Operation S2S: An Advising Model for Supporting the Student-Veteran’s Transition from Service to Student Success

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Operation S2S: Mission

Participants will gain an understanding of:

- The unique characteristics of the Student Veteran.
- The challenges a Student Veteran faces in a college setting.
- How the framework of “Andragogy” can be utilized in planning and carrying out advising activities to support the Student Veteran.
- Activities that can help Student Veterans successfully transition into higher education.
In 2015 there were 1,016,664 students using VA educational benefits, resulting in $12.3 billion in benefits paid to students and institutions.

Approximately two million Veterans will enroll in postsecondary education in the next decade.

83% of Student Veterans are enrolled in Public Institutions.

Popular degrees include: business, public service, health, science, and engineering.

51.7% of Student Veterans complete their degree within 4-5 years.
Service to Scholar

Over 660,000 undergraduate students are Veterans = 3% of all undergraduates.

Nearly 215,000 undergraduate students are military Service Members on active duty or in the reserves = 1% of all undergraduates.
Characteristics of Student Veterans

- 73% of Student Veterans are male.
- 27% of Student Veterans are female.
  - With only 10-12% of military personnel being women, female Student Veterans are over represented in postsecondary education.
- 62% of Student Veterans are first generation students.
- Student Veterans are non-traditional students.
  - Only 15% of Student Veterans are traditionally aged college students (18-23).
  - 80% are over age 25.
- Many Student Veterans have families.
  - 47% of Student Veterans have children.
  - 47.3% of Student Veterans are married.
Characteristics of Student Veterans

- Mature
- Committed
- Hard working
- Know the importance of finishing their education
- A strong work ethic and self-discipline
- Goal-focused approach
- Global perspective—an understanding of global conflict and issues around the world, perspectives on, and experiences with diverse cultures
- The ability to confront complex and difficult challenges
- Motivation to learn and put education into practice
- A history of selfless service
- Maturity and sense of purpose
- Self-reliance and resourcefulness
- Leadership skills
- Project management experience
- Teamwork
- Depth of character, honor, and integrity
Challenges Student Veterans Face in College

- Unstructured environment
  - Feeling lost/overwhelmed
  - Too many choices makes small decisions seem big
  - May experience college life as chaotic
- Feelings of isolation
  - Difficulty fitting in with family/friends
- Family challenges
- Irritability/anger
- Increased substance use
- Medical and mental health issues
  - PTSD
  - Traumatic brain injury (TBI)
  - Physical disability
  - Grieving
  - Identity Loss
  - Suicidal ideations
- Financial issues
  - Navigating their Veteran/military benefits
- Educational issues
  - Under preparedness
  - Learning disabilities
  - First generation college student
- Reserve obligations
Student Veterans Transitioning

美军生活

- 团队伙伴是家人
- 伙伴会支持你
- 团队是一个支持性的社区
- 团队作为一个团队工作
- 命令员告诉你该怎么做
- 严格的规则
- 被告诉该做什么
- 保持专注和警惕以确保安全

大学生活

- 配偶/子女/父母是家人
- 他们可能感到没有支持
- 大学社区不会感到包容
- 每个人为自己
- 没有人告诉你该怎么做
- 不同的规则或根本没有规则
- 做事情时按自己的意愿
- 应该放松并不要担心

请留下你的军衔在门外。
Look at Veterans as a Special Population

- Adult learners
- Minority population on campus
- Re-entry into civilian/college life is challenging
- Military has their own vocabulary
- May Special needs
- Student Veterans need to connect with their military peers
- Must learn how to navigate their benefits to succeed
- Strict rules for use of benefits
Veterans in the Classroom or Advising Meetings

- May prefer to sit in the back of the classroom
- May avoid having back to the door during meetings or class
- May appear distracted/trouble with memory
- May leave classroom or meeting unexpectedly
- May be irritable in class discussions
- May frequently miss class or meetings
- May have doctors appointments they cannot miss
- May appear sleepy
How May We Support Our Student Veteran’s Transition from Service to Student Success?

Develop programs/services with a Conceptual Base

The need for college programs, both curricular and extra-curricular, to have a conceptual or theoretical base has been well established in literature.

This base helps to establish the legitimacy of a program and its activities and also serves as a guide for determining which activities will be implemented and how they will be evaluated.
The design and implementation of resources to support Student Veterans should also be based on a theoretical foundation.

However, the literature on the transition of Student Veterans into the role of college students lacks this foundation.
Need for a Conceptual Base

Without a conceptual base, services to help the Student Veterans’ transition onto a college campus:

★ Don’t meet the needs of Student Veterans.

★ Are “hit or miss”.

★ Provided at the “whim” or personal preference of the designated veteran representative on campus.

★ May Suffer from a lack of funding.

★ Lack a conceptual framework to guide program evaluation.
Andragogy: A Proposed Advising Model for Supporting Student Veterans Transition from Service to Student Success

Andragogy

 Definitions:

 ★ **Andragogy**: The art and science of helping adults learn

 ★ **Pedagogy**: The art and science of helping children learn
Pedagogy vs. Andragogy

**Pedagogy:**

- Teaching method is didactic.
- Learner dependent on instructor. Teacher responsible for teaching.

**Andragogy:**

- Methods used are problem solving, discussion, service learning, etc.
- Learner is self directed; responsible for own learning.
Pedagogy vs. Andragogy

**Pedagogy:**
- Standardized curriculum.
- Learner motivation is external.

**Andragogy:**
- Curriculum is application based, related to life experiences.
- Learning is for problem solving; motivation is internal.
Andragogy

Uses strategies to help adults:

★ Meet their needs as learners.

★ Honor their preferences for teaching and learning styles.

★ Utilize their prior learning and experiences.

★ Develop problem solving skills.

★ Acknowledges adult levels of maturity and independence.

★ Capitalizes on internal motivation.
Six Principles of Andragogy

- Learner’s need to know = Relevant & Meaningful Objectives
- Self-concept of the learner = Trust, Preferences & Flexibility
- Prior learning experience = Sharing, Chunking & Scaffolding
- Readiness to learn = Preparation & Clarity
- Orientation to Learning = Objective-oriented meetings
- Motivation to learn = Engagement & Personal Development
Learners Need to Know

Advisors mission = Relevant & Meaningful Objectives

★ Understand how classes apply to their major and career goals.
★ Help clarify set and achieve goals.
★ Assist student veterans to identify life-problems resulting from their learning needs.
★ Work through problem solving.
★ Build connections.
Learners Self Concept

Advisors mission = Trust, Preferences & Flexibility

★ Create a culture of flexibility, self-direction and independence.
★ Assist in identifying their learning preferences.
★ Promote leadership opportunities on campus.
★ Promote building trust, respect and cooperation between learners.
★ Adults are self-directed, so instruction should allow learners to discover things for themselves and provide guidance as needed.
Prior Learning Experience

Advisors mission = Sharing, Chunking & Scaffolding

- Understand how previous academic experience shapes current learning and behavior.
- Communicate value in prior learning experience.
- Help student veteran’s utilize their own experiences.
- Encourage student veteran’s to take advantage of opportunities to share their experiences as they relate to learning.
- Instruction and learning activities should be task-oriented.
Readiness to learn

 Advisors mission = Preparation & Clarity

★ Understand that readiness to learn is developed from life tasks and problems.
★ Take into consideration the different backgrounds of learners.
★ Instruction and learning activities should allow for the different levels and types of previous experience.
Motivation

Advisors mission = Engagement & Personal Development
★ Understand that student veteran’s motivation comes from internal incentives, external motivators, and problems solving.
★ Understand what motivates their student veterans.
★ Watch for potential obstacles: time constraints, negative self-concept, doubt, frustration, etc.
Orientation Toward Learning

Advisor’s mission = Objective-oriented Meetings

★ Understand their learning is problem and life centered.
★ Advisors may link learning with life goals.
★ Provide opportunities to problem solve.
★ Understand that student veterans are most interested in learning subjects that have immediate relevance to their job or personal life.
★ Adult learning is problem-centered rather than content-oriented.
Why Andragogy?

- Builds strong learning communities
- Meets the needs of adult learners
- Prepares student veteran for future challenges
- Develops learning and life skills
- Reallocates responsibility for learning
- Respects the student veteran’s
  - ★ Time
  - ★ Goals
  - ★ Learning needs
Do You Know This Student?
Do You Know This Student?

Alicia: A student sailor, on active duty, comes to your office.

★ She begs you to explain to her professor that it isn’t her choice to go on her unit’s field training exercise.

★ She can’t tell her Petty Officer that she has to be in class.

★ Her professor is threatening to fail her if she misses classes.

★ What advice do you give her??

Hooyah
Do You Know This Student?

Josh: A student Marine on active duty, has just begun his 1st semester at your college.

★ He just learned that his unit is being deployed to Afghanistan.

★ It is too late for him to drop his classes and he does not want to quit.

★ How do you advice him?

Oorah
Do You Know This Student?

Tom: A Student Veteran, is a large, muscular man in his 30’s.

- He has been medically discharged from the Army, after 2 tours in Iraq, but has no physical signs of an injury.
- His professors have expressed concerns to you about his classroom behavior (angry, loud, sarcastic, scares other students).
- His professors fear “setting him off”.
- What advice do you give him?

Hoaah
Jackson: A student Airmen, on active duty but soon to be discharged, is a new student at your college.

★ You meet and tell him you are his advisor.

★ He responds bluntly, “I need to work with a veteran. I’m finally going to get my schooling and I don’t want to get jerked around. I don’t have time for any of that crap.”

★ How do you advise him?

Hua
Closing Thought

“Our Student Veterans have fulfilled their duty to keep our nation safe, often sacrificing greatly in the process. Now it is our turn to do our part to help them build promising futures for themselves and their families.”

Gen. David Petraeus & Sidney Goodfriend

Wall Street Journal

March 26, 2013
Thank You For Supporting Our Veterans
References


