

**Academic Libraries Supporting the Research Needs of Student Veterans:
A Bibliography**

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Abstract

The number of student veterans entering higher education has grown, especially after the passage of the new Post-9/11 GI Bill in 2008. Veterans are using their educational benefits and transitioning from a military to civilian environment. In order to meet the needs of student veterans, administrators, faculty, and staff are trying to make support services available. A range of services can be provided. The library can provide both a physical and virtual environment to support them. Although not always mentioned in articles on student veteran transition, it is important that libraries become aware of this population. . This annotated bibliography examines fifteen resources that discuss the issues of student veterans and their transition to higher education.

Keywords: student veterans, transition, library, Post-9/11 GI Bill, support services

Introduction

Support for student veterans encompasses the federal to local levels. Student veterans increasingly apply to two- and four-year colleges in the public and private sectors. How can higher education, specifically the library, help student veterans? Student veterans are a unique group of students whom would benefit from support. The library can provide the base of research support with books, online resources, and instruction.

A recurrent theme of these resources is that the transition from a military to non-military educational environment poses some difficulties and obstacles for student veterans. One includes complex interpersonal experiences with peers, professors, and administrators. These resources provide some insight, as well as proposals, to help support student veterans. As a support service, the library can try to process and reflect on these ideas, as well as be aware of or even incorporate some to support this population of students as it tries to facilitate the research needs of all students on campus.

While gathering sources for this bibliography, it was discovered that every detail about veterans in higher education, while important, could not be presented due to space constraints. Some of these topics in veteran's education include: gender studies, history of disabled student veterans, adult education , transitioning theories like identity development of students with military experience, Schlossberg's adult transition to higher education, trauma, post-deployment issues, traumatic brain injury (TBI), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), loss, homecoming experiences, homeless veterans, women veterans and transition, administrative processing issues of veteran education benefits, and stopgap measures of veterans with financial entitlements for school payments and

concerns with self-identifying as a student veteran at a university.

The resources illustrate issues student veterans encounter. Most are written or edited by retired veterans, those still in the military or who work with student veterans. They provide practical suggestions and theoretical approaches to education, including adult education and transition. The resources also provide insight into the differences in the culture and ethics of both the military and academe. They hopefully describe a different outlook in how we can be more supportive and have better awareness regarding those with diverse backgrounds. One main point is that collaboration and interaction between students and faculty is key in retention of student veterans.

This annotated bibliography groups fifteen resources, including nine articles, one book, one government resource, and four studies or presentations. The articles were selected by searching in EBSCOhost, Wiley, and from alerts using Google Scholar. A variety of databases were selected, including Academic Search Complete, Masterfile Premier, Project Muse, and JSTOR.

The limiters applied for this search include full-text, scholarly, peer-reviewed articles. Dates range from 2009-2012. Search terms used were “student veterans,” “library,” “adult education,” and “transition.”

The annotated bibliography is geared to libraries, faculty, and the college community, as well as anyone interested in student veterans in higher education, to provide awareness about their specific needs. Many articles dealing with student veterans pertain to the transition of veterans from the military to academic or higher education. A few articles specifically describe what libraries on college campuses can do to support student veterans. The objective is to initiate discussion of how libraries can

support student veterans in their quest for research and information literacy.

Ackerman, Robert, David DiRamio, and Regina L. Garza Mitchell. 2009. "Transitions: Combat veterans as college students." *New Directions for Student Services* no. 126: 5-14. Wiley (accessed July 28, 2011).

This article's findings suggest that combat veterans in the college setting are a student population with special needs. Emergent themes with complex issues reveal themselves through student veteran interviews, including joining the military (for educational opportunities), deployment issues (losing four or more semesters of school due to multiple deployments, forfeiting a scholarship, foregoing work, tuition, and book investment being deployed during the semester, dealing with administrative issues of college withdrawal, even writing a will), serving in a war zone (reminders of war and loss of friends injured or killed, and being wounded, disability, and a loss of connection and relationships with fellow soldiers), and returning to college.

Personal stories of deployment activations occurring during the school semester provide a background for what combat veterans experience. One student was deployed to Iraq, then to Afghanistan. The traditional college student will not often need to think about losing four semesters of school due to serving thirteen months in a war, or writing out a will before deployment. Suggestions were made by the 25 students who served in the Iraq or Afghanistan Wars about what college personnel can do to help in their transition.

Identified in the study by the authors were principles to provide guidelines for campus staff in supporting student veterans transitioning to college. A few unanticipated findings included issues with female veterans, mental health and physical issues, and the need for specialized support services for veterans on campus. The authors effectively

offer a well-rounded, quick study on student veterans, their college transition issues, and what campus personnel can do to help them.

Cate, Chris Andrew, Michael M. Gerber, and David L. Holmes. Institute for Social, Behavioral, and Economic Research and the Social Science Survey Center at UC: Santa Barbara, "Student Veteran Stressors in Higher Education: A Pilot Study." Last modified 2009. Accessed July 16, 2011.
<http://www.uweb.ucsb.edu/~chriscate/CateISTSS25.pdf>.

This pilot study reports results from a Web survey given to 26 student veterans at a four-year and a two-year college, measuring their experience of stress in academic, social, and institutional levels. The results indicate that higher stress levels are in academic and institutional experiences. Although it would have been interesting to view results of a larger sampling, the study itself provides a good cross-section of 26 survey statements that any college can pose to its veterans. Responses to these or other questions can yield valuable results to establish what the institution -- and in effect, specific departments -- can do to help in the transition process from soldier to student.

Cate, Chris Andrew, and David L. Holmes. Students Veterans of America and University of California, Santa Barbara, "Prevalence of Mental Health Disorders and On-Campus Service Utilization Among Student Veterans." Last modified 2011. Accessed September 16, 2012.
<http://www.uweb.ucsb.edu/~chriscate/CateISTSS27.pdf>

This study, supported by the Institute for Social, Behavioral, and Economic Research at UC Santa Barbara and Student Veterans of America, provides data results from a Web survey given to 131 student veterans. The pilot study's threefold purpose is to ascertain mental health disorder rates of student veterans, investigate which campus programs and services veterans use and discover any barriers to on-campus use of these services.

The results of the study were obtained from an assessment questionnaire. It infers that veterans might not seek out college programs and services or may not be aware of their availability. It also concludes that some student veterans will enter college with PTSD symptoms. The Student Veterans' Mental Health screening polled symptoms and behaviors including PTSD, use of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, binge drinking, suicidal thoughts, and difficulty with memory, tension and anxiety.

Investigating the use of campus programs showed that Financial Aid, Veterans Affairs Office (VAO) and On-Campus Student Health, were the top three services used. The programs that followed the top three services were the Career Center, Transfer Center, On-Campus Personal Counseling Services, Tutorial Center, and lastly, Disabled Student Program and Services (DSPS). Specific reported barriers for use of the services included not knowing what services were offered for On-Campus Service Utilization of VAO, not benefiting from Counseling services and ending with respondents reporting that they were not eligible for DSPS services. It would have been interesting to review results for use of the physical library and online library resources.

Ford, Deborah, Pamela Northrup, and Lusharon Wiley. 2009. "Connections, partnerships, opportunities, and programs to enhance success for military students." *New Directions for Student Services* no. 126: 61-69. Education Research Complete, EBSCOhost (accessed September 16, 2012).

Although not all universities have the faculty, staff, or budget to create a similar environment as at the University of West Florida, this article promotes a proactive template of the initiatives and description of programs for colleges to support the educational needs of military students. This environment supports partnerships, working collaboratively, and creating learning opportunities for student veterans. It is also

accommodating and maintains flexibility of support services. The article also advocates transitional strategies to assist students navigating bureaucratic institutions and enhancing campus communication.

Libraries can build on these examples and take the lead in coordinating services and orientations for student veterans or one-on-one appointments. Many libraries already provide flexible environments by offering physical and virtual resources with online databases and guides and 24/7 reference chat. Libraries also attempt to connect with students via social media like Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest for today's 21st century veterans.

Gomez, Cynthia. "Understand your student-veterans to help them succeed."
Recruiting & Retaining Adult Learners. 15. no. 1 (2012).
<http://www.recruitingretainingadultlearners.com/sample-article/understand-your-student-veterans-to-help-them-succeed.aspx> (accessed September 26, 2012).

This article reports on previous DiRamio studies on student veterans and identifies characteristics of veterans of which colleges should be aware. It explains that veterans are vocal and will express themselves when asked, and are mature compared to their student counterparts. Issues that may cause some stress for veterans include having families and financial strains. Other challenges include the culture shock of returning to civilian life and school from a highly structured military life, academic rustiness, social isolation, and disability.

Helton, Rae. 2010. "Diversity Dispatch: Libraries—An Important Campus Partner for Student Veterans." *Kentucky Libraries* 74, no. 3: 14-15. *Library Literature & Information Science Full Text* (H.W. Wilson), EBSCOhost (accessed July 28, 2011).

The article highlights that student veterans have unique experiences that may

make it difficult for them to integrate and adjust to college, including isolation, mental and physical wounds, and stressors like a competitive job market, which necessitates college, especially for veterans reentering the civilian workforce.

The essay describes what libraries can do to become veteran-friendly. It emphasizes that a library needs to be a welcoming space to assist with research and the learning process, and that it is an important partner for the transition of student veterans. Libraries need to provide deliberate outreach services like open houses, exhibits and programs. They should tailor research and information literacy classes for veterans at convenient locations and times, as veterans may be hesitant to ask for help.

Marketing and publicity of library resources to college departments, including academic advising, financial aid, student veterans office, and disability services are also beneficial to reach student veterans. Soliciting input from the college's Office of Military and Veterans Affairs resource person is advantageous to partner with veterans and support their academic success.

Hopkins, Charles, Douglas Herrmann, Roland B. Wilson, Bert Allen, and Lynn Malley. *Improving College Education of Veterans*. South Carolina: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2010.

This book is based on a series of presentations made at the 2009 College Educators for Veterans Higher Education conference. Each chapter addresses an issue that affects student veterans in their process of obtaining a college degree. Discussions include improving the education of veterans, guidelines on best practices in educating veterans and service members, to informing policy makers, educators, and administration. Distance learning opportunities for veterans, as well as veterans and adult education, are

discussed since adult learning continues to be an overlooked yet important topic for veterans transitioning to college.

Enlightening discussions ensue, including discrimination of U.S. military veterans at college and the difficulties encountered by different types of veterans. One chapter suggests that veterans should have legal protection since some experience anti-military or anti-veteran sentiments and statements in class by students and professors. In comparing types of veterans, some who have served and are now civilians may not require as much support as those who currently serve in the Reserves and National Guard. This group may be required to leave at any point during the semester for active duty, and must stop their education.

Chapter 15 highlights the clash of cultures between veterans and their military culture and ethic versus academe and its academic culture. Data reveals that 97% of students and administrators are unaware of military culture. Possible cultural biases may occur because of it. A useful table demonstrates different issues and conflicts between the military and academe, including organization, values and beliefs, and their relation to wider society.

Chapter 20 recommends that local and national action plans can try to address challenges veterans face when transitioning to higher education. It also recommends professional development for faculty and staff for how to address the needs of student veterans and service members.

Madaus, Joseph W., Wayne K. Miller II, and Mary Lee Vance. 2009. "Veterans with Disabilities in Postsecondary Education." *Journal of Postsecondary Education & Disability* 22, no. 1: 10-17. Education Research Complete, EBSCOhost (accessed September 17, 2012).

Why is it important for the library community to know about traumatic brain injuries (TBI), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and other disabling and challenging conditions that student veterans are experiencing? This article demonstrates that it would benefit us to know how to deal with these different issues, as we may encounter problems and situations in instructional classes, reference, or interactions with students in our schools.

Military Family Research Institute at Purdue University. 2009. *The Higher Education Landscape for Student Service Members and Veterans in Indiana*. <https://www.mfri.purdue.edu/programs/new-knowledge.aspx>

This report outlines support services that Purdue University offers its student veterans including Admissions, Financial Aid, Academic Affairs, and Student Services. The library is considered under “Student Services” for its online databases and extended collections, but needs to make a concerted effort toward the goal of supporting student veterans.

Appendix A supplies questions a traditional or even non-traditional student would not need to ask. Prior to deployment, student veterans in school need to find out whether they can be given an extension to complete assignments, or if they need to reapply for admission when they return.

The article contains an interesting list of general references on education, attrition of non-traditional students, as well as references for college services for an overview to colleges and administrators.

Military Service Members and Veterans: A Profile of Those Enrolled in

Undergraduate and Graduate Education in 2007–08.
<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2011163>

This resource from U.S. Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics furnishes a profile for the public, using data comparing college enrollment characteristics and demographics between military and non-military undergraduate and graduate students from 2007-2008. The results were conducted prior to the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008, or the new GI Bill. The study includes military students on active duty or in the reserves and pursuing their studies. It will be interesting to compare a future study with veterans from Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom using the new GI Bill educational benefits.

Moon, Tracey L., and Geraldine A. Schma. 2011. A proactive approach to serving military and veteran students. *New Directions for Higher Education*, no. 153. Wiley Online Library. Accessed May 10, 2012.

This peer-reviewed article explores military and veteran students, becoming a military-friendly institution, and understanding the needs of adult students. The article reinforces and describes reintegration issues that impact student veterans reported by students at Western Michigan University (WMU). It also depicts efforts made at WMU to promote a philosophy and set of practices resulting in the university’s “System of Care” for student veterans. WMU has an institutional culture that supports the needs of adult learners, with a core group being current and former service members.

The article describes different types of student veterans, including those seeking readmission who never officially dropped, those that did notify the Registrar, but are now out of sequence with their major, and first-time students who receive a few credits from

their military transcript. It also reveals the challenges of reintegration that affect veterans -- knowingly or not -- memory and concentration, including age differences, their military culture and experience, post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, and depression.

The article mentions that the military provides after-deployment briefings; however, information disseminated may be lost or secondary to a soldier's eagerness to return home and back to family.

The publication emphasizes that student veterans will increasingly be using their GI Bill benefits to attend college. Faculty and staff would benefit from seeking training to accommodate veterans returning to college, to provide tools, resources, referrals, and recommendations, and to be proactive supporters. Orientations with key university contacts for student veterans only are one way of imparting a military-friendly environment.

Librarians are sometimes at a disadvantage when working with students. We are not the Student Veterans Office that understands the experience of military students. We are not the Counseling Center, and may not be able to develop insights into a student's issues. The library can become very busy during the day and busiest times of the year. We can try to evaluate and understand the research needs of student veterans. The library is not always familiar with or aware of reintegration issues of military students. If a student were to reveal a physical or cognitive challenge, a librarian will usually try or may need to learn how to accommodate such an information request.

Schaefer, Henry Burnell. Hints on Teaching Veterans. *The Clearing House*, Vol. 21, No. 9 (May, 1947), p. 544. Published by: Taylor & Francis, Ltd. Article Stable URL:

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/30178950>

A very short, even humorous, historic commentary on teaching veterans in 1947. It still delves into the discussion that student veterans are a unique student population due to their background and experience.

Vacci, David T. 2012. University of Massachusetts-Amherst, "Considering a Unique Framework for Understanding Student Veterans: Research and Implications." Last modified 2012. Accessed September 12, 2012.

This presentation was created for the Veterans Academic Resources Center at the University of Central Florida. It contributes to the discussion of previously compiled research for student veterans, and reveals educational theories for non-traditional students and veterans. The presentation asserts that most studies on student veterans have only been about the transition to higher education.

The author suggests we should be appropriately critical and question this early research of student veterans. He provides a conceptual model and informative graphic identifying the interrelationships between the social, cultural, and personal areas that challenge student veterans.

Vacchi, David T. 2012. "Considering student veterans on the twenty-first-century college campus." *About Campus* 17, no. 2: 15-21. Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost (accessed September 22, 2012).

This article contributes to the discussion of student veteran transition and institutional policy change that can help support them. The research recommends that today's college institutions reflect upon the experiences of present-day student veterans, and understand them to provide improved experiences. Considerations include

understanding what a veteran is, their background and experience, and how faculty and staff can work with student veterans to improve their college experience and learning.

The author discusses some of the reasons for a possible influx of new student veterans, including a generous new GI Bill, end of the Iraq War, and recent budget cuts to the Department of Defense that will provide a possible military downsizing, which will present a surge in the student veteran population.

The author questions some of the findings of recent reports on student veterans and their difficulty when returning to college, especially concerning PTSD reports. He reveals that this may cause distance between college staff and student veterans. More empirical evidence is needed in studies of student veteran research and transition to college. The author expresses that programming should focus more on undergraduate students in the National Guard and Reserves, as opposed to undergraduate and graduate students on active duty, or graduate student veterans, since the former may need more support services due to the alternating of military and school life.

The writer supplies short historical facts on the GI Bill, what the term “veteran” means on campus, background of today’s professional all-volunteer standing military, as well as their military socialization, and how that may affect their adjustment especially in their first year of college.

He also says that expectations are important. He offers remedies for ongoing student veteran obstacles for GI Bill processing, health care insurance, as well as bursar, academic advising, and faculty practices. Ultimately, it is faculty or advisor and student veteran interaction that will support student veteran academic development.

He summarizes that student veterans can succeed when provided with reasonable

efforts in policy modifications. Student veterans have a sense of mission, aspire to be academically challenged, and can thrive with basic awareness of college resources and support services.

Power, John T. 2008. Campus kit for colleges and universities. Student Veterans of America.
http://www.operationpromiseforservicemembers.com/Campus_Kit_for_Colleges_and_Universities.pdf (accessed September 28, 2012).

A detailed resource designed for college and university administrators by the Student Veterans Association to make campuses veteran-friendly. It offers suggestions to create, supplement, or maintain a veteran-friendly program throughout campuses to meet the academic, financial, and medical needs and referrals of student veterans. It successfully describes the issues and concerns that veterans face when transitioning back to higher education, including navigating complex college and university departments to identify the benefits and resources available to them, as well as accessibility to student veteran-specific information, readjustment barriers, physical and mental health issues, need for a central area of information for academic support services, and their need for camaraderie with peers for support in academic and social integration.

Suggestions for areas of campus improvement are well-intentioned. Although the library is not specifically mentioned, libraries can definitely be a member of the “Suggested Partnership” to implement some items in this guide. “Faculty and Staff Training” can be provided, so that library staff can recognize struggling student veterans, or where to refer them.

In “Suggested Online and Print Resources,” many libraries already have online

guides and handouts ready for students, which can be easily distributed to the student veterans administrator or college Veterans Center. The library can also be a “Suggested Partnership,” and can “Institute Veteran Orientation Programs” by providing veteran-only workshops to demonstrate available library resources.