

## ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation:           EXPERIENCES OF TROOPS TO TEACHERS (TTT) IN  
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The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of Troops to Teachers (TTT) participants in Maryland to gain a deeper understanding of how they transitioned from being troops to their second tour of duty: being teachers. Organized in 1993 by Dr. J. H. Hexter, the TTT program is meant to reduce veteran unemployment, provide male role models in the classroom, and reduce teacher shortages in schools that serve low-income families. In this study, I considered the transitions of the TTT program participants and their contributions as highly qualified teachers (HQTs) in the state of Maryland. I used the qualitative narrative study method to explore the lived experiences of eight TTT participants in the state of Maryland. I also used the Schlossberg Transition Theory (STT) as a lens, and I used the Integrative Transition Model (ITM) to interpret TTT participants' descriptions of their evolutions from military life to teaching. I derived a model from the STT and ITM and used the 4 S's—situation, self, support, and strategies—to analyze the experiences of the TTT participants. In addition, I also analyzed the challenges the TTT participants experienced as they transitioned and evaluated the mitigation strategies they used to succeed. I

argue that the TTT participants help mitigate the shortage of HQTs in the state of Maryland, as the participants faced a unique set of challenges but successfully used mitigation strategies and exhibited resilience to persevere. Based on my findings, I make three sets of recommendations: (1) recommendations regarding further research of the TTT participants, (2) recommendations regarding changes to the TTT program, and (3) recommendations for civilian teaching programs.

This study is the first of its kind about the experiences of TTT participants in the state of Maryland and contributes to the field of urban education by providing a proof of principle that the TTT program can help reduce HQTs shortages in Maryland. This study also shows that the TTT program produces teachers who have the worldly experience, discipline, and resilience to succeed and that the TTT participants go through transition and may face challenges that should be considered for mitigation.

EXPERIENCES OF TROOP TO TEACHERS (TTT) IN MARYLAND

by

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## DEDICATION

First giving honor to God who is the light of my life, I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my aunt, Johnnie Hamilton Massey, who has always been there for me, through the good and the bad. To my significant other, Dr. Trupti Patel, thank you for standing with me through this very unique and exhausting experience. To my grandmother, Eva Francis Smith Hamilton (deceased); my mother, Nellie Hamilton Brown (deceased); and my brother, Edward Lee Brown (deceased)—thank you for the memories. I will love and cherish you always.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### Introduction to the Troops to Teachers (TTT) Program

To appreciate the experiences of Troops to Teachers (TTT) participants in Maryland, it is critical to first understand the factors affecting teacher shortages in general and then specifically in Maryland (Podolsky, Kini, Bishop, & Darling-Hammond, 2016; Sutchter, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas, 2016). It is also important to lay out several characteristics of the service members and issues related to their transitions and the TTT program (Feistritzer, 2011). I begin this chapter with the introduction to the TTT program. Subsequently I discuss the TTT program and public education in the United States, followed by a discussion of TTT participants, the military, and their transitions from military to civilian and from civilian to teacher. After covering these topics, I present the statement of the problem, followed by the conceptual framework and research question. Subsequently, I address the significance of the study, limitations and delimitations, and the definitions of terms, giving a clear understanding of the chapter's content and flow. I begin by introducing the TTT program in the following paragraph.

The TTT program was organized by Dr. J. H. Hexter (Clinton, 1992). The TTT program was approved under the Clinton administration in 1993 (Clinton, 1992; Adams & Adams, 2003). Any veteran that has been honorably discharged and has an undergraduate degree can apply to participate in the program (K. Daniels, personal communication, February 4, 2017). The program has been successful for over 20 years (Feistritzer, 2005b; Feistritzer, 2011). For example, although 82% of TTT participants are men, 37% are ethnic minorities, with a retention rate of 78% after five years of teaching (Feistritzer, 2005b; Feistritzer, 2011). The TTT program has helped mitigate male teacher shortages in high-risk schools in both urban and rural school settings (Feistritzer, 2005b; Feistritzer, 2011; Ingersoll & May, 2011a; Ingersoll & May, 2011b; Ingersoll & May, 2016).

The TTT program's goals have been expanded to include providing male role models in today's classroom and reducing veteran unemployment and teacher shortages in K–12 schools that serve low-income families. As of January 2, 2017, the veterans who had become teachers were 83% male and 43% ethnic minorities, and 70% planned on remaining in the teaching profession (K. Daniels, personal communication, February 4, 2017). The number of military

personnel hired in 2016 was 1,047. The total number of participants in the TTT program as of January 16, 2017, was 20,061 (K. Daniels, personal communication, February 4, 2017).

### **The TTT Program and Public Education in the United States**

**Urban Education and Highly Qualified Teachers.** Urban education is delineated as a public-school system within a metropolitan community that serves many ethnic minorities, has multiple languages, and has a greater concentration of the poor (Anhorn, 1977; Billingsley, 1993; Chuong, 2008; Colbert & Wolff, 1992; Feistritzer, 2011; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Morin, 2011).

Highly Qualified Teachers (HQTs) are teachers who possess bachelor's degrees, state certifications, or licenses and can prove they are knowledgeable about the subjects they teach (Feistritzer, 2011; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Morin, 2011). HQTs might have the necessary skill sets to teach, but they might not be able to relate to the diverse populations they have been charged to educate. There is no course on caring taught in the teacher education program (Talbert-Johnson, 2006). Teachers who work in urban settings must also be able to relate to the diverse populations of students they teach (Talbert-Johnson, 2006). With this in mind, Talbert-Johnson (2006) defined an *HQT* as a teacher who possesses the necessary credentials to teach (undergraduate degree, valid state certification, and expertise in the core academic area) and could also relate to and care for his or her students. However, Talbert-Johnson (2006) said this change would not occur until education programs could "adequately prepare future teachers to address diversity issues at all levels in the educational arena" (p. 149). In this sense, children in urban settings face barriers to a high-quality education because they are more likely to be taught by teachers who are not qualified or prepared (Sutcher et al., 2016) than HQTs. To address this problem, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) was reinvigorated by President George W. Bush.

**No Child Left Behind.** The NCLB, which was put into effect under President Bush's administration, reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965 (ESEA) and "directly targets poor students and struggling schools" (Cochran-Smith, 2002, p. 148; Welner, 2011). The ESEA's primary goal was to ensure equal access to all categories of students, particularly the poor and disadvantaged (Olson, 1985). Title 1 of the NCLB was amended from the ESEA of 1965 and

to read as “improving the academic achievement of the disadvantaged” (Cochran-Smith, 2002, p. 148; Robelen, 2012; Welner, 2011).

Title I allocated billions of dollars to schools with high concentrations of poor students (Cochran-Smith, 2002; Robelen, 2012; Welner, 2011). This piece of legislation marked the initial entry of the federal government into an exclusive state and local venue (Cochran-Smith, 2002; Robelen, 2012; Welner, 2011). Despite billions of dollars being invested into education, the poor and disadvantaged still remained underserved and marginalized by the education system (Cochran-Smith, 2002; Olson, 1985; Robelen, 2012; Welner, 2011). However, the accountability mechanism it used, with its one-size-fits-all approach, and the 2013–2014 full proficiency goals made the NCLB unrealistic (Robelen, 2012). The lack of classroom discipline has played an important role in the student achievement lag and whether or not teachers stay in schools.

**Classroom Discipline.** Classroom discipline is one of the toughest tasks a teacher faces (Anhorn, 1977; Billingsley, 1993; Chuong, 2008; Colbert & Wolff, 1992; Feistritzer, 2011; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Morin, 2011). A teacher’s ability to maintain control in his or her classroom is a significant tool in the learning process. To establish and maintain discipline in the classroom, teachers should treat their students equitably, attempt to remain rational and in control of every situation, and immediately document any incident (Talbert-Johnson, 2006; Guha, Hyler, & Darling-Hammond, 2016). Gonzalez, Brown, and Slate (2008) found that student discipline was a major factor that influenced the departures of new teachers after only one year. Hudson (2009) agreed with Gonzalez et al. (2008), stating that student discipline was the primary reason for new teacher departure. An additional factor affecting teacher departure is teacher pay.

**Teacher Pay.** Teachers in the United States are paid less than their professional counterparts (Cox, Parmer, Tourkin, Warner, & Lyter, 2007). For example, the average pay for a U.S. teacher is about \$56,900 annually, whereas the average pay for a U.S. nurse is \$70,000 annually (U.S. Department of Labor, 2017). Over 60% of teachers in the U.S. teacher workforce have a second job, and some even sell their blood to make ends meet (Cox et al., 2007).

Croasmun, Hampton, and Herrmann (2003) indicated that the teaching profession was underappreciated, which did not present an encouraging picture for those who wanted to become

teachers. Most college students entering the field of education get a college degree and then leave for other professions that pay more money (Scaccia, 2009; Robelen, 2012; Sutcher et al., 2016). Teacher salaries have declined over the past 40 years (Robelen, 2012). To attract top students graduating from college, teacher salaries have to increase (Billingsley, 1993; Chuong, 2008; Colbert & Wolff, 1992; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Morin, 2011). Low pay may not be as critical for some TTT participants, however, because it is supplementary income to their retirement pay and benefits. There are several incentives for TTT participants to remain in teaching.

**Incentives for TTT Participants to Remain in Teaching.** Of the 17,000 TTT participants teaching in elementary and secondary schools, approximately 8,500 teach in urban schools (Owings, Kaplan, & Chappell, 2014). This is because participants want to mentor and educate young people and are eligible for a \$10,000 bonus if they teach in urban or rural schools (Feistritzer, 2005a, 2005b, 2011; Maze, 2012). Most participants keep their bonuses and remain in teaching after the first three years. As a result, participants have helped reduce the teacher attrition rate. This reduction in the teacher attrition rate can be attributed to not only the additional incentives to stay in the profession, but also to the opportunity teaching provides to work toward a second retirement. Like other teachers, TTT participants experience challenges, yet they are determined to succeed by any means necessary, a mantra that is held in the military (Boyd, 2011; Donathan, 2007; Isherwood, 1996; Owings et al., 2014; Ramirez, 2008; Ramsey, 1999; Sessoms-Penny, 2007). After leaving the military, veterans must maintain their lifestyles and need to have civilian jobs.

### **The TTT Program and the Military**

**Veterans in Need of Civilian Jobs.** During veterans' military indoctrination, they are instilled with a distinct set of values and morals to live by as soldiers, sailors, airmen, or marines. These values are embedded into every veteran (Feistritzer, 2005b). Veterans or retirees, similar to all adults, want to continue earning a living and providing for their families after they end their terms of service, and thus require civilian jobs. Some veterans not only have a distinct set of values and morals, but they also possess college degrees (Maze, 2012). To harvest this talent, a program was

created by the federal government to bring these individuals into the classroom as teachers (Feistritzer, 2005b). That program is the TTT program.

**Nature of Teacher Shortages.** The teaching profession has been referred to as "the profession that eats its young" (Anhorn, 1977, p. 15). This means that new teachers swim or are eaten alive. This phenomenon has become an epidemic that has swept the nation, with an enormous number of highly qualified K–12 teachers leaving the profession during their novice years (Halford, 1998; Ingersoll et al., 2011a; Ingersoll et al., 2011b; Ingersoll et al., 2016; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Podolsky et al., 2016; Sutchter et al., 2016).

Croasmun et al. (2003) indicated that teacher departure (i.e., teacher attrition, teacher migration, and teacher transfer) was the largest single factor creating a demand for additional teachers in the United States. *Teacher attrition* occurs when teachers leave the teaching profession. *Teacher migration* occurs when teachers move from one school to another, and *teacher transfer* occurs when teachers transfer from special education to general education or vice versa. The teacher departure phenomenon became ubiquitous in 1987, suggesting that younger teachers were 2.5 times more likely to leave the profession than their more experienced counterparts (U.S. Department of Education, 2005; Wagner, 2010). Specifically, 50% of first-time teachers left the profession within their first five years of teaching (Colbert & Wolff, 1992; Sutchter et al., 2016). This most commonly occurred in schools that served high percentages of ethnic minorities and low-income students. Teacher dissatisfaction (i.e., unhappiness with teaching, administration, lack of support) was the leading cause attributed to teachers leaving the profession (Sutchter et al., 2016). The following statistics solidify the magnitude of the problem.

**Teacher Shortages.** The National Center for Education Statistics projected that student enrollment would rise to over 50 million in 2016 and that approximately 3.5 million public-school teachers would staff 98,000 public elementary and secondary schools in the United States (Allegiance for Excellent Education, 2008). Roughly half a million teachers leave their schools each year. Approximately 60% of this turnover resulted from teachers transferring between schools, while about 40% resulted from teachers leaving the profession, either because of dissatisfaction with teaching or retirement (Allegiance for Excellent Education, 2008; Podolsky et al., 2016; Riggs,

2013; Sutchter et al., 2016). Ingersoll (2001) labeled this occurrence as “the revolving door” (p. 2). As a result, schools nationwide have lost up to \$2.2 billion in annual attrition costs (Allegiance for Excellent Education, 2008).

Schools in urban and rural areas have been equally impacted by teacher attrition. On average, urban areas lost 20% of their faculty each year (Ingersoll, 2003; Podolsky et al., 2016; Sutchter et al., 2016). Schools that have trouble retaining teachers also struggle to fill vacancies, contributing to a cycle of chronic turnover (Hirsch, 2010; Guha et al., 2016). Ingersoll and Smith’s (2003) quantitative study on teacher departure revealed that the teacher shortage could also be attributed to increased student enrollment and the number of teachers retiring. The teacher shortages in Maryland have followed similar trends.

**Teacher Shortages in Maryland.** I chose Maryland as the target location because one of the TTT program’s goals is to place more men and ethnic minorities within the teaching profession. Maryland currently ranks third in the nation among the number of students that are non-Caucasian (55%), while only 17% of the teachers are non-Caucasian (K. Daniels, personal communication, February 4, 2017). Within the Washington, DC; Maryland; Virginia; and Delaware corridor, there are 22 major military commands and the Pentagon. Soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines who are ending their terms of service or retiring and who have the necessary prerequisites may continue to serve by becoming teachers.

Historically, Maryland has had a shortage of qualified teachers in certain critical fields, such as career and technology, computer science, English for speakers of other languages, mathematics, science, special education, and world languages. As an import state, Maryland hires teachers from other states that have produced more teachers in these areas than needed (Maryland State Department of Education [MSDE], 2014; MSDE, 2016). Early career attrition, flat teacher education graduation rates, and teacher retirements have all contributed to the teacher shortages in Maryland.

Additionally, retention is a major contributing factor to the teacher shortages in Maryland. In 2011, Maryland lost 7.1% of the teaching workforce when 4,485 teachers left employment. Although Maryland institutions produced 2,555 teacher candidates in 2011, a smaller number of



them were hired as teachers in Maryland itself. While many returned to their home states, others moved out of state, entered graduate school, or pursued careers outside of teaching (MSDE, 2014; MSDE 2016). The State of Maryland has used the TTT program and other federal teacher recruitment programs to mitigate teacher shortages (MSDE, 2014; MSDE 2016). The MSDE (2016) also declared shortages of males and ethnic minorities in teaching.

The 125 TTT participants in Maryland have helped address the teacher shortage problem. For example, 90% of the TTT participants in Maryland are men, and 29% are ethnic minorities. They instruct math, science, special education, English, foreign languages, and computer science, which are the subject areas deemed to be critical shortage areas (MSDE, 2014). Between 2014 and 2016, 23 of the 24 counties in Maryland projected a shortage of HQTs (MSDE, 2014). In the same timeframe, approximately 30.6% of the total teacher workforce had less than five years of teaching experience (MSDE, 2014; MSDE, 2016). At the other end of the spectrum, 10.5% of the total teacher workforce had 26 or more years of experience. These two categories made up 40% of the teacher population in Maryland, and these teachers were the most likely to leave and require replacements (MSDE, 2014). However, TTT participants in general intend to stay in their teaching positions for up to 20 years, which enables them to have a second retirement (Feistritz, 2005a, 2005b, 2011; Maze, 2012). TTT participants can attain the goal of a second retirement by completing an alternative teacher certification.

**Alternative Teacher Certifications.** To teach within the U.S. public-school system, individuals must acquire the necessary certification (Feistritz, 2005a, 2005b, 2011; Sutch et al., 2016). A veteran who aspires to become a public-school teacher has the option of completing the traditional teacher certification requirements. This process involves attending college and completing an undergraduate degree in education, as well as completing student teaching under the supervision of a master teacher. However, the Alternative Teacher Education and Certification (ATEC) programs present other options. Since 2005, one-third of veterans who were first-time public-school teachers entered the teaching profession through a program other than a college-based teacher education program, with a higher proportion of male teachers entering the profession (Feistritz, 2011).

The ATEC programs first appeared in the 1980s as a result of a combination of public and political dissatisfaction with the poor quality of teacher education programs and teacher shortages. The ATEC programs are supported by colleges. Attendees of these programs already possess bachelor's degrees in disciplines other than education. They attend prescribed education courses and are granted alternative teacher certifications. The states that led the way for the ATEC programs were Texas, New Jersey, and California (Feistritzer, 2005a). Starting in the 1980s, experienced professionals began migrating from their usual occupations into teaching, and many completed their certifications through alternative teacher certification programs.

According to Feistritzer (2005a), "Alternative teacher certification programs are funded by the state and teacher certifications are rendered by the state" (p. 2). Feistritzer (2005a) also stated that "most teachers entering the profession through alternate routes are recruited for areas where the demand for teachers is greatest—in large cities and rural areas—and in subject areas in greatest demand—special education, mathematics and science" (p. 3). Boyd, Goldhaber, Hamilton, and Wyckoff (2007) indicated that most teachers are hired from traditional programs. The common hiring practice is that teachers who complete a four-year teacher education program are usually hired first, and the remaining teaching positions are filled by teachers who are not certified, such as those from Teach for America (TFA) or the TTT program. TFA and TTT personnel, because they already have four-year college degrees but are not certified, are placed into the school system as full-time teachers while they complete their teacher certifications.

**Application and Acceptance into the TTT Program.** To be admitted into the TTT program, veterans must first apply. After veterans are accepted into the program, they are contractually bound for three years. TTT participants are either given stipends or bonuses after accepting teaching positions (Feistritzer, 2005a, 2005b, 2011). The TTT participants are then placed in high-need urban and rural schools to mitigate teacher attrition (Feistritzer, 2005a, 2005b, 2011; Adams & Adams, 2003). The participants may apply to teach in any of the 50 states. The state grants a Resident Teacher Certificate (RTC) to an applicant who participates in an alternative teacher certification program. The RTC is valid for two years (MSDE, 2014). Also, after completing the alternative teacher certification program and two years of teaching experience, a veteran can

apply for a Standard Professional Certificate I (SPC I). It is valid for five years and issued to the applicant upon completion of all certification requirements. The complexities of the process, including the multiple steps, make transitioning from military to civilian and then from civilian to teacher difficult for veterans.

### **The Transitions from Military to Civilian and from Civilian to Teacher**

To become a teacher, prospective TTT participants must make two critical transitions. The first transition is from being in the military to becoming a civilian, and the second transition is from being a civilian to becoming a teacher.

**Transition One: Military Life to Becoming a Civilian.** A *transition*, as defined by Goodman, Schlossberg, and Anderson (2006), is “any event, or non-event, that results in changed relationships, routines, assumptions, and roles” (p. 33). The journey for troops begins with their initial transition from retiring or leaving active duty to becoming civilians. The Department of Defense (DoD) established a transition program to help separating service members understand and receive their benefits.

The DoD has the overall responsibility of preparing service members for departures from the military. In addition, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has the responsibility of ensuring that service members successfully transition back into civilian life and become productive citizens (Government Accountability Office [GAO], 2014; Morin, 2011). VA defines this transitional period as the first five years after separation from military service (GAO, 2014).

The transition from active duty to civilian life poses many challenges for service members and their families (Chuong, 2008; Feistritz, 2011; Morin, 2011). As a result, the U.S. Congress established a transition program for service members separating from military service in 1990 (GAO, 1994). The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for fiscal year (FY) 1991 required the DoD to prepare service members for transition back into civilian life 180 days prior to their leaving military service. The NDAA for FY 1993 also required pre-separation counseling 90 days before the separation (GAO, 1994).

The six-month transition process involves multiple agencies. In step one, DoD identifies separating service members 180 days before their separation dates. In step two, DoD verifies the

separating service members' military experience levels and training documents. This takes place 120 to 150 days before the service members' separation dates. In step three, DoD provides pre-separation counseling to separating service members and develops their Individual Transition Plans (ITPs) 90 days before their separation dates. The NDAA for FY 1993 required each separating service member to have an ITP (GAO, 1994). The ITP is the plan for each service member's education, training, and employment aims. It is also a structure that can be used to accomplish genuine career objectives based on exclusive skills, knowledge, experience, and abilities (GAO, 2014). The 90-day (or pre-separation) counseling includes education and vocational rehabilitation benefits, job counseling, medical and dental benefits, and financial planning (GAO, 1994). In steps four and five, the Department of Labor, VA, and DoD conduct workshops and operate the Employment Assistance Center. By the time they reach step six, the service members and their spouses should be ready to transition into civilian life (GAO, 1994). GAO (2014) reported that the then Deputy Director for the Transition Assistance Program (TAP), Ron Horne, advised military commanders that separating military personnel should begin their transitions out of the military about a year in advance and that retiring service members should start transitioning two years prior to their retirement dates. This recommendation points to the complexity and difficulty of the transition.

Some separating service members make their transitions into civilian life with minimal difficulties, while others experience great difficulties (GAO, 2014). Morin (2011) conducted a study of 1,853 veterans and found that 72% of the veterans surveyed indicated that they had an easy time readjusting to civilian life, while 27% indicated that they experienced difficulties readjusting. Morin (2011) conducted an analysis of the attitudes, experiences, and demographics of the veterans surveyed and identified factors that predicted whether service members would have hard or easy re-entries into civilian life. Four factors indicated that a service member would have an easy transition back into civilian life, and six factors indicated a more difficult transition.

The six major difficulties reported by readjusting veterans were finances and employment, relationships, legal difficulties, homelessness, and substance abuse (GAO, 2014). Separating service members, particularly those with families, can experience financial challenges if they do

not have a job lined up when they get out of the military. For example, going from receiving a check every two weeks, having medical and dental benefits, and receiving other privileges to having none of these privileges can result in a very dramatic transition. Veterans also indicated that taking minimum-wage jobs and experiencing extended wait times to receive VA benefits contributed to difficult transitions into civilian life (GAO, 2014). In addition, undiagnosed or untreated mental health issues add another layer of difficulty to transitioning.

Readjusting to former relationships can also be difficult for some veterans; some indicated that their spouses or family members did not necessarily understand what they were experiencing. Other veterans reported that they assaulted their spouses after having nightmares. Also, they reported that they had problems being around their children for fear they would lose control (GAO, 2014).

Other reported transition difficulties included felonies that veterans committed and the consequences of such felonies, such as being arrested and even spending time in jail (GAO, 2014). For some veterans, going from the front line, where they defended America's freedom, to a jail cell is quite a turnaround. According to the Department of Justice (2007), an estimated 5,280 reported cases involved veterans being incarcerated in either state or federal correctional facilities from 2002–2004 (GAO, 2014). This led to the development of the Veterans Treatment Courts, which assist veterans in criminal cases. As of 2017, there were 300 Veterans Treatment Courts in the United States (GAO, 2017).

Some veterans also identified homelessness as a major difficulty they experienced while transitioning to civilian life. A national study of VA records reported that veterans diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) experienced significantly higher risks of becoming homeless (GAO, 2014). A VA (2018) study also indicated that 28% of separated veterans had PTSD and about 3% had TBI. PTSD is a serious condition that can occur in people who have experienced or witnessed a natural disaster, the sudden death of a loved one, war, violent personal assault such as rape, or other life-threatening events. TBI occurs when a sudden trauma causes damage to the brain. TBI can result from the head suddenly and violently

hitting an object or from an object piercing the skull and entering the brain. Signs of TBI include loss of memory, confusion, slow thinking, and slurred speaking (GAO, 2014).

VA offers many programs to assist separating service members in transitioning to civilian life. The benefits of these programs are education, health care, counseling, disability compensation, vocational rehabilitation, VA loans, and VA life insurance. However, separating service members must request benefits because they are not automatically given.

**Transition Two: Civilian to Becoming a Teacher.** To get into the TTT program, the individual must first have a four-year college degree. Next, the individual must apply to and be accepted into the TTT program. After being accepted into the TTT program, the individual must decide which route he or she will take to get a teacher certification, either the traditional route or the alternative route. After completing the traditional or alternative route to certification, the TTT participant must apply to a school that will accept them. Usually an individual who took the alternative route to certification is already teaching while completing teacher certification. Since 84% of public-school teachers are Caucasian females, veterans or retirees entering the teaching profession must transition from being in a male-dominated profession in the military to being in a profession dominated by Caucasian females (Anhorn, 1977; Billingsley, 1993; Chuong, 2008; Colbert & Wolff, 1992; Feistritzer, 2011; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Morin, 2011). This transition may take some getting used to as well. Hispanics are the fastest growing non-Caucasian group in teaching, with a large number of males entering teaching (Feistritzer, 2005a, 2005b, 2011).

### **Statement of the Problem**

The aim of this study was to capture the TTT participants' points of view on transitioning from being a troop to becoming a civilian and then becoming a teacher. Applying the Schlossberg Transition Theory (STT) and Schlossberg's model to understand the TTT participants' transitions, I will discuss (1) how the TTT participants attained their self-identities as teachers, (2) how they described their transitions, (3) how they described any associated challenges or stressors, (4) the routines they developed, (5) the kind of support they received, and (6) the coping strategies they employed, answering the 4 S's.

## Conceptual Framework

*Conceptual framework* is defined by Miles and Huberman (1994) “as a visual or written product that explains the main things to be studied, key factors, concepts, or variables and the presumed relationships among them” (p. 18). The conceptual framework I used to conduct this study is the STT.

**STT.** I used the STT, which was developed in the early 1980s, in this study as a lens to interpret TTT participants’ descriptions of their evolutions from military life to teaching. Schlossberg (1984) developed this model to understand and counsel adults who experienced challenges as they transitioned from one life event to another. The model provides a framework for understanding how adults address changes in their lives during various transitional phases. However, the theory was revisited a number of times and was later re-conceptualized as a model (Anderson, Goodman, & Schlossberg, 2012; Schlossberg, 1984; Schlossberg, Waters, & Goodman, 1995a; Schlossberg, Waters, & Goodman, 1995b; Schlossberg, 2011).

According to Schlossberg et al. (1995a), changes take place in an individual’s relationships, beliefs, roles, and responsibilities during transition. According to Sargent and Schlossberg (1988), “The more the event alters an adult’s roles, routines, assumptions, and relationships, the more he or she will be affected by the transition” (p. 58). However, the outcome of the transition is determined by the coping strategies that an individual employs. Although the transition might be different for each individual, the framework for understanding his or her transition does not vary (Schlossberg et al., 1995a). Schlossberg’s (1984) definition of a *transition* was “any event that results in a change in relationships, routines, assumptions or roles with the setting of self, work, family, health and/or economics” (p. 43). Furthermore, a transition exists when the individual experiencing it identifies it as such (Anderson et al., 2012). This transitional process is described as events and non-events that result in life changes, as well as the potential resources (such as the TTT program) that are needed to enable the individual to develop coping mechanisms during the transition (Anderson et al., 2012). *Anticipated transitions* are events that occur expectedly and are usually planned and executed accordingly, while *unanticipated transitions* are

usually unplanned and occur unexpectedly. In addition, non-event transitions do not occur at all, even though the individual expects them to happen (Anderson et al., 2012).

Schlossberg's (1984) transitional theory was later developed into a model that outlines the transition process and the different events that impact an individual's life (Anderson et al., 2012). Figure 1 illustrates the transitional process that adults experience when important events cause changes in their lives, such as transitioning from military life to civilian life.

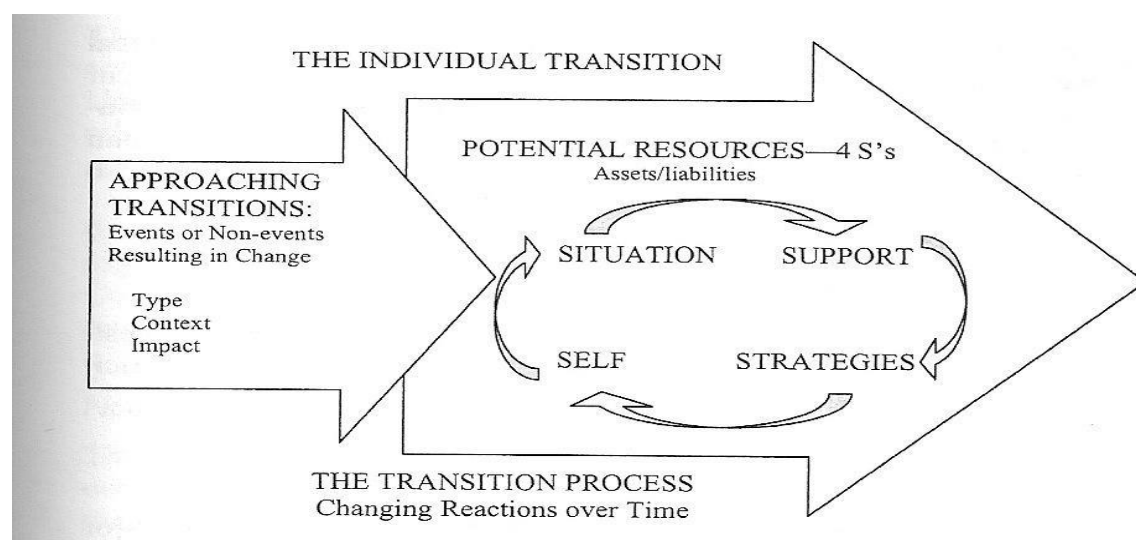


Figure 1. The individual transition process. Adapted from *Counseling Adults in Transition: Linking Schlossberg's Theory with Practice in a Diverse World* (p. 39), by M. Anderson, J. Goodman, & N. Schlossberg, 2012, New York, NY: Springer Publishing Co. Copyright 2012 by Springer Publishing Co. LLC 2012. Reprinted with permission.

An enlisted soldier who spent many years of service in the military could expect to be promoted to pay grade E9, but in a non-event transition, he or she would not receive the promotion. Although the transition did not occur, Anderson et al. (2012) concluded that the soldier could still develop negative perceptions of himself or herself because of disappointment from not being self-actualized. In addition, having negative perceptions because of the non-event transition could affect the way a soldier later coped with anticipated and unanticipated transitions.

Although most troops are likely to experience less stress in an anticipated transition, all troops experience some amount of stress associated with transitioning from military to civilian life, with more stress occurring when the transition is unanticipated, such as being medically discharged or being discharged for the good of the service (Schlossberg et al., 1995a).



Most of the troops who were deployed in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, known as Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), and Operation New Dawn (OND), returned to civilian life without long-term physical or mental health problems. However, a significant number of OEF, OIF, and OND veterans returned with invisible injuries, such as PTSD, mild TBI, and depression (Eisen, Shultz, Vogt, Glickman, Elwy, Drainoni, & Martin, 2012). Although the occurrence of mental health problems in OEF, OIF, and OND veterans is high, the number of veterans who have actually received treatment is limited. Because these needs are unmet, veterans with mental health problems are at an increased risk of experiencing disruptions in their family and social roles and in their abilities to engage in daily activities. Effects of PTSD and TBI are paramount in transition and are important to acknowledge. However, they are not a focus of this study. Some of the main stressors that veterans face while transitioning from active duty to civilian life are finances, employment, relationships, legal troubles, and homelessness (Erbes, Kaler, Schult, Polusny, & Arbisi, 2011). The 4 S's, which are situation, self, support, and strategies, as well as how they are used during transitions are further explained in the following paragraphs.

**Situation.** An individual's situation in a transition varies depending on the factors that triggered the transition. These include the timing (i.e., anticipated or unanticipated) of the transition and whether it is perceived as good or bad; the duration of the transition, which relates to the degree to which an individual perceives the change that they experience as a result of the transition, whether temporary or permanent; the amount of control (i.e., influence and power) the individual has over the transition; the new role (i.e., the extent to which the transition brings about a change in duties and responsibilities) the individual will assume (e.g., from troops to teachers); whether the individual assesses the transition as positive or negative; whether the individual had any previous experiences with similar transitions; and other stressors that are not directly related to the transition (Schlossberg et al., 1995a).

**Self.** Another factor that impacts an individual's transition process is self. This includes an individual's personal and demographic characteristics, as well as psychological resources. An individual's personal and demographic characteristics and psychological resources (e.g., socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, gender, culture, age, beliefs, and values) influence his or her

worldview and how he or she relates to life events, such as transitions. For example, during the transition from troops to teachers, troops have varying degrees of self that impact their transitions.

**Support.** Despite the availability of a variety of VA benefits and services during a veteran's first few years out of the military, GAO has identified long-standing challenges with VA's delivery and management of this support. Specifically, VA provides a wide range of services and benefits, such as education, health care, counseling, employment, home loans, and insurance, through several programs. VA informs veterans of these benefits and services before they leave military service through outreach and education. However, GAO's research over the last decade has shown that VA has struggled for years to provide timely access to medical appointments, make timely disability compensation decisions, and coordinate the transfer of medical records from DoD.

**Strategies.** Transitional resources such as situation, self, and support are critical to an individual's transitional success. However, if an individual does not employ effective coping strategies, the entire transition can be compromised. *Strategies* refer to an individual's ability to identify and adjust his or her coping responses and processes to experience a successful transition (Anderson et al., 2012).

Troops transitioning to teachers have different experiences based on the situations that trigger their transitions. A military individual's transition to the TTT program could be anticipated or unanticipated. However, most troops tend to experience anticipated transitions, in which long-term plans are made to facilitate the end of their service or retirement from the military on specific dates. Since military personnel experiencing anticipated transitions have more time to plan for their transitions, they have increased abilities to cope with stressors associated with transitioning from military to civilian life. In addition, they can develop the proper mindsets and make necessary arrangements, including pursuing higher educational studies (e.g., alternative certification) and applying for veteran benefits, that would facilitate an easier transition from being a troop to becoming a teacher.

Troops transitioning from military life to teaching do not necessarily have the required certifications and experience to enter the teaching profession. The TTT participants' abilities to cope with such a reality depend on how well they develop the readiness and required teacher

identities suitable for successful transitions (DiRamio, Ackerman, & Mitchell, 2008). During the transition from troops to teachers, troops have varying degrees of self that impact their transitions. Troops are required to access higher education via alternative certifications to qualify to teach. Since veterans pursuing higher education are non-traditional students, they tend to have additional stressors related to self. This can affect their abilities to smoothly transition into the demands and rigors of higher education.

The student-veteran is required to learn and relearn new study skills and classroom behaviors that differ from his or her familiar military routine (DiRamio et al., 2008). Some of the main stressors for troops transitioning from active duty to civilian life are finances, employment, relationships, legal troubles, and homelessness. As a result of these various stressors, TTT participants have suffered many setbacks in their educational and professional pursuits while transitioning into teaching (DiRamio et al., 2008). The support system available to the troops, in the form of the military, VA, and the school system, can greatly influence the transition experience and affect the transition positively or negatively. Lastly, the strategies the transitioning troops use largely determine their transitional success.

The aim of this study was to capture the TTT participants' points of view on transitioning from being troops to becoming teachers. Applying the STT and Integrative Transition Model (ITM) model for understanding the TTT participants' transitions, this study will look at how the participants attained their self-identities as teachers, how they described their transitions, how they described any associated challenges or stressors, the routines they developed, the kind of support they received, and the coping strategies they employed, answering the 4 S's.

### **Research Questions**

To address the statement of the problem, I will explore the following research questions: (1) how the TTT participants attained their self-identities as teachers, (2) how TTT participants described their transitions, (3) how TTT participants described transition associated challenges or stressors, (4) what teaching routines TTT participants developed, (5) what support TTT participants received, and what coping strategies TTT participants employed.

### **Significance of the Study**

Several studies have been conducted in the United States on the experiences of TTT participants as they transitioned from a military context to the public-education system, but no studies have explored this experience specifically in Maryland. Therefore, this study aimed to fill this gap in the literature by exploring and describing the essence of TTT participants' experiences as they transitioned from troops to teachers in Maryland.

The results of this study would be a useful resource and add value to the TTT program at the national, state, and local levels. Some possible areas of application include TTT participants' recruitment, program design and choices, class requirements for students, and other faculty assignments at the local level. In addition, the private sector could use the results of this study as a resource to inform their own transition programs for new and retiring employees.

### **Limitations and Delimitations**

This study was limited in terms of sample size, selection of the sample, time, and the number of years that the TTT participants had been teaching. The sample was selected based on recommendations from the TTT program coordinator for Maryland. Per communications with the TTT program headquarters in Florida, the state by state information is proprietary and can be released only by the Office of the Secretary of Defense (K. Daniels, personal communication, February 4, 2017). In 2013, the function was transferred from the Secretary of Education to the Secretary of Defense (K. Daniels, personal communication, February 4, 2017). The data collection was completed over a two-month period, with the study participants being the TTT participants who taught in Maryland for at least one year.

This study was delimited in scope. It used only the qualitative narrative design, and data were collected via teleconference and video teleconference. The interview questions were developed to enable the respondents to provide qualitative input based on their own experience.

### **Definitions of Terms**

ATEC                      Alternative Teacher Education and Certification

The ATEC program first appeared in the 1980s (Feistritz, 2005a). The ATEC programs are college-supported programs that allow a veteran with a bachelor's

degree to attend prescribed education courses; the veteran is granted an alternative teacher certification upon completion (Feistritzer, 2005a).

- DoD** Department of Defense
- The DoD is the department of the federal executive branch charged with ensuring that the military is prepared to safeguard the national security of the United States. It is headed by the Secretary of Defense, a cabinet-level head who reports directly to the President of the United States. It is headquartered in the Pentagon (DoD Dictionary of Military Terms, 2010).
- DoDI** Department of Defense Instructions
- The DoDI is a memorandum that provides general guidance and procedures for actions DoD is about to implement. It is formally staffed through all DOD branches for concurrence. The document is reviewed by the Office of General Counsel and once approved becomes policy (DoD Dictionary of Military Terms, 2010).
- GAO** Government Accounting Office
- GAO works for the U.S. Congress. Their job is to investigate how the national government spends taxpayer dollars. The U.S. president appoints the head of the GAO (GAO, 1994, 2001, 2009, 2011).
- HQT** A highly qualified teacher (HQT) is a teacher who possesses the necessary credentials to teach (undergraduate degree, valid state certification, and expertise in the core academic area) and can prove that they are knowledgeable about the subjects they teach, in addition to being capable of caring for their students (Feistritzer, 2011; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Morin, 2011; Talbert-Johnson, 2006).
- IDC** Independent Duty Corpsman (NAVPERS 18086F, 2017)
- ITP** Individual Transition Plan

The ITP is an individual roadmap that guides the service member during his or her transition from one duty station to another or from the transition from active duty to civilian life (GAO, 1994).

ITM	Integrative Transition Model
	The ITM is a model that shows how an individual moves in, through, and out of a transition (Chickering & Schlossberg, 1995).
MOS	Military Occupational Specialty (AR 611-1)
MSDE	Maryland State Department of Education
	The MSDE is a department of the Maryland State government that executes the policies and enforces the regulations pertaining to education.
NEC	Navy Enlisted Classification (NAVPERS 18086F, 2017)
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
	OEF was a military operation created for the sole purpose of denying the Taliban from providing a safe haven to al Qaeda, and to stop al Qaeda's use of Afghanistan as a base of operations for terrorist activities (DoD Dictionary of Military Terms, 2010).
OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom
	Spanning from March to May 2003, OIF was a mission authorized by President Bush to rid Iraq of tyrannical dictator Saddam Hussein and eliminate Hussein's ability to develop weapons of mass destruction (DoD Dictionary of Military Terms, 2010).
OND	Operation New Dawn
	OND was the official end to OIF and combat operations by United States forces in Iraq. OND's mission in Iraq was to conduct stability operations, focusing on advising, assisting, and training Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) (DoD Dictionary of Military Terms, 2010).
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

PTSD is a condition that can occur in people who have experienced or witnessed a natural disaster, the sudden death of a loved one, war, violent personal assault such as rape, or other life-threatening events (GAO, 2014).

RTC	Resident Teacher Certificate
	The RTC is issued by the local Maryland school system to an individual who is participating in an alternative teacher preparation program. The certificate is valid for two years (MSDE, 2014).
SPC	Standard Professional Teaching Certificate
	The SPC is issued upon an individual's completion of all Maryland State certification requirements, and the individual is then employed by a local Maryland school system or accredited nonpublic school. The certificate is valid for five years (MSDE, 2014).
STT	Schlossberg Transition Theory
	Developed by Nancy Schlossberg in 1984, the Schlossberg Transition Theory provides a roadmap for understanding how adults address changes in their lives as they move from one altered transitional stage to another (Schlossberg, 2011).
TAP	Transition Assistance Program
	TAP offers data, tools, and preparations to ensure persons transitioning from active duty to civilian life are prepared (GAO, 2014).
TBI	Traumatic Brain Injury
	TBI occurs when a sudden trauma causes damage to the brain. TBI can result when the head suddenly and violently hits an object or when an object pierces the skull and enters the brain (GAO, 2014). Signs of TBI include loss of memory, confusion, slowed thinking, and slurred speaking (GAO, 2014).
TTT	Troops to Teachers
	TTT is a recruiting program. The program aids eligible veterans in beginning new careers as public-school teachers. The program was approved in 1993 and is currently managed by the DoD. From 1994 to the present, over 17,000 TTT

participants have been hired nationwide in public schools (GAO, 2001, 2009, 2006, 2014).

VA Department of Veterans Affairs

VA is the federal department of the executive branch charged with operating the largest combined health system in the United States. It delivers patient care and centralized assistance to veterans and their dependents (GAO, 2014).

VRP Vocational Rehabilitation Program

Administered by VA, the VRP is a summary of services, resources, and criteria used to assist veterans with 10% or higher disability in acquiring employment and/or independent living goals (VA, 2010).

### **Summary**

In chapter one, I introduced the Troops to Teachers program. I then explained the relationship between the TTT program and public education in the sections urban education and highly qualified teachers, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, classroom discipline, teachers pay, and incentives for TTT participants to remain in teaching. The was followed by a section on TTT participants and the military, which was further broken down into subsections about veterans in need of civilian jobs, the nature of teacher shortages, teacher shortages, teacher shortages in Maryland, alternative teacher certifications, and application and acceptance into the TTT program. I then discussed the transitions from military to civilian and then from civilian to teacher. Finally, I discussed the statement of the problem, conceptual framework, research questions, significance of the study, limitations and delimitations, and definitions of terms.



## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### Introduction

Since the TTT program is a fairly young governmental program founded in 1993, there is a lack of existing literature about the program. The literature review for this study spanned 25 years from 1993 until 2018. I found 10 dissertations and several procedural articles. The specific databases I searched were the ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, the Department of Defense, the Department of Veterans Affairs, Article First, Education Journals, and LexisNexis Academic. As a result of the lack of sufficient literature, I sought additional context based on the conceptual framework.

As explained in chapter one, the STT provides a conceptual framework for understanding how adults address changes in their lives during various transitional phases, such as troops to teachers. Specifically, I extrapolated research on teacher shortages from the dissertations and procedural articles, since the TTT program was created to address the problem of teacher shortages. From the outset, military personnel that are now TTT participants know the importance of making successful transitions into teaching and are prepared to remain in the teaching profession to mitigate teacher shortages. I explored the connection between military identities and TTT participants in the dissertations. This literature discussed how former military personnel use their past military identities as power bases to transition into their new teacher identities. Furthermore, I examined literature on environmental factors and the TTT participants. This literature discussed how factors in schools can determine whether teachers stay in teaching—specifically why most TTT participants remain in teaching despite negative environmental factors. Finally, I reviewed dissertations on teacher education and TTT participants. This literature discussed whether the quality of the teacher education program determines the length of time teachers remain in teaching—specifically why most TTT participants' decisions to stay in teaching are not affected by their teacher education programs.

Therefore, three categories emerged from the 10 dissertations and summaries of the procedural articles about the TTT program: (1) Military and Teacher Identities, (2) School Environment and Teacher Departure, and (3) Teacher Licensing Education Requirements.

## Results of the Literature Search

**Teacher Departure Literature.** Croasmun et al. (2003) showed that teacher departure was the largest single factor creating a demand for additional teachers in the United States. Further research conducted by Croasmun et al. (2003) determined that beginning teachers were 2.5 times more likely to leave the profession than their skilled colleagues. The study further suggested that when new teachers were unprepared to take charge of their classrooms on the first day of the school year, or when they were not committed to teaching, they tended to leave the profession (Croasmun et al., 2003; Sutchter et al., 2016). The study also revealed that more teachers in special education left teaching than those in general education (Bobbitt, Faupel, & Burns, 1991; Sutchter et al., 2016).

In addition, it was determined that teachers who obtained their master's degrees usually continued teaching longer than teachers with bachelor's degrees. The teachers who left teaching within their first years listed family or personal issues, other job opportunities, dissatisfaction with their salaries, and school staffing actions as their reasons for leaving the profession (Croasmun et al., 2003; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Sutchter et al., 2016). The teachers who left because of job dissatisfaction listed poor salaries, student discipline, and poor administrative support as their top three reasons for leaving, followed by student motivation, lack of faculty influence, class size, no opportunities for advancement, classroom intrusions, and inadequate preparation time (Croasmun et al., 2003; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Sutchter et al., 2016). The data that supported the above findings were taken from the School and Staffing Survey (SASS) and its supplement, the Teacher Follow-up Survey (TFS), conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (Ingersoll, 1999, 2001, 2002; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003).

Geving (2007) also explained that certain types of student behaviors caused stressful situations for teachers and resulted in teacher departure. The results of the study revealed that lack of student participation, students attending class unprepared, and poor student behavior were the main contributors to stress and, ultimately, teacher departure, particularly among new teachers in high schools (Geving, 2007; Sutchter et al., 2016). Researchers such as Buckley, Schneider, and Shang (2005); Hamburg (2012); Hanushek, Kain, and Rivkin (2004); and Ingersoll (2003) also

argued that teaching was considered a stressful career and that new teachers tended to leave the profession after experiencing burnout because they were not adequately supported by administration or were given an excessive number of tasks before they acquired necessary task-management skills.

Other empirical studies showed that the reasons for teacher attrition included student discipline, lack of support from administration, low pay, insufficient retirement, poor working conditions, and a lack of influence and respect. For example, Gonzalez et al. (2008) examined the reasons for public-school teachers' departures in Texas in March 2008. The participants were eight teachers who left the teaching profession after one year. Six Hispanics and two Caucasians participated in the study. The ages of the participants ranged from 25 to 56. The source of the data collection was one-on-one interviews, with follow-ups as needed. This study determined that the overall reasons for the eight teachers leaving the teaching profession after one year were lack of support from administration, student discipline, and low pay. However, the authors concluded that student discipline was the greatest concern among teachers, ultimately leading them to leave the profession. Gonzalez et al. (2008) recommended that a conflict resolution class be incorporated into the teacher education program at the university level so that beginning teachers would be exposed to student disciplinary issues. The researchers concluded that without discipline, there was no control of the classroom, and without control of the classroom, there was no learning.

Although Gonzalez et al. (2008) attempted to provide deeper insights into the reasons for new teacher departure in Texas, the study did not adequately address the complex phenomenon of teacher departure and the multiplicity of factors contributing to new teacher departure. The study found that student discipline was a major factor influencing new teacher departure after only one year. However, a meta-analysis study conducted by Hudson (2009) addressed new teacher departure from 1983 to 2005 and encompassed teachers that left the profession after five years.

Unlike Gonzalez et al. (2008), Hudson (2009) used a meta-analysis approach to capture a multiplicity of reasons for new teacher dissatisfaction and departure. Since the reasons for teacher departure change over time, this instrument more adequately captured the reasons for new teacher departure over time. Hudson's (2009) findings not only included student discipline, but also salary

and benefits, class size, and lack of administrative support as reasons for teacher dissatisfaction and ultimate departure. In addition, studies such as Chuong (2008), Darling-Hammond (1998), and Grissmer and Kirby (1997) supported Hudson's (2009) findings, which indicated that teachers left the profession for a myriad of reasons, including student discipline, lack of adequate administrative support, poor working conditions, lack of influence and respect, inadequate salary, and insufficient benefits. These studies also suggested that the No Child Left Behind Act mandates and professional development assignments contributed to teacher dissatisfaction and became major reasons for teacher departure.

Although the Teacher Follow-up Survey (2012) that was administered every four years concurred with researchers such as Hudson (2009) and Gonzales et al. (2008) on some of the reasons teachers left the profession, it also listed insufficient retirement as an additional reason. Although teacher salaries and benefits were widely discussed features of teacher satisfaction within the American education system and were listed as reasons why 16% left the profession, they were not the most noted reasons. For example, retirement was the highest rated reason for teacher departure, with 38% of the teachers leaving as a result of retirement (Cox et al., 2007). Smits' (2009) findings also suggested that the teacher departure rate was greatest among older teachers. Smits (2009) concluded that older teachers could retire and leave teaching earlier than any of the other professions because of the incentives from their retirement benefits.

However, other studies' findings showed that teacher departure was the highest among younger teachers within the first five years of teaching. For example, Boe, Cook, and Sunderland (2008) and Ingersoll (2003) indicated that the number of teachers who left the profession within the first five years could range from 33% to 50%. In addition, the U.S. Department of Education (2005) asserted that because there were high teacher departure rates within the first five years of teaching, the period was considered a vulnerable time and a lost opportunity for the health of the teaching profession (Hanushek, 2007). In contrast, the TTT program has produced fewer turnovers and more retention.

The studies above painted a picture of what incoming teachers can expect. Even while beginning teachers experience a period of adjustment as they settle into their teaching positions,

they are bombarded by a number of issues, including the number of students they are given to teach, poor salaries, student discipline, lack of administrative support, poor student motivation, classroom intrusions, and inadequate preparation time.

**Military and Teacher Identities.** A reasonable amount of literature has been published on military identity and past wars and conflicts, as well as the number of military suicides, homeless veterans, and PTSD and TBI cases; however, very little literature has dealt with the TTT program specifically (Boe et al., 2008; Coupland, 2004; Donathan, 2007; GAO, 2014; Isherwood, 1996; Ramirez, 2008; Ramsey, 1999; Sessoms-Penny, 2007). In the following paragraphs, I will discuss military identity and teacher identity.

TTT participants allow their military identities to influence the development of their overall teacher identities. A TTT will always place teaching first. They will never accept failure and will therefore try every teaching technique possible to ensure that a child learns. They will never quit or leave a student behind. The TTT participants come armed with leadership, management, and people skills as a result of their military service (Owings et al., 2014; Ramirez, 2008; Ramsey, 1999; Sessoms-Penny, 2007).

An individual's identity is developed through social interactions that result in an understanding of his or her own self, as well as whom he or she thinks other people are. Therefore, identities are never fixed but always under construction (Danielewicz, 2001; Sexton, 2008). A teacher's identity development is part of the process of being a student, since students work themselves into teachers by taking teacher education courses. The process continues when the education courses help them become teachers, based on the effects the courses have on them (Jenkins, 1996; Freedman & Appleman, 2008; Sexton, 2008). Additionally, the new teacher's identity development is based on social interactions, so they tend to seek mature, more experienced teachers within their new environments to guide and support them. TTT participants also tend to seek out other participants for guidance and support.

Some new teachers receive one-on-one support from an individual teacher or group of teachers to help them develop their teacher identities. However, roughly 50% do not find anyone with whom to interact and share their feelings. As a result, these teachers usually find it challenging

to build the social interactions that are essential to constructing their teacher identities and, therefore, end up leaving the profession (Freedman & Appleman, 2008; Jenkins, 1996). The TTT participants are taught that failure is not an option and develop ways to forge the necessary camaraderie to accomplish their missions (Owings et al., 2014).

Freedman and Appleman's (2008) five-year case study explored the development of teacher identity primarily through the sociocultural theories of Vygotsky (1978, 1986) and Bakhtin (1981, 1986). These theories were used to explain how new teachers assumed and incorporated teacher identities based on social interactions and how their identities could change, resulting in some teachers leaving the profession (Freedman & Appleman, 2008). For example, Freedman and Appleman (2008) highlighted the experience of a new teacher named Sally from the Multicultural Urban Secondary English (MUSE) credential and master's program at the University of California, Berkeley. After two years in the MUSE program, including her first year in the classroom, Sally was the least likely member of her cohort to be involved in political and religious conflicts, which resulted in her departure from teaching altogether (Freedman & Appleman, 2008). Although Sally was a great team player in her cohort and embraced the identity of an urban classroom teacher with enthusiasm, she felt that her peers and other members of the teaching staff did not support her during non-reelection after the two-year probationary period in the MUSE program. Sally explained that her feelings of lack of support seemed to have permanently stunted her identity as an urban teacher. After feeling abandoned by the program and her colleagues, Sally left teaching and vowed never to return to the classroom (Freedman & Appleman, 2008).

A similar qualitative, ethnographic case study conducted by Sexton (2008) investigated the role played by teacher identity among pre-service and in-service teachers concerning their decisions to stay in the teaching profession. The study utilized Blumer's (1969) symbolic interactionism as a theoretical lens to provide an understanding of teacher identity and the role it played in teachers' decision about their futures in the profession. According to Blumer (1969), symbolic interactionism is based on the premise that:

Human beings act toward things on the basis of meanings they have for them and the meaning of such things is derived from or arises out of, the social interaction that one has

with one's fellows. These meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretive process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters. (p. 2)

Therefore, teachers' identities are developed from constructing and mediating shared meanings from their time as students and throughout their teaching careers. Teacher identity is an ongoing process that is constantly reshaped through interactions with new people and contexts.

Sexton (2008) found that whenever there was misalignment between an individual's teacher identity and the teacher role offered by the overall teaching program, the teacher would likely leave the profession. The study suggested that both pre-service and in-service teachers were more likely to stay in teaching if they received support and understanding from their colleagues, and if there was congruence between their teacher identities and the teaching programs that defined their teaching roles (Sexton, 2008).

Although TTT participants' teacher identities are influenced by social interactions with other teacher colleagues, as well as through exposure to their teacher education programs, their teacher identities are largely shaped by their military identities, which are defined by years of leadership, management, and training experience. Therefore, the military core values of duty, selfless service, respect, loyalty, honor, integrity, and personal courage primarily define the TTT participants' teacher identities (Fry, Vitucci, & Cedillo, 2005). As participants transition into their new positions as teachers, these core values build their overall teacher identities and become the main reasons they stay in teaching long term.

TTT participants believe in and devote themselves to the cause of teaching and strive to become the best teachers they can become. They interpret *duty* as accomplishing tasks that are part of an individual's responsibilities or the requirements of the grade-level team. TTT participants believe in treating people the way they want to be treated and in respecting other individuals' positions. This means putting the welfare of the people they serve above their own welfare. They also believe in carrying out each task they are given until it is complete; in always taking the hard right instead of the easy left; and in openly facing fear, danger, and adversity. In other words, they believe that no sacrifice is too great (Fry et al., 2005).

**School Environment and Teacher Departure.** The teacher departure and retention literature defined *environmental factors* in schools as aspects of the work environment that affected a teacher's work life and career decisions. Some of the identified environmental factors that contributed to teacher departure included salary, school climate, administrative support, colleague support, professional development, teacher roles, paperwork, and student issues (Billingsley, 2003; Boe et al., 2008). For example, in a national study on teacher departure, Ingersoll (2001) specifically identified the environmental factors in schools that contributed to teacher departure as "low salaries, inadequate support from school administration, student discipline problems, and limited faculty input into decision making" (p. 7). The study suggested that environmental factors contributed to higher attrition after controlling for the characteristics of both teachers and schools. Similarly, in a quantitative study that attempted to generalize its findings to a wider population in the United States, Moore (2011) investigated the reasons for teacher departure and the influence of school environment and teacher characteristics on discontent and departure. This empirical study relied on the SASS and the TFS. The population sampled was 38,240 public-school teachers from all 50 states. Moore (2011) stated that the school organization could be thought of as a system with many layers. Each layer, such as the classroom, school, neighborhood, city, school system, state, and the national government, contributed to the overall environment, in which teachers were either unable to persist and quit, or persevered and remained in the classroom.

Moore's (2011) findings indicated that several features of school environments were directly tied to increased teacher dissatisfaction and eventual departure. These included negative school climates, poor administrative leadership, the quality of the school buildings, classroom control, teacher perceptions of student problems, certification types, school sizes, and rural locales (Moore, 2011; Ramirez, 2008; Ramsey, 1999; Sessoms-Penny, 2007). Billingsley's (2003) study also examined a combination of environmental, school-related factors, such as too many students, excessive paperwork, inadequate support from colleagues, and a lack of essential resources, which tended to weaken teachers' abilities to be effective and therefore reduced opportunities for positive intrinsic rewards that were important for reducing the number of teachers leaving the profession.



Additionally, Billingsley's (2003) study suggested that excessive and prolonged environmental school-related problems led to negative affective reactions, such as increased stress, lower job satisfaction, and reduced organizational and professional commitment. Additionally, findings from the TFS and Cox et al. (2007) reported that 37% of teachers who left the profession cited poor working conditions as their reason for leaving.

A large-scale Florida study on factors that predicted reasons why teachers remained in the profession, left the profession, or transferred from special education also revealed that stress was one of the most powerful predictors of teacher departure (Cox et al., 2007). Stress on the job was also found to be related to the intent to leave teaching (Billingsley & Cross, 1992; Morvant, Gersten, Gillman, Keating, & Blake, 1995). Morvant et al. (1995) stated that nearly 80% of those who planned to leave teaching indicated that they experienced excessive stress on a daily or weekly basis, compared to a little over 50% of those who planned to stay. Morvant et al. (1995) also reported that those who left the teaching profession experienced excessive stress because of a range of student-related issues; inadequate support from administration; bureaucratic requirements; and conflicting expectations, goals, and directives. Johnson, Berg, and Donaldson (2005) also suggested that teachers who felt supported by their colleagues and experienced more success with their students tended to express more satisfaction with their work, and they therefore inferred that these teachers were more likely to remain in teaching.

Most of the teacher departure literature stated that 50% of first year teachers leave the profession within the first five years and cited stress as the main reason because of multiple environmental factors at school (Colbert & Wolff, 1992). Likewise, Ingersoll, and Smith (2003) clearly stated that it was a combination of multiple factors that resulted in nearly 50% of teachers leaving the profession before their sixth year of teaching. Geving (2007) also found that poor student behavior was the main contributor to stress and ultimately teacher departure, particularly among new teachers in high schools. Researchers such as Buckley et al. (2005), Hamburg (2012), Hanushek et al. (2004), and Ingersoll (2003) also argued that teaching was considered a stressful career and that new teachers tended to leave the profession after experiencing burnout because they were not adequately supported by administration or were given an excessive number of tasks

before they acquired necessary task-management skills. For example, the first year teacher was usually strapped with expenses from teaching training programs and also experienced stress in school.

Despite the high attrition rate as a result of negative environmental factors that teachers in their first five years of teaching generally experience, TTT participants are taught to stay the course, as well as budget, plan ahead, and deal with life as it comes. This tends to give participants an advantage over most first year teachers. In addition, TTT participants go into teaching as a second tour of duty and for a second retirement. Participants are also given stipends for accepting their teaching positions, which helps them offset the costs of their teacher certifications, creating less of a financial burden at the beginning of their teaching tenure. TTT participants are better able to concentrate on teaching because they are given stipends, monthly retirement pensions, and their regular teacher salaries.

Although most first year teachers tend to be stressed about making ends meet, TTT participants are able to concentrate on educating their students because of the range of financial support they receive from the military. In addition to the aforementioned financial support that participants receive after entering the teaching profession, they are entitled to service-related disability compensation through VA. If their service-related disabilities are over 20%, TTT participants can apply to the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment program within VA, which pays for their teacher certifications and medical expenses and also provides them with monthly stipends until their teacher certifications are completed.

Empirical studies revealed that TTT participants remain in teaching for many reasons, including working with young people, giving back to humankind, valuing a quality education in society, spending more time with their families, longer summer vacations, job security, and working toward a second retirement income (Feistritzer, 2005; Owings et al., 2014). For example, Feistritzer (2005) conducted a study to determine why TTT participants remain in teaching. Seventy percent said they chose to remain in teaching because they enjoyed working with young people (Feistritzer, 2005).

However, even though the TTT participants are resilient and try everything possible to remain teachers, 22% leave the profession for a number of reasons (Feistritzer, 2005). For example, a study by Owings et al. (2014) stated that the top reason participants left teaching was disrespect:

Disrespect is multi-pronged; from the administration: There is no respect from the administration to the teacher. They treat you like a child; from the students: the children are very disrespectful and lack self-control; and from the parents: the parents have become increasingly disrespectful and apathetic. (p. 67)

One TTT participant indicated that he wanted to find a position in which compensation, workload, and customer respect were better. However, the most common reasons for TTT participants to leave the teaching profession are students, pay, overall disappointment with the education system, lack of adequate support from the school administration, and disrespect. Among those who indicated that students were the reason for leaving, some stated that the children were “unmotivated, entitled, apathetic, and lacked work ethic” (Owings et al., 2014, p. 66). Those who indicated that pay was the reason stated that teacher pay had been frozen for years and that “they could make more money working less hours and having much less responsibility” (Owings et al., 2014, p. 66). Among those who indicated that overall disappointment with the education system was their reason for leaving, some stated that “the current dismantling of public education by state and federal mandates” was to blame (Owings et al., 2014, p. 66). Those who indicated the administration was the reason they left teaching stated that a “lack of support from administration, poor leadership skills of administrators, lack of vision from educational leaders, and ultimately a lack of effective leadership from school administration” were to blame (Owings et al., 2014, p. 67).

**Teacher Licensing Education Requirements.** Literature on teacher education was abundant, but literature on teacher education as applied to TTT participants was limited. Although the literature that addressed teacher departure and the roles played by teacher education tended to be limited, a few researchers have attempted to make inferences from their studies about TTT participants and how they go about establishing themselves as teachers and meeting the licensing education requirements. For example, Darling-Hammond (1998) suggested that if teachers are

adequately prepared in both content and pedagogy, “it makes an enormous difference, not only to their effectiveness in the classroom, but also to whether they’re likely to enter and stay in teaching” (p. 16). She further stated that better preparation and more investment in teacher education increased longevity. Furthermore, Darling-Hammond (1998) argued that it was “more expensive to under-prepare people, and then let them spin out again, than it was to prepare people more effectively and keep them in the profession” (p. 17). She also stated that the quality of teacher education, preparation, and support was integral to the development of incentives to prevent teachers from leaving the profession. However, Reynolds, Ross, and Rakow (2002) concluded that it was impossible to know whether a teacher’s decision to stay in teaching preceded the teacher education program or was a consequence of the program (Boyd, 2010; Coupland, 2004; Donathan, 2007; Isherwood, 1996; Metcalf, 1999; Ramirez, 2008; Ramsey, 1999; Reynolds et al., 2002; Sessoms-Penny, 2007).

According to Johnson et al. (2005), a few studies that explored the relationship between having a degree and a teacher’s decision to remain in teaching found that teachers with advanced degrees reported being less committed to teaching and actually left teaching at higher rates than those with only bachelor’s degrees. However, these studies did not distinguish between teachers with advanced degrees in particular types of content or pedagogies (Johnson et al., 2005).

Rees (1991) used logistic regression to study the career paths of New York State teachers from 1975 to 1978 and reported that departure rates were higher among those with higher degrees. In this study, all other variables were held constant, such as “measuring salary, seniority provisions, class size, and the number of sick leave days available” (Rees, 1991, p. 34). Similarly, Kirby, Berends, and Naftel (1999) used longitudinal data obtained from the Texas Education Agency to study different cohorts of teachers in Texas who entered the teaching profession from 1979 to 1996. They found that teachers who obtained advanced degrees were more likely to leave teaching than those with only bachelor’s degrees (Kirby et al., 1999). Johnson et al. (2005) argued that such conclusions seemed logical since teacher departure was also influenced by other factors, such as salary and environmental conditions at school. Therefore, it seemed more likely that having an

advanced degree increased a teacher's career options and might influence the teacher's decision to leave teaching for another profession (Johnson et al., 2005).

In contrast to these studies that suggested advanced degrees increased the teacher departure rate. Adams' (1996) study that analyzed data on elementary teachers employed by a large school district in Texas from 1985 to 1991 found that teachers who had only bachelor's degrees were 68% more likely to leave teaching than those with advanced degrees. Similarly, data from the National Longitudinal Study of High School Class of 1972 revealed that teachers with master's degrees stayed in teaching longer (i.e., an average career of 10.60 years) than those with bachelor's degrees (i.e., an average career of 5.24 years). Whether the teacher's decision to leave teaching was based on the type or quality of teacher education and preparation programs, or the level of degrees, research suggested that this decision seemed to be influenced by multiple complex factors that need further investigation (Johnson et al., 2005).

Although 69.1% of TTT participants completed a traditional teacher certification program, 30.9% completed an alternative certification program (Johnson et al., 2005). However, only 22% were found to leave the teaching profession, regardless of whether they acquired bachelor's or master's degrees or whether their certifications were through an alternative or traditional program (Johnson et al., 2005). The preparation program in content or pedagogy seemed to influence TTT participants to stay in teaching less than other overwhelming factors. For example, in a study conducted by Owings et al. (2014), the more effective TTT participants tended to remain in teaching, while the least effective chose to leave the profession. This happened regardless of the certification program (i.e., alternative or traditional) or whether the participants had bachelor's or master's degrees (Boyd, 2010; Coupland, 2004; Donathan, 2007; Isherwood, 1996; Metcalf, 1999; Owings et al., 2014; Ramirez, 2008; Ramsey, 1999).

### **Summary**

In summary, there is a shortage of literature about the TTT program. Early documentation began to surface in 1993. From 1993 to 2007 (the first 14 years of the program's existence), several dissertations and theoretical studies were written. From 2008 to 2017, the writing began to decline. The literature covered in this review fell into three categories: (1) Military and Teacher Identities,

(2) School Environment and Teacher Departure, and (3) Teacher Licensing Education Requirements. Each area had limited information regarding the TTT program and requires further study.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of troops who became teachers in Maryland to better understand how they transitioned from being troops to their second tour of duty: being teachers. Therefore, this study fell within the scope of a qualitative research design. Qualitative research is used to obtain a more detailed understanding of a topic. This understanding is gained by allowing people to tell their own stories by talking directly with them, going to their homes or places of work, or conducting telephone interviews or video conferencing (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

This chapter discusses the rationale for choosing a qualitative research design; introduces a narrative study (and gives the rationale for using a narrative study); reviews the procedure, data collection methods, and data analysis; and concludes with a summary.

### **Rationale for Choosing a Qualitative Research Design**

When conducting research, the researcher inevitably chooses which research design will best suit his or her research needs. I chose a qualitative research approach for this study because qualitative research provides a better understanding of the cultural and social contexts in which participants live. The underlying philosophy of qualitative research is social constructivism, which aims to develop a deeper understanding of how people experience, perceive, and interpret their socio-cultural world (Bateson, 1984; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Dewey, 1938; Moody, 2002).

Qualitative research designs provide rich, detailed explanations and descriptions of social phenomena on a smaller scale (Bateson, 1984; Creswell, 2003; Creswell, 2016; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Instead of providing a broad view of an occurrence that can be generalized to a large population, qualitative research seeks to explain a current situation, and it describes that situation for only a particular group (Zikmund, 2001). This study aimed to describe the experiences of troops based on their descriptions of their transitions from the military to the teaching profession.

## **Introduction to a Narrative Study and Rationale for Narrative Study**

The qualitative research method for this narrative study is designed to explore and understand the meaning of an experience through detailed narrative stories of individuals who have experienced it. A narrative study is used to study a particular experience or issue. Initially, it begins with the researcher inquiring into an individual's story about the experience or issue. Constructing these narratives has one of two starting points: (1) listening to individuals tell their stories or (2) living alongside participants as they live their stories. The starting point most used is the individual telling his or her story. The information is captured via interview recordings, notes, or texts (Bateson, 1984; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell, 2016; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Dewey, 1938).

This study explored the core of TTT participants' experiences while teaching in Maryland public schools to determine what subjective meanings they constructed from these experiences. This method provided flexibility to explore the experiences of participants as they transitioned from military life into civilian life as teachers.

I also chose a qualitative design to focus on two fundamental priorities in all phases of the study: (1) to represent the essential attributes of TTT participants' experiences as described by themselves and (2) "to maintain the TTTs' original descriptions of their experiences while at the same time remaining faithful to that intent" (Munhall & Oiler, 1986, p. 105).

## **Procedures**

**Research Participants.** The participants for this study were troop teachers in the Maryland TTT program. I used purposive sampling to select participants who had experienced the transition from the military to teaching. These participants provided rich, detailed information to describe the changes in their lives during their transitions to becoming teachers (Berg, 2001; Creswell, 2014; Keppel, 1991; Riessman, 1993, Maxwell, 2005; Neuman, 2007; Patton, 1990; Tongco, 2007). I used criterion-based sampling to select participants who met some "predetermined criterion of importance" (Patton, 2002, p. 238). These TTT participants had been in the program for at least one year, while simultaneously completing their teacher training certifications.



These participants served in various teaching positions (e.g., classroom teachers, department heads, and administrators) in the urban and rural Maryland Public School System at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.

I requested approval of my Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct my study, and it was granted. Afterwards I contacted the chief of the TTT program at the program's national headquarters in Pensacola, Florida, to ask for a list of all the TTT participants in Maryland. Because of confidentiality, they could not provide me with a name list of the participants in Maryland; instead, they offered to send an email to all TTT participants in Maryland who had been in the program for one year or more. If they chose to participate, they could email or call me. I would then invite them through a recruitment letter. I prepared a recruitment letter that introduced the researcher, explained the purpose of the study, and requested the participation of the individuals. Of the 125 TTT participants in the state of Maryland who received the email from TTT headquarters, 13 responded to me, and 8 agreed to participate in the study. Each met the criteria. I selected the TTT participants from a number of urban and rural public elementary, middle, and high schools in different school districts within Maryland.

**Ethical Considerations.** As the researcher, I protected the privacy of the participants by creating pseudonyms for each participant and by keeping the names confidential. This practice also allowed for the privacy of data and academic information.

No personally identifying information was used or recorded. I will maintain the research data for five years in an electronic format that is password protected. At the end of the five-year period, I will destroy the data. I will use the research study in presentations at seminars, conferences, and lectures and in the writing of scholarly publications. I informed participants through the informed consent forms they signed that they could obtain information regarding the usage, maintenance, and destruction of the data.

### **Data Collection**

I collected the data through recorded face-to-face interviews or through recorded teleconferences. I determined that I would interview at least eight to 13 TTT participants for the study. This was based on the number of TTT participants that responded to me after receiving the

email from TTT headquarters, which was 13. Eight chose to participate in the study. The eight interviews took place over a two-month period. Each lasted approximately 45–60 minutes and were digitally recorded. I interviewed each individual separately and asked them to expound on the problem question. The face-to-face interview is the most prevalent and oldest form of data collection. The key benefit of the face-to-face interview is the attendance of the interviewer, which makes it easier for the interviewee to either explicate answers or ask questions for amplification if necessary (Riessman, 1993, Creswell, 2014; Maxwell, 2005; Neuman, 2007; Patton, 1990).

An open-ended interview format was the main method of data collection, with follow-up questions based on the participants' responses. I encouraged participants to speak freely and to tell stories using their own words. This allowed me to freely probe and ask follow-up questions. It also helped me build rapport with participants. This was in keeping with the assertions made by Creswell (1998) and Moustakas (1994), who stated that the open-ended interview style was appropriate for a qualitative study. Moustakas (1994) described the interview as "an informal, interactive process, which utilizes open-ended comments and questions" (p. 114).

The follow-up questions were based on the participants' responses. For this study, I sought clarification from TTT participants about the events that occurred as they transitioned from troops to teachers and how the transition affected their relationships, beliefs, roles, and responsibilities.

I transcribed the interviews verbatim for each participant. The data analysis is described in the following section. The data corpus also included field notes and reflective journal entries compiled during the data collection and analysis process. Table 1 shows the participant demographics.

Table 1

## Participants Demographics

Participants (by pseudonym)	Gender	Education	Branch	Years of Service	Ethnicity	Teacher Grade Level	Military Grade
Participant 1 Tim	Male	Master's of Education	Marine (Retired)	23	Caucasian	6th, 7th, & 8th	Chief Warrant Officer 5 (CW5)
Participant 2 James	Male	Master's of Education	Navy (Retired)	21	Hispanic	5th & 6th	Navy Chief (E7)
Participant 3 Tammy	Female	Bachelor's of Science	Navy	5	African- American	Special Education	Petty Officer First Class (E6)
Participant 4 Janice	Female	Master's of English	Navy (Retired)	22	Caucasian	Eighth-Grade Honors English	Lieutenant Commander (O4)
Participant 5 Jane	Female	Master's of Education	Navy (Retired)	22	African- American	2nd Grade	Navy Chief (E7)
Participant 6 Sam	Male	Master's of Education	Navy (Retired)	25	Caucasian	7th Grade	Lieutenant Commander (O4)
Participant 7 Beth	Female	Master's of Education	Army (Retired)	22	African- American	High School Chemistry	Major (O4)
Participant 8 Jim	Male	Doctorate in Music	Air Force (Retired)	23	Caucasian	High School Music Teacher	Senior Master Sergeant (E8)

Note: "E" denotes enlisted grades (ranging from E1 to E9); "W" denotes the warrant officer grade (WO1); "CW" denotes chief warrant officer grades (ranging from CW02 to CW05); "O" denotes officer grades (ranging from O1-O9, O10 only in case of a congressionally declared war).

Source: Author's work.

## Data Analysis

**Narrative Analysis.** I analyzed the data using the narrative analysis method, which helped create a structure for investigating the experiences of troops as they transitioned to being teachers. Narrative analysis focuses on close readings of stories told by applicants. Narrative analysis is a strategy for extracting a comprehensive description about an experience or issue. I used it to extract a description about troops' experiences after retiring from the military and transitioning into civilian life as teachers, as well as a description of the coping strategies they used to facilitate their transitions into troop teachers (Colaizzi, 1978; Fina & GeorgaKopoulou, 2015; Kim, 2016; Riessman, 1993).

In the narrative analysis process, I used participants' interview transcripts to extract integrated significant statements and theme clusters in order to derive overall themes to describe the TTT participants' experiences thoroughly and comprehensively. I also used Nvivo for narrative analysis and triangulation. The data analysis process involved several steps, described in the next section (Colaizzi, 1978; Fina & GeorgaKopoulou, 2015; Kim, 2016; Riessman, 1993).

**Procedural Steps for Conducting the Narrative Analysis.** The procedural steps for conducting the narrative analysis of the resulting data were as follows:

Step 1. Identified participants in coordination with the national TTT program office

Step 2. Interviewed the eight participants

Step 3. Asked the participants how they received their teacher certifications

Step 4. Asked each participant to describe a typical day as a TTT participant

Step 5. Recorded the interviews verbatim

Step 6. From the interviews, developed eight transcripts

Step 7. Created the project in NVivo

Step 8. Entered the project name and project description into NVivo

Step 9. Imported the transcripts into NVivo

Step 10. Opened source in detail view, selected the interview transcript to be analyzed, and clicked analyze

Step 11. Followed steps 8 and 9 until all eight participants were entered into the project

Step 12. Cross-checked initial coding against NVivo

Step 13. Utilized NVivo to corroborate coding and summary tables and to develop master themes

Step 14. From the information entered into NVivo, identified five master themes and further corroborated by the reading and re-reading of the transcripts. The five themes were as follows:

- a) Theme 1. Military experience is a benefit in the transition to becoming a teacher
- b) Theme 2. Employing mitigation strategies helps permit success in teaching
- c) Theme 3. Establishing rapport within the school environment facilitates success
- d) Theme 4. Being prepared is the key to a successful transition
- e) Theme 5. Future outlook for TTT participants

Step 12. Discussed general information and themes

Step 13. Performed an analysis of each of the themes

Step 14. Analyzed theme 1. Military experience is a benefit in the transition to becoming a teacher

- a) Identified several military elements by asking each participant about the elements.

1. The military elements were public speaking, being resourceful, contributing to a team, being confident, organizational skills, military discipline and assume a leadership role.

Step 15. Analyzed theme 2. Employing mitigation strategies helps permit success in teaching

- a) Asked each participant about the challenges they experienced as a TTT participant and how they mitigated the challenges.
- b) The collective challenges were alienation, students' family situations, lack of support, socioeconomic status of students, lack of parent involvement, student lethargy, understanding state requirements, and multitasking.
- c) The collective mitigation strategies were being persistent and learning, being a role model, re-teaching students, relating to students, changing demeanor, engaging students, applying military experience, and using one-on-one teaching.

Step 16. Analyzed theme 3. Establishing rapport within the school environment facilitates success

- a) Discussed how participants got along with the administration, their grade-level teams, the parents of the students, and the students.
- b) The answers varied from getting along well with all parties to getting along with most to getting along with only a few.

Step 17. Analyzed theme 4. Being prepared is the key to a successful transition

- a) Discussed participants' transitions.
- b) Seven participants out of eight indicated that their transitions were smooth; only one indicated that the transition was difficult.

Step 18. Analyzed theme 5. Future outlook of TTT participants

- a) Discussed the future outlook of the TTT participants.
- b) Seven out of eight indicated they would remain in teaching; one indicated a desire to leave teaching because of the low salary

**Researcher as Instrument.** In qualitative research, the researcher is the instrument or tool used for data collection (Creswell, 2014; Maxwell, 2005; Neuman, 2007; Patton, 1990; Riessman, 1993). In this study, the researcher was the human instrument. To further explain, qualitative research is the study of human experiences and situations, and the researcher is the only instrument flexible enough to capture the ever-changing human experience (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). As the researcher, I had to be constantly aware of my personal biases and practice reflexivity throughout the investigative procedure (Creswell, 2014; Maxwell, 2005; Neuman, 2007; Patton, 1990; Riessman, 1993). *Reflexivity* is the process of critical self-reflection of an individual's own beliefs and biases. This enables the researcher to be part of the social occurrence he or she seeks to understand (Creswell, 2014; Maxwell, 2005; Neuman, 2007; Patton, 1990; Riessman, 1993).

As the instrument of the research (and as a former TTT participant), I was seen as part of the community I sought to understand. In many ways, the participants had transition challenges similar to those I experienced in the TTT program. This made my role as the researcher even more multifaceted and complex because I had to understand the participants' stories and transitions from troops to teachers from their perspectives, not my own. The following section describes my experience as a TTT participant and how I maneuvered my way through different situations as I transitioned from being a troop to becoming a teacher.

**Subjectivity Statement.** The following is the story of my experience being a troop and becoming a teacher and of my experiences in my first year of teaching within the public-school system. I will discuss how I received my alternative teacher certification, the day-to-day association with the administration and my fourth-grade team, and how I utilized my military experience to overcome obstacles and challenges I experienced during my first year of teaching.

I was trained to teach through the alternative teacher certification program at the College of Notre Dame, Maryland. The program was very structured; we had many courses that prepared us to teach but none about managing a classroom. My military experience assisted me in this area. It also gave me an advantage when dealing with my students' parents. I began teaching when I was 44 years old. I was older than most of my students' parents and had already raised two

daughters and put them through school, so when I talked, they listened. They did not always take my advice, but that was fine by me.

My experience with the TTT program began in 1998 while I was still on active duty. In 1999, I applied for the program and was accepted. I began my teaching career at Sam Elementary School (a pseudonym), which was a Title I elementary school in Maryland. Since I did not have a teaching certificate, I was granted a provisional teaching certificate until I completed a teacher certification program. I attended the College of Notre Dame and completed my teacher certification program.

Initially, I took over a fourth-grade class because the primary teacher was departing on long-term medical leave. My fourth-grade team was a bit disjointed and unnecessarily competitive. Instead of assisting me in my efforts to teach, they created conflicts on purpose. I discovered that it was about survival of the fittest. Some of my team members did not value me as an educator and openly voiced their pessimistic opinions. I found myself in hostile waters at times, but I was able to negotiate the obstacles because of my Army experience. In the Army, you succeed by any means necessary, and failure is not an option. I was new to teaching in a public-school setting, but I was in no way new to teaching. As a Senior Non-Commissioned Officer, I was involved in training the force. Learning the curriculum without a mentor was a challenge, but it was doable.

Some of my fellow teachers were fine with my being from the TTT program, but some resented me because they felt I had not paid my dues. The teachers with seniority were exceptionally adversarial. They criticized everything from the way I dressed and how I instructed my classes to how I disciplined my students.

My students' parents were a bit puzzled because one day they saw me in my uniform wearing the rank of Sergeants Major, and a week later I was teaching their children. This was too much for some parents, so they asked the principal to put their children in other fourth-grade classrooms. In my first year of teaching, the parents demanded a lot of me, but once they realized that I was there to teach and mentor their children, they were more accepting. Also, in my first year, I had no parent helpers in my classroom, but I had parent helpers on a daily basis in my second year of teaching. The school politics were centered on the teachers with the most seniority. The principal was the gatekeeper and mediator who kept the county superintendent at bay. This helped

us do our jobs more effectively. The school principal and county central office evaluated new teachers at least four or more times during the school year.

When I started the TTT program, I was awarded a stipend of \$5,000 to help defray the cost of a teaching certification program. Upon accepting the stipend, I was committed to teaching for three years with the stipulation that I would repay the stipend if I were terminated before the end of the three-year period. Since I was a 20% disabled veteran, I was also able to leverage the Vocational Rehabilitation Program (VRP), which paid for all my classes and provided a monthly stipend until I finished my teacher certification program. I tell my story to be transparent; in the same vein, the next paragraph discusses trustworthiness and validity.

**Trustworthiness and Validity.** Trustworthiness and validity are important attributes of qualitative research. *Trustworthiness* is how well the researcher ensures the accounts and examination of a particular person are truthful based on the situation (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). *Trustworthiness* in qualitative research can also be defined as a blend of credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Trochim & Donnelly, 2008; Shank, 2006). These terms are described in the following paragraphs. Another aspect of trustworthiness is being transparent, meaning the researcher reveals his or her experience with the phenomenon under study because researcher bias is the greatest threat in qualitative research.

*Validity* is the ability to defend the findings from the position of the researcher, participant, or reader of an account (Creswell, 2009). Strategies I employed in this study to ensure validity were (1) member checking, in which the participants checked the accuracy of the data they provided throughout the analysis process, and (2) cross-checking work through audit trails.

**Credibility.** *Credibility* establishes whether the study findings are accurate and believable from the position of the researcher, the participants, and the reader (Creswell, 2003; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Mason, 1996; Maxwell, 2005; Merriam, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). Trochim and Donnelly (2008) indicated that “from this perspective the purpose of qualitative research is to describe or understand the phenomena of interest from the participant’s eyes; the participants are the only ones who can legitimately judge the credibility” (p. 149). To ensure credibility, constant contact with participants throughout a study is encouraged. To stay



engaged with the participants, I conducted follow-up interviews throughout the entire length of the two-month study.

**Dependability.** *Dependability* is “the degree to which the research adequately describes the continuously changing context and its effects on conclusions” (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008, p. 149). Trochim and Donnelly (2008) further stated, “It is the researcher’s responsibility to develop the changes that occur in the setting and how these changes might affect the conclusions that are reached” (p. 149). Shank (2006) indicated that *dependability* is “where the data in a given study come from, how they are collected and how they are used” (p. 114). This is achieved by maintaining a strong audit trail between the collection of data and their use (Shank, 2006, p. 15). I maintained copious notes throughout the entire length of the study. I maintained my notes on 3 x 5 cards or in a ledger.

**Confirmability.** *Confirmability* is the ability to corroborate the results of a given study by another researcher conducting the same study (Shank, 2006; Trochim & Donnelly, 2008).

**Transferability.** *Transferability* is the process of using the outcome of an investigation in one situation and applying it to other similar situations (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008; Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). As an example of transferability, imagine a troop who is considering being a teacher upon retirement. She starts reading about the TTT program and comes across a study in which another troop has successfully become a teacher. She determines that the experiences within the study are similar to hers. She uses the study as a roadmap for her own transition from being a troop to being a teacher. The troop transfers the results of the study over to herself as she transitions out of the military to become a teacher.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, I discussed the rationale for choosing a qualitative research design; introduced the narrative study approach; provided a rationale for conducting a narrative study; and reviewed the procedures, the research participants, ethical considerations, the data collection, the data analysis, the researcher as instrument, trustworthiness, validity, credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability.

## Chapter 4: Findings

### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to discover and examine how TTT participants in Maryland traverse and negotiate the transition from being in the military to becoming a civilian teacher. The importance of this study was determining what influence TTT participants in Maryland have on the teaching occupation overall against the framework of the national teacher shortage. In this qualitative narrative study, I explored the lives of individuals through their stories. I then analyzed the information I gathered through their stories and wrote it as a narrative. The narrative combines the opinions from the participants with my personal experience, concluding in a collective narrative (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

What follows in this chapter are the original findings I collected through interviews with the TTT participants. I identify the participants by pseudonyms to protect their identities and privacy. In this chapter, I describe the TTT participants' experiences through their eyes and provide basic information on the paths the participants took to certification. At that point, I analyze the five themes: (1) military experience a benefit in the transition to becoming a teacher, (2) employing mitigation strategies helps permit success in teaching, (3) establishing rapport within the school environment facilitates success, (4) being prepared is the key to a successful transition, and (5) future outlook of TTT participants. Chapter 4 culminates with a summary. In the succeeding paragraphs, I will introduce the eight TTT participants and describe their typical school day.

### The Participants

**Mr. Tim Acosta.** Mr. Acosta is a retired United States marine. Tim came into the Marine Corps as an enlisted service member. Later in his career, he became a warrant officer. Tim's military occupational specialty (MOS) was 5702: chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) defense officer. Tim retired as the director of the Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical School. Tim said that the most interesting fact about his teaching experience is that he teaches and also serves as the school nurse during the school nurse's absence. Tim is a paramedic and is certified to use cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), the automated external defibrillator (AED), and first aid. Tim described his typical school day as follows:

I get there . . . about 7:10, and it gives me a good half an hour to prepare before I go on duty, which I have an additional duty before school to be the teacher in charge of the front lobby of the school, and I oversee and supervise all the activities in the front lobby at the school . . . . Then I go get coffee, go back to my room . . . . There is a homeroom in there that's held by another teacher, and then I wait until the first bell of the day and I start getting kids around 8:10, and I start with eighth-grade classes, which go from 8:10 to 9:44, and then after I teach the eighth-grade class, the first thing . . . we are on what's called block scheduling where we teach approximately hour and a half blocks of instruction for all of our classes, and we have an A-day schedule and a B-day schedule. So, I have six different classes at any given time, tenth-grade to seventh-grade to sixth-grade classes. But, at 9:44, the eighth graders leave and then the seventh graders [are] in the room by 9:48, and then I teach seventh grade until 11:22 . . . . Then at 11:22, the lunch bell rings and . . . the seventh grade goes to lunch, and then I eat lunch . . . . Then, at about ten 'til one, I go to the school clinic because I am the backup nurse in the school, and I cover her for half an hour while she goes to lunch. . . . Then, about 12:20 to 12:30, she comes back from lunch, and then I'm on break until 1:55, at which time I get—my final class of the day comes in, which is sixth graders . . . . Then I have sixth graders in the classroom until 3:10 p.m. Now all these times are different this year because of all the snow days, because 25 minutes has been added on to each school day to make up for lost time during the school year. But that's in line with the typical day. The days for the last five years have been different than what they are right now, but that's—3:10 being the final bell rings and I send—dismiss the sixth graders. They'll get on their buses and go catch their rides, and then we have two busloads—two different loads of buses that park there in the afternoon. Then I'll have kids in the room until about 3:25 waiting for the bell for the second load of buses. And then at 3:25 my day is over, and I get to the gym or go running.

The next TTT participant is Mr. James Barnes. While Mr. Acosta is a retired US Marine, Mr. Barnes is retired from the Navy. Mr. Acosta was a warrant officer, and Mr. Barnes was a non-commissioned officer. Commissioned officers are appointed by the President of the United States.

Warrant officers are designated an officer by a warrant, which is the official authority for the appointment. They are experts in their particular fields. A non-commissioned officer volunteers to come into the military and is in charge of day-to-day operations of a unit (squad, company, or battalion) and trains junior officers and other enlisted soldiers.

**Mr. James Barnes.** Mr. Barnes is a retired navy chief (E7). James' Navy Enlisted Classification (NEC) was independent duty corpsman (IDC) NEC 8425. Independent duty corpsmen are Navy enlisted medical personnel who serve with the Navy Surface Warfare units, Fleet Marine Forces, or Special Warfare units (the SEALs) on the sea, on land, or in the air.

James said that the most interesting fact about his teaching experience is that his school has not often been on "lock-down" for security purposes, but a month ago, an animal got into the building. Neither the principal nor his administrative staff knew whether the "animal was rabid or not, so they locked the building down." He stated that "the teachers were told go to full lock-down." He indicated that he took "this old cricket bat, which I've had for years, and I stood near the front door." After the lock-down was lifted and things got back to normal, he stated that his students were telling the administrators that "if ever there is a real-life situation where somebody infiltrated our school with a weapon, or was going to cause harm, I want to be in Mr. Barnes's classroom." James described his typical day at school as follows:

Sure. That's like, I usually get to school about a little after seven o'clock in the morning every day. I go through the front office. I will usually go ahead and check my mailbox, or usually I need to come back, the students or me. I get to my classroom a few minutes later and go ahead and fire up the computer, sign on to that. [I] begin putting my addendums or my outline on the sideboards of the two classes that I'm teaching. Just to go [get] ahead [on my] psychology . . . and the international baccalaureate psychology course. By that time, I am signed onto my computer fully. I'll take out paperwork that has been graded from the day before and usually stack that out so I can go ahead and hand that back that day. And, I'm putting out any papers, but my lesson plans [were] already made the night before. So, tonight, before you called, I was writing my lesson plans for tomorrow, so they're ready to go for . . . tomorrow. So, I'm having to do nothing else except get ready to receive the

kids. By about 7:20, the first bell rings, and a few minutes later I'm usually posting myself in . . . the hallway. All teachers are required to be there in the hallway during the passing bell, just to make sure the kids aren't up to mischief when they're coming through. And then, by 7:40 the bell has . . . rung and the day begins. I have a first block class; they usually last about 85 minutes, and we'll normally go through a warm-up activity, and then as soon as the warm-up activity is concluded, we'll do a quick review of the material we covered the last time. Because I see these kids every other day, I want to make sure that they haven't lost material since the last time we were together. So . . . we do the review activity, and usually while they're catching up with that, if there's anything administrative-wise I need to pass on to the kids, changes in a—let's say a day—or something changes, some other, I'll give it to them . . . then we're into the main part of the lesson. There's an activity usually involved with this because it is a psychology course. It's kind of like having a laboratory to go along with it. And then, near the end I hold a quick review, and usually an informal kind of an assessment of how the kids are doing, and kids are understanding. We'll go ahead and get the homework reviewed—usually it's a small amount because I usually have the kids do most of it in class. And then, they're out of the class, at the end of the block . . . We provide them with four blocks in a day of 85-minute sessions. And so, I have a block one, two, and then a block four. A block three is usually my lunch and my planning period, and that's what my schedule's been this year, so next year could be something entirely different. At the end of the day, I'm usually . . . either tutoring the kids that come by for extra tutoring sessions, usually by appointment, but not always. There're usually one or two kids that pop in to make up work they've missed from an absence or something like that. That will take me usually to about 2:45; the day ends at 2:15. So about o'clock, hmm, 3:15 or so, unless I've really got something that's running late, like a meeting or something like that. [James also indicated that] my grade-level team [and I have] a pretty good relationship. Recently I was moved down to the second floor—my . . . whole department, social studies . . . is up on the third floor, they didn't really like that, it's a matter of logistics. I get along well with the administration.

The next TTT participant is Ms. Tammy Clemson. Both Mr. Barnes and Ms. Clemson were non-commissioned officers in the US Navy. Comparatively, Mr. Barnes was an IDC, while Ms. Clemson was a dental technician.

**Ms. Tammy Clemson.** Ms. Clemson is a veteran of the US Navy. Tammy spent five years on active duty and ended her term of service (ETS) as a petty officer second class (E5). Tammy's NEC was a dental technician (NEC 8707). After Tammy left the Navy and before she joined the TTT program, she was a teacher in the DoD Education Activity (commonly known as DoD Schools). DoD Schools is a network of schools that serve active duty dependents and civilian DoD personnel in the US and overseas. Tammy stated that after she and her family returned from Japan, she started to pursue the TTT program. Tammy took her Praxis examinations, and after several attempts, she completed it and applied for her teaching credentials. Tammy said that the most interesting fact about her teaching experience is that she "loves to learn and teach [children]." Tammy described her typical day at school as follows:

School begins for students at 8:25, and I will attend door duty at 8:25, so I watch the front door and I, you know, invite the students in grades K–6. Then around 8:35 I will report back to the classroom where myself, the general [education] teacher, and the instructional aide are along with 31 students; 10 of those students being special [education]. At around 9:00, we'll start, begin our math, our subject, and the general [education] teacher will then teach the math lesson while myself and the instructional aide will support all students, but really honing in on the special education students. At around 9:45 to about 10:15, I will take my special [education] students down to a smaller classroom setting where we'll do remediation. A small group, on the math subject that was just taught. At around 10:15, we'll return to the classroom for encore, and encore is just your extracurricular activities throughout the school such as art, P.E., music, and that's it . . . Then at 10:45, the students will return to class, we'll review math concepts a little more, honing in on peer tutoring and individual support for those students who didn't get it the first time around. At 11:25, we'll take the students down to lunch. They're escorted by myself, the general [education] teacher, and we both have to sit there in the cafeteria with our students during this lunch

time which ends at 11:50. We escort the students back up to the classroom, give them a little restroom break, and then at 12:00 we will begin teaching reading. That's where . . . myself as a co-teacher comes in and teaches our students the reading strategies such as passages, main ideas, synonym/antonym, causes and effects, author's purpose, all those things that tie into the reading standards. Okay, at 1:00 to 1:30 we'll hold math remediation and that's again in a small group setting. I take my students back downstairs, touching upon any skills that they missed not just that day, but throughout the week, so it's a big review. And then [from] 1:30 to 2:00, we'll do reading remediation, again we're still downstairs with my small group, and for reading, we mainly get onto the computers. I let, I allow them to get onto the computers to do reading comprehension skills, vocabulary skills. We have this pilot program that has been run through our district which is called "Reading Eggs," and that's where many of our students get that hands-on type computer technology experience and reading support. Then at 2:00, from 2:00 to 3:00, we're into Maryland studies, and again that topic is taught by the general [education teacher]. I will, myself will provide classroom support for the students. At 3:00 to 3:15, students are supported in the end of the day wrap-up or pack-up, helping them, mainly my students write down their homework assignments, gather all of their books needed to take home for homework, answer any questions that they may have had throughout the day pertaining to the homework instructions, and at 3:15 back at door duty to dismiss all students.

Tammy said of her team: "That's a good question. I asked myself that daily. It's not cohesive rapport, I . . . want to say this in a professional tone. It's . . . a rough, rocky relationship."

The next TTT participant is Ms. Janice Davis. Both Ms. Clemson and Ms. Davis were in the Navy. Ms. Clemson was a non-commissioned officer, dental technician, while Ms. Davis was a naval officer, public affairs officer (PAO).

**Ms. Janice Davis.** Ms. Davis is a retired naval officer. Janice's job while on active duty was as a PAO 1650. As a PAO, Janice created a connection between the Navy and the public, and she correspondingly determined the best way to relay information, answer reporters, and provide accurate information to Navy decision makers (NAVPERS 15839I, 2017).

Janice said that the most interesting fact about her teaching experience is that during her first year of teaching English, she had her students enter the Navy Fleet Reserve Association Essay Contest, and one of her seventh-grade students won the contest. Her student wrote an essay about “how the freedom of speech affected him as an African-American because without it, Harriet Tubman or Frederick Douglas could not have said what they said . . . as the freedom of speech is guaranteed in the Constitution.” Janice stated that this student was recognized by the Navy Fleet Reserve Association for his essay. Janice stated that “standing there, I was so proud and . . . I had tears in my eyes because . . . he wrote such a good essay, and I helped him just a little bit on it.” Janice described her typical day at school as follows:

Sure, well I arrive somewhere around 7:30 and finish some lessons plans and make various copies . . . of any material I might need to, you know, actually implement the lesson plans. Whether it's gathering, you know, markers or, you know, various things that I need. I'll pull some vocabulary words. I'm an English teacher, so there's some regular routine stuff as well as, you know, differentiating through lessons every day and then classes start. You have homeroom, and then classes actually start at 8:50 and, on the first bell, we have what's called . . . let's see, this old sort of period schedule at where I have 50-minute bells for middle school, and I have five a day with two 50-minute bells set aside for planning purposes. So, I have a bell, first bell is my inclusion bell, I have that class special [education], and I have a special education assistant in there. Then I have my planning . . . . An hour and half, and it also includes meetings, then I have the remainder of my classes until 3:30.

In response to the question [add question], Janice remarked:

Sure. I mean, it is excellent. I'm, I'm very blessed to have veteran teachers. I have a team [in] middle school, we have these teams which deal with each constant area. So, I'm the English teacher, there's a social studies teacher, there is a science teacher, and there is a math teacher, and I'm so fortunate, I have a wonderful group of ladies who I work with and . . . . they've all been very good. [The] administration here has also been very supportive and, and helpful. I don't, you know, I don't converse with them at lunch, but in terms of like,



giving me the support I need . . . if I need to refer a child which is very, very rare you know . . . it's taken seriously, and they know if Ms. Davis is referring a child, you know, to the eighth-grade principal, something's going on, so I appreciate that because Baltimore . . . there were so many referrals and, you know, there were so many behavior issues that, you know, it was a whole different fallback. But, so in this case, you know, it's a very good relationship.

The next TTT participant is Ms. Jane Ely. Both Ms. Davis and Ms. Ely were in the Navy. Ms. Davis was a naval officer, public affairs officer, and Ms. Ely was a non-commissioned officer, chief personnel specialist.

**Ms. Jane Ely.** Ms. Ely is a retired Navy chief (E7). Jane's NEC was a chief personnel specialist (NEC B710). As a chief personnel specialist, Jane provided guidance and procedural oversight to personnel specialists under her supervision, who provided enlisted sailors with personnel actions (*personnel actions* are any actions that effect a change to a service member's pay, leave, promotion, or readiness status, and *readiness status* refers to whether a service member is prepared and ready for deployment), pay, and travel entitlements (*a travel entitlement* is a subsidy paid to a service member to move from one geographical assignment to another) (NAVPERS 18068F, 2017).

Jane said that the most interesting fact about her teaching experience is that she knew teaching was her calling "when this little boy [in her class] broke her glasses because she wouldn't give him a snack." The connection to teaching is the enforcement of discipline; no means no, regardless of how bad the student behavior becomes. Jane stated that she has always wanted to be a teacher and "that was her plan before she came into the military." Jane stated that she got "kind of sidetracked for 24 years, but that every adult in her family is a teacher." Jane described her typical school day as follows:

I get there and the bells rings, but the children will not start coming in until about 9:00 a.m., after they finish eating their breakfast. They're putting their book bags up in their lockers, because they have lockers, and they eat breakfast and they do their morning work. [At] about 9:30, that's when the actual bell rings for school to start. They'll make the morning

announcements, they'll say the Pledge of Allegiance, their school pledge, and that lasts about [until] 9:45 or so. They're throwing away their breakfast and then we start our song . . . right after morning announcements, to let them know what they're [doing] for today. Then . . . take a lunch count and then we start our small groups for reading. So, we go to our small group, and while I'm doing small groups, the other two groups are . . . on the computer or at another station, workstation. We do that, [then] we switch groups every 20 minutes. Then we do that until about 9:40, I'm sorry, 10:40 or so, and then my kids, they go to resource. And of course, while they're at resource, I'm planning with the other teachers on my grade level. So, that lasts for about 45, 50 minutes or so. I go pick my students up, I get my bathroom break there. Got to . . . pick up my students and give them their bathroom break, and then we come back to class and we do our shared reading . . . . That's more like 30 minutes or so, and after shared reading, we have social science [and] history. And that's from like . . . 2 o'clock to about 12:45, and at 12:45 we get ready and lineup for lunch. I take, walk my students to the cafeteria for lunch. I stay there until they get through the lunch line, and then I know I have maybe 10 to 15 minutes for lunch [pause] to eat my food. Then I go and pick them up at about 1:20. Take them for another bathroom break, and we get in the room about 1:30. 1:30 is our math time, 1:30 to 2:30 is math. So, we're either doing our math, that's when we start off working in our daily math review. Then I'll teach a whole group lesson, and after that I go into my small groups . . . I have students on the computer, or at a station, or if they're just doing practice. After . . . that, 2:30 to 3:00, I teach them science (pause), and from 3:00 to 3:30, we're writing. At around 3:35, I start packing up, and 3:45 my students start getting dismissed.

In response to the question, Jane also voiced that:

I get along [with my grade-level team] very well. Three of us are first year teachers, and then . . . there's six of us all together. One of them, she has like . . . I don't know what kind of class she has . . . special education, so, but it's six of us all together. But I get along with them really well.

The next TTT participant is Mr. Sam Farmer. Both Mr. Farmer and Ms. Ely were in the Navy. Ms. Ely was a non-commissioned officer, chief personnel specialist, and Mr. Farmer was a naval commissioned officer, reactor engineer.

**Mr. Sam Farmer.** Mr. Farmer is a retired naval officer. Sam spent 15 years as a nuclear reactor operator on three different submarines and then accepted a commission (all commissioned officers in the military are appointed by the President of the United States). He was commissioned as a naval reactor engineer (122X). Sam was one of approximately 380 engineers that technically managed the various areas of the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program. Sam was directly responsible from cradle to grave for all shipboard nuclear power plants and shore-based prototypes support facilities ("shore-based" here meaning any military activity on land that is powered by nuclear energy) that were under his control (NAVPERS 15839I, 2017).

Sam said that the most interesting fact about his teaching experience is that after many trials and errors, in teaching he found a breakthrough. During his lectures, he will identify with the person, place, or thing and inject his personal experience. Sam stated that "to break through to some of those students, I would say, 'Oh, I've been there.' And it's unbelievable how their whole demeanor changed when . . . 'You've been there?'" Sam described his typical school day as follows:

Certainly . . . I normally arrive at the school around 7:00 AM in the morning, at that time when I come in, I arrange everything [for the day] . . . I look over material from the previous day and see if there's anything that we need to re-, re-do, re-cover, I bring up. I always have a warm up when the class begins, we got through that to see if there's something on there. Then, the students actually start in class at 8:10. For me, I don't receive students. That's my planning period from 8:10 until about 9:00, so I have about 50 minutes there at the beginning of the day worth of planning, and that's for if I need to enter grades or something, or kind of work on some other materials or update a lesson that's coming up in the future, that's when I do that. Then at 9:00, I have my students and I have three classes, and they're about 93 minutes each. I have a class, one class, then I pick right up with the next class, and these are life science, seventh-grade life science. Then we have a lunch break, and then my next class comes in, and that's a split class, so I have them for about

46 minutes or so, and then I go teach a computer class for about 46 minutes, and then they come back, and we finish up the day and go to 15:10 . . . when they're done. Of course, at that point, I'm there. Typically, I'm there from one to two hours afterward, I always if I have a lab for the next day, I'll set up for that, I'll get materials together, make sure everything, I have everything I need for the next day and then set that out. I don't necessarily have the lab stations all set up, but I have all my materials out and make sure I'm not missing anything, and if I need to go get something or need to purchase something that night, I'll make sure I, I do that . . . I get out the lesson that when it was previously taught, look at that. I have little reflections at the bottom that tell me you know, this went well, maybe I can add this in, then I'll review the lesson. So, between . . . 4:00 and 5:00 I leave and come back to the house.

In response to the question [add question], Sam also indicated:

Oh . . . we [I] have a great relationship [with the grade-level team]. Of course . . . I am probably one of the oldest in the building, so with that you have a . . . a different approach. When they see you, they don't see somebody fresh out of, of college, and, so we, a matter of fact, this year the seventh-grade team, for the school, won team of the year at our school. So, it's a . . . great team. We all get along, we enjoy each other's company . . . we're the only team I think that sits down at lunch, and we sit down together . . . we eat together.

The next TTT participant is Ms. Beth George. Mr. Farmer was a commissioned officer in the Navy, whereas Ms. George was a commissioned officer in the United States Army.

**Ms. Beth George.** Ms. George is a retired Army officer. Beth's job while on active duty was as a PAO, 46A. As a PAO, Beth's principal task was to inform senior Army leaders on public affairs concerns and assist them in making informed decisions (AR 611-1, 1997).

Beth indicated that she currently works within an academy that has three alternative schools under its umbrella. She stated that one school teaches special needs and behavioral problem children. One teaches gifted children, and her group teaches children who cannot go back to public-school because of violations. Her group is between the ages of 16 and 21 and are not

ready for adult education classes. In addition, Beth teaches GED (General Education Development) classes on Tuesday and Thursday evenings.

Beth worked as the recruiter for the TTT program for the state of Maryland. She indicated she would visit military units in the tri-state area (Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia) and attempt to recruit military personnel or their spouses to become TTT participants.

Beth said the most interesting fact about her teaching experience is that she enjoys teaching young adults and delights in watching their faces light up when they have struggled with a teaching point and finally get it. Beth described her typical school day as follows:

Yes. My room is set up virtually as a computer lab. I get in . . . just before 8 o'clock usually. We start the day at 8:30. Our students arrive in two groups. We have a morning group that comes in two days a week, and we have an afternoon group that comes in two days a week, so I'm basically, for Monday and Tuesday, I see one group of students, it was in four modules, again I see them on Tuesday, so that's four different, four groups of students in the groups I see twice a week. They end at 5:00, so on mornings they start at 8:30. We break at 10:15, they get a break for the restroom and what have you, and then we recess from 10:30 until 12:00. At 12:00 the buses come and take our morning students away, and around 1:00, the afternoon group arrives on the city bus. The group then works from 1:00 until 3:00, and then . . . they take a break, and then they're back by 3:15 until 5:00 p.m.

The next TTT participant is Mr. Hammer. Ms. George was a commissioned officer in the United States Army, whereas Mr. Hammer is a non-commissioned officer in the Air Force Band.

**Mr. Jim Hammer.** Mr. Hammer is a retired Air Force senior non-commissioned officer (SNCO). Jim's Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC) was as an Air Force Band musician (3N2XX). As an Air Force Band musician, Jim performed as a member of the Air Force regional bands and as a member of the Air Force Premier Band, which performs all over the free world.

The Air Force Band consists of one Premier Band and 11 regional bands. The AFSC identifies enlisted jobs in the Air Force. They are further broken down into career fields. AFSCs with similar functions are grouped into the same career field. In this case, all Air Force enlisted band

members are assigned an AFSC based on which band they are assigned to. The AFSC (3N2XX) denotes that the enlisted individual is assigned to the Premier Band. The AFSC (3N1XX) denotes that this enlisted individual is assigned to a regional band. Jim became a special education teacher because of his one-on-one teaching philosophy in teaching future musicians. He carried this experience into teaching special education.

Jim said that the most interesting fact about his teaching experience is that his background as a band member helps him teach his special education students because it gave him one-on-one, hands-on teaching experience. Jim described his typical school day as follows:

Well, I . . . [teach] in an elementary school. I am serving students who have individual education plans . . . that call for an additional support . . . in their programs. And so, I go to classrooms where the students are and then [we] do several different things. One is to maybe help make sure that they're staying on task when they're in the classroom. Sometimes it's to take them aside in the classroom and . . . work on the projects that . . . everyone in the classroom is working on. Sometimes it's to take them to the special education resource room and . . . do projects. And that would be based on . . . what sort of things are going on in the classroom. If there's a lot, if . . . the classroom is packed, sometimes it's . . . good to work in the classroom in a small group setting. Sometimes there's lots of activity and you go to a separate location so that . . . two teachers aren't competing . . . So, then I also . . . teach a remedial math course . . . called Voyager Math, and it's a particular packaged product . . . that's direct instruction oriented . . . I do that for small groups of students who . . . are identified as having . . . weaknesses in math . . . that's a, a part of the requirements. And then . . . we write the . . . plans . . . in conjunction with the . . . the classroom teachers, the general education teachers, and present them to the parents. [The] IEP committee consists of . . . the students' parents, the general education teacher, a special education teacher, an administrator of school, the building administrator, and other . . . service providers, if it's warranted. Speech therapy [or] educational therapy, [services of this kind.]

Jim also indicated that he got along well with his team and the administration.

Eight professional military personnel participated in the above interviews. Both non-commissioned officers and commissioned officers were included. All had the same goal, which was to transition from being a troop to being a teacher. In the interviews, each participant discussed his or her typical day at school as a TTT participant. This typical day became his or her routine.

### **General Information and Themes**

The TTT program is not a teacher certification program. It is a government supported program that provides veterans and military retirees with a path to teaching through subsidizing teacher certifications programs (alternative or traditional) and giving them a “foot inside the school door.” Both the alternative and traditional teacher certification programs deliver HQTs. The objective of participating in either program type is to become licensed, so either path to certification ends at the same destination: inside the classroom.

TTT participants select their routes to teacher certification based on the programs offered in the areas they live and work. Tim, Beth, and Jim received their teacher certification through an alternative teacher certification program, and James, Tammy, Janice, Jane, and Sam received their teacher certification through a traditional teacher certification program. The participants described their journeys to certification in the interviews, as described in the following paragraphs.

Tim specified that:

I got my bachelor's degree in 2000 when I was stationed at Ft. Lost in the Woods. I got recruited, moved here to Maryland, and worked at the Pentagon for three years. And then while I was living there [in Maryland], in 2005 I started working on my business degree with Texas Christian University online. I walked away from the world [Tim went off the grid and didn't have a job or social contacts during this phase of his life], but I eventually applied to a county school so I could career switch, which led to licensure, and I finished my master's in 2008.

Tim and Beth received their certifications through the same teacher certification program.

Beth:

Well, I started . . . in Texas. I found out the State of Texas had a kind [type] of a teaching program for people who just wanted to substitute. I found out when I moved back to Virginia

that the state of Virginia had initiated the first college program, a career infantry program for the military. I applied and got accepted. I received my teaching certification via the alternative teacher certification program.

Beth and Jim received their certifications through the same teacher certification program.

Jim:

Well, that's . . . I'm probably a bit unusual, out of the normal ladder. I had a teaching certificate before I entered the Air Force. Once I got in the Air Force, I decided that, that . . . I can make it a career. During the time I was in the Air Force, I got my master's degree, started on a doctorate. My goal was to teach college . . . after the Air Force. And, I did teach college as an adjunct teacher, teaching music . . . then I earned . . . my doctorate and got a full-time position for a local university for four years. That . . . came to an end [because] I . . . ruffled too many feathers. Then I got my teaching credentials to teach special education through an alternate [alternative] teacher certification program and began teaching in the public-school system.

Jim and James received their teacher certifications through different programs. James received his teacher certification through the traditional teacher certification program, while Jim received his through the alternative teacher certification program.

James:

Well, I got mine, in kind of a . . . little bit different [way] . . . as compared to some of the other veterans that I've encountered. I was working on a teacher certificate, [and] my teacher license here in Delaware at the time I was hired. I was hired . . . the last minute for the social studies department.

James and Tammy received their teacher certifications through the same teacher certification program.

Tammy:

You know [laughs], I don't know if it was conventional [traditional], alternative, but it was a tough road for me . . . One being that, I had a bachelor's degree. It was in sociology. Now, with the sociology degree I knew I couldn't teach, so I had to find other means. I . . .



[pursued] . . . my master's through University of Phoenix. Once I obtained my master's, I thought, "Hey, let me go apply." No, I didn't know that I needed to take the Praxis. Okay, took the Praxis seven tries. I believe in the Bible, seven times seven is the number of completions. So, my seventh time I completed the Praxis and I got a passing score. [I] didn't realize that, okay, now you have to apply for a licensure in the state in which you wanted to teach. Because I got my degree through University of Phoenix, which is [in] Arizona, it had nothing to do with, or they had no way of saying, "Hey, if you teach in another state, you have to abide by that state's rules or laws or licensure process." So, I was clueless. I was totally clueless, so I kept trying and saying, okay, how do I apply for a job in Maryland? I have a master's degree. What do I need to do? And that's when I started getting information from, you know, other teachers that . . . okay, you need to apply for the licensure . . . . So . . . I would say I went through the traditional teacher certification program of getting my degree and then getting my licensure through the state of the Maryland.

Tammy and Janice, received their certification through the same type of traditional teacher certification program. Janice was receiving her certification via the alternative teacher certification program, but in essence she received her certification via an 18-month traditional teacher certification program.

Janice:

It was called ATP (alternative teacher certification program), but it ended up being an 18-month program [traditional teacher certification program] because, my major was in communications, and in order to teach English and get my secondary English teaching certificate, to teach the upper level, I had to essentially get a bachelor's degree in English.

Janice and Jane, received their teacher certification through the same type of traditional teacher certification program.

Jane:

No, I went back and got my teaching certification through the traditional teacher certification program. So, I got my . . . bachelor's in psychology, then I got my master's in . . . education.

Both Jane and Sam received their teacher certification through the same type of traditional teacher certification program.

Sam:

Well, I actually did it through the traditional teacher certification program . . . through a school in Utah called Western Governor's. It was all online and it fit into my schedule. I did a lot of weekend work [laughs] . . . and so, what I did was go through Western Governor's. They actually set up your student teaching wherever you're going to go, and I knew I was coming back to District of Columbia.

In summary, five TTT participants, (James, Tammy, Janice, Jane, and Sam) received their teaching certification via the traditional teacher certification program. The remaining three participants (Tim, Beth, and Jim) received their teaching certification via the alternative teacher certification program. Each participant had to complete a teacher certification program in order to teach. Some chose the traditional program; others chose the alternative program.

The first theme that I will present is that military experience is a plus to becoming a teacher.

***Theme 1: Military experience is a benefit in the transition to becoming a teacher***

I identified the basic military elements (principles foundational to the military) during the reading of the transcripts, re-reading, and coding. All the participants responded that certain elements of the military helped prepare them in their transition to becoming a teacher.

identifies the elements of military experience that are beneficial in the transition to becoming a teacher: (1) assume a leadership role, (2) military discipline, (3) organizational skills, (4) being confident, (5) contribute to the team, (6) being resourceful, and (7) public speaking.

Table 2

Military experience a benefit in the transition to becoming a teacher

Military experience a benefit in the transition to becoming a teacher								
Military Elements								
Public Speaking	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Being Resourceful		X		x	X		X	X
Contribute to the Team	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Being Confident	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Organizational Skills	X	X				X	X	X
Military Discipline		X			X	X		
Assume Leadership Role		X					X	
Participants	Tim	James	Tammy	Janice	Jane	Sam	Beth	Jim

Source: Author's work.

James and Beth indicated that assuming a leadership role benefited them most in their transition to becoming a teacher. James, Jane, and Sam specified that military discipline aided them most in their transition to becoming a teacher. Tim, James, Sam, Beth, and Jim stated that organizational skills helped them most in their transition to becoming a teacher. All eight participants replied that the elements of being confident and contributing to the team helped them in their transition to becoming a teacher. James, Janice, Jane, Beth, and Jim indicated that being resourceful helped them most in their transition to becoming a teacher. All eight participants stated that public speaking helped them transition to becoming a teacher. The quotes are organized by subthemes.

The first subtheme is assume leadership role.

James:

The Navy taught me to be a leader among men. I mean it took a lot of confidence as a person. The Navy taught me a great deal about what I could possibly be, the best I could possibly be . . . . You don't think about the possibility of harm for yourself, you just go because that's what your job is.

Beth:

Yes. Number one, being organized. Being a stickler for time. Being able to meet deadlines. Being able to contribute to a team when you attend meetings. Willing to assume leadership roles as a leader, and that was mainly at the middle school level. Being resourceful,

knowing where to go for things that we're short of, or just out [and] finding ways to jerry-rig certain things.

The next subtheme is military discipline.

Jane:

The military assisted me by how I discipline my class. My class, everybody's always complimenting my class in the hallway. They're like they're marching. No, they're not marching, they just learned to keep their eyes straight, hands by their side, mouths closed. In the hallway . . . they're more disciplined than the other classes, because I see the other classes, they're out there doing flips in the hallway, my class knows how to act.

James:

Well, let me . . . just explain that I don't think I could be half the teacher that I am today if it wasn't for my military experience. I mean it took a lot of confidence as a person, I learned to be a leader in the Navy . . . . They taught me to be a leader among men . . . in combat situations when you know . . . when a plane goes down and they're calling for a corpsman . . . you don't think about the possibility of harm for yourself, you just go because that's what your job is.

Sam:

Well I think really what . . . it gives you is a maturity and the ability to walk into the classroom, and you understand order, discipline . . . . I'm pretty organized because of the military.

The next subtheme is organizational skills.

Tim:

I would say the military prepared me for teaching, because of having to speak in public. You're used to the public speaking as an officer or non-commissioned officer. When I made warrant officer, that kind of took me away from interacting with new troops, which is, you know, one of the most enjoyable things you can do. So, by becoming a teacher, it puts me back . . . . I'll never become an administrator, because then I wouldn't have all the contact I have with the kids. doing flips in the hallway, my class knows how to act.

James:

Well, let me . . . say that great organizational skills were a must in my job. That has helped me be a better teacher today. I don't think I could be half the teacher that I am today if it wasn't for my military experience. I mean it took a lot of confidence as a person, I learned to be a leader in the Navy . . . . The Navy taught me a great deal about what I could possibly be, the best I could possibly be. They taught me to be a leader among men . . . in combat situations when you know . . . when a plane goes down and they're calling for a corpsman . . . you don't think about the possibility of harm for yourself, you just go because that's what your job is.

Sam:

Well I think really what . . . it gives you is a maturity and the ability to walk into the classroom, and you understand order, discipline . . . . I'm pretty organized because of the military.

Beth:

Yes. Number one, being organized. Being a stickler for time. Being able to meet deadlines. Being able to contribute to a team when you attend meetings. Willing to assume leadership roles as a leader, and that was mainly at the middle school level. Being resourceful, knowing where to go for things that we're short of, or just out [and] finding ways to jerry-rig certain things.

Jim:

Well . . . that's where I learned my craft . . . as a musician. And so . . . being a working musician, you know, you just learn stuff, learn things, that . . . you can't learn in college, really . . . a musician. And, while I was in, on active duty, you know, I started teaching privately, teaching one-on-one applied lessons to noticeable kids, and . . . then when I got to Maryland, that became . . . for a while, a full-time occupation. I basically had my kind of a business teaching privately. And then I taught as an adjunct at several universities, and that was basically, a part, those were part-time positions, you know.

The next subtheme is being confident.

Tim:

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James:

I mean, it took a lot of confidence as a person to do some of the things I have done. You don't think about the possibility of harm for yourself, you just do it . . . The Navy taught me a great deal about what I could possibly be, the best I could possibly be.

Tammy:

I would say that it all began when I taught the Red Cross volunteer students. And with that came an ability in me to say, "Hmm, I enjoy teaching." Then I was actually chosen to be the instructor by one of my dentists, and I just thought, "Wow, he . . . asked me?" You know, little old dental tech me. To instruct others? So . . . I said, "Okay, let me get on board." From thereafter, I applied to Round Rock College to teach and took on position as dental instructor teaching adults.

Janice:

I think in a number of ways . . . I think I'm pretty organized . . . I think having strong organizational skills, I think dealing with a diverse group of people . . . I've worked in many different places dealing with diverse backgrounds. Dealing with different personalities . . . it's also similar in a lot of ways at schools, in terms of the teachers and the students and everybody comes in, everybody's a unique person . . . I think understanding that and having lived . . . and worked with [in] the Navy around the world, I really appreciate that. You know my neighbor and I probably couldn't be more different, you know? So, I think it's understanding and appreciating the differences and that they definitely . . . apply to children and education.

Jane:

The military assisted me by how I discipline my class. My class, everybody's always complimenting my class in the hallway. They're like they're marching. No, they're not marching, they just learned to keep their eyes straight, hands by their side, mouths closed. In the hallway . . . they're more disciplined than the other classes, because I see the other classes, they're out there doing flips in the hallway, my class knows how to act.

Sam:

Well I think really what . . . it gives you is a maturity and the ability to walk into the classroom, and you understand order, discipline . . . I'm pretty organized because of the military.

Beth:

Yes. Number one, being organized. Being a stickler for time. Being able to meet deadlines. Being able to contribute to a team when you attend meetings. Willing to assume leadership roles as a leader, and that was mainly at the middle school level. Being resourceful, knowing where to go for things that we're short of, or just out [and] finding ways to jerry-rig certain things.

Jim:

Well . . . that's where I learned my craft . . . as a musician. And so . . . being a working musician, you know, you just learn stuff, learn things that . . . you can't learn in college, really . . . a musician. And, while I was in, on active duty, you know, I started teaching privately, teaching one-on-one applied lessons to noticeable kids, and . . . then when I got to Maryland, that became . . . for a while, a full-time occupation. I basically had my kind of a business teaching privately. And then I taught as an adjunct at several universities, and that was basically, a part, those were part-time positions, you know.

The next subtheme is contribute to the team.

Tim:

I would say the military prepared me for teaching because of having to speak in public. You're used to the public speaking as an officer or non-commissioned officer. When I made

warrant officer, that kind of took me away from interacting with new troops, which is, you know, one of the most enjoyable things you can do. So, by becoming a teacher, it puts me back . . . I'll never become an administrator, because then I wouldn't have all the contact I have with the kids.

James:

The way the teams operated, it made you a team player. I mean it took a lot of confidence as a person, I learned to be a leader in the Navy . . . The Navy taught me a great deal about what I could possibly be, the best I could possibly be. They taught me to be a leader among men . . . in combat situations.

Tammy:

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The next subtheme is being resourceful.

James:

Well, let me . . . just explain that I don't think I could be half the teacher that I am today if it wasn't for my military experience. I mean it took a lot of confidence as a person, I learned to be in the Navy, you had to be resourceful . . . The Navy taught me a great deal about

what I could possibly be, the best I could possibly be. They taught me to be a leader among men . . . in combat situations when you know . . . when a plane goes down and they're calling for a corpsman . . . you don't think about the possibility of harm for yourself, you just go because that's what your job is.

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The final subtheme is public speaking.

Tim:

I would say the military prepared me for teaching because of having to speak in public. You're used to the public speaking as an officer or non-commissioned officer. When I made warrant officer, that kind of took me away from interacting with new troops, which is, you know, one of the most enjoyable things you can do. So, by becoming a teacher, it puts me back . . . I'll never become an administrator, because then I wouldn't have all the contact I have with the kids.

James:

My position in the Navy made me be a public speaker . . . if I liked it or not. It has definitely helped me be all I can be. It has taught me to be a leader among men . . . in combat situations.

Tammy:

I would say that it all began when I taught the Red Cross volunteer students. And with that came an ability in me to say, "Hmm, I enjoy teaching." Then I was actually chosen to be the instructor by one of my dentists, and I just thought, "Wow, he . . . asked me?" You know, little old dental tech me. To instruct others? So . . . I said, "Okay, let me get on board." From thereafter, I applied to Round Rock College to teach and took on position as dental instructor teaching adults.

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really . . . a musician. And, while I was in, on active duty, you know, I started teaching privately, teaching one-on-one applied lessons to noticeable kids, and . . . then when I got to Maryland, that became . . . for a while, a full-time occupation. I basically had my kind of a business teaching privately. And then I taught as an adjunct at several universities, and that was basically, a part, those were part-time positions, you know.

In summary, all eight TTT participants indicated that the experiences they had in the military enabled them to better transition to becoming a teacher. There was at least one overlap in every military element. The next theme is employing mitigation strategies helps permit success in teaching.

***Theme 2. Employing mitigation strategies helps permit success in teaching***

During the interviews, each participant discussed the uncertainties and challenges that they experienced during the first year of teaching and the mitigation strategies they used to overcome the challenges. In the military, whenever a decision is to be made, three courses of action (COAs) are determined to ensure the action will be completed successfully. COAs are determined when a challenge has no clear answer. Therefore, the particular situation is analyzed, and the three best answers are determined. They are ranked as the best, second, and last course of action in a particular situation. For example, imagine an individual is experiencing a challenge in which he is spending more money than he is paid. The best COA is for the individual to seek counseling, the second COA is for the individual to develop a budget and stick to it, and the last COA is for the individual to be put on a budget with supervision (a supervisor tells him how to spend his money to keep him from getting into financial trouble). This is the type of mental strategy the TTT participant uses to confront challenges and situations. The participants' challenges and mitigation strategies are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Employing mitigation strategies helps permit success in teaching

Participant	Challenges as TTT Participant	Mitigation Strategies for Challenges
Tim	Alienation of the TTT by the teaching team	Being persistent and learning
James	Students' family situation	Being a role model
Tammy	Lack of family support for the students	Re-teaching students
Janice	Socioeconomic status of students	Relating to students
Jane	Lack of parent involvement	Changing demeanor
Sam	Student lethargy	Engaging students
Beth	Understanding state requirements	Applied military experience
Jim	Multitasking	One-on-one teaching

Source: Author's work.

The responses will be discussed by subtheme, followed by the mitigation strategy. The first subtheme is alienation.

Tim:

You have to learn all the new computer systems, all the new schedules, the kids really—the kids know that you don't know, and they'll try you out." Every teacher struggles the first year in a classroom. I mean, it just—you're an alien in that world. Even though you have the best intentions and worked really hard, there are still things you just have to learn through the school of hard knocks, and then come back there and stick it out. 50 percent of [teachers do not] last more than three years. And I can see, if they don't do it, I can understand why . . . it takes about . . . three years . . . to get comfortable, because [of] all the kids that are in the school. But I can say the first-year struggles are just like anyone [else]. Maybe 22-year-olds right out of college probably have a little more energy to direct at those struggles, but it took me the whole first semester before I felt like I had my feet on the ground and was being [ready] every day.

Tim's challenge as a TTT was alienation, and his mitigation strategies (COAs) were being persistent, learning, or accepting alienation. Even though teachers have grade-level teams, inside the classroom, they are alienated and alone. They must learn quickly and learn to apply what they have learned on the move.

The next subtheme is the student's family situation.

James:

The biggest challenge for me was to keep my non-military teachers informed about what the military life is like and that, you know, as a veteran that we can offer a different insight. My experience as a TTT has been great, especially during my first year of teaching. I had two daughters in the same high school in which I was teaching. My oldest daughter was a junior, and they accidentally put her in my class for the first year. She told me something that has stuck with me to this day. She said, "Dad, you've got to promise me that when we're there at school, don't call me your daughter. Okay? I'll pretend like you're not my father, you pretend like I'm not your daughter." I agreed and made the deal with my daughter; she became my biggest supporter. She was always there telling the other students, this is my dad.

James' challenge as a TTT participant was the students' family situation, and his mitigation strategy was being a role model. The parents of most kids on a military post (which have DoD schools or the surrounding schools) know the teachers who can communicate effectively between the teachers and the parents. James is a role model for both sides, which made his day at times very long. When he was on active duty, he had to be prepared anytime and anyplace to answer questions about a military operation that may have deployed both husband and wife, or left a wife or husband with school-aged children. James' job was and still is double duty. When James was on active duty, he had his share of deployments, and now that he is a teacher, he has the capability to answer questions on both sides of the fence (as retired military service member and now a civilian).

The next subtheme is lack of family support.

Tammy:

The TTT program has been great and assisted me monetarily in getting my certification. The challenge was that the children they lacked home support, and I think without support from home I, I just feel that they're just spinning wheels—and so are teachers, we're spinning wheels—because students aren't holding on to information, they're not retaining any of the information that's taught throughout the day. And so, when they return the next day, it's like we're starting all over from, from square one. So, one, they lack support from

home. Two, teachers aren't getting the support that we need from home from the parents. I understand that, but however in the same breath, parents, you are their parents, so therefore they need support in their education as well to be successful. And many of our parent are, are lacking that.

Tammy's challenge as a TTT participant was lack of family support, and her mitigation strategy was to re-teach the students. Tammy indicated that she would teach a lesson and then send homework home with the students, but without parent involvement, the children had no re-enforcement. Therefore, Tammy's mitigation strategy was that she had to keep re-teaching the subject or task until the children could comprehend it. Trying to go any further than that was, as Tammy has already stated, like spinning your wheels and going nowhere.

The next subtheme is the socioeconomic status of students.

Janice indicated that she enjoyed being in the TTT program and that it helped her to defray the cost of her certification. She also discussed the challenges in her school:

Sure. I think because my first year I taught was in Baltimore. I taught at an, at really a neat . . . school and there were a number of socioeconomic and background issues and it was very difficult to be quite honest, because a lot of the children came from broken homes. They came from homes where education is not valued, they came from, you know, tough family dynamics. I had two girls who, in seventh grade, were mothers.

Janice's challenge as a TTT participant was the socioeconomic status of children, and her mitigation strategy was an attempt to relate to the students. Janice, like Tammy, was fighting an uphill battle in an attempt to teach her students. There were more prevailing issues that were going on at home or on the block than going to school to actually learn. Janice as a teacher was attempting to find a breakthrough; the ability to get through to a few is better than getting through to none at all.

The next subtheme is the lack of parent involvement.

Jane stated that her experience as a TTT participant is a work in progress, and she develops it one day at a time. She also stated this about the challenges she experienced in school:



I did experience challenges during my first year of teaching. I took a second-grade teaching position at a school in which . . . was low-income and their parents are not involved, so there were a lot of problems there.

Jane's challenge as a TTT was lack of parent involvement. The parents were more concerned with putting clothing on the kids' backs and food on the table, which was their primary concern. Her mitigation strategy was changing her demeanor. She stated that she had to change her delivery from raising her voice to speaking softly. She also spoke favorably of the TTT program: "The TTT program has provided structure for me. I can't really say [there have been] any challenges that I've experienced as far as [being a] TTT."

The next subtheme is student lethargy.

Sam:

My experience with the TTT program has been good. What I found was when you come into the public-school systems, students tend to be a lot more lethargic . . . you have to really, really entertain them [laughs]. You have to . . . keep their interest because if you don't, you're going to lose them, and they're just going to go you know, wander away [whereas in the Navy, you have their full attention].

Sam retired from the military as a military instructor. Sam assumed that teaching would be more or less the same, but he ran into an issue that he had not dealt with before. The issue was that the students were not like his military students, for whom he could use his military authority to make them pay attention. Sam went through his COAs and changed his way of teaching. While teaching a block of instruction, he would tell the students that he had been there and done that. This captured the attention of the students, and some participated, while others continued to be lethargic.

The next subtheme is understanding state requirements.

Beth:

The TTT program has did [done] exactly what they said they would do, and I have no problem with the program. I think my biggest challenge was understanding the requirements from the state SOLs [Standards of Learning]. To me it was very much like SQTs [Skill Qualification Test] in the military. The challenge had been financial, mostly.

Beth's challenge as a TTT was understanding the state requirements, and her mitigation strategy was to apply her military experience of the SQT administered each year by the US Army to gain a better understanding of the SOLs, which are standardized tests given in public school. The difference is that the SOL measures standards for the grade in which a student is being tested, whereas the SQT measures how much a soldier knows about his or her Military Occupational Specialty depending on grade. Beth also stated that her other challenge was financial, as she was not making enough money to pay for her courses to complete a master's program and was worried that she would be dropped from the program.

The last subtheme is multitasking.

Jim:

The TTT program helped me transition into teaching, and I am most grateful for this. I thought special education will [would] be a good fit for me . . . because of all my experience working one-on-one with students. That's the way I teach. That is . . . the way music is taught primarily, in the private sector not the public schools, but in, in terms of private lessons . . . . They didn't . . . , want to learn to play better and, and so they'd have a private lesson, and we . . . work together . . . . One of my strong points is . . . being able to work with students one-on-one. Challenges have been . . . the multitasking that has to go on to get all of the parts of the job done . . . . Where we got to be in the classrooms, but we've also got to . . . write the Individual Education Program (IEP). We have to give due diagnostic tests to gather data to, to support the . . . IEPs again . . . . Then . . . working with students who for . . . a variety of reasons are reluctant learners.

Jim's challenge as a TTT was being able to multitask, and his mitigation strategy was one-on-one teaching. Jim thought that his experience as a band member and being able to work one-on-one with the students would make him a great fit to teach special education. Being a teacher is being a teacher, and you must be able to multitask. Jim had issues picking children up on time and going to Individual Education Program (IEP) meetings, just to name a few. Over time, Jim learned to multitask and to be a better one-on-one teacher, as he has the children only a certain amount of time each day. The next paragraph summarizes the above findings.

In summary, all eight TTT participants indicated that they have experienced both ups and downs with teaching and have attempted to mitigate issues as they arise. Jane, Tammy, and Janice teach in low-income communities where parents do not value education, perhaps because putting food on the table is their first priority. Students were experiencing situations that were well beyond their age and grade. For example, Janice had two students in her seventh-grade English class that were mothers already. So, concentrating on schoolwork was not very high on their list of things to do. Children come from all types of environments, and teachers must respect and treat all children the same. The next theme is establishing rapport within the school environment facilitates success.

***Theme 3: Establishing rapport within the school environment facilitates success***

Establishing rapport within the school setting is a particularly vital part of the teacher's daily activities. I asked the participants how well they got along with the administration, their grade-level teams, the parents of the students, and lastly the students. Janice and Jim stated that they got along well with their administration, whereas Tammy stated that she was cordial with the administration, but there were areas in which they could improve. The remainder of the participants stated that there were no problems with their relationships with the administration.

I also asked the participants how well they got along with their grade-level teams. Once again, Tammy stated that there really was no love lost within her grade-level team. She basically indicated that it was survival of the fittest. However, Jane indicated that she got along well with the team and that they worked as a unit. Regarding parents, Janice indicated that she struggled with how the parents basically presented a lack of concern for the education of their children. Next, I asked how well the participants got along with the students. Tammy and Jim stated that there was a great deal of room for improvement in the relationships they have with their students. Tammy indicated that it was futile to teach her children because the information would go in one ear and out the other. It was quite a tribulation to make simple advancements with her children, as she found herself teaching the same material over and over again. Jim indicated that his students were lethargic and had to be entertained constantly for them to grasp any concept he was attempting to teach. The remainder of the participants indicated that at times it was a struggle, but they found a way to make it happen. The responses from each of the participants were as follows.

Tim:

I get along well with my grade-level team I teach with, the administration, my students, and parents alike.

Like Tim, James also got along well with his grade-level team, the administration, parents, and students.

My grade-level team [and I have] a pretty good relationship. Recently I was moved down to the second floor—my . . . whole department, social studies . . . is up on the third floor, they didn't really like that, it's a matter of logistics. I get along well with the administration, my parents, and students.

Unlike Tim and James, Tammy did not get along well with her grade-level team, the administration, Parents, and students. In response to the question “how well do you get along with your grade-level team,” she said:

That's a good question . . . I ask myself that daily. It's not cohesive rapport, I . . . want to say this in a professional tone. It's . . . a rough . . . rocky relationship.

Distinct from Tammy, Janice stated that she got along well with her grade-level team, the administration, parents, and students.

Sure. I mean, it is excellent. I'm, I'm very blessed to have veteran teachers, I have a team [in] middle school, we have these teams which deal with each constant area. So, I'm the English teacher, there's a social studies teacher, there is a science teacher, and there is a math teacher, and I'm so fortunate, I have a wonderful group of ladies who I work with and . . . they've all been very good. [The] administration here has also been very supportive and, and helpful. I don't, you know, I don't converse with them at lunch, but in terms of like, giving me the support I need . . . if I need to refer a child, which is very, very rare, you know . . . it's taken seriously, and they know if Ms. Davis is referring a child, you know, to the eighth-grade principal, something's going on, so I appreciate that because Baltimore . . . there were so many referrals, and, you know, there were so many behavior issues that, you know, it was a whole different fallback. But, so in this case, you know, it's a very good relationship.

Like Janice, Jane also got along well with her grade-level team, the administration, parents, and students.

I get along with them very well [with my grade-level team]. Three of us are first year teachers, and then . . . there's six of us all together. One of them, she has like . . . I don't know what kind of class she has . . . special education, so, but it's six of us all together. But I get along with them really well. In addition, I get along well with the administration, parents, and students.

Sam, like Jane, got along well with his grade-level team, the administration, parents, and students.

Oh, we [I] have a great relationship [with the grade-level team]. Of course . . . I am probably one of the oldest in the building, so with that you have a . . . a different approach. When they see you, they don't see somebody fresh out of, of college, and so we, a matter of fact, this year the seventh-grade team, for the school, won team of the year at our school. So, it's a . . . great team. We all get along, we enjoy each other's company . . . we're the only team I think that sits down at lunch, and we sit down together . . . we eat together. I also have a respectful relationship with the principal, parent, and teachers the same.

Sam and Beth are somewhat alike in that they both have polite relationships with their teams, administration, parents, and students.

I think we are very contributing [we are very courteous and helpful to each other. My team specifically] comes to me for science issues. I have a coworker who's also the math teacher, she's also the Earth science teacher. We collaborate a lot, between her class and my class. I get along well with the director who acts as the principal for the alternative program. I enjoy teaching my students and discussing their academics with their parents. The principal covers the entire school. She has no assistant principal, but a very extensive office and support staff.

Jim, like Beth, had a good relationship with his team and the administration, but he struggled with his relationship with the students and parents, as he stated that the students were lethargic and the parents were not helping.

Well, I have a good relationship with my special education team and also with the principal. I got the job where I am now because of a practicum I did at the school. On my way out, I said goodbye to the principal, and also stated that I understand, there are lots of people who want jobs, but if you're ever in need for someone, I would be happy to serve you. Days later I received a call from the school secretary to come in for an interview, and I was given the job. Impressions go a long way. I was impressed with the faculty and the principal, and they too were impressed with me. My relationship with my students and parents was a struggle.

In summary, all eight TTT participants indicated that establishing rapport in the school system means you must be able to give and take. The ability to stay in your lane and, most of all, provide the needed instruction for your children is where the rubber meets the road. The next theme is the TTT participants' preparation to make the transition to teaching.

***Theme 4: Being prepared is the key to a successful transition***

The transition from military life to becoming a teacher is complicated. It requires leaving an environment that operates by the clock and entering a world that is not quite as punctual. Seven participants out of eight had smooth transitions to becoming a teacher, while one experienced a difficult transition but prevailed because of her passion for teaching. The TTT participants bring with them strategies to help make the transition doable. The next paragraphs show what each participant said about the idea that being prepared is the key to a successful transition.

Tim:

Transitioning from the military to being a teacher was smooth because I had planned ahead and eliminated the stress factors. I think getting the bachelor's degree was the most key thing I could get as it pertains to my transitioning out of the service. And networking was what got me here to this great job at the Pentagon, making more than I ever imagined. Making sure you have your education, and networking inside and outside of the military, creates the best transition.

Both Tim and James had the same plan in mind, which was to be prepared to make the transition.

James:

My transition went as expected because I had planned for it. Well, I had a very rigid military experience the last seven years of my career. I served with the sea, air, and land teams (SEALs). And so being exposed to that lifestyle for the longest time left me with this idea that I was a very . . . military-oriented individual. Okay, I left the military, and I had just a small change to make with regard to security in life. It was a little bit different, and I liked it. It . . . didn't take me long to readjust to civilian life at all. Seeing that I was not moving every three years or so was a nice thing to have. Making the transition to education was not a problem.

James was prepared to make the transition, but he was a bit concerned about security. Tammy was not prepared, and this made her transition difficult.

Tammy:

My transition was not so pleasant because I didn't know the system and had to figure out each step as I proceeded through it. Yes, because I didn't know the procedures. That was my bad.

Unlike Tammy, Janice had help in making her transition.

You know [sighs] . . . what helped me? My parents were . . . I wasn't on active duty, but for . . . most of my service, I was in the Reserves, so I hopped in . . . the civilian sector. I've worked for MPR, PBS, I was a reporter for many years, so I kind of had that civilian taste going on, you know, alongside with my, alongside with my military career. The short answer is yes, I think it was, it was smooth, the pay cut was enormous, I'm going to be frank, that was something that I really had [not expected] you know, but . . . my husband works too, you know, but I'm sole bread winner, you know, it does make it more tough, but we also have the luxury of having that retirement income from my husband, he's retired active duty. So there, that's [the] end of the transition, [but it] was the financial transition too.

Even though Janice had help making the transition, the cut in pay was not welcomed and created some anxiety. Jane was truly on top of the transition, and her transition was smooth.

It was good because I, actually, I . . . while I was on active duty, I did my bachelor's, and I retired in November and . . . I got my master's in December . . . the same year. So, like 15

days later after I retired, I got my master's because I was already pretty much done with it, and I, as far as the transition, I really didn't have a . . . transition. It was like I was on terminal leave, and I was doing my student teaching while I was on terminal leave . . . and I was doing my student teaching while I was on terminal leave, and I went, I started teaching . . . I graduated in December; I got a job in January. So, I don't really . . . it was like boom . . . you know, so I didn't have . . . . The transition was [pause] a change in my regular routine but doable.

Sam, like Jane, made a smooth transition without any setbacks or delays.

I think very highly of [the] TTT program, that's who I dealt with the whole transition process, and, and they made it so much easier on me because I was in Connecticut and I needed to certify here in Maryland. The university that I was attending to receive my teacher's certification set up all my student teaching for me prior to me retiring, which took a great deal of stress off me. The TTT program, as well as the Navy, helped me to relocate to the area and took care of my financial and medical concerns. I had no regrets. My transition was uneventful.

Beth indicated she had no problem with her transition.

I had a great transition coming from active duty to becoming a teacher. My transition took place over time. Initially, I became a teacher's assistant, then as I prepared to transition out of the military, I found a program that helped me adjust, and then I was accepted into the TTT program. My transition was uneventful.

Jim indicated that his transition was also uneventful.

It had its ups and downs, but manageable. I had been a licensed teacher prior to going into the Air Force. When I went into the Air Force, I let me [my] teaching license lapse. Before I got out of the Air Force, I had completed my doctorate and was doing well until I went against the grain at a college I was teaching at and was asked to leave. With no job, I researched out the TTT program, applied, and was accepted. The TTT program saved me and gave me a job, so I am most grateful.



In summary, all eight TTT participants indicated that they had experienced their transitions in different ways. Some of the participants had smooth transitions, and some had transitions that were full of chaos. Transitioning from being a troop to being a teacher is a two-phased experience. First, the troop transitions to being a civilian again. This alone brings about disorder because the troop must adjust to a different way of life outside the military. Second, the troop must transition to becoming a teacher, which brings with it several criteria that must be met in order to teach. The best way to prepare for this according to the participants is to plan, prepare, and then execute. The eight participants knew what they wanted and went after it. Because failure in the military is not an option, the same holds true in this case. They had served in the military and now were ready and prepared to serve again. The next theme is future outlook for TTT participants.

#### ***Theme 5. Future outlook for TTT participants***

The eight TTT participants discussed their future outlook with me, and based on their responses, I deduced what the outlook for the TTT program in Maryland could be. The overall consensus of the eight TTT participants was that they enjoyed teaching. However, the participants were not in consensus when asked whether they planned to remain in teaching. Their reasons for staying in teaching were only somewhat consistent with the reported literature, but their reasons for leaving were more consistent with the reported literature.

The TTT program requires that each participant sign a 36-month contract. Per Ms. K. Daniels at TTT headquarters in Florida, the retention rate has dropped (K. Daniels, personal communication, February 4, 2017). Even though the actual retention rate has dropped, it is still well ahead of the national rate of 50% of teachers leaving teaching within five years (Colbert & Wolff, 1992) and the rate of 9.5% teachers leaving within their first year (Dachille & Ruff, 2017). Croasmun (2003) and Sutchter (2016) found that one reason that teachers leave teaching is that they are not committed to teaching. Another reason is the poor salary (Ingersoll, 2001; Croasmun et al., 2003; Ingersoll and Smith, 2003; Gonzales et al., 2008; Hudson, 2009; Sutchter et al., 2016). In addition, Sutchter et al. (2016) reported that teachers who obtained a master's degree tended to remain in teaching (Sutchter et al., 2016). Ingersoll and May (2016) also reported that the teachers leaving

teaching created a revolving door phenomenon, costing school districts upwards of \$2.2 billion a year.

As one criterion for selecting participants for this study, I chose teachers who had taught for at least one year. All eight TTT participants had stayed in teaching after their first year, and 78% were determined to stay in teaching. Seven out of eight TTT participants stated that they will remain in the teaching profession. This finding contrasts the reported findings of Colbert & Wolff (1992) of over 50% of teachers leaving the teaching profession within the first five years and 9.5% leaving within their first year. None of the eight TTT participants left during their first year of teaching, and the participant who stated that she may leave said it was because the financial hardship was extending well beyond her first year of teaching. All eight of the TTT participants were in consensus that teachers' salaries should be more than what they currently are. Beth stated that she would most likely leave teaching because she was not being paid enough and that it was leading to financial problems. This finding was consistent with (Ingersoll, 2001; Croasmun et al., 2003; Ingersoll and Smith, 2003; Gonzales et al., 2008; Hudson, 2009; Sutcher et al., 2016) that some teachers leave because of poor salary. The TTT participants in this study not only remained in teaching with a bachelor's degree (a prerequisite for the TTT program), but they were also planning to obtain a master's degree while remaining in the teaching profession. The responses from the participants are shown in the following paragraphs:

Tim:

I will be teaching for years to come. I plan on getting up Monday morning and going to school and teaching kids [laughing], but I've fished around a couple of places. I've, I've put out a fishing net in my hometown a couple times, a couple the last school years. My parents are in their 80s, and I've kicked around about moving back there and being with them. But I . . . but each time I did, I applied to the local school system back there, and nothing ever came back. Now I intend to teach until I'm 67. That's . . . I enjoy it because I mean, I really, I don't consider it work. I go home at 3:10 when the school bell rings.

James, like Tim, stated that he will continue teaching.

I don't plan on being anywhere but the classroom. You know, I know a lot of my colleagues that are from the military go on to administrative positions and so forth. Really what I want to do is teach high school, and when I do retire, I wouldn't mind moving into the community college, doing some part time there, just to keep my hand in education.

Tammy, like James, stated that she plans to continue to teach.

Even though I have had some trying times getting to where I am now, I definitely will be teaching in years to come. My education goal overall is to ascertain a doctorate in education and one day become a principal of a school. This is just the beginning for me.

Janice, like Tammy, plans to be involved with the teaching profession in years to come.

I plan to be in the teaching profession in one capacity or another. As a classroom teacher, as a specialist of, within, administration, I plan to be engaged. I love teaching, but I need a position that will pay me more money. I know that with that comes earning a higher level degree, so in order to pursue a position of more responsibility, that will pay me more money, I must ascertain a higher level degree.

Jane, unlike Janice, plans to leave teaching and pursue a different profession. To the question "do you plan to be teaching in the future," she replied:

Probably not. I don't [laughs] I don't know. Some days I'm like I'm going to do this forever. And then some days, I'm like I don't know if I can do this because we have chair throwers, and I, I'm just like, I don't know if I can do this. But I, I love teaching (pause) so I say that probably not, but I don't know. I don't know.

Jane plans to leave, but Sam plans to continue teaching. To the same question, he answered:

Oh I, I don't know how long I'll do it. I enjoy teaching middle school and coaching the boys' basketball team. I also enjoy teaching chemistry and physics. I was selected as teacher of the year at my school, so I must be doing something right. Teaching is a profession that loves you back. The more you put into teaching, the more your return.

Beth, like Sam, plans to teach and also pursue a graduate degree.

My plan is to continue to teach and pursue a graduate level degree. Jesus had his cloak on, and not once did he need a degree to do anything. I have had some personal issues

that kind of hung me up, so I'm right on the precipice of either not being able to finish my master's within my five-year time frame. The challenge has been financial, mostly. I would love to have the time also to finish my math certification.

Jim, like Beth, plans to continue to teach because the teaching atmosphere is very thrilling.

I will be teaching in the future to come. It's a very exciting environment for me, so next year, [I] plan to be teaching in a public or private school, but there is no guarantee. So, I must keep my skill sets sharp and not wait for anything to come to me. I must be aggressive and pursue it. Wherever I end up, whatever my assignment is, that's where I'm going to work to become the expert.

In summary, each of the TTT participants have decided whether or not they will continue teaching in the future, and seven of eight said they will continue to teach. Teaching is a noble profession, just like being a troop on active duty. The TTT participants are determined to do the best they can to slow down the revolving door and to give as much stability to teaching as they can. The analysis of the themes has thoroughly answered the research questions.

### **Summary**

In chapter 4, I presented an individual description of each of the TTT participants' experiences. I introduced the participants and gave basic information on the paths they took to certification. In the interviews, the participants discussed their typical school day as a TTT participant as they experienced the rigor of being a teacher. Subsequently, I analyzed the five themes that emerged: (1) military experience as a benefit in the transition to becoming a teacher, (2) employing mitigation strategies helps permit success in teaching, (3) establishing rapport within the school environment facilitates success, (4) being prepared is the key to a successful transition, and (5) future outlook for TTT participants.

I extracted the data from interviews with eight professional military personnel, both non-commissioned officers and commissioned officers. All had the same goal, which was to have a successful transition from being a troop to being a teacher. The next chapter discusses my findings.

## Chapter 5: Discussion

### Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative narrative study was to determine how TTT participants in Maryland transition out of the military (through a traditional or alternative teacher certification program) into teaching and how they help overcome the teacher shortage in Maryland. The study also considered the types of resources and strategies TTT participants utilized as they transitioned out of the military and into teaching. In this chapter, I will revisit the research question and conceptual framework. I will discuss Schlossberg Transition Theory and the TTT participants; revisit Dr. Hexter and the TTT program; and then I will finish with programmatic recommendations, conclusions, and implications.

The aim of this study was to capture the TTT participants points of view on transitioning from being a troop to becoming a civilian and then becoming a teacher. To address the statement of the problem, the study explored six sub-questions: (1) how the TTT participants attained their self-identities as teachers, (2) how they described their transitions, (3) any challenges or stressors associated with their transitions, (4) the routines they developed, (5) the kind of support they received, and (6) the coping strategies they employed.

The Integrative Transition Model (ITM) depicts how individuals move in, through, and out of a transition. The STT served as the conceptual framework to understand the study's findings. The model based on the STT provided a framework for understanding how adults addressed changes in their lives during various transitional phases (Chickering & Schlossberg, 1995).

### STT and the TTT Participants

Eight TTT participants participated in this qualitative narrative study. I conducted the interviews over a 60-day period via teleconference. The interviews ranged from 45 to 60 minutes. I asked questions of the participants and audio recorded their answers. The process was a semi-structured interview approach. I then transcribed participants' interviews literal and used pseudonyms to protect the participants' identities.

The ITM (Chickering & Schlossberg, 1995), shown in Figure 2, explains how individuals constantly experience transitions. Transitions begin with either moving in or moving out. As the

individual begins to understand the transition, he or she begins to move through. Lastly, moving out is when the individual begins another transition. “A transition has no end point; rather, a transition is a process over time that includes phases of assimilation and continuous appraisal as people move in, through and out of it” (Anderson, Goodman & Schlossberg, 2012, p. 59).

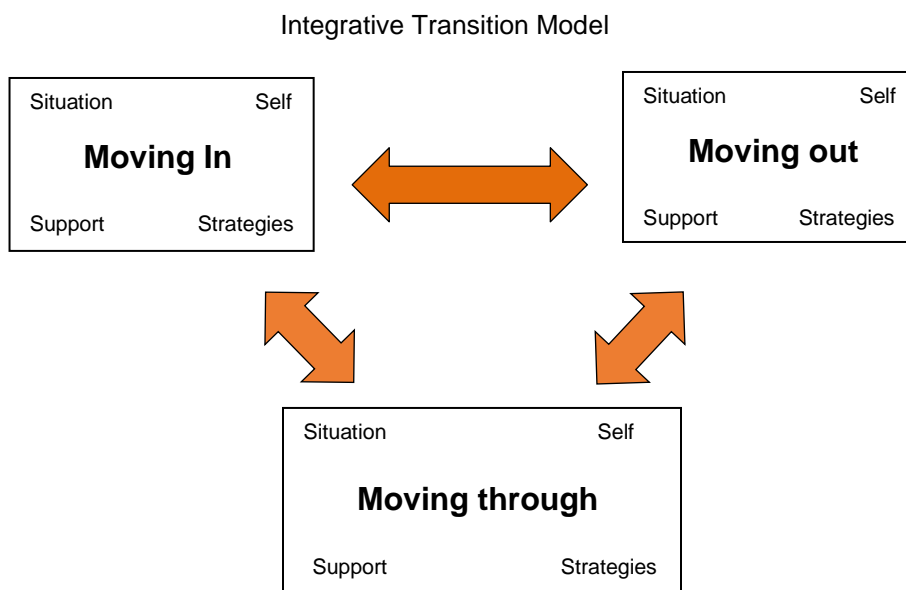


Figure 2. Integrative Transition Model. Adapted from

For example, during her transition to becoming a teacher, Tammy took the CORE Praxis examinations multiple times before she passed them. Each time she would move in by deciding which CORE Praxis examination she would take and study the material prior to taking the examination. She moved through by being able to balance her life, study for the examination, and finally take the selected CORE Praxis examination. She moved out regardless of whether she passed or failed the examination. If she passed, she moved out and moved in to preparing for the next CORE Praxis examination. If she failed, she moved out and moved in to the process of studying the selected material for the CORE Praxis examination she failed, and then she moved in to balancing her life and studying for the examination until she was able to move out by passing the selected CORE Praxis. Each time she moved in, through, and out, she assessed her particular situation, self, support, and strategies to ultimately pass the CORE Praxis examination. She moved in to determine whether she had met all the requirements for her teacher certification, moved

through if she met all the prerequisites for the teaching certification, and (if so) moved out and into her classroom to teach.

The aim of the study was to capture the TTT participants' points of view on transitioning from being in the military to being a teacher. Therefore, I used the STT and the ITM developed by Chickering and Schlossberg (2012) to interpret TTT participants' descriptions of their evolutions from military life to teaching. The four major sets of factors (called the "4 S's": Situation, Self, Support, and Strategies) identified by the theory influenced the TTT participants' abilities to cope with a transition. The TTT participants' assets and liabilities in each of these factors are the determinants for evaluating how well they coped with the transitions (Chickering & Schlossberg, 2012).

The first "S" is the TTT participant's *situation*, meaning the cause that initiated the transition. *Timing* is how the transition links to the participant's social clock. *Control* is the feature of the transition that the participant wants to control. *Role change* asks whether the transition is going to be long or brief (Anderson et al., 2012; Chickering & Schlossberg, 2012).

The second "S" is *self*, meaning the personal and demographic characteristics and psychological resources that the TTT participant considers. The personal and demographic characteristics, meaning the gender, socioeconomic status, stage of life, and age (defined as functional, social, and psychological age) affect how a person perceives self (Anderson et al., 2012; Goodman et al., 2012; Chickering & Schlossberg, 2012; Schlossberg, 1981). Psychological resources include the tools used to create a person's cope-identity, outlook, commitment, and value (Anderson et al., 2012; Chickering & Schlossberg, 2012; Schlossberg, 1981).

The third "S" is *support*, evaluated as the social and system support the TTT participant receives as he or she transitions through phases (Anderson et al., 2012; Goodman et al., 2012; Chickering & Schlossberg, 2012; Schlossberg, 1981).

The fourth "S" is *strategies* that the TTT participant employed. Strategies are looked at in terms of four modes. The modes are action, inhibition of action, information seeking, and behavior (Anderson et al., 2012; Goodman et al., 2012; Chickering & Schlossberg, 2012; Schlossberg, 1981).

**Situation.** As the TTT participants were moving out of the military, becoming a civilian, attaining teaching certification, and moving into teaching, they were going through a series of transitions. The trigger for the transition for the participants was the end of service obligation or retirement from military service, and the trigger was anticipated. The participants could not control the fact that they had to separate from the service, but to a degree they could decide when to end their service or retire, thus the timing of the transition was chosen by the TTT participant. The most significant factor about the situation was the role change from being a military service member to becoming a civilian, and the transition was permanent. Also, the role change involved going from a male-dominant, but diverse, profession to a Caucasian-female-dominated profession.

The findings of my study show that the eight TTT participants recognized that making the transition from the military to becoming a civilian came with many challenges for service members and their families. The eight participants whom I interviewed understood the importance of making a successful transition. However, it is interesting to note that each of the eight participants indicated encountering many obstacles while transitioning from the military to becoming a civilian.

**Self.** From the eight interviews, I captured the essence of military experience being a benefit in the transition to becoming a teacher. I identified the basic military elements (principles foundational to the military) while reading the transcripts. The eight participants responded that certain elements of the military helped prepare them in the transition to become a civilian. The elements of military experience that were beneficial in the transition were (1) assuming a leadership role, (2) military discipline, (3) organizational skills, (4) being confident, (5) contributing to the team, (6) being resourceful, and (7) public speaking. The eight TTT participants stated that they would have never quit because of a lack of ability; instead, they would continue to learn and move forward because of a "never quit" attitude. The never quit attitude is instilled in the recruit during military basic training and means that regardless of how tough it is, you will never quit or give up (Coupland, 2004; Donathan, 2007; GAO, 2014; Isherwood, 1996; Sessoms-Penny, 2007).

The transition literature discussed how military personnel used their past military identities as power bases to transition into their new teacher identities (Boe et al., 2008; Coupland, 2004; Donathan, 2007; GAO, 2014; Isherwood, 1996; Ramirez, 2008; Ramsey, 1999; Sessoms-Penny,



2007). The eight TTT participants in my study understood that their teacher identities had been influenced by social interactions with other teacher colleagues, as well as by exposure in their teacher education programs. Their teacher identities were also largely influenced and shaped by their military identities, which had been defined by years of leadership, management, and training experience. Therefore, the military core values of duty, selfless service, respect, loyalty, honor, integrity, and personal courage primarily defined the TTT participants' teacher identities (Fry, Vitucci, & Cedillo, 2005). As TTT participants transition into their new positions as teachers, these core values build their overall teacher identities and become the main reasons they stay in teaching for the long haul (Feistritzer, 2011). All of my study participants allowed their military identities to influence the development of their overall teacher identities. My findings parallel the literature on military identity influencing the development of the teacher identity (Owings et al., 2014; Ramirez, 2008; Ramsey, 1999; Sessoms-Penny, 2007).

For the TTT participants, the elements of military experience that were beneficial in the transition to becoming a teacher also helped various other aspects of being an effective teacher in the classroom. My findings suggest that the eight TTT participants' teacher identities had been shaped by their military identities, and elements of their military experience had helped them to not only successfully transition, but also believe in and devote themselves to the cause of teaching and strive to become the best teachers they could become. My findings also suggest that the eight participants were resourceful and used their military experience to their advantage to overcome challenges such as the number of students they were given to teach, student discipline, lack of administrative support, student motivation, classroom intrusions, and inadequate preparation time.

TTT participants interpret *duty* as accomplishing tasks that are part of an individual's responsibilities or the requirements of the grade-level team, since contributing to the team is one element of military experience (Boe et al., 2008; Coupland, 2004; Donathan, 2007; GAO, 2014; Isherwood, 1996; Ramirez, 2008; Ramsey, 1999; Sessoms-Penny, 2007).

TTT participants believe in treating people the way they want to be treated and in respecting other individuals' positions. This means putting the welfare of the people they serve above their own welfare. They also believe in carrying out each task until it is complete; in always

taking the hard right instead of the easy left; and in openly facing fear, danger, and adversity. In other words, they believe that no sacrifice is too great (Fry et al., 2005). The factors of commitment and values came across distinct and clear from the TTT participants I studied.

Since 84% of public-school teachers are Caucasian females, veterans entering the teaching profession must understand that they will have to transition from being in a male-dominated profession in the military to being in a Caucasian-female-dominated profession (Anhorn, 1977; Chuong, 2008; Colbert & Wolff, 1992; Feistritzer, 2011; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Morin, 2011). However, among the personal and demographic characteristics, gender did not seem to be a factor to the TTT participants in my study.

**Support.** As a result of military service members not being prepared to retire or end their terms of service, the U.S. Congress established a transition program for military service members separating from military service in 1990 (GAO, 1994). After a military service member transitions into civilian life, VA is responsible to ensure the transition is successful. The transitional period is five years after the military service member becomes a civilian. The DoD provides transition assistance classes to separating military service members. In addition, troops interested in teaching are offered the TTT program. All eight of my study participants took advantage of the transition support available to them. However, one participant did have difficulty in her transition due to being unprepared.

From the eight TTT interviews, I captured the TTT participants' rapport within the school environment to facilitate their success. I asked the eight participants how well they got along with the administration, their grade-level teams, the parents of the students, and lastly the students. An individual's identity is developed through social interactions that result in an understanding of his or her own self, as well as who he or she thinks other people are. Therefore, identities are never fixed, but always under construction (Danielewicz, 2001; Sexton, 2008). Teacher identity is an ongoing process that is constantly reshaped through interactions with new people and contexts.

Roughly 50% of teachers (non-TTT) do not find anyone to interact with and share their experiences. As a result, these teachers usually find it challenging to build social interactions that are essential to constructing their teacher identities and, therefore, end up leaving the profession

(Freedman & Appleman, 2008; Jenkins, 1996). The teaching profession has been referred to as "the profession that eats its young" (Anhorn, 1977, p. 15). An epidemic has swept the nation, with enormous numbers of highly qualified K–12 teachers leaving the profession during their novice years (Andrew & Quinn, 2004; Halford, 1998; Ingersoll et al., 2011a; Ingersoll et al., 2011b; Ingersoll et al., 2016; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Podolsky et al., 2016; Sutchter et al., 2016).

The eight TTT participants in my study were accustomed to working as one cohesive team, and they worked to build that comradery. They also knew how to succeed by any means necessary. Therefore, if they were put into an unfavorable situation by their grade-level teams, they would find others who could assist them. The TTT participants in this study were there for their students. The prevailing view of the eight TTT participants I interviewed was that teaching is just like a military mission that has to be accomplished, and their job is to teach the children the best way they know how regardless of support system.

The majority of the TTT participants I interviewed got along with their teacher colleagues, their children's parents, and the students. There were a few that had struggles, but overall they felt that the support system of the administration, peers, and parents was adequate. However, unlike the literature, the support system's presence did not seem to enhance the ease of the TTT participants' transitions.

**Strategies.** The outcome of a transition is determined by the coping strategies that an individual employs. Being prepared is the key to a successful transition. In reading the eight interviews, I captured the crux of the transition from military life to becoming a civilian. Seven out of eight participants had smooth transitions to becoming civilians and teachers, while one experienced a difficult transition to becoming a teacher, but she prevailed because of her passion for teaching. The TTT participants brought with them strategies to help them make the transition workable. One such strategy is to attain at least an undergraduate degree while in service to be eligible to apply for the TTT program. In my study, all eight participants held an undergraduate degree; therefore, they were able to apply to the TTT program and be accepted. Employing the strategy of being educationally prepared helped the participants move out of military service and into a civilian career of teaching.

The route to teacher certification is a personal choice. The choices are the traditional route or the alternative route. In this study, three participants received their teaching certifications via an alternative teaching certification program, and the other five participants received their teaching certifications via a traditional teaching certification program. The participants understood that to move through the transition, a teaching certificate was required, and they had a choice of the path that best suited their situations.

Having had leadership experience and military discipline helped the TTT participants in my study instill discipline in their students and manage the classroom environment, thus avoiding distractions stemming from disruptions due to a lack of student discipline. Since the TTT participants saw themselves as contributors to the team, they not only naturally contributed to their teaching team but also were able to elicit support from their team to an extent. Those who did not have support in their first year were able to garner the support later.

From the eight responses to my question regarding daily routine, I can deduce that the TTT participants in my study introduced their military discipline of orderly routine to make the most of their preparation time. The TTT participants I interviewed were using their teaching salary to supplement their retirement income, but one TTT did have concerns about pay, so an inadequate teacher salary was a factor for her, and she considered quitting teaching to pursue another career. In contrast to the reported literature on the causes of early teacher departures, my research found that the reported causes were not contributory factors to departure for the TTT participants, and the participants if faced with the challenges were able to overcome them using their military experience, when possible. They exhibited the grit that Duckworth described (Duckworth, 2016).

Moving into a new situation per Schlossberg requires people to become familiar with new roles, relationships, and routines (Schlossberg et al., 1995a). Based upon my eight interviewees, I found that military personnel making the transition to teaching have an advantage over graduates coming directly out of college into teaching because the TTT participants in my study had their military experience as a power base and benefit. They were mature and worldly, had taught military classes while on active duty, had leadership experience, and were eager to teach. In contrast to the reasons reported in the literature for teacher departures, the TTT program has produced fewer

teacher turnovers and more retention. This higher retention rate can be directly attributed to the TTT participants' military experience (Duckworth, 2016). From the eight TTT interviews, I captured the uncertainties and challenges of teaching that the TTT participants had experienced. During the interviews, each interviewee discussed the uncertainties and challenges that they experienced during their first year of teaching and mitigation strategies they used to overcome the challenges.

The participants in my study described their challenges as alienation, the students' family situation, lack of family support, lack of parent involvement, student lethargy, understanding the state testing requirements, and inability to multitask. The mitigation strategies used by the TTT participants were being persistent, being a role model, re-teaching and re-training, changing demeanor, engaging the students, applying military experience, and using one-on-one teaching. In summary, the eight TTT participants were able to confront their challenges using a variety of mitigation strategies. Employing the mitigation strategies enabled them to establish themselves in their new roles.

#### **4 S's in the Context of the Study Participants**

Five of the eight participants had a normal transition from military to civilian and from civilian to teacher. They all had utilized the 4 S's (Situation, Self, Support, and Strategies) and continued to move in, move through, and move out, always in transition while assessing themselves at every level. Their transition to teaching was anticipated, they perceived their transition as good, they all had control over their particular situation, and they had a plan and stuck with it. They were geographically where they wanted to be and had their support systems in place. As they came up against an obstacle, they identified it as such and adjusted their coping response for a successful transition.

One female participant did not have a normal transition because she did not use the 4 S's and was always unprepared. Even though she had control over the situation, her timing to use her strategies was always off. She continued to repeat the previous experience over and over again. Instead of learning from her mistakes, she continued to repeat them, never making through transition successfully.

Another female participant had utilized the 4 S's to make a successful transition into teaching, but she had not planned for the long run. While on active duty, she was making an adequate salary to take care of herself and contribute to the support of her family. After a year in teaching, she was rethinking being a teacher because she was not making the salary she desired, so she left teaching.

One male participant had not planned his transition as well as he should have and failed to utilize the 4 S's as he moved in, through, and out of transitions. This individual already had a teaching certificate, but he joined the Air Force and let his certification lapse. While in the Air Force, he earned a doctorate. After retirement, he had no problem getting a job at the nearby university as a professor, but he did not successfully develop the sense of self to fit in the university system and was unanticipatedly terminated. This required him to go through yet another transition. He did recover as he utilized TTT program as a support system to get back into teaching.

#### **Dr. Hexter and the TTT Program Revisited**

Dr. Hexter was the driving force behind placing military veterans into teaching positions within the US public-school system. The connections that he had on Capitol Hill and inside the White House aided him in selling the novel TTT concept to the Congress and the President. The TTT program offers teaching positions to qualified military veterans, provides role models for students, and helps increase the longevity of the teacher cadre.

Dr. Hexter appreciated that military veterans have particular skill sets that would enable them to become teachers. The military veteran could either attend a college or university or choose to go the alternative teacher certification route to obtain teaching credentials.

Dr. Hexter believed discipline in the classroom would be one of the strengths of a military veteran turned teacher. He understood that classroom discipline was the biggest reason why teachers left the teaching profession. The veteran would bring his or her military experience to bear on any disciplinary situation and make every attempt necessary to mitigate the circumstances.

Dr. Hexter was an outstanding Ivy League educated student and professor, but he was never a sailor, soldier, airman, coast guardsman, or marine. Consequently, he may not have fully appreciated the transition process that service members go through to become civilians and then

teachers. Dr. Hexter did not factor in that even though military veterans have the skill sets to become teachers, they may also face major difficulties, such as finances, relationships, legal problems, and substance abuse. In addition, he may not have factored in the possibility that many military veterans have PTSD or TBI. Therefore, however successful the TTT program and the troops in teacher roles may be, some considerations may have been missed.

Service members who leave the military experience an adjustment period into civilian life during which they unpack the values and principles that they learned in the military. Some adjust quickly to the transition, others may take years to effectively make the transition. Congress established a transition program for service members separating from the military in 1990 (GAO, 1994). DoD has the responsibility of preparing service members for departure from the military. The NDAA for FY 1991 required the DoD to prepare service members for transition back into civilian life 180 days prior to them leaving military service. Pre-separation counseling was also required by the NDAA for FY 1993 90 days before the separation occurred (GAO, 1994). VA is responsible for ensuring that service members successfully transition to civilian life and become productive citizens (GAO, 2014; Morin, 2011). VA defines this transitional period as the first five years after separation from military service.

Even though the above programs are in place to assist veterans in their transitions into civilian life, many veterans leave the military with undetected and unaddressed issues. Dr. Hexter assumed that the departing veterans were prepared to make the transition, as there are programs to address the veterans' issues prior to them leaving the military. Many veterans who are college graduates (a prerequisite to joining the TTT program) leave the military and apply for the TTT program and are accepted. However, the transition back to civilian life still must take place. Even though they have all the prerequisites to become a TTT participant, they may not be ready to make that step because of PTSD, TBI, or other challenges. Howe and Shpeer (2019) looked at the initial transition that a veteran makes to civilian life. They stated that some military members who exit the military find it challenging to communicate with individuals who have not been in the military. Some veterans cannot communicate with civilians because, as seen by the veteran, they speak different languages.

Dr. Hexter, by not being a military veteran himself, may not have taken into consideration that veterans coming from the military and its way of life at times have challenges adapting to the more copious way of life outside the military.

### **Programmatic Recommendations**

Having completed my study, I here make three sets of recommendations: (1) recommendations regarding further research of the TTT participants, (2) recommendations regarding changes to the TTT program, and (3) recommendations for the civilian teaching programs.

**Recommendations regarding further research of the TTT participants.** My findings suggest that the TTT participants in Maryland faced many problems but still persevered and stayed in teaching. Further research is needed to understand if this phenomenon is unique to my sample, unique to the state of Maryland, or universal in all of the states where TTT participants teach. One possible reason that the TTT participants may have stayed in teaching is the three-year commitment required by the TTT program. It will be pertinent to study how this three-year commitment affects TTT participants' decisions to leave or stay in teaching.

**Recommendations regarding changes to the TTT program.** The TTT program could further investigate how it can add more TTT participants to the school system of not only Maryland but also all other states. The TTT program seems to have a positive effect on the TTT participants' transitions, and it is helping alleviate the teacher shortage in Maryland. It is important to study whether this phenomenon is generalizable to all other states; if it is unique to Maryland, it may be interesting to study why. Capitalizing on the TTT program's success, it is imperative to study whether an incentive program for longer than the three-year commitment or for an additional term of teaching is warranted and will add to the success of the TTT program by increasing the possibility of TTT participants' longevity in teaching. This incentive program may be in the form of tuition assistance for advanced education or a cash bonus. The pros and cons of incentive programs can then be used to establish a combinatorial incentive program. Also, if states have differences in shortages of teachers, then a state-based incentive program could be customized.



**Recommendations for civilian teaching programs.** It will be interesting to see what TTT program elements can be incorporated into civilian teaching programs to strengthen the teaching programs and ensure they produce teachers with characteristics similar to those of the TTT participants so that they stay longer in teaching. The elements that make the TTT participants resilient teachers should be studied, and methods to instill the same elements should be explored and incorporated into civilian teaching programs. In addition, school systems could also study standing up incentive programs based on the local teacher shortages. Lastly, classes such as conflict resolution strategies should be included in undergraduate teaching programs to better equip teachers to persist in teaching.

### **Conclusions**

The TTT participants in this study displayed the grit that Duckworth's (2016) research depicted. In contrast to the statistics reported in the literature for teacher departures, I found that the TTT program produced fewer teacher turnovers and better retention. This higher retention rate can be directly attributed to the TTT participants' military experience (Duckworth, 2016). The reason for the higher retention rate is that TTT participants enjoy what they are doing and making a difference.

I also found that the TTT participants faced some unique challenges in addition to the challenges common to teachers. However, the literature did not address the mitigation strategies used by teachers. On the contrary, I found that the TTT participants consistently employed mitigation strategies to overcome the challenges they faced instead of quitting. The TTT participants seemed to exhaust every mitigation strategy until the task was done, just as they did during military operations.

Teachers need to establish support systems within the school setting so they always have someone to turn to. However, my eight interviewees were still able to teach without this support; a lack of support was not a factor in their decisions to leave or stay in the teaching profession.

In conclusion, all of the participants in my study with the exception of one planned on having a successful transition, and they did. However, each achieved the results in different ways. The availability of the TTT program was critical in the success of the eight participants' transitions.

Lastly, the TTT participants employed the strategies learned from their military experiences to ensure a successful transition. I found that the eight participants enjoyed their teaching experiences, and seven out of the eight had committed to continuing to teach.

Together these findings suggest that seven out of the eight TTT participants were overwhelmingly committed to teaching and determined to stay in teaching long term. They also planned to gain higher education to further their careers in teaching and tended to persevere through difficulties such as student discipline or poor salary. These are all indications that the eight TTT participants will provide stability within the Maryland school system where they teach, and this stability will help slow the revolving door and bring down the cost of teacher attrition.

This study offers an observation of the experiences of TTT participants in Maryland. This study is the first of its kind because it specifically addresses TTT participants in Maryland and closes that knowledge gap in the literature.

### **Implications**

This study is the first of its kind about the experiences of TTT participants in Maryland and contributes three positive actions to the field of urban education, which are discussed in more detail in the following paragraphs. First, it provides a proof of principle that the TTT program can help reduce HQT shortages in urban areas of Maryland and brings a high percentage of males into the predominantly female profession of teaching. Second, TTT program participants produce teachers who have worldly experience, discipline, and resilience. Third, the TTT participants go through transition and may face challenges that should be considered for mitigation.

This study contributes to the field of urban education by providing a proof of principle that the TTT program reduces HQT shortages in urban areas. This study found that the TTT participants were committed to teaching beyond the contractual 36 months in their current teaching positions; therefore, they will contribute to the stability of the urban schools where they are teaching. This not only slows the revolving door, but it also gives the urban education system another possible area of recruitment for HQTs, other than the educators coming directly out of college. Seven of the eight participants in this study were teachers in an urban school setting. Nationally, of the 17,000 TTT participants, 8,500 teach in urban school environments. The TTT participants within my study were

diverse and capable of relating to students from every walk of life and ethnicity. Moreover, because the military is a male-dominant but diverse population, the TTT program contributes to ethnic diversity in the teacher population and increases the number of male teachers. At the national level, 83% of the TTT participants are male, and 43% are ethnic minorities.

The TTT participants in this study were able to bring their worldly experiences into urban classrooms, unlike their civilian colleagues who did not possess that depth of experience coming right out of college. In addition, the TTT participants within this study brought a high level of discipline from their military backgrounds, a never quit attitude, and a sense of mission. Lack of classroom discipline is one of the primary reasons why new teachers leave teaching. However, the TTT participants showed resilience and were determined to stay in teaching. Seventy-five percent of the TTT participants in my study had families and the experience of raising children firsthand. The TTT participants were not only teachers, but also mentors to the students and parents alike.

Lastly, my study shows that TTT participants face challenges as they transition from being troops to civilians and civilians to teachers. My study contributes to the field of urban education by pointing out that there are opportunities to mitigate these challenges that would serve the veterans and the education system alike.

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