts, I took notes about issues, ideas, and topics that were interesting, recurring, and perhaps important to the issues that I am studying. Using ideas from the literature (reviewed in Chapter 3), I developed specific categories that were relevant to my research questions. When I analyzed the transcript again, I used my list of categories to identify and mark sections of the text that related to specific issues. I then gathered these sections together into groups of text and analyzed the passages within these categories for further distinctions. Once I had developed sets of sub-categories (i.e., within the broad categories), I identified quotes within these smaller groups that represent the content, sentiment, and tone of what I believe the participants were trying to say and embedded most of them in my presentation of the results in the next chapter.

Observation Notes

Immediately following each classroom visit, I reviewed my observation notes to make corrections and add information that I might have missed, and/or simply to review the observation experience. Often, I would highlight things that were interesting or that were perhaps related to something else that I had witnessed.

Similar to the manner in which I analyzed the interview transcripts, I looked over my research questions before I began my in-depth analysis of the observation notes. After reading over the entire collection of field notes, I tried to identify broad categories of ideas that might inform my understanding of the issues that I am studying. Using these categories as my guide, I revisited the classroom notes and tried to identify what classroom practices were common among the participants that I studied. In addition to

forming a picture of classroom practice, I used my classroom notes as a guide for understanding what participants said in their interviews and for developing my overall ideas of this study.

Artifacts

As I said earlier, I collected artifacts during (in person) and after (by mail) each visit. During my analysis, I used these artifacts primarily in conjunction with the observation notes to form an understanding of participants' classroom practice. However, as with the observation notes, these artifacts informed my overall perception of the ideas of this study.

Follow-up Questions

As I said in the data collection section, I used these follow-up questions to fill the gaps of information and check ideas as I organized and analyzed the data. Most of the ideas that came from this method were not necessarily unique or original, but rather slight adjustments and clarifications of my focus and direction. I often used these responses directly with categories that I had developed during my analysis of the interview transcripts, the classroom notes, and the artifacts of teaching.

Generalization

Generalizations in qualitative research can be problematic – especially when viewed from a strict quantitative perspective. But Firestone (1993) offers three arguments for generalizing that allow for a better understanding of qualitative research findings. First, researchers can argue for generalizing from a sample to a population. In this most traditional definition of generalization, researchers use random sampling and probability theory to make claims about a larger population by studying only selected

members. Second, researchers can argue for generalizing to a theory. In this kind of generalization, researchers make predictions based on a particular theory and then try to confirm those predictions under particular conditions. Third, researchers can argue for case-to-case transfer. In this kind of generalization, researchers place greater responsibility in the hands of readers to transfer findings from the study's case to another case.

While case-to-case transfer asks readers to make connections between issues presented and their own personal experience, this does not give researchers license to make careless assertions at whatever level of analysis that they please. Stake (1995) says:

> It is not uncommon for case study researchers to make assertions on a relatively small database, invoking the privilege and responsibility of interpretation. To draw so much attention to interpretation may be a mistake, suggesting that case work hastens to draw conclusions. Good case study is patient, reflective, willing to see another view of the case. An ethic of caution is not contradictory to an ethic of interpretation. (p. 12)

In other words, case-to-case transfer is not an excuse for sloppy research. Firestone (1993) claims that researchers have "an obligation to provide a rich detailed, thick description of the case…[that would include] a broad range of background features, aspects of the processes studied, and outcomes so readers have enough information to assess the match between the situation studied and their own" (p. 18).

For my case study of TTT participants, I argue for a case-to-case transfer of findings. I readily admit my limitations, I am careful not to overstate my assertions, and I have done my best to provide the kind of description that Firestone (1993) calls for. I hope to have provided enough detail so that others may be able to use my findings from this case to understand their own better.

Reliability and Validity

In case study research, researchers attempt to achieve defensible findings by providing readers with thorough descriptions of the research process and product (Bassey, 1999; Firestone, 1993; Maxwell, 1992). My goal in this chapter was to provide descriptions that include detailed information on data collection and analysis. In the chapters to come, I will provide evidence in the form of extended quotations and careful portrayals of events. I hope that readers will find my descriptions of both research process and product thorough enough to place some level of trust in what I say in this document.

Summary

In this chapter, I outlined the methods for my study of TTT participants. Because I wanted to study the participants' experiences, I decided to use qualitative methods that include interviews, observations, and artifact collection. Based on the focus of this study, I decide to do a case study of 10 TTT participants who teach in Ohio. While I do not generalize to a larger population, I hope this study will be able to offer ideas, make connections, and encourage further study of TTT and other recruitment programs. In the end, I hope that my "ethic of caution" has earned the trust and confidence of all who read this document.

CHAPTER 4

TALKING ABOUT TEACHING

Introduction

Troops to Teachers supporters often reference the traits that participants bring

with them from the military to teaching. Because supporters focus on these traits, I

decided that this would be a good place to begin my investigation of the TTT transition

experience. I wanted to give program participants the opportunity to describe the traits

that they believe transferred from one occupation to the other.

In this chapter, I discuss the results of these conversations. First, I identify and

describe traits from the military – in terms of skills, knowledge, and dispositions – that

participants say they draw upon as teachers. Second, I review these traits in light of what

research says teachers need in order to do their job in the classroom. Finally, I offer three

possible interpretations concerning the impact of military experience on teaching and

state my conclusion on which of the three interpretations makes the most sense in light of

the results.

Influence of Military Experience on Teaching

Skills

The participants of this study identified six different skills that they acquired in

the military and now use as teachers: preparing, making decisions under pressure, public

speaking, social skills, managing, and writing.

First, participants said that while in the military they acquired *preparation* skills

that have been useful to them as teachers.

> *Kraig*: Yeah, anytime that we did anything; you had to plan and organize,
> coordinate in the military. When I was working at the evaluation center, I had to

write a test plan. I had to coordinate the test plan. I had to plan the events. I had to get the equipment from point A to point B. I had to plan the airlift. I had to plan everything.

Part of preparation is collecting, analyzing, and organizing information and having it close at hand so it can be used at a moments notice. Another part of this preparation is a mindset.

> *Keith*: That's kind of an undercurrent. They train about everything all of the time. I mean they are constantly training for every possible contingency. For readiness, for first aid, you name it; the military is doing it all of the time. And so they get people to think that way.

Apparently, this mindset stayed with them in their transition to the classroom. In reference to preparing for classes, one teacher said:

> *Delphine*: I don't wait until the last minute to do it. It is all thought through. I may Xerox at the last minute and change at the last minute, but I think about it all of the time.
> *Interviewer*: Do you think that the military helped you not to procrastinate?
> *Delphine*: Yeah, because if you were not ready, even though you were not supposed to be ready, it could spell death, for you or your career at least. So you were always trying to predict the unpredictable. And so to that degree, I certainly try to predict the unpredictable.

Delphine developed a way of thinking where she was constantly looking to the future, bringing resources together, and creating a plan that will accomplish her mission – whatever that may be.

> Participants talked about learning to *make decisions under pressure*. This second skill is closely associated with the first in that plans are only useful when one chooses to implement them.

> *Paul*: Looking back, one of the most important aspects that the military gave me that has really helped is just the organizational skills. Having to do lots of stuff quickly and efficiently to the level of detail...like flight-planning where I've got to draw charts, I've got to execute it, you know, at the time the airplane with Special Operations Unit we are flying 250 feet above the ground, mountains at night in bad weather. And our radar did not lead. So one of my big jobs when I

was the navigator was to make sure that when we are turning at night in bad weather, that there is nothing that we are going to run into…So that's the level that I got used to. I got used to getting the airplane within seconds. Because I had to drop people or cargo out of the back of the aircraft. So, that's helped me…that's carried forward which makes this job, and I'm not saying anything against teaching, but compared to where I came from, that element of the job is a piece of cake.

In this quote, Paul says that in the military he learned how to get things done "quickly" and "efficiently" within the context of highly stressful situations. Paul suggests that this experience helped him deal with the pressures of the classroom.

Many of these teachers said that their experience in the military helped develop their *public speaking* skills. Unlike shooting a rifle, public speaking is not in every soldier's job description. However, many of the participants said that while in the military they had to stand before groups of people and speak intelligently and intelligibly on one topic or another.

Tom: Well first of all, I think that I quickly got over my fear of being in front of an audience because of all of my intelligence briefings. They definitely make you think on your feet and with that, comes the ability to communicate.

One of those intelligence briefings that Tom gave was for then Vice President George H. W. Bush. But he was not the only person to deliver an important briefing; Kraig once spoke before a military oversight committee in the U. S. Congress. Although the context is different, these kinds of speaking experiences gave these soldiers the confidence they needed to stand before a group of students in a classroom.

Beyond public speaking, participants said that they had developed good *social skills* that have been useful in dealing with people in the school community. With all of the travel and assignment changes, these soldiers learned how to develop working relationships quickly.

Bryan: You have to work with people a lot, so certainly social skills and leadership skills are developed. You work with a lot of different types of folks. When you are working in the shipping industry, you are working with everyone from masters and chief engineers and presidents of shipping companies, right down to the lowly person that is chipping paint. And you really have to work and communicate very well with everyone. And that takes a while to develop that skill. I think that [it is] very applicable to teaching. Very translatable.

Paul: The people skills that I've picked up in the Air Force, particularly the ones that I gained as a commander, …certainly help because I've found particularly in the later part of my career and certainly now, I have become a pretty good read of people. And it helps you, that skill and that innate ability, helps you understand the kids a little bit better.

In order to do their jobs in the military, these soldiers needed social skills to develop meaningful relationships. As teachers, these participants must develop similar working relationships within the school community. Participants pointed to the social skills they acquired in the military as helpful in developing and navigating these relationships.

Participants of this study also said that the military helped them learn how to *manage* students.

Keith: [Y]ou have to manage and lead and you have to motivate. And it's not just telling people. It is actually sometimes showing them, sometimes guiding them, sometimes getting out of their way. And over time in the service, you can kind of hone those skills pretty good. And I think that that helped me make the decision to become a teacher because high school students are just younger sailors. I mean they are younger people. But the same kind of things that motivate sailors, motivate students, if you can show them.

I doubt that all of the participants would agree that high school students are just like soldiers, only younger. Regardless, these participants still claim that they acquired basic skills for managing in the military that serve them well as teachers in the classroom.

Some of these teachers commented that the military helped them develop their *writing* skills. Perhaps the most outspoken about this was Bryan, who spent a great deal of time reading and writing research reports in his job as investigator for the U. S. Coast

Guard. But he was not alone. A number of those whom I interviewed described how

preparing written briefs for one group or another was a substantial part of their job in the

military.

> *Tom*: You gained the ability of not only verbal communication, but written
> communication because a lot of the things that we put out were in written form.
> So a lot of those inhibiting factors that would steer people away from the teaching
> profession, I overcame while I was in the military.

Along with public speaking, Tom realized that the writing skills that he acquired in the

military were applicable to his life as a teacher. Beyond the mechanics of writing,

Delphine commented on its practical importance.

> *Delphine*: I document everything.
> *Interviewer*: And did you get that from the military?
> *Delphine*: Absolutely. Because there is somebody out there looking to get you.
> If they want your job, if they don't like you, if they want to dump you...there is a
> great deal of personal interplay in my opinion. And if someone said that you said
> something, you want to be able to say, "Yes, I did," or "No, I didn't." And the
> fact is whether I am right, wrong, or lying, if I wrote it down, I win. If I didn't
> write it down, it is a debatable point.

From her experience in the military, Delphine learned that putting things in written form

(i.e., documentation) protected her from the unexpected.

Knowledge

Participants of this study also identified two forms of knowledge that they

acquired while in the military that is now useful to them as teachers: global knowledge

and real-world knowledge.

First, many of the participants suggested that while in the military they gained

global knowledge. By this, I mean they acquired first-hand experience of the world

beyond this country's shores. Most of the participants lived in and traveled to many

different countries during their time in the service.[18] Participants claimed that this exposure to other cultures shaped how they teach.

> *Tom*: I was able to see a lot of the world, meet a lot of people from different parts of the world that I never would have met otherwise. And that experience was far more important [for my teaching] than what I ever would have gained out of a textbook or seeing in a college class for sure. And really, that was the most valuable experience that I have ever had in my life.

> *Keith*: Yeah, it gave me worldview. Because in the Navy I traveled so much all over the world, I really got an appreciation for life experiences in the classroom. So I kind of use them, not a lot, but I do use them to add little bits and pieces to keep it interesting. But to me, it gave me a worldview…[The experiences] that I had in the Navy just dealing with other cultures… impacted my ability to see this culture, right here in [name of school]. I think it's important. I think that teachers need to get out a little bit.

Tom and Keith's comments suggest that embedded in their instruction is a developed understanding of the world and a healthy appreciation for other cultures.

Some of the teachers talked about drawing on the *real-world knowledge* they acquired during their time in the military to help students connect with the subject matter. For example, Kraig referred back on his work as an air traffic controller in the military to help his students see the practical importance of math.

> *Kraig*: I was telling the kids that in air traffic controlling, math was a very big thing. You needed to know radials and…have to be able to subtract…and convert things over. Like when you are converting from centigrade to Fahrenheit and Fahrenheit to centigrade, you had factors and you had to follow formulas. So there were certain things in the math aspect that fell right into it.

Kraig used his military experience to let students help students see that math is not simply abstract ideas with little or no relationship to the outside world. Rather, he tried to connect the classroom content knowledge to the work that he did as a soldier.

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[18] See participant descriptions in the Appendix.

Dispositions

In addition to skills and knowledge, participants of this study identified

dispositions that they acquired in the military and now use as teachers: determination,

service, and diversity

First, participants said that in the military they acquired a kind of *determination*

that has served them well in the classroom. As a teacher looking back on his military

experience, one participant saw this attitude as an important part of the way that he does

his job.

> *Todd*: The greatest asset that I learned was that you are always working for
> someone, so do your very, very best for them at all times. Whether you like them
> or not, if you take the mission, you do it well... So, I knew that I had this work
> ethic to do well for whoever I worked for. And I felt like I had this ability to get
> things done. And I had this drive.

Some even said that they would not be able to handle their teaching responsibility

without the determination they acquired while part of the armed services.

> *Delphine*: The assistant superintendent did say, "Now, suppose that [teaching]
> takes you longer than you think." "Well, you finish the job." And that is another
> effect of the military. It doesn't matter how long it takes, you do it. It doesn't
> matter how difficult the job is, you do it. It is doesn't matter that they don't give
> you enough tools to do half of what they require you to do, you do it. It's
> irrelevant. In fact, I can't imagine if I didn't come from the military. Who the
> heck would do this? Unless they wanted to dedicate their lives to teaching.

Notice how Delphine lists the pressures of the job - limited time, difficulty of the job, and

lack of sufficient resources - and each time she follows it up with the simple, no nonsense

answer "you do it" as if there is no other possible response. This determination

apparently helps these teachers face the uncertainties of their job with a never-say-die

attitude towards getting the mission, whatever that may be, accomplished in the

classroom.

The TTT teachers from this study described an attitude towards *service* that they acquired in the military. Many enlisted in the armed forces out of a sense of duty to their country. Some of the participants say that this same attitude influences who they are as teachers and how they work with students.

> *Harold*: I think that most former military people do make good teachers. Because they are disciplined. They are organized. And they have a sense of duty in what they are doing, which is important as a teacher. You have to have a sense of duty and a sense of concern for the kids and the families that you are serving.

> *Keith*: Will military people make good teachers? I think so. Generally speaking, I think so.
> Interviewer: And why?
> Keith: Because they are patriotic. Because they swore an oath to the military is the same reason that they will be a good teacher. It is because they care.

> *Todd*: And like I told these kids, "I'm training you to serve your country. You will serve your country. Either in the military or out of the military, you are serving your country by doing your part and doing it well and honestly and being a good citizen." They don't hear that. But a military guy lives that.

Look at the language in these quotes: "duty," "concern," "oath," "care," and "serve." All of these words suggest that, like soldiering, teaching is more that just a just a job. The TTT program uses this sentiment in their promotional literature to attract veterans into teaching. For example, one can easily find the program's motto "Proud to Serve Again" on most of the materials that TTT produces and distributes.

Participant also described how military experience helped them to develop a healthy respect for *diversity*. Many of the participants talked about coming out of homogeneous neighborhoods and going into a heterogeneous military.

> *Larry*: I grew up in a suburban area where everyone looked like me. But when I joined the Navy, I was put in with and lived with people from all different cultures and all different backgrounds. And I think that I got a better understanding of other cultures and background by living with these people. And I realized that success and failure comes from all different walks of life.

> *Kraig*: It wasn't until I went into the Air Force that I really began to meet ethnic groups and there is a gamut of them. And I never really realized that there were that many Asian-Americans because you just didn't see them where I lived.

Another participant talked about how the military helped him to become "attuned" to issues of diversity. By working with such a racially and ethnically diverse community in the military, perhaps these teachers are better able to deal with issues of diversity in schools.

Analyzing Results

Upon reading the results from these interviews, one is faced with a question: Do these TTT participants actually use these traits in their teaching? In other words, do these comments reflect the actual practice of these participants? This question is very important to understanding the issues surrounding this study and I will pick up this discussion in the next chapter, but for now, let us assume that the participants' descriptions match their classroom practice.

Assuming that the participants' description of their practice matches what is really happening in the classroom, I can see three possible interpretations concerning the impact of military traits on teaching. First, the traits that participants acquired in the military are very useful in classroom teaching. This is basically the argument that TTT supporters make. The second possibility is that the traits acquired in the military are of little or no use in classroom teaching. The third possibility is that the traits that participants acquired in the military are somewhat useful in classroom teaching. This would mean that the military is one of many experiences that ultimate influence these teachers' practice. This final position is the middle ground between the first two extremes. In the section below, I will look at these three options and discuss the viability of each.

Option 1: Military Experience Makes the Difference

The foundation of support for the TTT program is the idea that participants acquire valuable skills, knowledge, and dispositions in the military and that those traits are highly applicable to teaching. In other words, military experience has a major influence in the way TTT participants teach. In order to examine this perspective, I compare what participants say that they acquired in the military to what educational researchers say that teachers need.

Skills

In the interviews, the participants identified and described six different skills they acquired while in the military that they say are useful in their new careers as educators. To review, these skills include preparation, making decisions under pressure, public speaking, social skills, managing, and writing. If you will recall from Chapter 2, Reynolds (1992) stated that teachers would have to be skilled in planning, interacting, managing, organizing, presenting, assessing, and reflecting in order to do their jobs as educators. Some of the skills that participants identified appear to have a connection to the skills that Reynolds (1992) named in her description of what a teacher should be able to do in the classroom (see Table 4.1).

TABLE 4.1: Skills Comparison

Reynolds' Teaching Skills	Skills Developed in the Military
Planning & Organizing	Preparation
Interacting with Students	Social Skills
Presenting	Public Speaking & Writing
Managing Students	Managing & Making Decisions under Pressure
Reflecting	?
Assessing	?

First, participants talked about the fact that in the military they acquired an ability to bring people, things, and ideas together in order to develop a plan. Such preparation reminds me of how teachers must do similar things to plan lessons for their students. Being prepared as a teacher means creating an environment where students will be able to experience, interact with, and understand whatever the subject of the class may be. Preparation also involves organizing the physical and social environment around the students so that unnecessary distractions will be limited and students can focus on learning.

Second, these teachers said that they acquired public speaking skills in the military. Most of this had to do with participants gaining the confidence to stand before a group of people, talk about a particular issue, and answer related questions. Such a skill is valuable for most teachers. Not only do most educators spend a majority of their day in front of their students talking and answering question, but teachers also need to be able to speak intelligently before parents (e.g., at open-house), colleagues (e.g., in faculty meetings), and, perhaps, other members of the school community (e.g., at school board meetings).

Third, the TTT teachers said that they developed social skills during their time in the armed services that helped them to cultivate and nurture successful working relationships. These participants learned to value these relationships and to understand that they were an important part of their job in the military. Now while the age and maturity level often differs between soldiers and most students, the social skills that these participants acquired in the armed forces could be useful for teachers in classroom interactions. Participants could use these social skills to promote healthy relationships

with others in the school community. In addition, such positive relationships could provide job satisfaction, thus encouraging the participant to stay in their teaching position and, perhaps, improve as teachers.

Fourth, the participants also talked about how the military put them in leadership positions where they were responsible for managing groups of soldiers. The participants said that they developed valuable management skills as a result of these experiences. As in the military, managing in the classroom includes planning and organizing, but it also means establishing and following through on rules, routines, and procedures.

Fifth, the TTT teachers talked about how in the military they learned how to make important decisions under pressure. Planning and organizing are important part of what teachers do, but both are susceptible to failure when teachers try to do their job in the context of a real classroom. New teachers often discover that the classroom is a complex environment full of multiple uncertainties where the best made plans die a cruel death and organization quickly turns to chaos. Managing such an environment involves making multiple decisions sometimes under strenuous circumstances that will ultimately impact their students' futures. As a teacher, being able to think clearly and wisely in this kind of an environment would be quite useful.

Sixth, the participants of this study said that they learned how to write better while in the military. As soldiers, their superiors often demanded that their reports and correspondence were accurate, concise, and mechanically correct (i.e., structure, grammar, and spelling). For teachers, writing is an important part of presenting because they use this skill in designing materials, developing assignments, and corresponding with students and their parents. Being able to present ideas in a professional manner

seems critically important when teachers are looking to earn the respect of those in the school community and beyond.

Knowledge

The participants of this study talked about two categories of knowledge from their military experience that they used as teachers. To review, they said that they acquired a global knowledge in which to embed their teaching and "real-world" knowledge that would be useful for examples in classroom instruction. As I stated in Chapter 2, teachers need to know many things to do their jobs as educators. Shulman (1987) identifies seven categories of teacher knowledge including: knowledge of subject matter, knowledge of other content, general pedagogical knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of educational aims, goals, and purposes, knowledge of curriculum, and knowledge of the learner. From what I have learned from this study, there is only a limited connection between the knowledge that TTT participants say they acquired in the military and what they need for teaching (see Table 4.2). In the end, the knowledge they acquired as soldiers seems to connect with only two knowledge categories, and both focus on subject matter.

TABLE 4.2: Knowledge Comparison

Shulman's Teaching Knowledge	Knowledge Developed in the Military
Knowledge of Other Content	Global Knowledge
Knowledge of Subject Matter	"Real-World" Knowledge
General Pedagogical Knowledge	?
Pedagogical Content Knowledge	?
Knowledge of Learners	?
Knowledge of Educational Aims, Goals, & Purposes	?
Knowledge of Curriculum	?

First, the participants talked about acquiring global knowledge during their time in the military. Many of these soldiers traveled extensively during their time in the

service and were able to experience a wide variety of people, places, and things from across the globe. These experiences provided participants with a broad perspective of the world and a richer understanding of ideas across many subject areas. This global perspective would most likely be part of Shulman's "knowledge of other content." Such knowledge might allow teachers to help students make interdisciplinary connections and place knowledge from a particular content area within a broader scope of knowledge.

Second, some of the participants had jobs in the military that required knowledge from the subject area that they now teach. Not only did those participants deepen their understanding of subject matter knowledge in the military, they were also involved in a number of experiences in which they saw this "real-world" knowledge in action. Such experiences provided the participants with a collection of examples that they say they use with their students. Part of teaching is helping students make connections between often abstract subject-matter knowledge and the world outside of the classroom. The participants said that they used these "real-world" experiences for just this purpose. And while the use of these examples varied across this group, some said that, as teachers, this knowledge was the most useful thing from their military experience.

Dispositions

During our conversations, the participants identified three dispositions from their time in the military that are useful to them as teachers. These dispositions include attitudes towards diversity, service, and determination. In this section, I connect these three dispositions to a framework that I developed in Chapter 2 (see Table 4.3). Recall that this framework is based on a collection of pieces (NBPTS, 2002; NCATE 2000;

Darling-Hammond, Wise, & Klein, 1999; Feiman-Nemser & Remillard, 1996; INTASC 1992) that discuss teacher dispositions.

TABLE 4.3: Dispositions Comparison

Collective Framework of Teaching Dispositions	Dispositions from the Military
A Respect for Human Diversity and Dignity	Diversity
A Commitment to Students and Their Learning	Service & Determination
A Careful Approach to Reasoning	?
A Love of Learning	?

First, many of the participants said that they developed a healthy appreciation for diversity while in the military. They said that they were often put in a position where they were required to work or live with different types of people. In these situations, the pressure and intensity of their work forced them to accept differences and focus on getting the job done. Ultimately, they realized that diversity among team-members could be beneficial to the overall success of the team. Teachers who have a healthy respect for the diversity will be better able to meet the individual needs of their students. On the other hand, educators who do not value their students' backgrounds and individuality will find it very difficult in helping children make meaningful connections to the subject matter.

Second, these TTT teachers said that the military instilled in them a sense of service. As soldiers, they were taught to think of the good of country before their own personal needs, wishes, and desires. And although such patriotic fervor can get muted in the daily grind, the military system rewards and promotes those who emulate and support this sentiment. In addition, our society often asks teachers to put the interests of students, parents, and the community above their own. Without the promise of extrinsic rewards,

we ask teachers to fight ignorance, promote understanding, and offer a chance for a better life to their students. Because these TTT participants have already acquired such an attitude towards their work in the military, they say they have been able to "serve" their students in the classroom.

Third, participants talked about the determination that they acquired in the military. As soldiers, they came to believe that hard work and patience eventually pay off. Such an attitude can be helpful for teachers who rarely see the fruits of their labor. Years may pass before students make any kind of connections to what they learn in the classroom and appreciate their schooling experience. The determination of these participants allows them to make the kind of commitment to students and their learning that is required of successful teachers.

What's Missing?

In the area of *skills*, military experience did not necessarily help these soldiers learn to assess students' work and reflect on their own practice. While some of the participants were involved in testing and researching equipment as part of their job in the military, these experiences were of little use for them in assessing students' work. They discovered that assessment in the classroom often goes beyond following a diagnostic checklist of parts, procedure, and protocol. And while soldiers need to organize professional documents for promotions, they were not involved in anything that required them to reflect upon their work in the military for the sake of improving their practice as soldiers.

This lack of reflection in the military makes sense for two reasons. First, if most of a soldier's actions are the product of a directive from a superior officer or a reflex

developed after hours of training, then there is no need for personal reflection in the military. Second, reflection is a form of self-questioning. The strict top-down structure of the military provides very little opportunity for soldiers to learn how to develop good questions. In the end, soldiers might see this kind of activity as simply a waste of time.

There are a number of *knowledge* categories not covered by the two forms of knowledge that the participants identified. These categories include general pedagogical knowledge; pedagogical content knowledge; knowledge of educational aims, goals, and purposes; knowledge of curriculum; and knowledge of the learner. There were some comments about going to instructor school in the military and learning how to deliver presentations, etc. The participants who made these comments said that they participated in courses that "covered" some issues related to general pedagogical knowledge and knowledge about learners. But most of those who went through such training in the military were very quick to tell me how insignificant it was for them now as teachers in their understanding of students and how to teach them. Not only did the instructors of these courses skim over these topics, they had little to do with knowing how to teach school-age people.

With regard to *dispositions*, military experience did not necessarily help these teachers develop a careful approach to reasoning. As I stated earlier, soldiers' actions are often the result of a directive from a superior officer or a habit formed through training. While today's military requires greater thinking and technical skill from its personnel, obedience is still a higher priority than reason. The chain of command is the backbone of the military. Encouraging soldiers to think for themselves challenges the entire history and structure of the military. As it was with the participants' ability to ask good

questions, the military seems to have offered very little support in this area of development.

TABLE 4.4: Comparison of What Teachers Need to What Participants Say They Acquired in the Military

What Teachers Need	What Participants Acquired in the Military
Planning & Organizing	Preparation
Interacting with Students	Social Skills
Presenting	Public Speaking & Writing
Managing Students	Managing & Making Decisions under Pressure
Reflecting	?
Assessing	?
Knowledge of Other Content	Global Knowledge
Knowledge of Subject Matter	"Real-World" Knowledge
General Pedagogical Knowledge	?
Pedagogical Content Knowledge	?
Knowledge of Learners	?
Knowledge of Educational Aims, Goals, & Purposes	?
Knowledge of Curriculum	?
A Respect for Human Diversity and Dignity	Diversity
A Commitment to Students and Their Learning	Service & Determination
A Careful Approach to Reasoning	?
A Love of Learning	?

Looking at Table 4.4, one can see that some of the traits that participants say that they acquired in the military (the right column) *might* have some kind of relationship to the skills, knowledge, and dispositions that teachers need (the left column) in order to do their jobs. On the surface, this comparison suggests the possibility that military experience may have some influence one the way that participants teacher.

But those who argue that military experience is all that participants need in order to be good teachers might be in trouble. How do supporters of this position explain the absence of traits in the left column of Table 4.4? Are they willing to say that the missing

skills (e.g., assessment), knowledge (e.g., knowledge of learners), and dispositions (e.g., a love of learning) are unnecessary for teachers?

In addition, I am not entirely convinced that the traits acquired in the military are truly compatible with the traits that teachers need in order to do their job. Can we really say, for example, that managing soldiers is the same as managing students? I am equally concerned about the connection surrounding issues like planning, content knowledge, and presenting. In the end, I think that careful consideration of both sides of Table 4.4 suggests that some of the connections are, at best, superficial. In other words, TTT participants are going to need more assistance in acquiring the traits that they will need in order to teach than just what is represented by the question marks in Table 4.4.

Option 2: Military Experience Has Little Impact

The above analysis of option 1 might lead one to believe that the traits acquired during the participants' military experience offers little or nothing useful for teaching. In other words, the skills, knowledge, and dispositions that these participants need for teaching must be acquired in the non-military context, such as subject matter courses, teacher education courses, induction, professional development programs, etc.

However, completely discounting the impact of military experience is most likely an inaccurate extreme. The unique identity of the individual and the past experiences that helped create this identity must have some influence on the person's present practice. To deny the idea that we bring our own experiences to every situation that we encounter suggests a lack of commonsense. We cannot separate our experiences from who we are.

In order to understand this phenomenon, Sidney Fine developed a framework for understanding how workers use experiences from one vocation in an entirely different

vocation. Fine (as cited in Forester & Haldane, 1992) classified three broad categories of work experience. First, functional traits allow people to work with people, things, and information in order to accomplish a task. Computation, coordination, and organization are examples of functional traits. Second, adaptive traits have to do with personal characteristics that assist a person in developing and maintaining relationships and negotiating the demands of the work environment. Being friendly, seeing things in perspective, and being dependable are all examples of adaptive traits. Third, specific content traits have to do with abilities that are useful within a specific working situation. An example of specific content trait would be a person's ability with a unique accounting program that was designed for a single situation and is out-dated or dissimilar from any other program. According to Fine, people develop all three categories in each job that they hold. While functional and adaptive traits are transferable and enable people to move across career lines with minimal preparation or retraining, specific content traits are rarely useful in a career change.

Looking the traits that the TTT participants identified for this study, I hesitate to say that any specific trait is wholly "functional," "adaptive," or "specific content." For example, *social skills* seem to be a "functional" trait and *determination* seems to be "adaptive" trait. But there are some aspects of both social skills and determination in relation to what one needs to succeed in the military that might not apply in the classroom. This is especially true with issues like *preparation* where are some aspects of trait may be transferable to planning classroom instruction and some aspects might not. In the end, I would argue that those supporting the notion that military experience has *no*

influence on teaching practice are as misguided as the supporters of TTT who claim that military experience is all that a participant needs in order to teach.

Option 3: Military Experience Is One of Many

The third analytical option occupies the middle ground between the two above extremes. This perspective says that military experience influences the participants' teaching practice, but that this experience (and the resulting traits) is not in and of itself the most important influence. Rather, military experience is one of many experiences that have an impact on TTT participants' teaching practice.

During the interviews, I asked the participants to reflect upon any experiences that influence who they are as teachers and how they do their jobs. Besides the military, the participants identified four non-military experiences that influence their teaching practice. These experiences include teacher education courses, student teaching, favorite teacher, and K-12 experience

Teacher Education Courses

Many of the participants who completed a teacher preparation program said that they draw upon their education courses when they teach.

> *Larry*: My favorite college professor was the guy who taught classroom management. And he's the one who first told me, "Don't try to change yourself to meet the classroom management model that you think that you should be using." He said, "Take who you are and adapt the management model to it because it's easier to change your style than it is to change yourself." So that helped a lot.

> *Keith*: The behavior courses that I took that were really focused were very good. There was a guy at Old Dominion, I can't think of his name, but he taught just the behavior [course]…he was really good. I got a lot out of him about how to deal with behavior challenges.

Both Larry and Keith identified teacher education courses that helped them learn how to

teach and credited instructors for helping understand and deal with "management" or

"behavior" issues in the classroom.

The participants hired under the Veteran's Provision of 1997 (i.e., they did not

complete a preservice teacher preparation program before entering teaching) also

acknowledged the usefulness of their continuing education courses.

> *Paul*: I am talking about the [courses] that I am taking now. Since I did not have
> the background in some of the more important aspects of that, like philosophy,
> psychology, instructional development, integrating technology, they have helped
> a lot. They kind of confirm your gut instinct on stuff and it helps you understand
> certain things.

> *Tom*: The [teacher education courses] that I have taken and the ones that I am
> taking now, they do broaden my horizons. And they make me think differently
> and the way that I can improve as a teacher.

For Paul, education courses fill in gaps or solidify ideas for him as a teacher,

whereas education courses challenge Tom to "think differently" about his teaching

practice and ultimately lead to improvement.

Not all of the comments on teacher preparation coursework were positive. Some

of participants – including those who were positive about some aspects of the teacher

preparation experiences – complained about the structure of the courses.

> *Keith*: I mean it might just have been the way that they structured the courses.
> But to sit around and debate certain things was just a waste of time. If it wasn't
> structured and…if it was just a bunch of college students and a teacher sitting
> around debating the current state of education, which a lot of courses seemed to
> end up being, week after week, there was no point to that.

Others complained about the content of their teacher education classes.

> *Bryan*: Is it really necessary to take all of the undergraduate courses in education
> for military folks that kids coming out of high school have to take?…There was 3
> or 4 multicultural education courses. And I mean, I have been a civil-rights

officer in large units [while in the military]...but, you know, it's tough to document that.

While I question the direct connection between being assigned "a civil-rights officer of a large unit" and being able to teach from a multicultural perspective, I think I see Bryan's larger point. He is troubled by the repetitive nature of the courses that he was required to take. This seems especially true for Bryan when the classes cover topics in which he already believes he has some level of expertise.

Student Teaching

Many of the participants who completed a teacher preparation program said that their student teaching experience played a major role in who they are as teachers.

> *Larry*: My student teaching experience...helped a lot as well because that gave me the confidence to come into the job here and not have any fear about being able to do it. In my student teaching experience, the teacher gave me the class pretty much right away. It was a large class and I did a lot of work. I did a lot more than I do right now. Because there was just a lot more to do. I was teaching double classes and long sessions. Everything had to be written down. I wasn't able to do anything off of the cuff as much.

> *Keith*: I wasn't sure until the student teaching that I was going to be a teacher. I didn't know if I could do it. Because if I was just going to get the license and be an ineffective teacher, then I wasn't going to do it. I wasn't going to do something that I was lousy at or that I was miserable.

Larry used his student teaching as a venue in which to build confidence as an educator. Apparently, Keith saw student teaching as an opportunity to give teaching a try and see if he truly wanted to make it his career after the military.

There was also some praise for the support that participants received during their student teaching experience. In the following quote, Kraig talks about the people who started as his mentors (for student teaching) and are now his colleagues (the school where he completed his student teaching hired him):

> *Kraig*: My mentor and the other people in the building were fabulous. I came in here and I had no clue as to what I was doing. I mean, when you set up a classroom, you have all these records and you have all of the junk that you have to do. I had no idea what was going on and it was like taking a sip out of a fire hydrant. It was just amazing. So they helped me out tremendously... [T]hose people were the ones who really got me going here.

As with other participants, Kraig's official and unofficial mentors offered the support that he needed in order to be successful in his own classroom.

Favorite Teacher

Some of the participants credited a favorite teacher for how they approach their work in the classroom. They even acknowledged that they have adopted certain habits and admired particular qualities in these teachers.

> *Pete*: You know, it's funny. I find myself almost behaving the same way that my physics professor was. Especially when it is the same topic that he explained, I almost pick up the same physical habits.

> *Tom*: Yeah, I did have a favorite teacher. In fact, I still see her quite often. She was my fifth grade teacher [and] probably had more impact on my life as a teacher than anything else because of her compassion towards me.

> *Larry*: I had a few teachers when I was growing up that kind of inspired me and made me believe that even though I wasn't a great student, they showed me that I had the potential to do well in school.

Memories of a favorite teacher – their behaviors, habits, and qualities – formed an image of teaching that ultimately influences these participants' practice.

K-12 Experience

Some of the participants said that their own K-12 experience was a major influence in their teaching. When I asked one teacher how he developed his approach to teaching, he said:

> *Todd*: Well, I think a lot of it came through my K-12 experience. Because when I knew that I wanted to teach, I started to develop a philosophy. And writing down what I liked, what worked, what didn't work for me.

Todd looked back on his own schooling and developed a "philosophy" of teaching based

upon "what worked" for him as a student. Similarly, other teachers' said that they draw

upon the personal difficulties that they endured as students.

> *Kraig*: My own kindergarten through high school...impacted me a lot. Like I tell
> the kids, I wasn't a very good student when I was in 1st and 2nd grade. I played
> like they did. I was as immature as some of them are. But as I went through and
> started to realize that it was important, it was almost too late. It impacted me a
> lot.

> *Delphine*: I hated school. I was a horrible kid. I sympathize with them. Oh, do I.
> You don't want to be here? Boy, I understand. It was all I could do to get myself
> in there. And [this is] one of the interesting things that I need to start applying
> now to...these kids.

Kraig and Delphine can relate to their students because they can remember many of the

same feelings of failure when they were students.

Educational research supports this third perspective on the role of military

experience in TTT participants' teaching. In his classic sociological study of teachers

and teaching, Lortie (1975) identified experiences that influence how people teach. As I

discussed in chapter 2, Lortie suggests that teachers draw from three experiences in

particular (see Table 4.5).

TABLE 4.5: Experiences That Influence Practice

Lortie's Experiences That Influence Practice	TTT Participants from This Study
Teacher Education Course Work	Teacher Education Course Work
Student Teaching	Student Teaching
"Apprenticeship of Observation"	Favorite Teacher & K-12 Experience

First, teachers draw heavily upon their own schooling and often, end up "teaching

how they were taught." Lortie called this experience an "apprenticeship of observation."

Educators craft their approach to teaching by adopting what they like, rejecting what they

do not like, or simply falling into the habits that they witnessed over the 13 years that they were in school. This sounds reminiscent of how the TTT participants from this study draw upon the memories of their favorite teacher and their own experience as students.

Second, Lortie also said that teachers often point back to the practical nature of their student teaching experience where they were finally able to practice what they had learned in their college course work. Often the impact of this experience depended upon the personality, character, and involvement of the supervising teachers. Many of the TTT participants who completed a student teaching experience echoed this sentiment.

Finally, Lortie said that teachers value some portions of their teacher education course work. While teachers might look back to some of these TE classes and criticize, many recognize that specific courses - often, those dealing with practical issues of teaching methods or classroom management - have influenced how they teach their students. Once again, the TTT participants had similar feeling.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the participant interviews, I suggest that the third analytical option is most accurate. Option 1 ignores outside influences and puts too much stock in military experience to provide participants with what they need to teach. Based on the participants' comments there appears to be other important experiences that have a significant impact on how these teachers ultimately do their jobs. Option 2 demonstrates a lack of common sense or an outright denial of reality. These teachers cannot somehow place an experience as unique as military service in some kind of mental isolation. Clearly, military training has some influence on the way that these teachers job. In the

end, I argue for a holistic approach that puts military experience as one of many experiences that ultimately influence the kind of teachers these soldiers become.

Most likely the level of impact that military experience has on a participants' teaching also depends upon such issues as length military tenure, time between military service and teaching, work similarity, and even school structure and climate. In the next chapter, I explore participants teaching in action and return to some of these issues for deeper analysis.

Summary

In this chapter, I reviewed TTT participants' description of their transition from the military to the classroom. Specifically, I discussed participants' explanation of how, as teachers, they use the skills, knowledge, and dispositions that they acquired from their military experience. While many of these traits appear to have some kind of connection with what researchers say teachers need in the classroom, there are a number of teaching traits that were not mentioned in the participants' description. One can assume that participants will need to acquire these missing traits from some non-military experience.

Ultimately, I conclude that while military experience might have some use in the classroom, there are many other experiences that have substantial influence on how these participants do their jobs. Most likely, military experience becomes one of many experiences that TTT participants draw upon when they teach.

CHAPTER 5

TEACHING IN ACTION

Introduction

The interviews that I reviewed in the previous chapter offer a wonderful perspective on the TTT transition experience. The participants were very open and eager to discuss their teaching. In planning the study, however, I knew that if I wanted a deeper understanding of this transition, I would need to see the participants' teaching in action.

To this end, I observed these participants at work in their classrooms and collected artifacts related to their teaching. In this chapter, I first present what I observed and collected. Second, I discuss common features of the participants' teaching practice. Third, I focus in on two issues, classroom management and content knowledge, and offer an explanation why participants teach the way that they do. Fourth, I briefly discuss what TTT participants might need in order to make better use of their military experience in their teaching.

In the Classroom

Before I begin with my description of the participants teaching, I would like to clarify some important issues. First, I observed and collected artifacts because I wanted to gain a better understanding of the participants' teaching. I am not interested in making comparisons between what participants *do* and what they *say they do*. Although self-reporting is notoriously inaccurate, I have no need to catch these teachers in any kind of misrepresentation. To me, such exploration is a dead-end. I sincerely believe that all of the participants gave me descriptions that they believed were honest and accurate. And I

have no reason to believe otherwise. After all, if they wanted to deceive me, they would have never allowed me such open access to observe them teach or provided me with such an array of artifacts. In reality, the participants seemed very eager to have me as their guest and placed no limitations on what I could observe and describe. As I suspected in planning this study, the observation and artifact collection provided me with insight into these participants' teaching that I would not have acquired with interviews alone.

Second, my study focused on the impact that previous work experience has on classroom teaching. Specifically, I wanted to see the manifestations of military experience on TTT participants' teaching. Unlike others who have looked at TTT (i.e., Feistritzer, Hill, and Willett, 1998, and Webber, Raffeld, and Kettler, 2001), I do not offer a judgment as to whether TTT participants make "good" or "bad" teachers. While such discussions are interesting and informative, I am much more interested in looking at the origins of practice.

Third, my description of the participants' teaching is limited. Although I observed over 60 class periods across the study participants, took over 200 pages of hand-written notes, and collected over 600 pages of artifacts, I was with each teacher for no more than two school days. This is not enough time to acquire a full understanding of what goes on in each teacher's classroom. My description is to be only a summary and explanation of my observations. It describes what I observed in general terms emphasizing features that were common across the participants. None of the class periods that I observed fit the following description *exactly*. At the same time, the features that I describe in this chapter were common enough to be included here.

Classroom Appearance

The participants' classrooms had no physical features or artifacts that are uncommon to a stereotypical classroom. In all but one of the classrooms that I visited, the students' desks were in neat rows facing the front of the classroom. The one exception was a computer class where students sat at computers around hexagram-shaped tables. Teachers' desks were most often at the front or rear of the room. Teachers often had a computer on or next to their desks. Except for the computer classes where each student had a computer to use, there were usually two or three other computers in the room for student use.

At the "front" of the room, there was often a chalkboard or dry-erase board flanked on both sides by bulletin boards that covered the most of the wall. On the bulletin boards, the teachers posted items such as calendars, sports schedules, assignments, and sometimes even a small military recruitment poster. The only other sign of military paraphernalia in the classroom that I saw during my visits was coffee mugs (one from the Army and one from the Navy) on two of the participants' desks.

Classrooms often contained bookshelves covered with old textbooks, cupboards filled with old equipment, filing cabinets of old papers, and walls covered with student projects. Posters of all kinds covered most available wall space. Often, these posters were subject related (e.g., "Famous African-Americans in Math and Science"), inspirational (e.g., "You can do it!"), or entertainment (e.g., Austin Powers).

Some of the teachers had information related to thinking and learning posted in their classrooms. Example topics included Gardner's Multiple Intelligences, Bloom's

Taxonomy, and district goals for students. At no time during any of my visits did any of the teachers refer to these learning aids.

Beginning Class

While there were subtle variations among participants and across class periods, most of the classes I observed consisted of a four-part structure that included a beginning, a presentation, some kind of practice, and free time.

Many of the participants allowed their students to come into class and talk during the first few minutes of the period. Often, the teachers worked at their desks during these early minutes of the period to complete certain administrative tasks such as taking attendance, collecting late work, organizing their things, and looking over plans for the class period. Some of the teachers had written lesson plans for their classes while others did not. The written plans varied from a one-page description to a couple of phrases scribbled within a 2" x 2" box in a lesson plan book. Regardless of length, these plans rarely provided information beyond page numbers, titles of textbook sections, and names of activities.

Three teachers asked students to complete "warm-up" activities during the first few minutes of the period. Sometimes these activities related to the content of that days' lesson and sometimes they did not. Two of the teachers who used these activities reviewed them with their students before moving onto the presentation phase of the lesson. Rarely would the teacher ask students to turn these warm-up activities for a grade. If there were announcements over the loud speaker or Channel One, the teachers, although quiet, typically showed little attention to what was being said and little interest in making sure that their students listened.

Presentation

After a few minutes, the teachers made an opening remark (e.g., "Okay, let's get started.") and began to talk about the topic of the day. The presentation portion of the class often took up the majority of the period. During this time, the teachers moved very little from their basic location at the front of the room and did most of the talking. Every so often, the teachers would stop their lecture to ask questions. The questions the teachers used rarely required the students to provide anything more than yes/no or one-word answers.

Teacher: What did they grow out on the plains?

Student A: Wheat.

Student B: Corn.

Teacher: I'll give you a hint: moo.

Students: Cows!

In this example, the students were able to provide the "correct" answer only when the teacher provided them with an extremely obvious hint.

At times, teachers would stop their lecture to ask does-everyone-understand-type questions. These questions usually received one of two reactions. First, the students would make no effort to answer the teacher's question.

Teacher: Alright, did everyone get that?

Students: (no verbal response)

Teacher: I'll take that as a yes.

The teacher in this quote most likely assumed that if students had questions or were confused about something, they would speak up. Second, someone - perhaps tired of the waiting - would mumble a response.

> Teacher: Alright, did everyone get that?
>
> (long pause)
>
> Student: Yeah.
>
> Teacher: Okay, let's move on.

While these questions might have been legitimate attempts to check students' understanding of the lesson concepts, rarely did they yield any meaningful student replies.

If a teacher called on specific students to answer particular questions, they often chose students who looked as though they were not paying attention.

> Teacher: Is that clear?
>
> Students: (no verbal response)
>
> Teacher: (Name of student who is visiting with a classmate), is that clear?
>
> Student: Yeah.

Whatever form these questions took, the teachers rarely pursued the issue of student "understanding" beyond this level of investigation. Most often, the teachers moved quickly on to the next part of their presentation.

If students seemed bored or distracted, the teachers would often try to regain their attention by saying things like, "Come on guys, this stuff is important" or "Listen carefully to this because it is going to be on the test." While teachers would try to keep the students focused on the content of the lesson, they were not always successful.

During my visits, I noticed many students involved in activities that I would consider "off task." While the level of this behavior varied from teacher to teacher, I saw students sleeping, doing homework for other classes, listening to music, checking out web sites and playing computer games (in a computer class) all during the part of class that I have been calling "presentation." In three different classroom (with three different teachers), I saw students playing cards during the presentation segment of the class. On one of these occasions, I saw two students playing cards for real money while the teacher was presenting the lesson.

When the level of distraction or misbehavior got to a certain level (this varied among the study's participants), the teachers would often threaten particular students or the entire class with punishments. Common threats included loss of daily behavior points, extra homework, assigned seats, or a trip to the principal. Here are some sample threats that I heard during my observations:

- If you don't work quietly, I'll assign it for homework.
- Who wants a point off for talking?
- If you goof off..., you will receive a zero.
- Some of you are having trouble quieting down. If you don't quiet down, I'll give you some extra work to do.
- If you don't quiet down, I'm going to give you lots of writing to do.
- You know I don't like to give homework over the weekend, but if you talk, you are going to carry this into the weekend.

On a couple of occasions during my visits, teachers followed through with these threats. Most often, however, they did not.

Student Practice

Following the presentation portion of the class period, the teachers typically asked their students to do some kind of activity to practice the topic of the day. Most of these

activities were close-ended. By this, I mean that students had to complete an activity in which they would come to a specific conclusion.

There were two common types of closed-ended activities that teachers employed. The first asked students to look for a specific facts and fill-in/match/choose the correct answer. For example, one teacher asked the students to read through a portion of text on the planet Saturn and complete a paragraph by filling in the blanks. Here is that paragraph:

> Famed for its magnificent _____ system, Saturn is the _____ largest of the planets. Like its nearest neighbor _____, Saturn is a giant. However, the mass is so spread out that on average the planet is less _____ than _____. Saturn has more _____ than any other planet in our solar system – at least _____. The largest moon, _____, has an unusually _____ atmosphere.

The second common activity asked students to follow a set of specific instructions and then demonstrate that they had done so. For example, in one class, the teacher asked his students to open a pre-typed document on a computer that had many errors. All students had the same document. Students then had to go through the document, make appropriate changes on the computer, print a revised version of the document, and turn it in for points.

During the student practice portion of the class period, the teachers often divided their time between working at their desk (e.g., grading, reading e-mail, and planning) and roaming the classroom. When the teachers roamed the classroom, they spent most of their time answering students' questions about the activity, encouraging students to stay on task, and giving students clues on how to get a better grade on the activity. Some of the teachers spent part of this time talking with the students about topics that were not related to the class (e.g., scores of last night's ball game, trips to Florida for Spring

Break, and hunting). But when students began to have these kinds of conversations among themselves, the teachers would often put a stop to them very quickly and remind the students to get back to work. For example, one teacher was teasing a couple of students. When the students tried to join in with the joking, the teacher turned to them and said, "You guys get crazy when I start joking with you. I don't want that." He then told the students to "keep working" and moved to another part of the classroom.

At the end of the student practice, a couple of the teachers assigned homework. Most often, the students' homework was unfinished assignments from the practice portion of the class.

Free Time

At the end of the class period, most of the teachers allowed 5-10 minutes of free time. During this time, students were allowed to visit with friends, talk with the teacher, work on their homework, etc. The number of students who chose to do homework was typically the smallest. During free time, the teachers seemed to be more lenient about student movement and noise level than at any other time in the class period. Teachers often used this time to prepare for their future classes, talk to individuals about missing assignments, visit with students, read/write e-mail, or go into the hallway to chat with colleagues.

Common Features of Teaching Practice

Looking at the above description, there are at least four common features of the participants' teaching. First, most of the participants used a *traditional classroom setup*. By this I mean that these teachers' classrooms fit the stereotypical image of a traditional classroom– often found in books, in movies, and on television – with student desks in

rows and columns facing the front of the classroom. In fact, there was nothing about the chalk/dry-erase boards, walls, desks, bookshelves, filing cabinets, closets, windows, computers, etc. that would make the participants' classroom appear any different from this stereotypical image.

Second, the participants predominantly use a *teacher-centered* instructional approach. The teachers mostly stayed at the front of the classroom while delivering instruction. If they moved from this location during the presentation segment of class, it was only briefly (e.g., to retrieve something quickly from their desk, to answer a students' question one-on-one, etc.). While the teachers presented the material, the students' role in the classroom seemed limited to listening, taking notes, and at times, responding to low-level questions that the teacher might ask. In general, the teachers talked while the students listened.

During the practice phase of the class period, students were required to complete recall and/or reproduction activities. In these activities, the students had to either recall specific facts from the teacher's lecture, or they had to reproduce something from specific instructions. Neither activity type asks students to do anything beyond the lowest levels of Bloom's Taxonomy of Cognitive Tasks.

Third, the participants relied heavily on *prepackaged curriculum*. Most of the reading and activities were directly from the classroom textbook. Students read from the text and completed activities (i.e., questions, problems, etc.) written by the text's authors. Sometimes, the teachers would slightly modify these prepackaged activities; but most often, the assignments were directly from the text. The reliance on prepackage curriculum was also evident in the participants' planning. As I stated earlier, if teachers

had a lesson plan, it rarely included more than chapter titles, section titles, activity names, and page numbers from the textbook. Planning seemed to be more about finding "where we are in the text," than coming up with original instruction ideas that fit students' specific and unique needs.

Forth, most of the participants did not strictly enforce a rigid system of rules. Rather, the teachers used a *loose management approach* that included coaxing (e.g., "Come on guys, this stuff is important."), dealing (e.g., "...if you talk, you are going to carry this into the weekend."), and threats (e.g., "If you goof off..., you will receive a zero.") to get students to comply with the certain behavior expectations. The resulting classroom atmosphere was the product of teacher-student negotiations, with both sides trading what they have to get what they want.

Interpretation

As I stated at the beginning of this chapter, I am not going to pass judgment on the quality of TTT participants' teaching. Whether a traditional classroom layout, teacher-centered instruction, prepackaged curriculum, and loose classroom management are all features of good teaching is not this study's focus.[19] For this study, I am much more interested in exploring the origins of practice. In other words, I want to know what impact past work experience has on present teaching practice. For this reason, I do not claim that TTT participants' teaching is either good or bad. Instead, I argue that TTT participants' teaching is *common*. In other words, even if TTT participants come into teaching with a unique experience (i.e., the military), they eventually look and act like their non-military colleagues.

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[19] For perspectives on the "good teaching" debate see Chall, 2000, Kohn, 2000; Ravitch, 2000; Wiske, 1998; Hirsch 1996; Cohen, 1990; and Duckworth, 1987.

Cuban (1993) and Goodlad (1984), two classic studies of how teachers teach, conclude that most teachers in the United States rely heavily on prepackaged curricula, use extra work as punishment, rarely challenge students with higher-level thinking, organize their classrooms in rows of desks facing the front of the room, and do most of the talking. All of these features were present in my above description of TTT participants' teaching. Since TTT participants and their non-military colleagues act so similarly in the classroom, I can conclude that military experience has only a limited impact on the way that TTT participants actually do their job. So why is this case? While there are most likely other possible explanations, I will offer two here: school structure and domain-specific traits.

School Structure

The first reason why military experience does not have a significant impact on TTT participants' teaching is because schools are quite resistant to change. Reformers are constantly trying to modify the way that we *do school* in this country. Most often, however, these reform efforts produce very little change. If change occurs, it typically happens very slowly and only on the surface, leaving the fundamental structure of schools unchanged. Often, what ultimately changes is the reform idea itself, which somehow assimilates into the existing school structure. The reforms that have the greatest chance at making an impact are those that acknowledge/respect the existing complexity of the system's structure (Tyack & Cuban, 1995).

This might be one of the reasons why military experience does not play a more significant role in TTT participants' teaching. Perhaps the existing system of schooling is resistant to any instructional approach – informed by military experience, or not – that

does not fit into, make room for, or respect system norms. With so much of the system functioning in a particular way for such a long period of time, the participants' teaching might ultimately adapt to the existing system, rather than change it.

To see this theory in action, let us look at the participants' classroom management. It is easy to assume that former soldiers would be good at managing people. After all, any soldier promoted beyond the lowest rank of private/airman/seaman most likely had some experience managing people while in the armed services. Even those people who know very little about life in the military would correctly assume that management in the military is characterized by structure, order, and discipline. Using this information, TTT supporters claim that the participants would be able to draw on their management experience to develop a classroom that is highly structured, organized, and disciplined.

However, most of the study participants discovered that the military approach to management does not work in the classroom.

> *Larry*: When I was in the military thinking about [becoming a teacher], I was thinking that I could come into teaching like a boot-camp instructor. I soon found out that that doesn't work out at all. It's not even close because people in boot-camp, you can do a lot of things to them that you can't do to students. And I transitioned into a real different approach.

> *Pete*: Being a hard-liner, I don't think would work in this school. Those who try to be hard-liners are going to have problems. Because some of these kids do not respond well to real cut and dry, "All right, that's it." But there has to be some flexibility.

While the "hard-liner" approach might work in boot camp between a drill sergeant and new recruits, most of the participants realized that this does not work in schools. The classroom management system that most participants ultimately developed is not the disciplined structure that TTT supporters promised. Now that they are in the classroom,

these teachers do not demand total attention, absolute quiet, and active participation (i.e., a strict, heavy-handed approach to classroom management).

Most of the teachers participate in a loose classroom management system characterized by unspoken negotiations with their students. Within this system, both sides (i.e., teacher and students) use what they *have* to get what they *want*. For example, the teachers *have* control over grades, assignments, and free time. They can give or take off points, assign more or less questions for homework, and extend or limit students' social time in class. The students *have* control over their behavior. They can show a general interest in what is going on in class, choose specific opportunities for classroom disruptions, turn assignments that the teacher requested, and generally give the impression that they are following the teachers' plan for the class. The teachers *want* a classroom that does not draw too much of the wrong kind of attention. They do not want administrators and colleagues to think that they are unable to control the class. The students *want* higher grades, easy assignments, and plenty of free time. In the end, the classroom environment is in constant flux with each side giving and taking to maintain the precarious balance between chaos and the appearance of control.[20]

This classroom management arrangement between teacher and students makes perfect sense in light of the context. By the time the students reach the TTT participants' classroom, they have been thoroughly trained in the art of *doing school*. Consciously or unconsciously, students have grown accustom to the way schools work. They know what they have to do in order to move through the system. Those behaviors develop into habits of practice. Not only do the students in the classroom act in accordance with these

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[20] For further discussions, see McLaren (1994), Bissinger (1990), Sedlak, Wheeler, Pullin, & Cusick (1986), McNeil (1986), Sizer (1984), and Cusick (1983).

expectations, but they also see their teachers reinforcing these habits across many classrooms. Now imagine a teacher coming in with a set of expectations that goes contrary to so much the students have already learned about school. What chance does this kind of management system have against such pressure? I suggest very little. The system offers very few rewards to the maverick teacher who tries to alter that system. In the end, I assume that, like Larry and Pete (see quotes above), most of these teachers choose to adapt to the system, rather than change it.

Among the teachers that I observed, the single exception was Todd. Unlike the rest of the participants, Todd had a very strict classroom management system. Students entered and exited the classroom quietly, did not visit during class, and used non-instruction time (i.e., when the teacher was not talking at the front of the room) to work alone on their class assignments. From what I observed, Todd did not negotiate with his students. He had established and maintained a rigid system of rules without using threats or deals.

One might assume that Todd contradicts to my conclusion, but I would argue that his situation actually reinforces it. Of all the participants in this study, Todd is the only teacher not employed in the public school system. He teaches in a private, Catholic school, where many features common to the military (e.g., discipline, structure, and uniformity) are honored and enforced. Todd is able to maintain a strict classroom because he teaches within a system that supports and rewards teachers for taking such an approach. It would be interesting to see if Todd would be able to continue such strict management in a public school system where features do not match so closely to those of the military.

So why did TTT supporters think that participants would be able to successfully employ military-style management in the classroom? I suggest that, perhaps, TTT advocates acknowledge similarities between the military and schools, but ignore differences. Indeed there are similarities. A review of classic works on the U.S. armed forces (Ricks, 1997; Janowitz, 1960; Huntington, 1957; and Stouffer, 1949) suggest that the military in this country is, for example, highly structured, resistant to change, and isolated from the real-world.

Schools have some of these same features. First, Jackson (1990) talks about a "hidden curriculum" – or system of social norms – that provides a structure of values, attitudes, and beliefs that students must know in order to succeed. Much like the structure of the military, if a participant of the system tries to move outside this structure, there are mechanisms within the system to bring that person back in line. Second, like the military, schools are quite resistant to change. Tyack & Cuban (1995) offer many examples of how schools resist change (i.e., reform). Schools defuse major reforms by assimilating some of the ideas into its own structure. Third, like the military, schools are isolated – by location and by nature of the work – from real world. Teachers and students often meet in a location that is separated from the rest of society. Only on rare occasions within the school context do teachers and students interact with those in the adult work world. And the work in school is often very different than what goes on outside the classroom. Resnick (1987) says that much of what students do in the name of "learning" often have very little resemblance to what people do outside of schools.

But there are also important differences between the military and schools. The differences that play the biggest role in this study have to do with each institution's

mission and method. In recent years, the U.S. military has been involved in many so-called "peace-keeping" activities throughout the world. But let us not be misled. When it comes down to it, the military's ultimate mission is to kill people and brake things. Beyond the political spin, the military accomplishes its missions (i.e., its method) not by building and developing relationships, but by using its awesome force to beat its opponent into submission.

This is a very different than the mission and method of schools. Our society calls on schools to help students develop the skills, knowledge, and disposition of educated adults. Teachers accomplish this mission through the use of meaningful relationship that will help students make connections to the subject matter. In a way, teaching is working in the opposite direction of soldiering. While soldiers destroy, teachers build.

Domain-specific Traits

The second reason why military experience does not have a significant impact on TTT participants' practice is because teaching, like other occupations, has domain-specific traits that one must develop within the context of the professional community. Lave and Wenger (1991) suggest that most knowledge is domain-specific. The only way beginners can become experts is through active participation in the community. The skills, knowledge, and dispositions acquired outside the community offer only limited assistance in the person's development inside the community.

Assuming that teaching has certain domain-specific traits, educators then could only develop these traits through interaction with other teaching-community members. This would mean that TTT participants would need more than just their military experience to be effective teachers. Participants need to acquire the domain-specific

skills, knowledge, and dispositions that will allow them to become expert teachers. Let us look at this issue in the context of a particular domain-specific trait.

As I discussed in chapter 2, a common argument for recruiting soldiers – and other mid-career professionals in general – into teaching is that these recruits have strong backgrounds in practical, content knowledge. In other words, these teachers have "real-world" knowledge of the subject area that traditional-source teachers most likely do not have.

After interviewing and observing these participants, I am not convinced that this "real-world" content knowledge plays as big a role as TTT supporters claim. Most of the participants failed to identify specific instances where they use content area knowledge from the military in their teaching. Many claimed that their military experience made an impact in their teaching, but struggled to describe how.

There was one exception. When asked, Bryan describe how he uses the knowledge he acquired in the military as a teacher.

> *Bryan*: I've got so many stories and so many things that I can use. My experiences are so vast. When I am talking about a collision between 2 bodies, I have investigated thousands of collisions between 2 bodies, ships colliding with ships, and ships colliding with bridges. And I have got the experiences. When we talk about hazardous materials and chemical safety, I've responded to hundreds of big chemical accidents. I was the federal on-scene coordinator/representative for Times Beach, in Missouri. It was really a large dioxin spill that made the news. And the Exxon Valdez, and many, many others. Major spills, with benzene spills, styrene spills, and ethylene dichloride and many other hazardous materials. And I have been responsible for the accident management and the clean up. So, it has really come in handy and valuable in teaching chemistry and teaching physics and ecology. I teach ecology and I've spent a lot of time on working on oil spills and bio-remediation and spill-cleanup methods that I can talk about real-life experiences of actually being down there working with the EPA and people from the Department of Natural Resources and so on. I've got thousands of real-life experiences that I think the students really enjoy listening to. If someone can tell them a story, a true story about something that they were involved in, I think that they pay attention to it.

Bryan links specific ideas from his job in the military (e.g., "bio-remediation") to particular classes (e.g., "ecology") that he now teaches. Bryan's connection between specific experiences and particular classes goes far beyond the generalities of the other participants.

But just because he makes this connection does not mean that his experience plays a meaningful role in his instruction. In fact, looking closer at *how* Bryan uses this knowledge suggests that perhaps his military experience has more to do with entertaining students than providing meaningful instruction. Notice at the beginning and end of the quote, Brian refers to his military experiences as "stories." The two phrases "really enjoy listening to" and "pay attention to it" suggest that Brian uses these *stories* as a way to keep the students entertained. When I observed Bryan in the classroom, I saw these stories in action.

During my observation, Bryan told two stories about being in the military. In the first story, Bryan described the actions of the captain and first mate of the Exxon Valdez. (As a member of the Coast Guard, Bryan was involved in the clean up and investigation of this incident.) In his story, he focused the choices these men made on the night of this environment catastrophe. Bryan's final point to the story was that as a result of the Exxon Valdez, there are policies now in place to test ship officers for drug and alcohol. Bryan used this story to break up a lecture he was giving – like a commercial during a television program or an intermission during a play. Once he finished the story, he went back to his presentation of the day's lesson. He made no effort to connect anything from the story to the content of the lesson or the course in general.

The second story came at the end of a class period. The presentation and practice phases of the class were over and most students were visiting with their friends. One student asked the teacher to tell the "cockroach story" again (apparently he had told the story earlier in the school year). After some encouragement by other students, Bryan told a story about being stationed in Louisiana as a member of the Coast Guard. Bryan's story had to do with his surprise at the size and mobility of the insects (a cockroach flew into his mouth while he was trying to kill it). The students laughed at the story, but once again, Bryan made no effort to connect it to chemistry (the class he was teaching at the time), or any other science field. The story just filled time at the end of a class period.

Of all the classes I observed for this study, these two stories were the only military references that I heard from any of the study's participants. From what I observed, most participants made little or no reference to the real-world knowledge that they acquired in the military. The two military references that I heard were limited to telling stories to entertain the students. There was no meaningful connection between the knowledge acquired in the military and the subject matter knowledge in the classroom. Instead, many participants chose to teach from prepackaged curriculum, which left little room for these teachers to use their own experiences.

The lack of "real-world" knowledge from the participants' military experience could be due to the fact that many of the participants teach subjects that have very little relationship to what they were doing in the military. Most chose to teach a particular subject not because it was related to what they were doing in the military; rather, they decided to teach in a content area because they always liked the subject or they had enough college credits in the subject to get certified.

But I suggest that the most important reason why participants do not use their real-world knowledge in the classroom is because they do not know how. In other words, they do not use their military experience because they have never acquired the knowledge and skills specific to the teaching that would allow them to be able to translate their experiences into meaningful classroom instruction. In light of Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory, perhaps these participants need to acquire domain-specific pedagogical knowledge and skills within the context of the teaching community that will allow them to make meaningful use of their military experience in the classroom.

Larger Issues about Teaching

My discussion of the usefulness of content knowledge points to a larger issue. There is a common perception about teaching that if a person is smart/talented/skilled, he/she can teach. Supporters of this position often claim that beyond a criminal background check and a desire to teach, educators need only to be knowledgeable about the subject matter that they teach. In other words, successful teaching is easy or automatic for those who have a great deal of content knowledge. Students will somehow acquire the content knowledge from these people simply by being in their presence. Unfortunately, supporters of this position fail to explain how this learning-by-osmosis theory actually works.

The results of this study challenge this theory. In the classroom, the TTT participants struggled to use the knowledge that they acquired in the military. Instead, they relied heavily on prepackaged curriculum to teach their courses. Even if their military experience would have had a more direct relationship to the course content, these participants did not know how to transform this knowledge into meaningful instruction.

So where does the "if smart, then good teacher" notion come from? I suggest that people believe this idea because they underestimate the complexity of the task. As Labaree (2000) says, "[T]eaching is an enormously difficult job that looks easy" (p. 228).

Labaree suggests that teaching appears to be easy to those outside the profession for a couple reasons. First, almost every adult has spent 12+ years in school observing the teaching profession firsthand. From this perspective, they assume that they know what teachers do. When in reality, what they see is only the tip of the teaching iceberg. Second, those outside the profession assume that teachers are experts in the skills and knowledge that most adults have already acquired. Teachers' success depends on their ability to *give away* what they know. By graduation, students might assume that they have acquired all or most of what their teachers have to offer. Third, part of a teacher's job is to make complex content knowledge understandable (i.e., "simplify") for students. In the process of simplifying the knowledge, students might come away with the notion that teachers' work is *simplistic*.

Labaree (2000) claims, however, that teaching is not as easy as it might first appear. He offers five major factors that make teaching so difficult. First, success in teaching requires active cooperation of students. In other words, students must be willing to accept what the teacher has to offer. Second, the students often attend school under duress. Most students would prefer to be doing something other than what the teacher is asking them to do. Third, the teacher is responsible for much more than just delivering information. Much of a teacher's job involves establishing and maintaining an emotional relationship with the students. Fourth, teaching is a solitary practice. Teachers must do their job relatively isolated from other professionals in their field.

> Ever since the invention of age-graded education early in the 19th century, teachers have found themselves plying their trade within the four walls of the self-contained classroom. They normally teach under conditions where they are the only professional in the room, left to their own devices to figure out a way to manage a group of 30 students and move them through the required curriculum. (Labaree, 2000, p. 230)

Teachers must survive on their own with little, if any, support from colleagues and superiors. Fifth, teaching success depends upon a vast collection of complex relationships between multiple variables. Labaree suggests that teachers must ultimately "...learn to live with chronic uncertainty as an essential component of their professional practice" (p. 231).

TTT supporters – and other mid-career recruitment supporters who support this "if smart, then good teacher" theory – need to acknowledge teaching's complexity. If they cannot see this for themselves, they should listen to the program participants. Bryan, who perhaps found more use for his military experience in his teaching than any of the other participants, admits that the transition to teach is not as smooth as supporters make it out to be. In the interview he said:

> *Bryan*: You know, you don't retire from the military, find a teaching job and fall into it. It's not like that at all. Nor probably should it be. You can't have military people in a classroom that really don't understand the vocabulary and the culture of the schools. It is a very different culture.

Bryan's quote will most likely never be included in a promotional brochure for TTT because it contradicts what supporters claim. Bryan suggests that in order to succeed as teachers, former soldiers need more than just their military experience. Not only do they need to develop a fundamental understanding of "a very different culture," they are also going to need certain skills, knowledge, and dispositions that are specific to that culture.

Implications

If military experience does not have the impact that supporters of TTT had hoped for, what can be done to help future participants make the transition of skills, knowledge, and dispositions more meaningful? I suggest that there needs to be some kind of experience between the military and teaching or, perhaps, at teaching induction that would meet the specific needs of these special teachers.

I am not suggesting that TTT participants need to complete a traditional or alternative teacher preparation program. Most traditional preparation programs are designed with traditional-source candidates in mind and might offer very little to veterans in their 40's and 50's. Alternative teacher preparation programs might not meet these soldiers' needs either. These programs are often more about expediting the certification process rather than meeting candidates' specific needs. After all, 7 of the 10 participants completed a teacher preparation program and the other 3 participants have completed many education courses since employment, yet they still lack a proper understanding of schools and how to apply their military experience in their teaching.

The type of preparation that TTT participants need in order to apply their experience might ultimately look very different any kind of existing program. Now I am unsure what the entire program would look like, but the results of this study give me some ideas about the kind of preparation TTT participants will need. The analysis of classroom management and content knowledge demonstrates that TTT participants need some help if they are going to become effective teachers. Using these two issues, I can see at least three areas that TTT participants need assistance.

First, the participants need a better understanding of students. Students are not, as one participant told me, "... just younger sailors." Students are very complex creatures with unique experiences, wants, needs, desires, stages of development, etc. The participants need to develop a better understanding of who their students are. Once they begin to understand their students, these participants can avoid the kind of classroom bargaining that was so prevalent in their teaching. Ultimately they will be able to help students take more responsibility for their own behavior and learning.

Second, the participants need a better understanding of the ways schools work. If they reject the fundamental structure of schools, they risk not being able to make any kind of meaningful change in the system. These teachers will only be able to break the cycle of ordinary teaching, if they understand the system in which they work. Their preparation should include some experience exploring the unique mission, focus, and purpose of U.S. schools.

Third, the participants need to know how to translate their military experience into meaningful instruction. They need to develop pedagogical knowledge and skills that will allow them to draw upon their military experience and create meaningful connections between content area and students. While the situation of the career-switchers is unique to that of the traditional-source teachers, the acquisition of pedagogical knowledge and skills will most likely occur in conjunction with others in the education community who are constantly struggling to make similar pedagogical connections.

Conclusion

So, what we have seen is that students will most likely not be surprised by TTT participants' instructional approach because it probably looks very similar to the teaching they experience in other classrooms. This approach includes a traditional classroom setup, teacher-centered instruction, prepackaged curriculum, and a loose management style. The participants most likely employ such an instructional approach for least two reasons. First, they are unable to sustain an instructional approach that does not fit into this country's well-established schooling system. Second, they lack pedagogical skills and knowledge that would allow them to transform their experience into meaningful learning activities in the classroom.

If TTT supporters want program participants to make a difference in schools, they are going to have to acknowledge the complexities of teaching and encourage participants to acquire skills, knowledge, and dispositions that are teaching-specific. Participants ultimately need a preparation experience that addresses their specific transition needs.

Participants of this study said that they acquired, among other traits, a sense of determination while in the military. I hope that TTT supporters do not use these veterans' can-do attitude as an excuse to limit the kind of training and support that these teachers need. This misuse of this disposition does not honor these former soldiers or the students they ultimately teach.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Demographics Related to TTT

A. 1998 NCEI National Survey of TTT Participants (N=1,171)
B. 2000 DANTES Data of TTT Participants (N=3,821)
C. 2001 Texas Military Initiative/Troops to Teachers Study of Texas TTT Participants (N=270)
D. 1996 NCEI National Survey of Public School Teachers (N=1,018)
E. 2002 Data from Ohio TTT on Ohio TTT Participants (N=124)
F. 1999 MFRC Profile of the Military Community (N=1,371,144)

Demographic	Category	A %	B %	C %	D %	E %	F %
Gender	male	90	86	85	26	90	86
Ethnicity	minority	29	33		11	26	34
Subjects	math	29	15	17	13	10	
	science	27	11		11	9	
	special ed.	10	20	41	5	9	
	vocational ed.	15	15		3	5	
Location	inner city	24	24		16		
	suburban	27	27		31		
	small town	24	24		30		
	rural	24	24		23		
Age	35-54 years	91			70		
	under 35	5			21		80
	over 55	5			9		
Level	secondary	45	46	57	27		
	middle school	35	29		26		
	elementary	20	25	43	47		
Marital	married	85			69		55
	divorced or separated	11			13		4
	single	3			1		42
Branch	Army	37				29	35
	Air Force	33				42	26
	Navy	21				21	27
	Marines	6				6	13
	Coast Guard	1				2	
Rank	officer	59				61	16
TE	traditional	50					
	alternative	45		66			
	don't know	4					

Recruitment Letter to Study Participants

Daniel B. Coupland
6700 Pontiac Trail
West Bloomfield, MI 48323
Tel: (248)-366-9261
e-mail: couplan1@msu.edu

Dear Troops to Teachers Participant,

My name is Dan Coupland. I am a graduate student in Teacher Education at Michigan State University. In the coming months, I will be doing an independent research study on participants of the Troops to Teachers program. I am interested in studying the transition from military service to classroom teaching. I want to know how the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that participants acquired in the military transfer and apply to their careers as educators in Ohio public schools.

I would like to invite you to be a participant of this study. Included in this letter, you will find four items:

2 consent forms (one to be returned and one for your own records)
1 Troops to Teachers Transition Survey
1 return envelope

Please read over the documents carefully. The consent forms include a detailed description of the study. If you are interested in being chosen as one of the 10-12 participants for this study, please complete, sign, and return one of the consent forms and the basic information survey.

If you are chosen as a participant of this study, I will contact you by telephone or e-mail and make further arrangements. If I receive your forms and you are not selected for this study, I will also notify you by telephone or e-mail.

Thank you for your time.
Respectfully,

Daniel B. Coupland

APPENDIX C

Participant Consent Form

Purpose

My study will look at Ohio Troops to Teacher participants who have made the transition from military service to classroom teaching. I want to know how the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that these participants acquired in the military transfer and apply to their new careers as educators in public schools.

Procedures

Initial Survey

I will mail one page surveys to all of the TTT participants working in Ohio public schools that I can find. The survey will ask for basic demographic information (e.g., age, gender, and military rank) and a few questions that pertain to the study's topic. The information from this survey will assist me in selecting the 10-12 participants for the remainder of the study (i.e., observations, interviews, and artifact collection). The surveys of those individuals not selected will be placed in a back-up file (in the event that one or more participants leave the original group and I need more participants) and locked away at another site. I will keep all of these surveys in this file until the end of the study. Surveys of individuals not selected to participate in the study will be shredded at the conclusion of the study. Identifying information from the surveys of individuals selected for the study will be separated from the survey answers and shredded at the conclusion of this study.

Pre-interview Observation

I will come to the participant's school for a day and observe him/her throughout his/her entire school day. During this observation, I will take notes on what is happening in the classroom. This visit will prepare me for the up-coming general interview. There will be no audio or video recording during this observation.

General Interview

I will interview the participant at the end of the school. During this 1-2 hour, recorded (on audiocassette) interview, I will ask participants to talk about their transition from military service to classroom teaching. This interview will be later transcribed for analysis.

Post-interview Observation

I will return to the participant's school the following school day and observe him/her throughout his/her entire school day. During this observation, I will take notes on what is happening in the classroom. This visit will help me make sense of what I hear in the general interview. There will be no audio or video recording during this observation.

Artifact Collection

I will ask for copies of general artifacts from the participants' teaching (e.g., class rules, course syllabus, and written plans) and the observation days' lessons (e.g., lesson plans, activities, and assignments). The choice of artifacts will be at the discretion of the participant. Participants can choose not to provide artifacts for this project without any consequences to themselves or the study.

Follow-up Interviews

I want to be able to contact the participants, if necessary, for follow-up interviews. During these recorded (on audiocassette) interviews, I might, for example, ask participants to add insight to the ideas that I am formulating as the researcher or expound upon issues discussed in the general interview. While there is a possibility that participants will not be contacted for a follow-up interview, I would like to have this option available. This interview will later be transcribed for analysis.

All data will be compiled using subject identification numbers, with a master list of names and numbers locked away at another site. I will analyze all of the data (i.e., observation notes, transcripts of the recorded interviews, and copies of artifacts) for a final report. Following the production of the final report, all of the data collected for this study will be kept in my private files. If a participant withdraws from the study, all of audio tapes will be erased and all documents (i.e., observation notes, transcripts of recorded interviews, copies of artifacts, and initial survey) will be shredded.

Participation

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You can refuse to answer any question or stop participating at any time without penalty.

Confidentiality

All of the data collected will be treated with strict confidence; your name will not be used in any reports about this project, and any identifying characteristics will be disguised. There is a possibility that someone familiar with you and your teaching will be able to identify you from the report. However, I will do everything possible not to reveal your identity. Your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law.

Researcher's Contact Information and MSU's UCRIHS contact information

If you have any questions about this study, please contact the researcher: Daniel B. Coupland, 6700 Pontiac Trail, West Bloomfield, MI 48323, tel: (248)-366-9261, e-mail: couplan1@msu.edu

If you have any questions about your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact – anonymously, if you wish –Ashir Kumar, M.D., Chair of the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, 202 Olds Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824, tel: (517)-355-2180, fax: (517)-432-4503, e-mail: ucrihs@msu.edu

Consent for Participation

If you are willing to participate in this study, please print and sign your name below, and return this form with the Troops to Teachers Transition Survey in the provided envelope. Your signature below indicates your voluntary agreement to participate in this study.

Your name (Please Print): _____

Your signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX D

Troops to Teachers Transition Survey

Please Print

Last Name	First Name	Middle Initial
Address	Telephone Number(s)	E-mail Address

1. Gender: ___ male   ___ female

2. Age: ___ years old

3. Race/ethnicity:
   ___ Black, non-Hispanic   ___ Hispanic
   ___ White, non-Hispanic   ___ American Indian/Alaska Native
   ___ Asian/Pacific Islander   ___ Other: _____

4. Branch of Service: ___ Army   ___ Air Force   ___ Navy
   ___ Marines   ___ Coast Guard

5. Most Recent Military Rank: _____

6. Number of years of military service: ___ years

7. Position in School: ___ Teacher   ___ Administrator   ___ Other

8. Teaching Level: ___ High School   ___ Middle School   ___ Elementary

9. Subject area(s) that you teach: _____

10. Community where you teach: ___ Inner City   ___ Suburban
    ___ Small Town   ___ Rural

11. Number of years employed as a teacher in a K-12 setting (include this year): ___ years

12. Before you acquired a teaching job, how much did you plan to draw on the knowledge, skills, and dispositions from your military experience in your teaching?

    ___ A lot   ___ Somewhat ___ Not much   ___ Not at all

13. Now that you are a teacher, how much do you actually draw on the knowledge, skills, and dispositions from your military experience in your teaching?

    ___ A lot   ___ Somewhat ___ Not much   ___ Not at all

APPENDIX E

Interview Questions

The Military
- Talk about your job in the military.
  - Talk about what you did.

- Walk me through a typical day for you in the military.

- Talk about your life in the military.
  - Talk about what you miss about your life in the military.
  - Talk about the things in the military that you are glad to leave behind.

- Talk about the knowledge you acquired in the military that you thought would be useful for you in a second career.

- Talk about the skills you acquired in the military that you thought would be useful for you in a second career.

- Talk about the dispositions/attitudes/beliefs you acquired in the military that you thought would be useful for you in a second career.

Teaching
- Talk about your initial interest in teaching.
  - Talk about what was attractive to you about teaching.
  - Talk about what you were leery about regarding teaching.

- Walk me through a typical day for you as a teacher.

- Talk about your life as a teacher.
  - Talk about the things that you like about being a teacher.
  - Talk about the things that you dislike about being a teacher.

- Talk about the best teacher that you ever had.
  - What made that person such a good teacher?

- Talk about the qualities/characteristic/attributes that make a good teacher.

- Talk about yourself as a teacher.
  - What kind of teacher are you?
  - What makes you the teacher that you are?

- Before you became a teacher, how much did you plan to draw on the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that you acquired from your military experience in your teaching? Talk about your answer.

- Now that you are a teacher, how much do you actually draw on the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that you acquired from your military experience in your teaching? Talk about your answer.

- Talk about how the skills, knowledge, and dispositions that you acquired military influence who you as a teacher and how you teach.

- Talk about how other non-military experiences influence who you are as a teacher and how you teach.

- Talk about the similarities (environment/job/people) between your life in the military and your life as a teacher.

- Talk about the differences (environment/job/people) between your life in the military and your life as a teacher.

- Talk about the reactions that you have received from people in the school community (students, teachers, parents, etc.) when they find out that you were a member of the U.S. military?

Conclusion
- Is there anything that you would like to add before we conclude this interview?

APPENDIX F

Participant Descriptions

Bryan is a 48-year old, white male who served 20 years of active duty in the Coast Guard. He was stationed in Guam and visited countries like Japan, Indonesia, Venezuela, Hong Kong, Marshal Island, Mexico, the Philippines, Brazil, Trinidad, Taiwan, Peru, and Canada during his time in the armed services. Bryan worked primarily as a marine safety officer and earned the rank of lieutenant commander. For the last 3 years, he has been teaching chemistry, physics, and ecology at a suburban high school. Bryan completed a teacher preparation program before being hired for his teaching position.

Harold is a 42-year old, white male who served 8 ½ years of active duty in the Army. He was stationed in Germany and visited countries like France, Switzerland, Holland, England, Austria, Denmark, Turkey, Italy, Belgium, Spain, Yugoslavia, and Greece during his time in the armed forces. Harold worked primarily in health services and earned the rank of captain. He spent 3 ½ years in the military reserves. For the last 3 years, he has been an alternative education teacher at a suburban middle school. Harold completed a teacher preparation program before being hired for his teaching position.

Paul is a 46-year old, white male who served 21 years of active duty in the Air Force. He was stationed in Germany and visited countries like Norway, Denmark, England, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Holland, Italy, Spain, Israel, Turkey, Cyprus, Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, Liberia, Ivory Coast, Gabon, Zaire, Canada, Panama, Portugal, Cuba, El Salvador, Honduras, Korea, and Japan during his time in the armed forces. Paul worked primarily as navigator and instructor in special operations and earned the rank of lieutenant colonel. He spent 2 ½ years in ROTC and recruiting. For the last 2 ½ years, he has been a computer teacher at a rural high school. Paul was hired under the veterans' provision and did not complete a teacher preparation program before being hired for his teaching position.

Todd is a 46-year old, white male who served 21 years of active duty in the Army. He was stationed in Germany and visited countries like Denmark, France, Holland, and the former East Germany during his time in the armed forces. Todd worked primarily in aviation and logistics and earned the rank of lieutenant colonel. He spent 9 years in recruiting. For the last 3 years, he has been teaching math at an urban Catholic high school. Todd completed a teacher preparation program before being hired for his teaching position.

Delphine is a 50-year old, white female who served 10 ½ years of active duty in the Air Force. She was never stationed outside of the United States, but visited countries like France, Germany, and England during her time in the armed forces. Delphine worked primarily in aviation and earned the rank of major. She spent 10 years in the military reserves. For the last 2 years, she has been a math teacher at a rural high school. Delphine was hired under the veterans' provision and did not complete a teacher preparation program before being hired for her teaching position.

Keith is a 43-year old, white male who served 21 years of active duty in the Navy. He was stationed in Iceland and Japan and visited countries like the Philippines, Canada, Diego Garcia, Hong Kong, Thailand, Australia, Pakistan, Mexico, and Oman during his time in the armed forces. Keith worked primarily as a ship officer and earned the rank of lieutenant commander. He spent 2 years in recruiting. For the last 3 years, he has been a special education teacher at a suburban high school. Keith completed a teacher preparation program before being hired for his teaching position.

Kraig is a 51-year old, white male who served 25 years of active duty in the Air Force. He was stationed in Thailand, Greenland, Vietnam, Norway, Italy, Germany, England, and Spain and visited countries like Japan, Greece, Turkey, Indonesia, France, Saudi Arabia, Burma, Sweden, Holland, Australia, Denmark, and Austria during his time in the armed forces. Kraig worked primarily in air traffic control and earned the rank of senior master sergeant. For the last 8 years he has taught math and science at an urban elementary school. Kraig completed a teacher preparation program before being hired for his teaching position.

Tom is a 41-year old, white male who served 10 years of active duty in the Air Force. He was stationed in Germany, Spain, Honduras, and Panama and visited Holland, England, France and Italy during his time in the armed forces. Tom worked primarily in military intelligence and earned the rank of technical sergeant. He has served 10 years in the military reserves and continues to be a member. For the last 4 years, he has been a business and computers teacher at a rural high school. Tom was hired under the veterans' provision and did not complete a teacher preparation program before being hired for his teaching position.

Pete is a 41-year old, Native America/white male who served 8 years of active duty in the Marine Corps. He was stationed in Saudi Arabia and visited Kuwait, South Korea, the Philippines, Hong Kong, Australia, and Japan during his time in the armed forces. Pete worked primarily as a pilot and earned the rank of captain. He served 6 years in the military reserves. For the last three years, he has been a science teacher at an urban middle school. Pete completed a teacher preparation program before being hired for his teaching position.

Larry is a 34-year old, white male who served 8 years of active duty in the Navy. He was never stationed outside of the United States, but he visited Greece, Germany, England, Italy, and France during his time in the armed services. Larry worked primarily in logistics and earned the rank of petty officer second class. He has served 4 years in the military reserves and continues to be a member. For the last 4 years, he has been a computer applications and technology teacher at an urban middle school. Larry completed a teacher preparation program before being hired for his teaching position.

APPENDIX G

Table of Comparative Military Ranks

Enlisted Ranks

Pay Grade	Air Force	Army	Marine	Navy/Coast Guard
E-1	Airman Basic	Recruit	Private	Seaman Recruit
E-2	Airman	Private	Private First Class	Seaman Apprentice
E-3	Airman First Class	Private First Class	Lance Corporal	Seaman
E-4	Senior Airman or Sergeant	Corporal or Specialist 4	Corporal	Petty Officer Third Class
E-5	Staff Sergeant	Sergeant	Sergeant	Petty Officer Second Class
E-6	Technical Sergeant	Staff Sergeant	Staff Sergeant	Petty Officer First Class
E-7	Master Sergeant	Sergeant First Class or Platoon Sergeant	Gunnery Sergeant	Chief Petty Officer
E-8	Senior Master Sergeant	Master Sergeant or First Sergeant	Master Sergeant or First Sergeant	Senior Chief Petty Officer
E-9	Chief Master Sergeant	Sergeant Major	Master Gunnery Sergeant or Sergeant Major	Master Chief Petty Officer
W-1	Warrant Officer			
W-2 W-3 W-3	Chief Warrant Officer			

Officer Ranks

Pay Grade	Air Force/Army/Marines	Navy/Coast Guard
0-1	Second Lieutenant	Ensign
0-2	First Lieutenant	Lieutenant Junior Grade
0-3	Captain	Lieutenant
0-4	Major	Lieutenant Commander
0-5	Lieutenant Colonel	Commander
0-6	Colonel	Captain
0-7	Brigadier General	Rear Admiral (Lower Half)
0-8	Major General	Rear Admiral (Upper Half)
0-9	Lieutenant General	Vice Admiral
0-10	General	Admiral

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