Supporting Student Veterans Utilizing Participatory Curriculum Development

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SUPPORTING STUDENT VETERANS UTILIZING PARTICIPATORY CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of

Antioch University Seattle

Seattle, WA

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements of the Degree

Doctor of Psychology

By

Bryce Doehne

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SUPPORTING STUDENT VETERANS UTILIZING PARTICIPATORY CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

This dissertation, by Bryce Doehne, has been approved by the committee members signed below who recommend that it be accepted by the faculty of the Antioch University Seattle at Seattle, WA in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PSYCHOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

SUPPORTING STUDENT VETERANS UTILIZING PARTICIPATORY CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

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An organizational level program utilizing Participatory Curriculum Development (PCD) (Taylor, 2003) is presented to assist postsecondary institutions with development, implementation, and evaluation of programs to support student veterans. Postsecondary institutions are provided with a “how to” program manual that includes literature-based core and supplemental programs, trauma-informed theory, and a methodological framework to implement programs. Practical program evaluation measures are offered to assist postsecondary institutions with evaluating the outcomes of their efforts to support student veterans. The electronic version of this dissertation is at AURA: Antioch University Repository and Archive, http://aura.antioch.edu/ and OhioLink ETD Center, https://etd.ohiolink.edu
Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my son, Austin, and to my parents, Alan and Shelly.
Acknowledgments

The transformation I have experienced in graduate school and through this dissertation would not have been possible without the guidance, support, and encouragement of several individuals. First, I have appreciated the support of my committee members and chair as their edits and encouragement pushed me to the finish line. Specifically, Dr. Bill Heusler’s humor and ability to have a solution to each roadblock I experienced as I pieced this dissertation together was appreciated. Dr. Schmidt’s work within the Veterans Training Support Center was inspiring as his dedication and experience with supporting veterans has served as a model for myself and others.

I would especially like to thank Dr. Shana Hormann. The encouragement I received from her motivated me to pursue my dissertation topic. Whenever I found myself being critical of my dissertation and thinking I had nothing new to offer administrators within higher education, I often recalled the time I first met Shana and she told me that my voice and experience as a veteran was meaningful and important. I was lucky to have worked for her as a Graduate Assistant and to see her leadership and support for students in action.

I would also like to thank those I have served with who helped me with my journey through the military to get to where I am today. A.J. Zingsheim, Lauren Tietje, Jordan Bennett, Petros Emmanouil, Jon Mizell, Darren Schneibel, and Mark Delgadillo will always occupy a place in my mind that is connected with both struggles and moments of happiness and deep friendship. Through high school, enlistment, boot camp, deployments, and my return to civilian life, my best friend and fellow Navy veteran,
Tyler Hylton has always been there for me. I would also like to thank Kelly Lee of the University of Houston for her edits, logic, and encouragement during our doctoral internship at Washington State University. Thank you all very much.
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Introduction

Postsecondary institutions are provided a guide on how to create a program to support student veterans. “A program can be described as an intentional transformation of resources (inputs) into certain activities (processes) to produce desired outcomes (results) within a specific context” (McLaughlin & Jordan, 2010, p. 55). The intentional transformation of postsecondary institution resources is intended to support student veterans. Implementation of resources will be described at the organizational level to assist postsecondary institutions with selecting and implementing literature-based core and supplemental programs. Core and supplemental programs are selected and combined to create a main program. The main program is implemented through Participatory Curriculum Development (PCD) (Taylor, 2003). PCD is a five-phase, recursive methodology that provides a platform to make organizational change, involve stakeholders, and train institutions on how to support student veterans. Overall, the following program serves as a training manual for postsecondary institutions by providing a step-by-step, literature based, guide to implement measures to support student veterans.

Despite a number of guides and programs to assist veterans with graduation, a clear need exists for a comprehensive, flexible, step-by-step, and explanatory program that describes how stakeholder resources can be marshaled to support student veterans. The literature review explores this need and provides administrators with an understanding of the struggles many veterans face on campuses across the nation and how existing programs and initiatives have attempted to address these issues. The methodology section describes how stakeholders can come together, select programs to
support student veterans, implement programs through a PCD cycle, and evaluate outcomes.

A key feature of this program is its focus on coordination and collaboration between stakeholders through the creation of an organizing committee. Creating a dedicated, collaborative committee should be the first step postsecondary institutions take to support student veterans (Student Veterans of America [SVA], 2008) and is considered a best practice (Veterans Training Support Center [VTSC], 2013). Due to a lack of collaboration between services provided to veterans, institutions need guidance on how to create a committee to act as the “backbone” of program development and implementation (Armstrong, McDonough, & Savage, 2015, p. 12). Within this program, a Student Veterans’ Support Committee is created to assist with program development. The Student Veterans’ Support Committee acts as a centralized organization whose purpose is to facilitate collaboration between stakeholders and avoid duplication of efforts, fragmentation, and competition.

In addition to serving an organizational function, the Student Veterans’ Support Committee can select from examples of literature-based core and supplemental programs based upon the needs of the institution identified during the initial phase of the PCD cycle. Postsecondary institutions are provided guidance on how to create a Student Veterans’ Support Committee in the methodology section, which also describes how to utilize PCD to implement a five-phase cycle to both support and measure the success of veterans on campus at the organizational level.

Another key feature of this program is the option to select from literature-based core and supplemental programs. Literature-based core and supplemental programs are
offered as examples to guide institutions. Institutions will most likely select their own programs, which may be similar or based upon the programs provided. The Author selected core and supplemental program examples subjectively for organizational purposes and to highlight the importance of resource management. Core programs are offered based upon their ability to have the highest impact based upon literature support, while supplemental programs have less literature support; therefore, components of core programs should be selected over supplemental programs when resources limit the scope of what can be provided for student veterans. Each are considered demonstrations of how to incorporate literature in order for institutions to adapt as needed.

Another distinguishable feature of this program is its focus on listening to the voices of veterans on campus rather than “telling veterans what they need to do” to achieve their academic goals. The participatory nature of this program involves veterans as stakeholders by including them within the Student Veterans’ Support Committee. In addition, utilization of survey data and focus groups assists with identifying what veterans need to support their educational goals. Overall, this program represents an adaptable, functional guide on how to utilize stakeholder participation to give voice to the experience of veterans and allow them to work collaboratively within their postsecondary institutions to achieve their educational goals.

Overview and Layout of Sections

Prior to the literature review, my position, experience with military education benefits, and motivation for creating a program dedicated to supporting student veterans are described. Then, the first section provides an introduction to the literature to demonstrate central issues related to veteran graduation, the need for a participatory
program, and an outline of PCD. The outline and description of PCD phases serves as a brief overview and each point will be elaborated further within the sections that follow.

Part I of this dissertation focuses on literature regarding student veterans that will act as a key stakeholder in supporting the development and delivery of the program. Literature on student veteran difficulties and their experiences within higher education is discussed. Existing programs to support student veterans are reviewed and evaluated with attention to the strengths and weaknesses of each program. Core and supplemental programs postsecondary institutions can select based upon the literature reviewed are provided. A theoretical section on trauma theory is presented to help postsecondary institutions understand the importance of providing trauma-informed care to student veterans.

Part II of this dissertation explains the methodology of PCD, which is the platform for training institutions on how to implement their program to support student veteran success. The five-phases of a PCD cycle are explained and the literature-based programs are mapped onto each phase. Institutions are provided guidance on how to create a Student Veterans’ Support Committee. The main concepts of PCD are presented. The overview of PCD serves as a reference that readers can return to in order to review main concepts. A flow chart of the five phases and an overview of steps that occur during program to support student veterans. Helpful charts, examples, and ways to engage participatory, sustainable action are presented. Sample surveys, a lesson plan, and a glossary of key terms are provided in the appendices. The description of PCD application is intended to provide a set of guidelines that can be used by a diverse array of
postsecondary institutions ranging from technical, certificate granting institutions to large, tier-one research institutions.

Part III offers methods for evaluating programs. Although practical evaluation measures are built into the PCD cycle within individual programs, logic models are provided to evaluate how programs are functioning at the organizational level. Options of program evaluation methods are both formal and informal. The conclusion summarizes this program and lists limitations to consider.

**Literature Overview, Need, and Program Focus**

Programs on campuses are needed to assist veterans with academic progress toward their educational goals. The GI Bill is a form of reimbursement for the sacrifices veterans made during their time in the military; however, current levels of funding dedicated to assist student veterans in achieving graduation do not appear to be repayment enough to help them graduate. Despite over 12 billion dollars allotted to veterans last year (Government Accountability Office [GAO], 2014), McBain, Kim, Cook, and Snead (2012) reported only 62% of postsecondary institutions (N = 690) provided programs and services dedicated specifically to veterans in 2012. Although programs and initiatives are intended to support student veterans (American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers [AACRAO], 2014; Rumann & Hamrick, 2010; Supportive Education for the Returning Veteran [SERV], 2015; University of California Santa Cruz [UCSC], 2014), outcome data lacks consensus and accuracy (Briggs, 2012; Cate, 2013; McCann, 2014; Minnis & Hammond, 2014; National Association of Student Personnel Administrators [NASPA], 2013; SVA, 2014; Wood, 2012).
National estimates of graduation rates appear to be misleading due to the diversity within educational settings (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2014) and the lack of standardized, established tracking methods for the term “veteran” (Cate, 2013). Narrowly focusing on the rates of graduation of student veterans does not address variables that contribute to veteran difficulties (Barry, Whiteman, Wadsworth, & Hitt, 2012), or what postsecondary institutions can do to support graduation (AACRAO, 2014). Additionally, the national focus on veteran graduation rates assumes that all veterans are attempting to graduate; however, veterans may be using their benefits for alternative reasons such as gaining job skills or obtaining technical certificates that are not captured by graduation estimates. The design of this program provides postsecondary institutions with a guide to do more than address graduation rates, which may not accurately represent all that an institution is providing for its veterans.

A program that is adaptable includes the participation of student veterans and contains embedded evaluation measures to fill gaps within the existing literature. Rudd, Goulding, and Bryan (2011) stated, “Given the potentially unique nature of student veterans’ issues, attention would appear warranted across several domains including training and education, screening, clinical care, and overall administration” (p. 6). Armstrong et al. (2015) reported, “the leading gap in veterans and military family services is not a lack of resources or capacity, but a lack of collaboration, coordination, and collective purpose” (p. 3). A program incorporating the literature recommendations and providing a participatory methodology can address limitations within existing programs for student veterans and provide a platform that incorporates a collective
purpose directed at meeting the needs and challenges of student veterans within diverse institutions.

Student veterans have several needs and face a variety of challenges including distribution of their GI Bill benefits, difficulties transitioning into academia, and visible and invisible wounds related to their military service. When struggles exist within multiple ecological domains, there appears to be a systemic, compounding risk for student veterans attempting to succeed in their postsecondary goals (Rudd et al., 2011; Rumann & Hamrick, 2010). An effective method is needed that can incorporate literature recommendations and provide detailed descriptions of how to address difficulties experienced in multiple arenas to maximize the support of programs aiming to facilitate educational and vocational success. Researchers (DiRamio, Ackerman, & Mitchell, 2008; Rumann & Hamrick, 2010) have recommended that institutions track student veteran progress, which can be accomplished by embedding evaluation metrics within programs to monitor success and make adjustments to meet goals (Taylor, 2003).

**Participatory Curriculum Development**

Taylor’s (2003) participatory curriculum development (PCD) represents an effective methodology to support student veteran graduation. PCD can address gaps within disparate programs and incorporate literature recommendations for student veterans. PCD focuses on participatory, holistic methods to involve stakeholders through five-phases of a PCD cycle. Many programs tell “what” has been done without explaining in detail “how” to achieve results. In addition, most programs do not have built-in validity checks and evaluation methods to gauge impact or outcomes. PCD fills
these gaps and includes validity checks, impact evaluation, monitoring evaluation, and summative evaluation as a continuous part of assessing results.

PCD enlists stakeholders to establish ownership over programs being implemented, with stakeholders identified as anyone supporting the common goal of supporting student veteran graduation. “Graduation” is operationally defined as completion of an undergraduate or graduate degree, vocational training, or certification program. The term “college success” includes graduation, but also further encompasses individual goals such as gaining knowledge through academic coursework while applying for employment in order to account for the variety of ways student veterans may choose to use their college benefits. The terms “curriculum” and “program” are used interchangeably to allow for differences in resources between diverse postsecondary settings. “Programs” and “trainings” are also used interchangeably due to the possibility that an institution may find that a single training event is the end goal, or entire program, given the diversity of resources within postsecondary institutions.

Components of PCD added together form the main program, which means the sum of all efforts dedicated to establish a program with measureable outcomes. The measureable program is the combination of selected core and supplemental programs dedicated to support student veteran graduation; however, PCD adds more than resource building. Importantly, PCD involves all stakeholders, including student veterans, and contains built-in evaluative measures that allow institutions to adjust through recursive reflection as they learn how to support their student veterans. PCD is ecological, holistic, and brings stakeholders together in an organized manner to support clearly delineated goals. Overall, the PCD cycle provides postsecondary institutions with the “how to”
methods that make program implementation practical, guided, sustainable, and structured in a way that is easily understandable to stakeholders.

PCD utilizes established methods of curriculum development (Taylor, 2003) to explain in detail what postsecondary institutions can do to support veteran graduation. These include Training Needs Analysis (TNA); Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis; and stakeholder analysis to create a strong foundation for a program based upon a realistic awareness of institutional resources, which helps to ensure sustainability (Taylor, 2003). Additionally, PCD allows adaptability to meet the needs of different sizes of institutions varying in resources dedicated to support student veterans. Therefore, postsecondary institutions with more resources may have the ability to address multiple core and supplemental programs listed within this program, while smaller institutions with fewer resources can still benefit from selecting a single program.

In the following section, I present aspects of my life story that motivated me to create a program to support student veteran graduation. As a student veteran who has utilized a variety of military education benefits while working towards my doctorate degree, I believe my bias inevitably enters this program. I present my story and viewpoint to offer perspective on why many of the youth in our country join the military and why I think postsecondary institutions should assist veterans with graduation.
Author’s Position and Background

As a student veteran working towards a doctoral degree, my personal history and beliefs have inevitably affected my decision to write a program as my dissertation to assist student veterans with graduating college. My upbringing created and shaped a strong work ethic, which served as a foundation that helped me achieve my educational goals and allowed me to be in a position to create a program to help veterans achieve their postsecondary education goals. I grew up in a working class, blue collar family that taught me that the only way to success was to work hard. Both my maternal and paternal grandfathers worked in the same paper mill, along with my uncles. My father would lecture me about how working hard was the key to success. My values toward work were continually shaped around doing a “good job,” which meant supporting a boss or doing well for a company or business. I was taught that temporarily sacrificing my own needs to meet the goals of employers and organizations ensured success in life. I believed that as long as I worked hard I would be rewarded.

My working class values were also supported by public education. I was educated in a small, rural public high school in Southwest Washington. I remember my elementary school principal giving a speech about determination. He defined determination, telling us that it means to push through all barriers in order to achieve our goals. He talked to us about setting goals and making plans to ensure success in our future by attending college. I remember being in awe of my Principal’s speech. I told my mother and father about the speech and asked them how to spell the word determination. Despite my enthusiasm about having a successful future supported by a college degree, neither of my parents had
been to college and did not see the value of a postsecondary education in the way that I did.

As I progressed through school, I was determined to attend college. I believed college was a natural result of achieving good grades and working hard; therefore, I excelled in both academics and sports. By my senior year, I was the student body president and captain of the wrestling team. I believed I could attend any school I desired and did not even consider joining the military. I remember Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine recruiters coming to my school, but they did not speak with me. Instead, enlisted recruiters appeared to target students within my high school who did not excel academically and did not appear to have plans to attend college. Differing from these students, my close friends and I were actively preparing to attend college. We submitted applications to colleges together and applied to the same schools.

I was accepted to each school I applied to and I made my selection based upon receipt of a partial wrestling scholarship. As part of the wrestling requirements, I arrived at the campus before the start of the academic year to attend team practices. After my first practice my coach approached me and let me know that I did not have all of the loan paperwork in place to continue to practice with the team. I called my parents immediately and asked them if they had sent the loan paperwork. My parents told me that they had reconsidered their decision to allow me to attend college after fully considering their finances and the total costs of my education. They informed me that they would not sign my loan paperwork to attend school and I would need to find an alternative route to attend college. I was crushed when I found out that I could not sign the loan papers
myself and I returned home the following day. I was close to attending college, but did not make it quite yet.

After returning home to a town with almost no job prospects for a person without a college degree, the military became an attractive option to achieve my goals of attending college; however, this time it was me who targeted the military recruiters to apply for an enlistment. Recruiters informed me that the best way to achieve a degree was to take courses while enlisted and then apply for Officer Candidate School (OCS) to complete my degree. I chose the Navy because it was the only branch of service that could guarantee placement into a specific job that I qualified for based upon my Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) scores. Importantly, in late 2003 the Navy recruiter also let me know that if I joined the Marines or Army I would end up being deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan and unlikely to pursue college classes, which solidified my decision to join the Navy.

At the time I was considering joining the military, I was 18 years old, apathetic about the war, and more concerned with finding a way out of my hometown and achieving my goal of getting a college degree. War seemed very far removed from my life situation and personal beliefs. I was more worried about my parents’ request for me to move out of the house and get a job. Importantly, I was not joining the military to go to war. I joined the military because it represented a way out of my hometown, a job, and the opportunity to achieve my goal of attending college. In retrospect, I was confused by the war and I did not see how the U.S. invading Iraq and Afghanistan had anything to do with the September 11, 2001, attack on the World Trade Center. This was confirmed in early 2004, only two months after I joined the military, as any illusion I could have had
about avenging the September 11th attack on the World Trade Center was rendered obsolete by the 9/11 commission’s report that Iraq had no connection to al Qaeda even though the United States had already launched a full-scale military invasion (Eggen, 2004).

After taking the Oath of Enlistment in early 2004, I attended a local community college for one year as part of the Navy College Assistance/Student Headstart program (CASH) prior to arriving at boot camp to start my military service. As an enlisted member of the U.S. Navy, I quickly learned the value of having a degree. Within the military, officers and enlisted members are separated by the presence or absence of a degree. The distinction of having a degree allowed officers to achieve entry-level management positions regardless of their time in service. This differed greatly from enlisted members who did not have a degree. During my time in the service, I began to recognize the many privileges granted to officers due to the status their degree conferred. This was especially evident in junior officers who arrived to the ship with little actual experience. In addition to calling officers by their title, I also spent a period of time doing their laundry, cleaning their rooms, and serving them their meals. After witnessing the benefits of a college degree, I became more motivated to take classes and work towards finishing my degree.

As soon as I arrived at my ship, I began to seek out ways to earn a degree. I began to piece together classes through various education programs in the Navy, taking both distance learning and online courses. I used tuition assistance (TA) and the Navy CASH program to fund my degree during my enlistment. In addition, instructors would occasionally fly to the ship to teach entry-level courses while I was on deployment off the
shore of the Horn of Africa and the Philippines. I used tuition assistance to take upper level courses in psychology to gain knowledge of subject areas and then pass College Level Evaluation Program (CLEP) tests to gain credit for lower level courses on the same topics.

I remember the ship rocking as I studied late at night after working long hours and standing watch. Simply signing up for the courses did not guarantee that I could complete my coursework. In the military the mission comes first and the person directly in charge of me determined whether or not I was allowed to study or take college courses. If the mission requirements did not allow time for classes, I was not able to participate in classes. In reality, this was a subjective decision by my leaders and mainly relied upon whether or not my leaders had a favorable opinion of me. If they did not, and if I did not excel at my primary job, mission requirements became central and no time was given for classes, which could result in failure and an inability to access these courses in the future.

I eventually achieved my Bachelor’s degree in psychology after five years of enlistment. I entered the service wanting to get a degree in electrical engineering, but my first elective in psychology helped me make sense of the military environment. I began to notice difficulties that occurred naturally as a result of the military environment, including psychological stress and organizational trauma. During the time on board my ship, I observed instances of military sexual trauma, attempted suicides, and people returning from Individual Augmentee (IA) deployments with posttraumatic stress symptoms. I began reading RAND reports about the state of mental health in the U.S. military and found that psychologists were greatly needed to assist our troops returning from war. Being an enlisted member and seeing how interconnected education was to
influence and decision-making, I remember thinking that achieving the highest possible degree would allow me to have a platform and a voice to help out other veterans. Before my military service was over, I applied to the doctoral program in clinical psychology at Antioch University Seattle, was accepted, and entered the same year I left the service.

When I arrived on campus as a doctoral student, I did not feel like I belonged at school. I believed people did not see me and could not understand my reason for joining the military or my journey towards achieving an education. I did not feel like a war hero; I felt invisible. My decision for joining the military was not accounted for in the nationalistic, popular discourse that fills televisions during sports half-time shows with visuals of the American flag and stories of heroism. The common myths of why people join the military did not describe my experience, so I kept my mouth closed and tried to fit into academia. I could not explain why I joined the military due to the shame I felt from coming from a poor, working class family that did not value education. The shame I initially felt, combined with a lack of knowledge about the interdependent relationship between higher education and privilege, silenced me into not talking about my military service at all.

Based on both my experience and quality of the education I was receiving in a doctoral program focused on social justice, I quickly learned that higher education in the U.S. is a system of privilege in which the poor have to work even harder to achieve. Importantly, I began to realize that the GI Bill is a recruitment tool that targets those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Contrary to popular belief and images the media attempts to portray, not all service members join the military to achieve honor, valor, or become a hero. Many people enlist in the U.S. military because it represents one of the few
remaining ways to achieve class mobility, among the numerous other benefits a college degree confers in the U.S. Throughout my time in the service, I remember being told I was a “warrior” and that I was defending democracy; however, these words never felt true for me. I joined the military to attend college like many other young men and women who served in our nation’s most recent wars (AACRAO, 2014; Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America [IAVA], 2011).

I also began to realize that the military itself does not “give” anyone a college degree. I took my education benefits from the military, or more accurately, traded my youth for an education. During my seven year enlistment in the U.S. Navy, I realized that many other young women and men who enlisted were also seeking to improve and better their social situations, whether it was leaving an impoverished area without opportunity, finding a job to support their families, achieving citizenship, or escaping a difficult past. I saw a major discrepancy and flaw in my country as I observed fellow service members and listened to their stories. I realized the U.S. is not a meritocracy where people enter the world with equal opportunity and chances to succeed in life. Instead, I saw people who were willing to make the sacrifices required during military service to better their lives and the lives of their families.

Although many young men and women enter the military with positive intentions and hopes of bettering their situation, it appears joining the military for an education is a metaphorical lottery with extremely frightening odds given that approximately one in three service members deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) would experience posttraumatic stress disorder, depression, or a traumatic brain injury (Tanielian & Jaycox, 2008). In addition, I often
wonder how many people were recruited into the U.S. military by being promised the opportunity to achieve a college degree, yet suffered mental and physical injuries rendering education benefits ineffectual, or did not return at all. Moreover, it makes me question the culture of the U.S. as a nation that would allow its youth to risk death and trade their mental and physical well-being for the chance to achieve an education.

My position and decision to create a program to assist student veterans in graduating is not because I think veterans “deserve” an education due to their military service. Rather, I believe everyone who desires an education deserves to be offered one as a basic, moral, and human right, without having to make the sacrifices those in the military endured. Young men and women in our country have been exploited in the name of opportunity for an education. Our nation’s impoverished, vulnerable, and less advantaged have given years of their youth, risking death, surviving the rampant experience of sexual assault and risks associated with suicide, witnessing death, destruction, and the horrors of war; all for the possibility to achieve an education.

In a country that continuously denies the existence of classism for a view of meritocracy and the belief that everyone has an equal chance to succeed, it is easier to tell veterans, “Thank you for your service,” than to look deeper at the exploitation they have faced. Our nation is one in which education is a privilege, not a right, access to education is not equal, and those from marginalized backgrounds are directly and indirectly kept out of higher education through financial gate-keeping mechanisms. Those not born into wealth and those that choose to obtain debt over military service must borrow funds at a rate that has been termed “borrowing inequality” due to the financial hole those from disadvantaged backgrounds have to endure to achieve a college degree (Price, 2004).
Against this backdrop of American inequality, the GI Bill represents an alternative opportunity for the economically marginalized, or more specifically, “for those who are fortunate enough to come out of their active duty healthy, sane and alive” (Anderson, 2013, para. 20).

It is important to me that this dissertation does not separate issues of inequality as a veteran versus non-veteran issue. Discussing education difficulties as “a veteran problem” could result in victim blaming and obscure the root problem of access to postsecondary education in this country. My decision to create this program is to acknowledge the exploitation that occurs in a nation that allows its youth to go through such horrendous experiences to become educated, improve their lives, and support their families. Although these traumas cannot be erased, the participatory nature of this program has the potential to allow postsecondary institutions to give voice to veterans on their campus, come together as a community, and promote healing by asking service members what they require to achieve an education and better their lives. This program represents a call to action for postsecondary institutions to truly assess why veterans are struggling, listen to their voices, and create programs to assist student veterans with graduation.

The next section of this dissertation evaluates the literature regarding difficulties veterans face at postsecondary institutions. While the GI Bill is a form of reimbursement for those who have served, solely providing monetary benefits for education does not fully acknowledge the many aspects with which student veterans struggle due to their military experience and identity. Popular discourse in our society does not fully acknowledge what veterans have endured that the GI Bill is attempting to compensate.
The literature review section evaluates the less well known, associated costs of reimbursing veterans by highlighting the multiple areas veterans experience difficulties in and providing examples for interventions to support graduation.
PART I

Literature Review

Introduction

The literature review provides postsecondary institutions with context on the major issues related to student veterans in higher education. First, the GI Bill and its relationship to student veterans is discussed. Then, themes within the literature are explored. Although each of the themes are ostensibly deficit-based, they represent opportunities for postsecondary institutions to intervene to support veterans. Additionally, the literature review informs the creation of core and supplemental programs.

The Intention of the Post-9/11 GI Bill

The creation of the Post-9/11 GI Bill (hereafter called GI Bill) was made possible through the efforts of the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA) and their collaboration with Senators Jim Webb (D-VA), John Warner (R-VA), Chuck Hagel (R-VA), and Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ), along with multiple veterans’ organizations (IAVA, 2016). The IAVA’s bipartisan collaboration included extensive media outreach and a comprehensive report, “A New GI Bill: Rewarding Our Troops, Rebuilding Our Military.” The report included a comprehensive analysis of the benefits of the proposed GI Bill in order to refute the Bush administration’s arguments against passing it. The GI Bill faced strong criticism from President Bush and presidential nominee John McCain (R-AZ) who did not vote for its acceptance (Glantz, 2009). The IAVA’s collaboration represented grass roots activism and advocacy by those who served in our nation’s most recent war. The collective efforts to pass the GI Bill were sustained by the value of
supporting our nation’s veterans and the intention that veterans would achieve upward socioeconomic mobility through educational attainment.

The GI Bill is inextricably connected to government funding and the social value that veterans should be reimbursed for sacrifices made during military service. When government entities evaluate the impact of the GI Bill, graduation rates appear to be the most overt measure to demonstrate responsible use of funds by institutions; however, there is controversy and disagreement regarding the accuracy of graduation rates. Postsecondary institutions can benefit from being aware of these controversies, arguments, and national trends related to measuring student veteran success and the current political climate of GI Bill funding. Current initiatives appear to have recognized the economic toll on our nation to fund veteran education at postsecondary institutions that do not have support measures in place to assist student veterans. Postsecondary institutions can stay ahead of legislative decisions by creating programs that demonstrate commitment to use government funding in an ethical and responsible way.

Government entities have demanded accountability (GAO, 2013a, 2014; Obama, 2012), which puts pressure on postsecondary institutions to demonstrate their ability to support student veterans. Stakeholders should be aware of how graduation rates on their campus may not present a clear picture of what they are doing for veterans and they must be able to communicate how they are assisting veterans on their campus in more ways than citing graduation rates. Additionally, postsecondary institutions attempting to implement programs for their veterans must not only understand estimates of graduation rates nationally, but also be able to communicate to internal and external stakeholders how current political mandates and organizational standards related to the GI Bill require
support services dedicated to student veterans. For example, the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education ([CAS], 2010) has established standards and guidelines, stating programs should assist student veterans with “admissions support, orientation, financial aid, housing and logistics, advising and mentoring, and learning communities” (p. 4). Knowledge of standards requiring institutions to assist veterans with graduation can be used as the initial starting point for individuals who are attempting to start a program to support student veterans on their campus. Overall, this knowledge helps those implementing the program to explain why it is needed.

An understanding of student veteran graduation rates and GI Bill funding can serve as the initial starting point for institutions seeking to rally support to start programs dedicated for veterans on their campus. Individuals who understand and are up to date on national trends related to veteran funding and graduation may be more likely to garner support from their institutions. Additionally, when starting a program dedicated to assist student veteran graduation, knowledge of government initiatives related to GI Bill funding can allow institutions to have the foresight to stay ahead of national trends, legislative requirements, and mandates. Therefore, the beginning of the literature review will explain the most widely circulated and disputed graduation rates, funding, unethical actions by postsecondary institutions, and resultant legislative initiatives to arm individuals with the knowledge required to bolster support on their campus for the creation of a program designed to support student veterans.

**GI Bill, Funding, and Graduation Rates**

The Chapter 33, Post-9/11, GI Bill was passed on August 1, 2009. It was revised and corrected by President Obama on January 4th, 2011 (Howell, 2011). The Post-9/11
GI-Bill covers housing, tuition and fees, and includes a stipend for books. Student veterans have increased exponentially in our nation’s colleges since recent changes made the GI Bill more comprehensive (Radford, 2009), reaching an average enrollment of 823 veterans per two and four year institutions in 2012 (Grasgreen, 2012). The VA reported reaching one million beneficiaries of education benefits in 2011 (GAO, 2013b) and it provided almost 10 billion dollars for postsecondary education benefits to veterans in fiscal year 2011 (GAO, 2013b), 11 billion in 2012 (GAO, 2013a), and over 12 billion in 2013 (GAO, 2014).

Despite the amount of economic resources dedicated to student veterans, agreement has not been reached regarding the graduation rates of student veterans. Popular media has estimated graduation rates of only 3% (Briggs, 2012) and dropout rates to be 88% (Wood, 2012). These numbers were widely circulated by major news agencies and raised alarm regarding the effectiveness of the GI Bill to be enough support for veterans entering colleges; however, these popular media estimates did not evaluate empirical data to reach their conclusions. Instead, Briggs (2012) and Wood (2012) were referring to a 2012 Colorado Workforce Development Council (CWDC) study that fellow popular media correspondents were unable to obtain and noted the CWDC failed to respond to inquires regarding the validity of the data, eventually removing the study from their webpage (Tarantino, 2012). Despite the media reports espousing a dropout rate of 88% being clearly disputed, alarm had been raised, and many began to look deeper at graduation rates.

Cate (2013), research director of Student Veterans of America (SVA), also refuted the dropout rates espoused by popular media. He attempted to provide a more
accurate rate of student veteran graduation by utilizing data gleaned from the American Community Survey and a 2010 National Survey. Cate (2013) reported a more modest rate of 30–40% of veterans not graduating from their postsecondary programs. Overall, he clearly disagreed with the alarm raised by popular media reports; he asserted there is not a national tracking system that has reported the graduation rates of student veterans specifically, so estimates could only be inferred without distinct veteran data.

The SVA (2014) established a tracking process called the “Million Records Project,” following Cate’s (2013) initial report on the absence of measures designed specifically for veterans. According to the SVA (2014) website, the SVA partnered with the National Clearinghouse and the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA), which released previously unavailable data that:

provided a random sample of approximately 1 million student veteran records based on their initial use of the Montgomery and Post-9/11 GI bills from 2002 to 2010. The National Student Clearinghouse, which tracks graduation rates for 97 percent of all postsecondary students in the country, matched the VA data file with its DegreeTracker system. (About the Million Records Project section, para. 4)

On March 24, 2014, the SVA (2014) released its first phase of the data, which suggested a completion rate of 51.7% and completion time ranging from 4–6 years. However, Minnis and Hammond (2014) highlighted discrepancies in the way the SVA presented their data. For example, active duty service members using Tuition Assistance (TA) and reservists using Reserve Education Assistance (REAP) were excluded from the data. The graduation rates could also have been overstated because they were not calculated according to the standards of the Department of Education (McCann, 2014). Minnis and Hammond (2014) stated, the “Million Records Report offers statistics based
partly on conjecture and wholly on data, which cannot be viewed as complete or accurate” (para. 5), concluding there were many questions the report did not answer.

Overall, current estimates of graduation rates for student veterans have clearly been disputed. Those who have reported national numbers have varied from a 3% graduation rate espoused by popular media sources (Briggs, 2012; Wood, 2012) to the most recent number of 51.7% completion rates in 4 - 6 years cited by the SVA in collaboration with the DVA and National Clearinghouse (Cate, 2013). The SVA’s report of a completion rate of 51.7% and their earlier report of 30 - 40% are both questionable and not laudable rates to begin with given the amount of financial resources dedicated to student veterans. Furthermore, Minnis and Hammond (2014) noted there is not a clear meaning for the word “veteran” and this was not accurately tracked by entities conducting the Million Records project. Therefore, internal validity was threatened due to both the operational definition of the term veteran and exclusion criteria that has the potential to skew the data enormously.

**Ensuring Support and Avoiding Deception**

Comparing student veterans to their non-veteran peers by evaluating national tracking systems of graduation rates may add additional support for individuals seeking to start a program dedicated to supporting student veterans on campus. The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) is the postsecondary branch of the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics ([NCES], 2014). IPEDS tracks graduation rates reported by postsecondary institutions as mandated by the amended Higher Education Act of 1965. Importantly, IPEDS tracks student outcomes
(i.e., graduation data), and over 7,500 institutions report data to the tracking system.

NCES (2014, p. 2) reported:

About 59 percent of first-time, full-time students who began seeking a bachelor’s degree at a 4-year institution in fall 2006 completed that degree within 6 years. The graduation rate for females (61 percent) was higher than the rate for males (56 percent).

Individuals who are starting a program on their campus must be aware of how institutional practices relate to graduation rates in order to address difficulties unique to their campus because NCES (2014) graduation rates vary according to type of institution. NCES reported graduation rates varied by admission rates. Institutions that had the highest rates of acceptance (i.e., accepted a higher percentage of students or had open admissions policies) reported the lowest graduation rates. In contrast, institutions that had the lowest admission rates reported higher graduation rates. According to NCES, “at 4-year institutions with open admissions policies, 33 percent of students completed a bachelor’s degree within 6 years. At 4-year institutions where the acceptance rate was less than 25 percent of applicants, the 6-year graduation rate was 86 percent” (p. 1). It appears that institutions without strict acceptance policies may especially be in need of programs to assist students with graduation. Moreover, rapid enrollment of veterans without programs in place to support graduation has gained executive attention.

Information regarding selectivity criteria and graduation rates are especially important for institutions that are implementing a program to support student veterans considering the executive order of President Obama (2012) citing:

reports of aggressive and deceptive targeting of service members, veterans, and their families by some educational institutions. For example, some institutions have recruited veterans with serious brain injuries and emotional vulnerabilities without providing academic support and counseling; encouraged service members and veterans to take out costly institutional loans rather than encouraging them to
apply for Federal student loans first; engaged in misleading recruiting practices on military installations; and failed to disclose meaningful information that allows potential students to determine whether the institution has a good record of graduating service members, veterans, and their families and positioning them for success in the workforce. (para. 3)

Moreover, a GAO (2014) report stated 23% of veterans (15,200 veterans inferred nationally) noted “excessive” contacts from institutions seeking to recruit. The GAO (2014) report stated about 23% (16,500 veterans inferred nationally) of respondents noted receiving inaccurate information regarding estimated total student loan debt, suggesting veterans are perhaps misinformed in regard to the financial responsibilities of starting a postsecondary program. Therefore, individuals starting a support program for student veterans should be cognizant of the current executive and legislative awareness of deceptive marketing strategies and help their institutions avoid these harmful pitfalls.

Although there are not selectivity reports detailing which institutions accept what percentage of total veterans nationally, the GAO (2013a) reported outcomes vary across types of schools based upon the amount of VA funding received. The GAO (2013a) reported the distribution of VA education funds, noting “about 5 percent of schools (654 schools) received more than $3.8 billion in aggregate VA education payments used for tuition and fees in fiscal year 2011, over 60 percent of such funding” (para. 1). However, the GAO (2013a) report utilized data for the entire student population to estimate graduation rates, not specific graduation rates of student veterans. Still, the data divided schools by the amount of VA funding they received, which is useful to evaluate differences among public, nonprofit, and for-profit institutions receiving VA funding. The GAO (2013a) used regression analysis, reporting:

After controlling for differences in school and student characteristics, for-profit schools had lower retention rates compared to public and nonprofit schools.
However, for-profit schools had graduation rates that were higher than public schools and similar to nonprofit schools. (para. 3)

The GAO (2013a, 2014) and Obama (2012) reported recruiting strategies by postsecondary institutions that appear unethical and both socially and economically irresponsible. According to Obama (2012), postsecondary institutions enrolling and marketing to student veterans should have accurate information for student veterans; student veterans need information to select an institution that has a plan to support those who have returned from military service. Student veterans are at risk for enrolling in postsecondary institutions that do not have programs in place to assist not only with graduation, but also with visible and invisible disabilities (Obama, 2012). Therefore, institutions must be aware of the detrimental effects their recruiting strategies may have if they do not have programs in place to support student veterans with the full range of difficulties they may have that impact graduation.

In summary, twelve billion dollars were distributed to veteran education in 2013 (GAO, 2014) and almost all estimates of graduation rates fell below their civilian peers (NCES, 2014). Inconsistent information related to graduation rates, deceptive marketing strategies (Obama, 2012,) and the excessive amount of contacts veterans receive from postsecondary institutions reporting inaccurate information (GAO, 2014) appears to compound the risks veterans face when selecting a postsecondary institution that will support them. Moreover, postsecondary institutions have been enrolling veterans regardless of the quality of programs in place to assist with graduation.

Institutions that do not have programs to support student veterans may be contributing to a socioeconomic toll that has the potential to harm veterans and their families by not having mechanisms in place that promote responsible use of government
funds allocated to support veterans in higher education. Individuals who are seeking to garner support for the creation of a program on their campus to assist student veterans must be aware of these issues and use such foundational knowledge to help garner support by explaining why an institution-specific program is needed.

Literature related to student veteran experience and identity can assist institutions with understanding how to provide support programs. A review of student veteran literature is both helpful and required because graduation rates control for individual characteristics such as student veteran identity. Moreover, it is unclear why or what factors lead different types of institutions to achieve different outcomes or whether aspects of individual veteran identity were confounding variables in measures of graduation rates (e.g., did the veterans in the sample have accurate representations of rates of TBI, PTSD, or depression that are reported on campuses nationwide?). Overall, an evaluation of the literature on student veterans is needed to aid in understanding the variables that may strengthen or weaken the ability of student veterans to succeed.

**Evaluating Research on Student Veterans**

Empirical data can greatly aid institutions in understanding issues student veterans face on campuses; however, there is scant research in this area, and quantitative designs focusing on student veterans are lacking. There are not “true” experimental designs that include random selection and random assignment (Keppel, 1991) due to both ethical reasons and the difficulty researchers have expressed related to recruiting participants that are not convenience based. Additionally, quasi-experimental designs have mainly focused on northern, mid-western states (Whiteman et al., 2013), which are not as demographically diverse as other regions of the United States. These studies have relied
upon voluntary participation using web-based surveys and self-report data, which is subject to self-selection bias. Of the limited quasi-experimental studies, one is longitudinal (Whiteman, Barry, Mroczek, & MacDermid Wadsworth, 2013), while the remaining studies appear to be limited by cross-sectional design. Most quasi-experimental design studies come from the field of research-based psychology and focus on emotional adjustment, psychological distress, PTSD, suicide risk, and health-related behaviors of student veterans.

Importantly, institutions can better assist veterans by understanding their experience. The predominant bulk of literature on student veterans has come from phenomenological reports of student veteran experience in postsecondary institutions. Moreover, these reports are cross-sectional and do not explore whether veterans reported a reduction or increase in difficulty during subsequent times of their academic experience. Regardless of the limitations, literature describing the experience of student veterans is important because it can unearth convergent and recurring themes that may contribute to difficulties related to college success. Individuals can use this information to better understand the intersection of veteran identity with academic settings, common difficulties that may result, and generate programs that address these issues for veterans on their campus.

Postsecondary Institutions Understanding Military Service

Difficulties related to college success for student veterans can be compounded by veterans’ unique social identities and exposure to stressors during military service. According to the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (2014), many veterans joined the military following high school to achieve financial
benefits to attend college who would have been otherwise unable to afford the high cost of tuition. Student veterans attempting to achieve their academic goals have reported personal attributes, including a variety of challenges, related to their military experience that postsecondary institutions must be aware of to provide effective, focused support (DiRamio et al., 2008; O’Herrin, 2011; Rumann & Hamrick, 2010).

Specific factors associated with military service appear to place veterans at risk on campuses. Misunderstandings about military culture from faculty and administration (O’Herrin, 2011) can result in microaggressions, including perceived classism (Wurster, Rinaldi, Woods, & Ming Liu, 2013). Student veterans also have overlapping risk factors that have been identified in other non-traditional students: family obligations, age related variables, and lack of identification with other students that may result in peer isolation (O’Herrin, 2011; Whiteman et al., 2013). Following war zone deployment, student veterans have reported posttraumatic sequelae such as feeling easily startled, angry, and hypervigilance (Rumann & Hammrick, 2010).

Modern medical advancements have assisted with the identification of both visible and invisible wounds such as traumatic brain injuries that continue to impact veterans following their departure from the military (Glantz, 2009; Tanielian & Jaycox, 2008). Service members are also victims of sexual assault at a rate far higher than the frequency in the civilian population (Brown, 2013; Glantz, 2009). The amount of men who are sexually assaulted in the military outnumber that of women due to the majority of service members being male; however, males are less likely to report the crime due to stigma related to masculinity (Brown, 2013). Women are less likely than men to disclose their veteran status on campus resulting in an inability to access resources (American
Council on Education [ACE], 2014). In general, student veterans are likely to be unidentifiable unless they disclose that they have been in the military (ACE, 2014).

Student veterans have noted feeling more mature than non-veteran students, including having an understanding of what is important to them in their lives and an ability to organize priorities after witnessing death and continued hardships while being deployed to war zones (Rumann & Hamrick, 2010). They have reported appreciation of cultural diversity and awareness of the importance of culture (DiRamio et al., 2008; Rumann & Hamrick, 2010), which suggests their experiences outside the United States have impacted their understanding of cultural diversity on campuses. Given these actual and perceived differences from the general campus populations, student veterans report preferring relationships with other student veterans and not initially identifying with other students (O’Herrin, 2011; Rumann & Hammrick, 2010). Additionally, student veterans have described creating relationships with civilian students, then having to end friendships when recalled for deployment (Rumann & Hammrick, 2010).

**Sociocultural Considerations**

Acknowledgement of veteran culture and how this relates to additional components of student identity is essential to providing culturally competent services to support graduation. All veterans are not the same. Addressing student veterans as a homogenous community on campus neglects the unique and rich diversity within this population. Furthermore, the label of “community” can conceal inequalities and disparity within groups (Shaw, 2008); therefore, programs should use caution when homogenizing participants (Taylor, 2003). Despite the nuances and diversity within the veteran community, student veterans have reported misunderstandings from faculty and
administration about even the most basic aspects of military culture (Griffin & Gilbert, 2012; O’Herrin, 2011). When the academic cultures in which student veterans are engaged lack basic understanding of military culture, there will be no appreciation of the differences of needs within the student veteran population.

The National Survey of Student Engagement ([NSSE], 2010) reported student veterans consist of a majority of first generation college students (66% of combat veterans), a population that has consistently been identified to have difficulties related to navigating bureaucratic paperwork required for college admittance and for sustained enrollment beyond the first year; being academically prepared to enter and succeed in college; and the ability to draw upon their parents’ experiences for college success (Durdella & Kim, 2012; Engle, 2007; Wurster et al., 2013). The GAO (2013a) reported for-profit and highly funded (receiving from 2–113 million in VA benefits in fiscal year 2011–2012) schools “enrolled a higher percentage of low-income and minority students than public or nonprofit schools.”

Wurster et al. (2013) discussed issues related to social class and classism that student veterans may face on campus. Wurster et al. utilized the Social Class Worldview Model (SCWM-R) (Liu, 2011) to evaluate how social class has shaped the worldviews of student veterans and how classism affects student veterans in postsecondary settings. The four components of classism within the SCWM-R are: downward, upward, lateral, and internalized. According to these researchers, the intersecting identity of veterans, including their first-generation status, could leave them vulnerable to depression and anxiety. Additionally, “Students from wealthier backgrounds might be denigrating because of the social class stigma surrounding veterans, and returning veterans might feel
their social class being negatively judged by peers who have not served or who are not first-generation college students” (Wurster et al., 2013, p. 132).

Gender is a key component of veteran identity, and women may be more negatively impacted by their military service than men. DiRamio et al. (2008) discussed subthemes that occurred during their collected interview data from women student veterans, stating all women (N = 6) in their study reported financial strain, several were single mothers, and one reported present mistrust and anger towards others on campus due to sexual harassment and constant fear of sexual assault during her time in the military.

Health Concerns

Many studies have focused on the mental health concerns of student veterans, focusing on PTSD (Barry, Whiteman, MacDermid-Wadsworth, & Hitt, 2012; Ellison et al., 2012); suicide risk (Rudd et al., 2011); and general health-related behaviors (Whiteman et al., 2013). Whiteman et al. (2013) stated:

One of the primary features characterizing the student service member/veteran literature is a lack of data-based (especially quantitative) investigations. In other words, there is currently a dearth of scholarly literature illuminating the health-related (behavioral, mental, social) factors influencing student service members’/veterans’ adjustment to higher education. (p. 265)

Widome, Laska, Gulden, Fu, and Lust (2011) utilized an online-survey to evaluate health risk behaviors of student veterans. Widome et al. conducted Poisson regression to calculate adjusted relative risks of health behaviors. They measured tobacco use, alcohol use, illicit drug use, safety behaviors, and exercise behaviors reported by 1,901 self-identified military veterans. Although student veterans reported smoking more cigarettes and using more smokeless tobacco products than their peers, more veterans reported that
they are seriously trying to quit smoking compared to nonveterans. Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) veterans reported more high-risk drinking behaviors and were more likely to have been in a physical fight in the past 12 months. In addition, OEF/OIF veterans completed less vigorous exercise activity or strengthening exercises than nonveterans. Widome et al. suggested colleges could both promote health related behaviors and create partnerships with the VA to assist in preventative efforts to reduce future health problems for veterans.

Differing from Widome et al. (2011), Barry et al. (2012) reported, “veterans/student service members drank similarly to younger, civilian students” (p. 415); however, Barry et al. (2012) reported binge drinking was associated with PSTD and symptoms of depression and anxiety for veterans/student service members. Barry et al.’s (2012) cross-sectional design does not explain causality or patterns of drinking, and it is unclear if drinking is used to cope with past military experiences or for other challenges such as difficulties within postsecondary education. Barry, Whiteman, and MacDermid-Wadsworth (2012) reported student veterans who were exposed to combat had greater posttraumatic stress (PTS) symptoms, which were found to be associated with problem drinking and appeared to be in support of the self-medication theory of alcohol use. Barry et al. (2012) stated it is “paramount for college health professionals to ensure that combat-exposed student service members are both screened and monitored for alcohol misuse and associated consequences” (p. 570).

Rudd et al. (2011) discussed the results of the first national study aimed at evaluating psychological distress, emotional adjustment, and suicide risk of student veterans. The National Center for Veterans Studies (NCVS) at the University of Utah
partnered with the Student Veterans of America (SVA) to distribute surveys to their chapter campuses. The NCVS created a 34-item survey based upon items from six selected clinical instruments and reported the psychometric properties of each measure. A geographically diverse sample of 525 participants completed most items of the survey. Within the sample who completed items assessing suicide, 46% ($N = 441$) reported they have experienced suicidal thoughts, 20% reported suicidal thinking with a plan, 10.4% reported suicidal thinking on a frequent basis, 7.7% made a previous suicide attempt, and 3.8% rated likelihood of suicide likely or very likely. Within the sample of participants who completed items assessing psychological distress, 46% ($N = 439$) reported they experienced severe anxiety, 45.6% ($N = 425$) reported significant symptoms of PTSD, 23.7% ($N = 434$) experienced severe depression, and 58% ($N = 420$) reported being exposed to combat.

Rudd et al. (2011) stated the rates of suicidal ideation, plan, and attempts is alarming compared to both nonveteran and veterans at VA clinical facilities (Jakupcak et al., 2010). Rudd et al. (2011) suggested programs to target the alarming rates and risks. They suggested training for all who work with veterans on campuses and not just mental health practitioners at counseling centers. Trainings should include:

- recognizing the unique experiences and needs of student veterans, engaging student veterans, warning signs (including PTSD, depression, substance use, and suicidality), understanding the nature of clinical problems, and responding in a caring and effective manner that facilitates the transition to clinical care if needed. (Rudd et al., 2011, p. 6)

Rudd et al. also suggested screening student veterans for risk early in their arrival to campus and recommended partnerships with the VA. In addition they suggested training in veteran specific suicide risk screening and in effective treatments for combat related
PTSD. Once student veterans are on campus their engagement, that is, the types and quality of interactions with faculty, staff, and students, becomes important.

**Campus Engagement**

Campus engagement is not only the time spent in classroom activities, but also extra-curricular involvement with peers, faculty, and administration leading to social visibility. Campus engagement includes emotional investment related to feeling a sense of belonging and personal identification with a community that shares the value of learning.

According to the National Survey of Student Engagement (2010), student veterans perceived lower levels of campus support than nonveterans. The national survey included 362,000 first-year students and seniors across 564 U.S. colleges and institutions. Student veterans reported less interaction with faculty than nonveterans; however, student veterans also reported spending the same amount of time studying as their nonveteran peers, even though they spent twice the amount of time working and six times the amount of caring for family members per week. These responses are alarming considering campus engagement has been shown to contribute to success in college (Pascarella, Pierson, Wolniak, & Terenzini, 2004). The NSSE study highlighted how important engagement with faculty is for veterans. Exploring the reports of faculty member’s beliefs about military service further adds support for incorporating faculty-veteran connections within any program dedicated to assisting student veterans.

Barnard-Brak, Bagby, Jones, and Sulak (2011) evaluated online, self-reports of faculty regarding their beliefs about military service, the OIF/OEF wars, and their ability to effectively work with student veterans that may have a PTSD diagnosis. Barnard-Brak
et al. utilized structural equation modeling, including providing descriptive survey responses of faculty ($N = 596$) “to examine if faculty self-efficacy to work with returning student-veterans with symptoms of PTSD may be considered moderated” (2011, p. 32). Barnard-Brak et al. reported associations between faculty perceptions of military affairs and their beliefs of being effective teachers for returning student veterans. Importantly, a standardized path coefficient of $-0.255 (p < .001)$ indicated an inverse relationship, indicating faculty members who had negative feelings about military service felt less self-efficacious regarding their ability to work with and teach veterans with PTSD. Combined with the high rates of student veterans reporting psychological distress (Rudd et al., 2011) and lack of engagement on campus (NSSE, 2010), it appears student veterans in courses with faculty members who have negative feelings about military service are facing difficult odds related to achieving a passing grade. Therefore, programs should make an attempt to provide cultural competency training to faculty members that explicitly acknowledges this data and helps faculty members examine their biases.

Faculty perceptions of student veterans appears to be an important variable due to reports that engagement on campus (including with faculty) bolstered graduation rates for non-traditional, first generation college students (Pascarella et al., 2004). Additionally, Wurster et al. (2013) noted faculty could use their privilege to demonstrate direct support of student veterans. These authors described privilege as a class-based, hierarchical, social value granted to faculty members due to their position. Student veterans who are themselves first-generation college students and possibly exploring liberal values and ideals in the context of higher education may begin to understand a discrepancy between their identity while in the military service and their shifting identity that is incorporating
the social and class value that higher education grants in the United States. During this process, student veterans are at times acutely aware of the discrepancy in upbringing and social class as a result of privilege that allows some members of our society to obtain education without entering military service. Faculty members may serve as a buffer that supports student veterans who are both exploring their newfound identity in the context of higher education and adjusting to the privilege higher education confers.

Faculty are considered esteemed members of an educational community with the power to accept or deny the unique contributions student veterans bring to the context of higher education. By the very nature of their position and role, faculty members are a symbol of the institution of higher education and the privilege granted to those of the educated class. Not only are faculty members educated, they occupy a social position that society acknowledges as the person responsible to deem, or not deem, a student worthy of receiving a passing grade leading to the receipt of a degree. Therefore, faculty members have the ability to use their positional privilege to act as bridge-builders in a validating way by reaching out to veterans, encouraging campus engagement, and both accept and honor differences in individual history. However, this does not mean faculty members must shift their personal values and beliefs related to the merits of war or military service; instead, academic standards and efforts to include veterans in campus activities must be examined for bias.

Bellafiore (2012) demonstrated how faculty could engage with student veterans in projects that increase student veteran visibility, voice, and campus engagement even if faculty have opposing or dissimilar views on the merits of military service and war. Because direct engagement by faculty with students contributes to college success
(Pascarella et al., 2004), faculty members must find a way to engage with veterans on campus in a way that is true to their beliefs, yet still does not silence or deny the differences in experiences that veterans have had. Bellafiore developed a mixed-media sound installation on campus where veterans reflected upon their military experience through voice recordings. Students and staff could listen to the recordings, which allowed veterans to have their military experience listened to. Bellafiore’s project not only engaged veterans and highlighted their voice on campus, it was also true to her personal values.

Due to the lack of engagement on campuses by student veterans (NSSE, 2010), postsecondary institutions must find a way to increase engagement. Although it is unclear to what extent faculty should engage with veterans to maximize the effectiveness of a program to help student veterans graduate, it is clear there are crucial periods that faculty could reach out to veterans to form connections. The next section covers transitions for veterans, which appears to be an excellent time for faculty and advisors to check-in with student veterans to see how their transition is progressing. Faculty and/or support staff should be aware of campus and community resources to assist veterans; training programs and resource packets could be designed to give faculty and staff members the tools to assist. Overall, engagement between faculty members and student veterans is needed to help assist student veterans with graduation.

**Transitions**

Rumann and Hamrick (2010) explored the transition experiences of student veterans. Due to the dearth of literature on this topic, the authors explicitly evaluated the transition experience of student veterans who had previous college experience and were
re-enrolling after deployment to a war zone. Rumann and Hamrick highlighted how educators and administrators frequently do not understand the complicated ordeal of Guard and Reserve troops who become activated, leave college, and return following war zone deployment.

Rumann and Hamrick (2010) utilized phenomenological methods, conducted semi-structured interviews, and engaged in document analysis of archived campus newspapers from 2001 - 2008 at a Midwest University with approximately 25,000 students. Five men and one woman were selected using purposeful and referral sampling to add qualitative data to their research. Thematic analysis of interview data were validated by respondents and revealed four themes: role incongruities of student and service member; maturity level compared to peers; developing relationships only to have them cease once deployed; and identity redefinitions as a result of knowledge gained from higher education and wartime experience. Rumann and Hamrick noted limitations in terms of generalizability, yet suggested campuses can assist transitioning student veterans in these four thematic areas.

According to Rumann and Hamrick (2010), programs can be established on campuses that assist in the transition of Guard and Reserve members. The researchers highlighted how dividing student-related and military-related resources on campus can contribute to a “segmented sense of self,” for student veterans who “may be negotiating identities that honor and draw on all aspects of their lives” (p. 455). The authors also advised against duplicating resources for student veterans that already exist in the community, instead recommending partnerships between colleges and stakeholders who are experts in the rapidly changing requirements of education benefits that can be
difficult to interpret by both student veterans and college administrators. The authors suggested skilled referrals to organizations and community resources for student veterans who are re-enrolling following war zone deployment.

Rumann and Hamrick’s (2010) recommendations are especially significant for postsecondary institutions. Their recommendations should help those implementing a program realize that they do not need to provide all the resources for veterans on their campus. Instead, campuses may create partnerships with high quality, vetted resources already existing in the community. This may be very helpful for smaller institutions in cities that have high quality resources for veterans; more rural institutions may need to provide more resources on campus to make their programs effective. Campuses can complete a stakeholder analysis (described in methodology section) to identify existing resources in their area prior to duplicating efforts that have already been created to assist veterans.

Additional studies have highlighted how institutions can implement comprehensive, multi-level, programs to assist veterans. DiRamio et al. (2008) conducted a study that recommended collaborative, holistic support services for transitions. They interviewed 25 student veterans who served in Iraq or Afghanistan from three geographically diverse colleges to evaluate their transition experience into postsecondary institutions. Six women and 19 men, aged 20–34, 11 who were members of Reserves or Guard, were interviewed. Participants on Active Duty were excluded from the study to control for students receiving full military pay and benefits. DiRamio et al. utilized pattern coding to analyze themes in the data and suggested a holistic program approach for student veterans to aid transition. Their work indicated that the entering student
veteran must first be voluntarily identified. Institutions can increase veteran identification by demonstrating the benefits student veterans receive if they disclose. A simple registry should be created to store the list of student veteran contacts on campus. Student veterans can then be paired with a mentor who serves as a transition coach. Student veterans’ advisors need to be familiar with veteran education policies, benefits, and resources. DiRamio et al.’s holistic program included an orientation for student veterans who are then provided with resources and knowledge from financial aid; mental health counseling services; student organization services; disability support services; academic advising; faculty; and institutional research. The delivery of comprehensive programs suggested by DiRamio et al. requires multi-level, systemic involvement and support, which may exceed what some institutions can provide; however, campuses should strive to implement as many recommendations as they can.

Strengths of DiRamio et al.’s (2008) holistic model included collaborative stakeholder involvement. Their recommendations to involve multiple support services for veterans on campus would be greatly beneficial due to the inclusion and participatory nature of bringing multiple stakeholders together, which has been shown to be an effective method of achieving program success (Taylor, 2008). While they provided a helpful list of what would be best to provide student veterans in transition, DiRamio et al. lacked explaining the “how” to provide this support and “how” each area would collaborate to deliver services and share best practices. Instead, the authors were solely relying upon previous research and the generalization of interview data from three institutions to form a universal, holistic model. Additionally, another weakness is that the creation of the holistic model did not include the voice of student veterans in shaping its
inception, which may alter the type of program within each institutional setting and direct involvement of the population that programs are attempting to assist can enhance the effectiveness (Taylor, 2008).

Overall, DiRamio et al. (2008) provided an excellent starting point for those considering a participatory program to support student veteran graduation. The “how” that was lacking in their work may be enhanced by literature recommendations related to creating peer-support and mentorship programs that can bolster transition services.

**Mentorship, Peer Support, and Social Isolation**

Advocates for programs targeting veterans highlight the need to incorporate mentorship programs into postsecondary institutions (AACRO, 2014; ACE, 2014). For example, the AACRO (2014) discussed a program being implemented at Western Michigan University that connects student veterans to faculty veterans, suggesting benefits related to shared veteran identity and academic mentorship. ACE (2014) developed a program titled, “Severely Injured Military Veterans: Fulfilling Their Dream” and articulated how a mentor could help wounded veterans make informed decisions, navigate support services, and get through the difficult processes (e.g., paperwork such as VA forms) required to start their postsecondary education.

Evaluating the benefits of peer emotional support adds important data for postsecondary institutions to consider. Peer emotional support differs from a mentorship relationship in that it involves connecting with other students through daily interactions such as the development of supporting friendships, which could include relationships with other student veterans. Although literature (AACRO, 2014) has touted the benefits of peer connection with other students including veterans, longitudinal data has revealed
that this may not be enough support to reduce psychological distress experienced by student veterans (Whiteman et al., 2013).

In one of the more rigorous study designs created to evaluate student veteran experiences on campus, Whiteman et al. (2013) collected three waves of longitudinal data over three semesters using an online survey. The authors measured domains such as perceived emotional support from college peers, mental health, alcohol use, and academic functioning at Time 1, 2, and 3 by using an online survey. Measures included the Brief Symptom Inventory (to measure depression, anxiety, and general somatic complaints), the Friend Subscale of the Perceived Social Support Inventory, one question assessing alcohol use, reported GPA, academic motivation, educational self-efficacy, academic persistence decisions. Time 1 data collection included “199 (154 male, 45 female) student service members/veterans and 181 (81 male, 100 female) civilian students” (p. 268), representing a 70% completion rate of those who initially replied to the invitation to participate; 62% completed all three longitudinal waves of measurement.

Whiteman et al. (2013) noted Time 1 results indicate service members/veterans do not receive the same amount of emotional support from peers as civilian students. Specifically, although service members/veterans reported the same increase in emotional support from peers as civilian students measured from Time 1 to Time 3, they did not attain the same level of emotional support as their peers overall due to the initial deficits at Time 1. Emotional support was reported as a protective factor against mental health difficulties, however discrepant data was noted between civilians and service members/veterans regarding the protectiveness of emotional support. Although service members/veterans reported increases in emotional support from peers from Time 1 to 3,
they did not report a decrease in psychological distress over the duration of the study, which civilian peers claimed. Therefore, veterans differed from their civilian student peers, and appear to require more than peer support to reduce psychological distress.

Importantly, these results indicated inconsistencies with the previous literature reporting peer support decreases psychological distress for student veterans. In this study, emotional support was focused exclusively on that received from university peers, so it is likely student veterans may not receive the same level of emotional support at home, considering student veterans may be occupying a caretaking role when spending six-times as much time on dependent care than nonveteran students (NSSE, 2010). Whiteman et al. (2013) stated:

Institutions of higher education and counseling professionals, therefore, should take note that lower levels of received emotional support among student service members/veterans are both real and consequential. Because the psychological symptoms among student service members/veterans were not as responsive to peer emotional support as civilian students, campus counseling centers may be faced with the task of dealing with veteran-specific experiences that may occur before and during college. (p. 274)

Counseling centers may play an increasing role in the reduction of psychological distress reported by student veterans. However, Whiteman et al. discussed how both the military health system and college campus lack resources and preparedness to effectively treat the unique psychological difficulties of veterans. Limitations of their research include reliance on self-report data, lack of random sampling, and use of data gleaned within one midwestern state. Additionally, the design of the study did not determine increasing emotional support helped with transitions and adjustment. However, it was clear “increases in emotional support from peers were associated with little change in
psychological distress among student service members/veterans” (Whiteman et al., 2013, p. 274).

As the only identified longitudinal, quantitative study focusing on student veterans, Whiteman et al. (2013) added important data to qualitative studies stating student veterans find relationships with other veterans to be supportive (O’Herrin, 2011). Therefore, although qualitative data has suggested relationships with other student veterans are helpful, Whiteman et al. reported emotional support from peers did not result in a significant decrease in psychological distress. They specifically stated, “results from this investigation suggest that emotional support from peers may be insufficient to buffer against the psychological problems prevalent among student service members/veterans” (p. 274). These results suggest further research is needed and counseling services could play an increasing role in reducing psychological distress reported by student veterans. Programs could focus on connecting incoming student veterans with other student veterans to reduce isolation and increase emotional support, which may be more effective if programs incorporate a referral process to counseling services to assist with reducing psychological distress.

**Collective Purpose Towards Cross-Sector Collaboration**

Armstrong et al. (2015) highlighted the need for coordinated services directed towards military veterans and their families. Their comprehensive report incorporated empirical research to create a strong case for providing holistic services that draw from the community of services offered to veterans, which directly applies to higher education settings that may be working with multiple internal and external organizations. They noted there are many services, organizations, and funding allotted for the care of
veterans, yet veterans still fall behind on key measures of health and quality of life. The important conclusion Armstrong et al. draw from their research is the difficulties veterans are facing are not due to a lack of effort on the part of stakeholders, “but a lack of collaboration, coordination, and collective purpose” (p. 3). The authors astutely point out that therein lies the opportunity for stakeholders: to gather together, combine resources, and direct collective efforts from resources to support veterans.

Armstrong et al. (2015) described the importance of coordination and collective impact. The authors illustrated how coordination can become especially salient as veterans sift through multiple services and transitions in their life stating:

you enter Organization A and you’re in search of job training, it turns out that Organization A is focused on mental health services, but Organization B across the street has job training. And how can we ensure that Organization A shifts that veteran over to Organization B in a fluid way? That requires a sense of collective purpose. And it also requires a sense of actually knowing what organization B is all about and what their processes are, even at a very high level. (p. 4)

Armstrong et al. (2015) summarized literature on collective impact and described five requirements to facilitate and improve cross-sector coordination. Requirements included shared commitment toward a common goal; establishment of measurement systems such as metrics to evaluate progress, success, accountability, long-term impact; organizations that are symbiotic, mutually reinforcing, and share information in a streamlined process; sufficient communication between organizations that build trust; and centralized organization that acts as the hub to maintain overall operation termed a “backbone organization” (p. 12).

Armstrong et al.’s (2015) research is not only generalizable to the multiple offices and organizations (or what the authors call sectors) available to postsecondary institutions, but it also describes a case example demonstrating how to create collective
impact towards common goals. Their high-quality research and case example is applicable to postsecondary institutions who bring together external stakeholders not part of the college campus who can still fit with the “collective purpose” (Armstrong et al., 2015, p. 3). However, the authors’ recommendations could be improved upon by including veterans in a participatory manner, allowing their voice to shape the services being provided rather than what outside agencies believe veterans need. Overall, Armstrong et al.’s research is an essential read for postsecondary institutions looking to increase coordination and facilitate a shared purpose.

In addition to Armstrong et al.’s (2015) recommendations, it is important to acknowledge organizations are often competing for similar grants, similar budgets, and scarce resources within communities. Consolidation and avoiding duplication of efforts may present a threat to individuals who could be without a position within their organization following consolidation. Consolidating any organization or community may have the positive result of eliminating duplication of efforts; however, there are individual positions and entire non-profits that may be providing the same services to veterans because the military industrial complex is not exclusive to defense contracts, and economic operations that support and maintain war. There are also secondary organizations, such as non-profits, that only exist because war has occurred. Efforts to consolidate these organizations based on attempts to make support services more efficient, or to share common goals, may present a direct threat to these organizations. Therefore, when postsecondary institutions are selecting external stakeholder partnerships, they must be cognizant of the possibility of support organizations competing for the same funds or providing the same services, which requires a careful
selection of cross-sector partnerships that are not antithetical to common goals as Armstrong et al. (2015) suggested.

**50 Best Practices: VTSC (2013) Comprehensive Survey Results**

The Veterans Training Support Center (2013) of Lynnwood, Washington provided a comprehensive survey to garner best practices of postsecondary institutions in King County, also reviewing practices of selected campuses across the nation. Results generated an extremely useful, organized list of 50 best practices institutions can implement to support veterans on campus. This is an essential list for program developers and best practices are included in the core and supplemental program section. Select best practices include welcoming veterans on campus, creating a veteran’s advisory committee, tracking veteran-specific data to help develop programs, cultural competency training for staff/faculty that includes learning about invisible wounds of war, and conducting annual focus groups (VTSC, 2013).

**Summary of Literature Review: From Literature to Program Development**

Although the literature appears to be deficit based, each of the issues identified within the literature represent opportunities for postsecondary institutions to implement programs to address difficulties student veterans face. The Student Veterans’ Support Committee can select literature-based programs to support student veterans, and examples of how to do this are provided in later sections of this dissertation. The next section reviews existing programs that are available to assist student veterans, which will also be incorporated into the development of core and supplemental programs.
Review of Student Veteran Programs

The following section reviews programs that have been designed for student veterans. Each of these programs adds to the literature base for core and supplemental programs. Additionally, the brief review of existing programs provides campuses with ideas that address the difficulties that were discussed within the literature and theoretical review in the previous sections. Review of existing programs provides campuses with options to address the difficulties discussed within the literature review in the previous section.

ACE and the Toolkit for Veteran Friendly Institutions

The American Council on Education (ACE) is the largest and most influential education entity in the United States (ACE, 2014). ACE operates in two main areas: advocacy and leadership. According to the ACE website, ACE addresses “the toughest higher education challenges, with a focus on improving access and preparing every student to succeed” (About the American Council on Higher Education section, para. 1). ACE provides numerous programs and initiatives to assist student veterans. During the early stages of the GI Bill, ACE (2008) released an issue brief titled “Serving Those Who Serve.” ACE detailed how institutions can be more “veteran friendly” and support student veterans. The recommendations were based upon a summit held at Georgetown University, where leaders within higher education representing over 200 campuses gathered to discuss innovative ways to support student veterans. Recommendations included listening to veterans, knowing your institutions strengths and weaknesses, developing strength based programs, providing information to veterans about their
education benefits, creating community partnerships, and a starting a student veterans group.

ACE (2014) also offers a free, online “toolkit for veteran friendly institutions.” The ACE (2014) toolkit is an online database and resource center designed to help institutions create effective programs to assist student veterans. According to the website the toolkit:

highlighted a variety of best practices including veterans-specific orientation offerings, on-campus veterans’ service centers, prospective student outreach efforts, faculty training, and counseling and psychological services for veteran students. It also includes video clips, profiles of student veterans programs across the U.S., and a searchable database of tools and resources. (ACE, 2014, para. 2)

ACE (2014) evaluated the term “veteran friendly” that is often used within postsecondary institutions, finding the term susceptible to being used as a recruitment or advertising strategy, with little consensus on what the term actually means. ACE suggested institutions define exactly what “veteran friendly” means in order to provide accurate information to prospective student veterans and stakeholders. ACE created the toolkit to partially serve as an accountability measure of what makes an institution “veteran friendly,” and to provide institutions with the resources and tools to establish a welcoming and supportive campus for veterans.

ACE (2014) offered postsecondary institutions resources they can utilize in the following seven domains: top-down support; central point of contact; funding; admission; readmission and transfer considerations; veteran-specific space; and tracking veterans. These areas were informed by a nationwide “Veterans Jam” (2010), which was an online, 72-hour event consisting of 2,877 registrants involved in sharing resources, discussion forums, and webinars. Over 50% of log-ins and 32% of posts came from college staff,
while 13% of log-ins and about 25% of posts came from veterans. ACE incorporated data from the Veteran Success Jam, which informed specific recommendations for institutions to address the aforementioned seven domains. Each domain has a separate webpage with direct suggestions and links to specific resources within the domain area. For example, the webpage titled tracking veterans includes information on how to compensate for the anonymity and difficulty of tracking student veterans by providing the incentive of offering early registration to those who disclose prior military service.

The ACE (2014) website allows members or affiliates of institutions to register and create a profile. Users can upload resources they have used within their institution to share with other users and the general public, which includes descriptions of programs to support student veterans. ACE utilized a search engine feature to allow users to filter through and evaluate other postsecondary institution’s resources, view submitted materials that other campuses use to support student veterans, and obtain contact information.

Institutions earn a badge when users share resources on the online database. The badge signifies that an institution is “veteran friendly.” However, ACE has not evaluated uploaded content to determine the quality or effectiveness of what institutions share or if an institution is, in fact, “veteran friendly,” which allows discrepancies between the quality of resources between institutions who have earned the same badge designation. For example, one college shared a newsletter and flier identifying a central point of contact, while Eastern Washington University shared multiple resources that appeared to be of high quality.
Users can track their progress of implementing suggestions within the ACE toolkit; however, users are not required to upload more than one resource and resources are not evaluated for quality. Users are not required to explain how their uploaded resources have affected veterans and other stakeholders on campus. Therefore, it is unclear if ACE has limited institutions from using the term “veteran friendly” as a recruitment strategy. ACE did not provide a specific methodology to implement suggestions within the seven domains and also did not provide a specific methodology on how to achieve sustainable, participatory, or collaborative efforts between stakeholders. Overall, the ACE website and toolkit provide current resources, shared information, and directive, specific advice for institutions to create programs for student veterans; however, the ACE toolkit lacks the delivery of implementing recommendations within each domain and intentionally does not evaluate the quality of shared resources.

SERV Program

According to the Supportive Education for the Returning Veteran (SERV, 2014) website, SERV is a “program designed to assist in creating a more veteran friendly college campus environment for our returning OEF-OIF service-members” (Who is the SERV Program section, para. 1). SERV first started at Cleveland State University in 2007 as a cohort based program and has expanded to additional campuses. Student veterans can opt-in the program and join a cohort model restricted to veterans. Entry-level courses are offered exclusively to student veterans. The cohort model was designed to offer a supportive environment where military members can connect as they share both past and current experiences.
O’Herrin (2011) reviewed the SERV program concluding isolation from non-veteran students is not the intent of the courses. O’Herrin acknowledged student veterans have reported frustrations with other students due to differences in identity such as age and life experience. O’Herrin reported student veterans have found it beneficial to be in courses restricted to veterans and have found relationships with other student veterans to be helpful.

Student veterans transition out of the SERV program and into courses with other students upon completion. The SERV model can monitor success in two ways. First, student veterans complete the entry-level college courses with veteran peers in a supportive environment. Second, student veterans must transition out of the cohort model to continue their academic coursework successfully. A major strength of the SERV model is its capacity to acclimate student veterans to an academic environment at a reduced speed. Student veterans can share a classroom in a new setting that differs greatly from the military, while still having the opportunity to connect with their peers who share similar experiences. This acts as a halfway point, or step, towards a complete transition that may reduce the difficulties veterans report in adjusting to postsecondary education (Rumann & Hamrick, 2010).

**Operation Promise for Service Members**

According to the Operation Promise for Servicemembers ([OPS], 2014) website:

The mission of Operation College Promise (OCP) is to support veterans and service members transition into higher education; assist higher educators in developing appropriate on-campus mechanisms to optimize success in degree attainment; and collaborate with entities nationally in the development of evaluation instruments to document veterans’ student progress toward degree completion and employment. (para. 1)
OPS created two unique training components for service providers working with veterans: the OCP Field Guide and the Certificate for Veterans' Service Providers (CVSP).

OPS conducts a Certificate for Veterans' Service Providers (CVSP) training curriculum. The CVSP training curriculum contains seven modules: 1. Military 101: A primer on Military Culture; 2. What’s New, What to Expect - An update on the Status of the Post 9/11 GI Bill; 3. Serving My Country - A Student Veterans Panel; 4. Cracking the Code of Military Credit and Experience Transfer; 5. Invisible Injuries of Contemporary Warfare; 6. Resources for Veterans in Transition; 7. Promising Practices in Veteran Support Services: A National Perspective. The seven-module program is conducted over a three-day period. The module curriculum is intended for helping veterans succeed in broad area of transitions and is not tailored specifically to each institution; instead, it is training for veteran service providers that can attend from any institution. According to the OPS website, team exercises are conducted as part of the training and modules are open to all postsecondary institutions.

Both the CVSP program and the OCP field guide are offered to educate veterans and service providers. Service provider is used as a broad term to convey those who are in an occupation or position to provide any service to veterans. Therefore, strengths of the program include inclusion of a wide range of service providers. The broad range of topics delivered in a short time period and a panel including student veterans are additional strengths.
The Soldiers Project: Adopt a College

The Soldiers Project [TSP] (2014) is a non-profit organization that offers a unique program to assist postsecondary institutions that includes advocacy for the mental health of veterans on campuses. According to the TSP website, their mission is to provide psychological services to veterans and their families. In addition, TSP provides services to military members who served on or after September 11, 2001. TSP also educates communities about how war impacts veterans psychologically and is staffed by mental health practitioners.

TSP (2014) created the Adopt a College program as a partnership between TSP and colleges. Colleges that partner with TSP receive consultation services and are educated regarding how to make their campus “Veteran Friendly.” TSP provides psychological services to faculty, staff, and veterans. Psychological services are provided to staff and faculty to reduce anxiety resulting from stereotypes and myths related to the behavior of combat veterans.

The Adopt a College partnership has many benefits. The Adopt a College partnership provides education, consultation, and psychological services to faculty and staff that are working with student veterans. The partnership also helps connect student veterans to psychological services external to both TSP and campus resources. TSP offers their services pro-bono to faculty, staff, and student veterans. The partnership also intervenes with multiple levels of the institution and not just student veterans, which may reduce the likelihood of the difficulties that veterans face in college being viewed as an individual problem. Instead, the Adopt a College partnership includes multiple personnel on campus as a way to support student veteran presence and support.
Another purpose of the Adopt a College partnership is to create “vet-friendly” campuses. The website does not operationally define “vet-friendly” or how it can be measured. Although the website reported demographic data, there was no data reported on how the program measures and tracks success. Overall, the strengths of the Adopt a College partnership are pro-bono services that attempt to create an environment that is supportive to veterans. TSP services appear to be an excellent resource for postsecondary institutions due to the pro-bono consultation and psychological services.

**From Combat to Campus: Voices of Student Veterans**

The next program reviewed highlights how faculty can engage with student veterans on campus despite having differing viewpoint on the merits of military service and war. Bellafiore (2012), an art professor, created a project to highlight the voice and experience of student veterans at Bridgewater State University. Bellafiore recorded interviews of 12 student veterans and interview data was displayed in an art exhibit. The art exhibit utilized headphones to project the interview data. Listeners sat in a campus lounge space. The headphones were exposed and the electronic equipment was concealed in student gear such as backpacks to retain the appearance of a natural student environment. Photos of the student veterans were posted at the exhibit. Bellafiore stated, “These photos were evidence of their invisibility on campus: they didn’t look like soldiers to me.”

Bellafiore (2012) noted the exhibit helped reduce the invisibility of veterans on campus and reduce social isolation. Bellafiore discussed how she was against war and conducted art exhibits in the past opposing war. However, Bellafiore noted the project helped her better understand the experience of veterans. Bellafiore discussed how her
views of war were challenged by the discussions of the veterans and that she gained respect for the ability to serve in the armed forces in dangerous circumstances. Bellafiore stated her “understanding comes with a deep sadness from hearing of the loss and damage done to these students because of war. These student veterans are no longer invisible to me” (para. 34).

Bellafoire’s (2012) project is important because it represents how faculty with opposing viewpoints on the merits of military service can partner with veterans to reduce social isolation and increase student engagement on campuses. The project connected faculty with student veterans to change the perceptions of what military service entails and the difficulties related to transitions. Bellafoire reflected on the project stating, “I think [veterans] felt less isolated on campus” (para. 29). She concluded, “These student veterans are no longer invisible to me” (para. 34). Bellafoire’s project demonstrated how faculty members could engage with student veterans in programs and listen to their experiences.

**Center for Deployment Psychology: UC4 Program**

The Center for Deployment Psychology [CDP] (2015) offers training specifically for counseling centers and the campus community that supports counseling centers. It is designed to be engaging and community oriented, while providing high quality training to the counseling center and campus community. The program is a full-day training that universities can register for via an online submission form. The program seeks to add competence to clinical practice for various mental health clinicians and support staff who are associated with counseling centers. Non-clinical support staff, such as residence life staff, disability support services, and the registrar’s office can also attend.
The curriculum of the one-day training includes evaluation of evidence-based clinical practices for the treatment of veteran difficulties combined with the delivery of culturally competent services. Topics contained within the curriculum include the culture and experience of veterans, the effects of a deployment cycle on student veterans, reintegration difficulties, overview of treatments for PTSD, and culturally competent clinical interventions. Learning objectives are listed on the webpage and include recommendations for effective outreach services, recognizing common clinical presentations of veterans attending counseling centers, and understanding difficulties veterans often face on campus.

The UC4 program is a high-quality resource not only for college counseling centers, but also support staff because it addresses multiple areas veterans can experience difficulty with, and brings together stakeholders from various organizations on campus to support veterans. Additional strengths include the easy registration process for counseling centers and the affiliations and connections the Center for Deployment Health has with military bases, and the training staff’s experience with military. The portability of the program and delivery represent quick ways for college counseling centers to become up to date on highly vetted, evidence-based practices, and common presentations and themes that student veterans may present to college counseling centers with. The website also offers a CEU, self-paced online course, titled “Military Culture: Core Competencies for Healthcare Professionals” that individuals can take prior to the one-day training.

Weaknesses of the program include the requirement to have at least 35 mental health care providers on-site to conduct the program; however, the website states the staff works with smaller institutions and allows health care professionals in the area to
collaborate in order to reach the minimum number, which could include interns and providers the host site refers to. Host institutions will also be required to pay some of the associated costs, although the UC4 program is funded by the Center for Deployment Psychology. Overall, the program appears to be a promising opportunity due to focus on evidence based practice and bringing together multiple stakeholders on campus to provide a comprehensive one-day training. As a whole, the Center for Deployment Health represents a strong resource for postsecondary institutions, larger institutions may find it easier to host the training and smaller institutions can check the website, which allows smaller institutions to join a training at a host institute. The website also provides links to many trainings for evidence-based practices to assist college counseling centers with the training and education to provide culturally competent services.

**American Corporate Partners**

The American Corporate Partners [ACP] (2015) mission is to connect post-9/11 veterans with mentors from over 60 leading corporate companies such as IBM Technology, Coca-Cola, AT&T, Fidelity Investments, and Allstate. The ACP does not connect veterans directly to jobs; instead, it provides a long-term, network base and mentorships to assist veterans with the tools to successfully obtain jobs. ACP utilizes an application process to match mentees with mentors based on goodness-of-fit. Mentees are taught fundamental career development knowledge such as resume building, networking skills, and leadership skills.

It appears there is much variability regarding the content of each mentorship relationship as the mentors experience could vary greatly based upon what company they are from and what their experience has been. However, a prerequisite for mentors is they
are at least 35 years old and have been working in their field for at least eight years. The ACP mentoring program is also open to surviving spouses and spouses of severely injured service members, which represents a strength of the program due to its inclusiveness. Additional strengths include the possibility that veterans will be matched to high quality jobs due the assistance provided by mentors; the program would benefit from obtaining outcome data demonstrating whether or not employment is sustained over time.

**STARS for Student Veterans**

Services for Transfer And Re-entry Students (STARS) at the University of California Santa Cruz (UCSC, 2014) offers specific services dedicated to student veterans. According to the UCSC website, the re-entry program directly connects incoming student veterans with peer mentors. The STARS program targets transfer students whom by basis of their life experience are not considered freshman students. The program connects student veterans with peer mentors to assist in their transition process. The STARS program for veterans serves as an example of a component of a program that could be integrated that recognizes the unique identity of student veterans as heterogeneous compared to students entering their freshman year following high school. Strengths of the program include the recognition that veteran identity differs from traditional incoming freshman students, which informed the institution’s dedication to providing mentors to assist with transitions into the university.

**Student Veterans of America**

The Student Veterans of America (SVA, 2016) appears to be one of the highest quality advocacy organizations for student veterans based upon the support they provide
to enhance student veteran presence, leadership, and organization. The SVA provides grants for individual tuition, including grants to enhance and remodel veteran dedicated spaces on campuses such as lounges or centers. Additionally, the SVA provides weekend-long workshops at regional locations, partnering with companies such as Microsoft and Raytheon. Each year, the SVA holds a Leadership Institute where individual veterans can apply to attend, receive flight and lodging accommodations, and are provided trainings on how to establish a business plan and advocate for their student veteran organization. Regional workshops are also conducted throughout the year. The SVA also partners with Purdue’s Military Family Research Institute (MFRI), which has produced the highest quality research on student veteran issues. Overall, there are many strengths related to the numerous programs provided by the SVA and student veteran organizations on campus should become chapter affiliates of the SVA due to the high quality of resources provided and their dedication to advocacy.

**Summary of Program Review**

The previous section reviewed elements of programs that could be incorporated by postsecondary institutions. Components of these programs can be incorporated or partnerships with groups such as the SVA could assist administrators supporting student veterans on campus. The programs were reviewed to give postsecondary institutions ideas to create their own program using the PCD framework outlined in the methodology section. The five-phase implementation of PCD allows institutions to utilize the program literature as a stakeholder and eliminate duplication of efforts that already exist in the community or through partnerships. For example, aspects of the programs can be
synthesized to create a unique program on diverse campuses that may require only part of what one program entails.

In addition, each program reviewed addressed a number of concerns that were listed in the literature review section such as difficulties with transitions (STARS), psychological distress (TSP), and even engagement with faculty who have differing views on the merits of military service (From Combat to Classroom: Voices of Veterans). However, institutions utilizing this program will go above and beyond simply synthesizing the first two literature sections on student veteran difficulties and existing programs. Instead, institutions are provided core and supplemental programs to select from that are based upon the literature review, which are presented in the next section.
Identifying and Selecting Programs to Create the Main Program

To support student veterans, postsecondary institutions can select core and supplemental programs to build an overall, main program, which is implemented using the PCD cycle. The main program can consist of either a single core program or supplemental program listed in the following section. There are a total of nine core and nine supplemental programs offered as examples for institutions to select from, in any integrated combination, to meet their needs and match allotted resources. Institutions are provided programs as subjective examples and will most likely adapt these as needed to match their needs. The basis for providing options is to allow postsecondary institutions to do what they can for veterans no matter how small the initiative or scope. Importantly, additional supplemental programs can be identified by using a needs survey or focus group to ask veterans what type of support they need.

Both core and supplemental programs are subjectively based upon the literature review and fall into broad categories of engagement, tracking, screening, prevention, and resource provision. Overall, core programs are high impact, “high touch,” and will likely add the most value based upon literature support, while supplemental programs have less literature support, but can enhance the core programs to make them more effective because they are complementary to the core program literature.

Support for creating programs was listed throughout the literature review; this section lists “how to” integrate the literature review into specific programs by dividing the literature support into explicit examples of core and supplemental programs. The list of core and supplemental programs are not exhaustive; instead, they are designed to integrate themes to create literature-based support. Additional programs can be created,
and core and supplemental programs can be adjusted to meet the needs of student veterans that are identified with survey data and focus groups, which are detailed in future sections.

Importantly, there may be a variety of local programs and community resources that can be incorporated; therefore, the stakeholder analysis, situation analysis, and strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis are a crucial component of selecting what resources to provide, while avoiding duplication of services provided in the local community.

In summary, the two main ways to select programs are:

1. Selecting or adapting literature-based core and supplemental programs listed in the following section.

2. Conducting needs assessment by utilizing a survey or focus group asking veterans what support they need and creating an additional supplemental program.

The following section lists options for literature-based programs that the Student Veterans’ Support Committee can select. Additionally, the Student Veterans’ Support Committee will scan their local community during the stakeholder analysis to identify further programs or partnerships they can incorporate that may differ from this list. Ways to conduct stakeholder, situation, and SWOT analyses are presented to assist with community and resource scanning to identify further program options and to eliminate duplication of efforts. Ways to conduct focus groups and a survey example are provided to assist the Student Veterans’ Support Committee in developing a unique supplemental program that addressed the needs of veterans on their campus.
Postsecondary institutions can address the most commonly identified problems within the literature review by selecting core programs from the examples provided in the next section. Literature supporting program implementation is listed within the heading of each program, which can be referenced within the literature review to provide a quick reference.

**Core Programs**

Core programs were selected subjectively based upon the literature reviewed with the intention of hierarchically organizing programs in order to make the most impact; therefore, they should be selected over supplemental programs if resources become a limiting factor. Core programs are listed as examples and can be adapted and integrated by postsecondary institutions as needed. Each core program is listed as follows:

**Tracking program** (AACRAO, 2014; Briggs, 2012; Cate, 2013; McCann, 2014; Minnis & Hammond, 2014; NASPA, 2013; SVA, 2014; VTSC, 2013; Wood, 2012). Creating a tracking program to monitor graduation, retention, and college success is an essential way to gauge the effectiveness of initiatives for veterans. Tracking assists with not only monitoring how veterans are doing, but it can also be an essential communication tool to stakeholders for receiving grants or additional support. Monitoring the graduation rates of student veterans is deficient nationally and desegregated tracking data for veterans is greatly needed. It is essential to start tracking veterans or improve upon ways an institution may already be tracking veterans. For example, institutions can start with adding a checkbox on existing forms that gather demographic data (i.e., applications or creation of student identification). This initial step is a starting point for gathering data, but can be improved upon in many ways. Because
graduation is not the goal of every veteran, simply tracking graduation rates may not provide an accurate measure of student veteran success. A more comprehensive tracking system could include an exit survey administered to veterans asking questions such as reasons for discontinuing education. Response options for discontinuation could include achieving employment, rejoining the military, or exhausting GI Bill benefits. Exit surveys can provide important data that inform stop loss and allow for future programs to be dedicated to targeting veterans who may be leaving for similar reasons. Although the GI Bill is intended to provide veterans with degrees, it is not always used this way and postsecondary institutions can account for the many reasons veterans are no longer at their university. Institutions can also track reasons veterans entered their university by asking veterans during focus groups or administering surveys.

**Cultural competency program (ACE, 2008; Griffin & Gilbert, 2012; O’Herrin, 2011; VTSC, 2013; Wurster et al., 2013).** A history of military experience imparts one with a unique cultural perspective. Additionally, those who have served in the military are likely to share class values. A cultural competency program that educates faculty and staff regarding not only the culture of the military, but also issues of classism and ageism need to be addressed as veterans are more likely to be older than their peers, first generation college students, and can utilize the military for social mobility purposes such as gaining an education and employment. Military cultural competency programs exist in online format or can be created as part of an internal stakeholder presentation.

**Reducing isolation and increasing connection (ACP, 2015; Bellafoire, 2012; O’Herrin, 2011; Whiteman et al., 2013, VTSC, 2013).** Differing from a formal mentorship program, a program dedicated to reducing isolation can act as a day-to-day
intention where an institution focuses on raising awareness and providing safety nets for connection. This can be done by creating a program comprised of didactics for faculty and staff, or can represent a special topic or focus of a committee that is tasked with increasing outreach efforts to veterans on campus. A program can also be created that targets student veterans by partnering with existing programs that deliver skills such as networking or informs veterans of groups in the community that provide meeting places for veterans. Veterans have found relationships with peers helpful; however, efforts should also be focused on how to provide referral and screening services to counseling centers to augment social support and reduce distress if indicated.

Referral/screen for counseling centers (DiRamio et al., 2008; Whiteman et al., 2013; Widome et al., 2011; UC4, 2015). Incoming veterans should be provided with information about the university counseling center or local mental health services. Key administrators who have high contact with student veterans may benefit from having a mental health professional who specializes in veterans issues provide a formal presentation or hosting a CDP (2015) event on their campus to assist with raising awareness concerning mental health services and options for veterans. Literature supports providing more than veteran-to-veteran discussions about military related experiences as, “increases in emotional support from peers were associated with little change in psychological distress among student service members/veterans” (Whiteman et al., 2013, p. 274).

Preventative outreach for student veterans (Barry et al. 2012; Widome et al., 2011). Preventative outreach (e.g., screenings, referrals, outreach presentations) is needed to address the high rates of reported depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation and intent.
Outreaches could both promote health related behaviors and involve partnerships with the VA to assist in preventative efforts to reduce future health problems for veterans. Combat-exposed service members should also be presented with options related to services for substance use treatment and screened for alcohol misuse and associated consequences (i.e., alcohol outreach presentations tailored to veterans or university counseling centers providing specific referrals to veterans with substance use difficulties). Overall, outreach can serve as a platform to disseminate further information to student veterans, collaborate with stakeholders to deliver resources (i.e., VA), and educate individuals who have high levels of contact with student veterans.

Establish veterans’ space or lounge (ACE, 2008; CAS, 2010; McBain et al., 2012; SVA, 2015; VTSC, 2013). A centralized space for veterans can contribute to developing a sense of community. A veterans’ space can serve as a meeting and socializing place for veterans to share common experiences and connect with peers. Additionally, there are grants dedicated to modifying existing spaces on campus to make them into effective meeting places (central location and access for veterans with disabilities). Establishing a space for veterans on campus is considered a core subprogram initiative because it demonstrates institutional support, acceptance, and dedication to supporting graduation.

Centralized resource office with dedicated staff member (ACE, 2008; NASPA, 2013; VTSC, 2013). Creating a centralized resource office allows veterans to avoid the bureaucratic processes they experienced during their time in the military. A staff member can assist with the complex process of accessing and maintaining benefits. Additionally, a central point of contact can be educated on available resources for
veterans and a dedicated position ensures accountability and responsibility for support services. Although survey data has indicated a majority of respondents had a dedicated office, the data was influenced by response bias, meaning there are likely opportunities for a large number of campuses to create a space for veterans. In addition, postsecondary institutions vary in the range and quality of services provided and can modify existing services to meet the unique needs of their campus.

Dedicated partnership program to facilitate collaboration (ACE, 2008; Armstrong et al., 2015). There is a plethora of resources dedicated to veterans, but lack of collaboration between organizations providing these resources. This has resulted in duplication of efforts, competition, and fragmentation of services. Creating a partnership, alliance, or formal membership program that has the central goal of supporting student veterans can directly address the lack of collaboration between service organizations dedicated to support veterans. Bringing together existing veteran organizations in the area to create a coalition (or membership group) that meets monthly or quarterly on campus can assist with accumulating and focusing stakeholder resources. Additionally, student veteran groups on campus can initiate or increase partnerships with local or national veteran groups. For example, an existent student veteran group can become one of over 1,200 official chapters of the SVA and attend regional and national conferences. Also, institutions can consider sponsoring military presentations on campus by organizations to increase presence and collaboration. Overall, creating a partnership program can assist with combining efforts of stakeholders, reducing duplication of efforts, and bringing internal and external stakeholders together for unified meetings.
Transition program (AACRAO, 2014; ACE, 2008; DiRamio et al., 2008; Rumann and Hamrick, 2010; SERV, 2015). Veterans transitioning into postsecondary institutions are in an especially vulnerable time period. A transition program can have many benefits for veterans as they are likely to be adjusting to not only the new culture of academia, but also complicated paperwork processes to start GI Bill funding. Transition programs can be for both incoming and outgoing veterans (i.e., both orientations and job networking/connection). Mandated orientations or including veteran resources within existent orientations have the potential to reach the largest audience. Transition programs can focus on both connection and disseminating resources.

Mentorship program (AACRO, 2014; ACP, 2015; VTSC, 2013; Whiteman et al., 2013). Mentorship programs can consist of peers, faculty, and individuals within the local community. Additionally, existing mentorship programs can be utilized such as the American Corporate Partners (2015), which is an example of incorporating external stakeholders to augment, or be the entirety, of a mentorship and career development program. Despite the absence of outcome data on mentorship programs specifically for student veterans, it is within reason to assume these programs can reduce social isolation and promote peer support. However, it is important to remember peer support has not been shown to effectively reduce psychological distress in a longitudinal study (Whiteman et al., 2013); therefore, referral screens and initiatives within mentorship and training programs to counseling centers should be incorporated into programs, and may be a resource-saving alternative to consider if a mentorship program should be included.
Supplemental Programs

Supplemental programs are listed separately from core programs to demarcate resource management and likely impact based upon literature support. Selection and separation of core and supplemental programs was made by subjective determination and supplemental programs could still have an important impact on student veterans despite having less concrete, literature support. Each supplemental program is listed as follows:

**Program to assist with disclosing military identity (ACE, 2014; NASPA, 2013; SVA, 2015).** It is difficult to identify veterans on campus, which has been exacerbated by the reluctance of students to openly disclose their veteran status compounding both difficulties of engagement and opportunities for support. Disaggregated data is needed as a means to separate military service as an isolated variable, not only to assist with tracking, but also to connect veterans with resources. Resources are available to student veterans who are doing well, and those who are struggling. Individual veterans who are having success can benefit from programs and grants that target veterans who are in fields where grants are common (such as STEM scholarships offered by the SVA). Veterans who are struggling can be connected to resources such as academic support, mentorships, or mental health services. An individual program offering incentives to disclose military service must be achieved without coercive methods as privacy should be respected. For example, demonstrate the benefits of disclosure; do not punish or withhold for those who do not wish to disclose.

**Increase campus engagement (NSSE, 2010; Pascarella et al., 2004).** It is difficult to engage student veterans in campus activities; however, campus engagement correlates positively with graduation rates. Creating a program that specifically targets
student veteran engagement may be beneficial and a committee dedicated to engagement can work collaboratively with student veterans to support efforts on campus. Utilizing the recommendations within the theoretical section of this dissertation can help administrators engage with veterans from a trauma-informed perspective.

**Program dedicated to increased contact for student veterans with exacerbating identity variables (Durdella & Kim, 2012; Engle, 2007; NSSE, 2010; Wurster et al., 2013).** Identity variables such as being a first generation college student and socioeconomic status can compound difficulties with graduation. For example, first-generation college students have been shown to have difficulty navigating processes required to attend college, which applies to a majority of student veterans. Additionally, there is variability within the veteran community, and student veterans who are first generation college students likely face greater difficulty than their veteran peers who have a family history of college attendance, are former military officers, or are enlisted veterans with prior college experience. Student veterans have also been shown to be aware of class differences that may alienate them from faculty and staff. Therefore, student veterans with multiple, compounding identity variables such as first generation college students can be flagged as “high touch” students, meaning they may need additional contact in the form of a dedicated program that continuously offers resources.

**Faculty connection with veterans (Barnard-Brak et al., 2011; Bellafiore, 2012; VTSC, 2013).** Student veterans bring a unique experience to classrooms. Faculty have elicited concerns about effectively instructing and engaging with student veterans who have had wartime experience. Differences in values and experience between such students and faculty have the potential to alienate both parties. Faculty engagement with
students despite bias towards war and beliefs of effectiveness in teaching veterans is possible and has been achieved by faculty members who have taken the time to engage veterans, or inquire about the experience of veterans in their classrooms. Veteran support groups have suggested meet and greet events. For example, student veteran organizations on campus could include a faculty representative and invite additional faculty or staff to open house events. In addition, institutions could incorporate TSP’s Adopt a College program or host a CDP UC4 event to educate faculty who are fearful or reluctant to work with veterans on campus.

**Bring veteran organizations on campus weekly or monthly (VTSC, 2013).** A dedicated program to bring stakeholders on campus can have multiple benefits. It can increase perceptions of support, provide a network base, or connect veterans to job opportunities following graduation or achievement of goals. As not all veterans are using the GI Bill benefits to achieve a degree, such individuals could benefit from a career or job fair where they can speak directly with companies looking to hire veterans. This can increase options for veterans. Additional organizations that can possibly be brought to campus could be Veteran Service Organizations to assist with processing of claims or paperwork, VFW chapters, or past military service members who are alumni of the institution.

**Specific veteran classes for credit (SERV, 2015; VTSC, 2013).** Developing classes that are specific for student veterans can assist with transitions. Veterans may benefit from meeting other veterans during entry classes or adjustment classes. Class content can include delivery of resources to student veterans. Classmates can share resources and voice concerns about their transitions to each other, which may reduce
social isolation and normalize the transition from the military to the postsecondary institution.

**Job connection/transition program within local and national community (ACP, 2015; VTSC, 2013).** Establishing connections with employers demonstrates support for veterans. Creating a program tasked with establishing employer partnerships and job opportunities demonstrates support for student veterans. Local job fairs and networking events are common. National corporations and local companies are offered incentives to hire veterans, which may increase their willingness to create partnerships. Postsecondary institutions can advertise job fairs, host networking events, or assist veterans with connecting to existent external programs such as ACP (2015).

**Childcare services (DiRamio et al., 2008; NSSE, 2010; VTSC, 2013).** Veterans are more likely than their peers to have dependents. Student veterans spend more time than peers providing care for dependents and live further away from campus than their non-veteran peers. Attending courses may be compromised by an inability to find adequate child care services. Additionally, providing child care as a means to increase attendance so veterans can be connected to services benefiting graduation may increase engagement at events specifically dedicated to veterans. Creating partnerships with external organizations or existing internal resources on campus can also initiate childcare services for student veterans.

**Track efforts of current programs (NASPA, 2013).** Most institutions do not have disaggregated data to measure the effectiveness of their interventions dedicated towards veteran success. NASPA (2013) stated “only a small minority claim to understand the primary causes of attrition among student soldiers and veterans, and the
vast majority do not have the disaggregated retention and completion data required to measure the effectiveness of their interventions and investments” (p. 1). An organizational level, tracking program that monitors the efforts of the institution is essential for measuring the effectiveness of interventions. This differs from tracking individual veterans by instead tracking the organizational efforts to support veterans. However, institutions must first identify who student veterans are to incorporate this program. Recommendations include listing clear statements such as “any past military service” on applications within the demographic section. Due to the difficulty in accurately tracking veteran graduation rates and the many myths surrounding graduation rates, processes of PCD highlight how to track organizational outcomes of specific interventions, which will assist institutions in implementing this supplemental program.

Creating a Needs-Based Supplemental or Core Program

Postsecondary institutions can also create their own core or supplemental program based upon needs identified through survey or focus group data. Focus groups and survey data can allow for the identification of idiosyncratic barriers that are unique to a specific postsecondary institution and are not captured within the literature review, but represent opportunities to address needs with support programs. For example, focus groups may yield specific information that is unique to an institution such as dissatisfaction with processing times of GI Bill benefits, disagreement related to receiving credit for their past military service, or difficulties for veterans with disabilities to find adequate parking or have access to veteran spaces. Each of these examples could result in the creation of a unique program that was not suggested within the literature-based recommendations. A
discussion of how to conduct a focus group and create a sample survey to identify unique needs is detailed in within the application of PCD section of this dissertation.

**Conclusion: Core and Supplemental Programs**

Core and supplemental programs were offered as examples for institutions to select, adapt, and integrate into a main program. The Student Veterans’ Support Committee implements the main program through a PCD cycle. Importantly, each postsecondary institution will most likely choose their own way of adapting core and supplemental programs to meet the needs of their organization. Thus far, the users of this program have been provided with knowledge related to the experience of student veterans and examples of programs that can assist with support. However, institutions can be more effective in their support by also possessing attitudes and beliefs that assist with developing programs that are understanding of the unique experiences of veterans who are exiting the military and entering the classroom.

The next section assists with program development by providing a trauma-informed, theoretical framework to help stakeholders understand how veterans may engage in their postsecondary institution and respond to programs offered to support them. The theories of organizational trauma (Vivian & Hormann, 2013) and institutional betrayal (Smith & Freyd, 2014) are explored to provide key information related to program development such as: (a) how a history within a past organization where trauma was experienced can impact an individual’s behavior in future organizations, and (b) how being harmed within the military organization impacts the willingness of veterans to engage in programs offered by postsecondary institutions that are attempting to provide support and care. Each of these components are explored to provide trauma-informed
recommendations to increase engagement of veterans in programs. Overall, the following theoretical section can help provide program implementers with an understanding of the organizational culture veterans have come from, how their experience within past organizations continue with them beyond the time they leave the military, and how veterans who have come from a military organization can continue to be affected at their current organization, the postsecondary institution.
Theoretical Support for Trauma-Informed Program Development

Veterans come from a unique culture and circumstances that have shaped their way of not only viewing the world, but also the way they will view future organizations to which they transition. Although not all veterans experience trauma, this theoretical section proposes that their experience within the military organization impacts their engagement on college campuses and participation in programs to support them. Individuals, including veterans, rely upon their past history and experiences to inform their current behaviors. In addition, people see the world through lenses that reflect their history within organizations. The military organization is vastly different than a college campus, but to many veterans the military is the only organization they have ever known.

The military organization has its own set of values and operating principals, which require strict adherence. It is a powerful organization that attracts individuals in part due to the discipline and self-efficacy it promises to instill in its members (Smith & Freyd, 2014). Powerful organizations such as the military are vulnerable by design to perpetrating betrayal because members trust these organizations to protect them and provide them with a sense of safety (Smith & Freyd, 2014). However, when leadership, peers, or experiences in the military result in trauma, it can impact how veterans engage in future organizations that are designed to communicate trust and support such as postsecondary institutions.

Student veterans, and students in general, often arrive on campus in a state of vulnerability. They are once again in a bureaucracy where they are dependent on others for their care, whether this is processing financial aid, meeting deadlines to sign up for courses, receiving accommodations for disabilities, or establishing relationships with
professors and peers to aid in their success. By acknowledging that student veterans have been in a past organization where trauma was common (Smith & Freyd, 2014), it is understandable that veterans are less engaged with faculty and peers (NSSE, 2010). However, it is this very engagement that is helpful for students to graduate (Pascarella et al., 2004). Therefore, program implementation that is participatory and inclusive, listens to the voice of veterans, and acknowledges veterans are coming from an organization with a history of trauma may be more likely to facilitate college success.

Veterans enter postsecondary education with a variety of life experiences and a history that affects both their behavior and ability to complete their educational goals following military service (DiRamio et al., 2008; O’Herrin, 2011; Rumann & Hamrick, 2010; Wurster et al., 2013). Psychological distress and difficulty adjusting to the cultural norms of postsecondary education appear to be more of a reflection of the experience student veterans faced within the military organization they are leaving rather than a reflection of an individual deficiency. Abandoning the narrow view that veterans are struggling simply because of a diagnosis or personal issue that exists internal to the veteran requires the acknowledgement that their experience within the military organization does affect them in ways that can interfere with their ability to engage in future organizations, including postsecondary institutions.

Recognition that military service contains many hardships has yet to include the more insidious day-to-day experience of individuals within an organization that is tasked by our nation to carry out war, which requires meeting operational demands enforced by the military organization that can erode physical and mental health. Such an organization requires the daily sacrifice of individual needs and well being in order to serve the needs
of others. Service members are required to support the goals and mission of the military organization at the expense of their personal wellbeing, which requires the constant suppression of individual needs.

Supervisors and leaders within the military are tasked with enforcing policies and procedures that benefit the military organization, but suppress the needs of individual service members. These supervisors and leaders act as agents of the organization, both sacrificing their own needs and ensuring others do the same. Service members are caught between needing to trust and obey policies and procedures set forth by the military organization, while also maintaining their own health. In order to function in such an organization, individuals are required to maintain a certain level of trust and dependency in their leaders and supervisors to also care for them and protect them from harm (Smith & Freyd, 2014). This requires a dependent bond or attachment comprised of a relationship consisting of help and harm simultaneously. Specifically stated, service members are required to trust their leaders and military organization, while at the same time understanding that they will be pushed beyond their physical and mental limits to meet operational demands.

Student veterans may not be cognizant of their past bond or attachment to an organization that could both harm and help them; however, the fear to enter into another relationship with an organization is likely present and can impact engagement in programs and campus events, the development of relationships with faculty and administration, and the willingness to trust individuals who tell veterans they are supporting them. Accumulated interactions within the military organization have taught veterans what to expect from future organizations that they are dependent upon for care.
The experiences veterans have had within their past organization in the military can impact how they both view and respond to others who are attempting to create a program that requires their engagement for programs to be effective. Trauma-informed care (National Center for Trauma-Informed Care [NCTIC], 2015) and theory provides program implementers with the requisite mindset to engage veterans who have been within a past organization that has neglected their needs and may have impacted their ability to trust and receive support. Asking student veterans to participate in programs and engage in events is equivalent to asking them to trust their new organization, the postsecondary institution, has their best interests in mind.

The following sections will evaluate how individual and organizational trauma influence program development. Trauma theory will be discussed, followed by specific trauma-informed principals and recommendations to assist with engaging veterans in programs.

**Trauma-Informed Theory to Support Student Veterans**

A guiding theory allows program implementers to keep key points in mind when developing a program for those who have been previously imbedded within a powerful organization that has a dominant set of organizational principals and behavioral expectations. The military culture not only has a strong organizational history, it also imparts service members with a set of shared experiences, which can be both positive and negative in a new environment. Understanding the organizational culture of where veterans have come from can assist with developing a program that is trauma-informed and culturally sensitive to the range of attitudes and behaviors veterans may bring to campus. The two theories of organizational trauma and healing (Vivian & Hormann,
2013) and institutional betrayal (Smith & Freyd, 2014) are proposed to assist program developers with engaging student veterans by providing trauma-informed services.

The intention of proposing a theoretical framework is to provide a perspective for administrators to replace the potential for a victim-blaming approach with an understanding of how a history of trauma can impact student veteran behavior on campus. Trauma-informed care and services are defined as “an approach to engaging people with histories of trauma that recognizes the presence of trauma symptoms and acknowledges the role that trauma has played in their lives” (NCTIC, 2015, NCTIC’s Current Framework section, para. 1). Literature on student veterans has often voiced concern about the behaviors of veterans compared to their peers on issues such as lack of engagement (NSSE, 2010); however, their behaviors and attitudes towards organizational functions, bureaucracy, and interpersonal interactions may be better understood by recognizing the impact of traumatic experiences and stress that are prevalent within the military organization, and can result in a reluctance to engage in future organizations.

Trauma theory provides a meta-cognitive understanding to help address gaps in program development by acknowledging that individuals are affected by the nature of their occupation (Anson & Bloom, 1988; Bennett et al., 2005; Brough, 2004; Follette, Polusny, & Milbeck, 1994; Hart, Wearing, & Headey, 1995; Kassam-Adams, 1999; Pearlman & Mac Ian, 1995; Smith & Freyd, 2014; Vivian & Hormann, 2013), which can impact attitudes and behaviors related to engagement within new organizations (NCTIC, 2015). When individuals leave the military and enter higher education, difficulties with graduation, engagement, isolation, and transitions may all be strongly influenced by experiences within their past organization, rather than a reflection of an inherent
deficiency in communicating needs or engaging in services that would help them graduate. For example, if a student veteran was assaulted by a supervisor or peer who was entrusted to care for them during their military service, it is understandable that an administrator from a postsecondary institution claiming to help and care for the student veteran could be misperceived, distrusted, and even avoided. Moreover, lack of participation and engagement may be influenced by the treatment student veterans received within the military, which requires program developers to be sensitive while remaining persistent in their efforts to demonstrate their institution is supportive and values student veteran participation on campus.

When developing programs to support and engage student veterans, an understanding of how past experience within the military organization intersects with their current environment is much needed and absent from the literature review. Additionally, theories of trauma are often conceptualized at the individual level without a discussion of how past trauma impacts behavior and attitudes within new organizations or programs. This gap between individual trauma and organizational development will be discussed to provide program developers with a theoretical framework to facilitate engagement and understanding.

The two theories of organizational trauma and healing (Vivian & Hormann, 2013) and Smith and Freyd’s (2014) institutional betrayal theory are proposed to integrate the research related to interpersonal trauma and organizational trauma, and synthesize key theoretical components that impact program development. Integration of each theoretical framework helps program implementers adopt a mindset in order to enhance engagement by conducting culturally sensitive, trauma-informed, program development. First, trauma
is broadly defined, followed by integrating interpersonal and organizational trauma theory to assist with program development. Second, a discussion of how trauma theory can be applied and what postsecondary institutions can do to assist student veterans is proposed.

**Defining Trauma**

Trauma, broadly defined, can impact both intra- and interpersonal functioning as well as be a confounding variable or roadblock in implementing programs to engage student veterans and facilitate college success. Although trauma has been more widely researched at the individual and interpersonal level, literature on how trauma impacts program development, and both attitudes and behaviors within organizations, is much needed.

Sources of trauma can be defined as a single event or the result of cumulative events and micro-aggressions that occur over time. This is a more broad definition than Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, fifth edition, of the American Psychiatric Association (2013) definitions of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, which is commonly associated with military service, but likely has never captured the full range of symptoms or experience of military veterans. Instead, traumas and stress injuries can come in many forms impacting program development that are not captured within DSM criteria. Therefore, trauma will be broadly defined and evaluated at two main theoretical levels to provide a framework for program implementation: 1. interpersonal trauma and 2. organizational trauma.

Interpersonal trauma can be the result of a single interaction or multiple stressors over time. Organizational trauma encompasses interpersonal trauma, but extends the
definition further to capture how trauma occurs at the organizational level and becomes embodied in the role, mission, and process of an organization. Vivian and Hormann (2013) defined organizational trauma as the result of the mission of the organization or a toxic, harmful working environment. More specifically, the etiology of interpersonal trauma is an action taken by a person resulting in harm to another person such as sexual and physical assault, while the etiology of organizational trauma is the result of how an organization or its mission impacts an individual or group of individuals. According to definitions of organizational trauma (Vivian & Hormann, 2013), military service can require individuals to extend their bodies past limits of healthy biological functioning to meet the mission of the organization in cases such as extended periods of sleep deprivation, exposure to stressful working conditions, and being in a combat environment for short or extended periods of time.

The wide definition of trauma within this program accounts for the affects of small exposures to trauma that can impact individuals over time, which can be viewed as the daily stress and rigor experienced within the military. Within an organization that is constantly exposed to trauma, even the “strongest” individual can be harmed. The military experience is an inherently traumatic endeavor. The experience of war on veterans and civilians alike has been well documented as horrifying across cultures and across historical eras (Chang, 1998; Crawford, 2005; Hedges, 2002; Hynes, 1997; Jones & Wessely, 2005; Jünger, 1920; Junger, 2010; O’Brien, 1990). Although not all veterans experience combat directly, they exist within a military institution both organized and designed for the purpose of war. This requires sacrificing basic human needs (e.g., sleep, safety) to meet the demands of an organization. When veterans depart the military
organization and embark upon their postsecondary education, they inevitably bring with them the lessons they have learned in their past organization, which influences how they interact in future organizations.

**Two Levels of Trauma Contributing to Program Development**

The two levels of trauma conceptualization (interpersonal and organizational) allow program implementers to categorize and conceptualize theory related to key variables that can adversely impact program development if not attended. The prevalence of interpersonal trauma in the military is common (Glantz, 2009), often occurring in military member-on-member assault such as the epidemic of military sexual trauma (Smith & Freyd, 2014). When past relationships with others have resulted in harm, it may affect how willing student veterans are to form new relationships with those who are asking for their trust in order to deliver resources and assist with graduation. This is critical because relationships are required in order for student engagement, a key variable related to college success (Pascarella et al., 2004).

First, interpersonal trauma affects both attitudes and behavior. Past interpersonal trauma can impact the way veterans relate to other students, form attachments, and form trust with peers and administrators. What is known from interpersonal trauma is that not all traumas are equal (Freyd, 1996). Moreover, “abuse perpetrated within close relationships is more harmful than abuse perpetrated by strangers because of the violation of trust within a necessary relationship” (Smith & Freyd, 2014, p. 577). Military service requires close relationships between peers, trusting leaders with your life, and obedience to authority; not only to maintain health, but in some situations to stay alive.
The second level of trauma conceptualization is at the organizational level. Institutional betrayal can occur at institutions that (a) serve as an organization that views itself as protective and requires trust, strict adherence, and adoption of core values unique to the organization and (b) individuals within the organization must sustain ties to the system in order to maintain security, safety, a sense of connection, and belonging within the organization, which results in a “blind eye” to their own traumatization and betrayal (Smith & Freyd, 2014). The military organization by design must fit this definition; however, postsecondary institutions have an opportunity to take action towards creating trust and support.

Both theories of institutional betrayal and organizational trauma “examine institutional action and inaction that exacerbate the impact of traumatic experience” (Smith & Freyd, 2014, p. 577). However, organizational trauma further posits trauma and traumatic events are housed within organizations, and become a part of a conscious/unconscious culture consisting of shared meaning, understanding, and socialization processes (Vivian & Hormann, 2013). The shared meaning and socialization that occur at the organizational level are not simply left behind when service members exit the military organization. Instead, it can be argued that organizational trauma is brought to the postsecondary institution, making it a salient part of program development that must be attended to and understood. Campuses can demonstrate how their organization is different by creating participatory programs that listen to the voice of veterans, provide trauma-informed services, and support veterans with their educational goals.
Organizational Trauma Theory

The impact of individual trauma has been well documented; however, trauma occurring at the organizational level can be more difficult to conceptualize and understand. Organizational trauma (Vivian & Hormann, 2013) is a theory that generalizes the empirical base supporting the impact of interpersonal trauma on an individual to the organizational level. Organizational trauma theory also proposes that the type of work an organization is tasked to complete impacts individuals because they are constantly exposed to their work. Specifically, an individual is affected by what their organization “does.” For example, individuals exposed to trauma as a result of the mission of their work such as police officers and other first responders, mental health therapists, and individuals within organizations providing sexual assault advocacy (Anson & Bloom, 1988; Bennett et al., 2005; Brough, 2004; Follette, et al., 1994; Hart, et al., 1995; Kassam-Adams, 1999; Pearlman & Mac Ian, 1995; Vivian & Hormann, 2013) are affected by the function of their occupational role and the nature of their work.

Although the effects of a person’s actions and organizational culture can manifest individually, cultural patterns are created by groups and survive beyond any single person, group, or time, period (Vivian & Hormann, 2013). Organizations with a history of trauma that goes unrecognized may be more susceptible to further trauma. Therefore, it is imperative for institutions to acknowledge and understand the trauma that military members have experienced in order to avoid further harm by organizational practices.

What an organization does and what an individual experiences within the organization becomes a shared sense of meaning, understanding, and importantly, a socialization process (Vivian & Hormann, 2013). Military veterans may have been in an
organizational hierarchy that was at times unsafe, not to be trusted, and taught them that they should distance themselves from those with power over them. This means program development should account for how organizational trauma can affect an individual’s participation, or lack thereof, with those developing a program. Therefore, it becomes absolutely essential to adhere to egalitarian practices such as listening to what veterans are asking for on campus and behaviorally demonstrating that their voice has been heard by implementing requests and being open to feedback.

**Institutional Betrayal**

Betrayal trauma and institutional betrayal are closely related. Betrayal trauma occurs following the rupture of basic trust and safety, which is exacerbated when perpetrated by someone who the individual was dependent upon for care and survival (Freyd, 1996). Examples of such trauma include incest, or when a supervisor assaults or abuses a junior ranking military member. Institutional betrayal is when the institution itself destroys trust as a result of action or inaction taken resulting in the exacerbation of trauma (Smith & Freyd, 2014). This could be the result of numerous reports identifying military leadership blaming a victim of sexual assault or VA mishandling or denying claims for disability compensation (Glantz, 2009).

Smith and Freyd (2014) presented psychological research describing the role of institutions following experiences where individuals experienced trauma. Institutional betrayal draws upon betrayal trauma theory (Freyd, 1996) for empirical support. “Institutional betrayal is a description of individual experiences of violations of trust and dependency perpetrated against any member of an institution in a way that does not necessarily arise from an individual’s less-privileged identity” (Smith & Freyd, 2014,
Institutional betrayal occurs when trusted institutions (such as the military or VA) act in ways that harm individuals who are dependent upon them for care (Smith & Freyd, 2014). Betrayal trauma theory (Freyd, 1996) describes differences between traumatic experiences, positing that not all trauma is created equally. According to betrayal trauma theory, trauma experienced from someone who was entrusted to take care of another is the most pernicious.

Importantly, not all veterans have experienced the broad definition of trauma listed above. It is also not necessary for student veterans to identify with experiencing interpersonal trauma or organizational trauma because program development does not have to focus on deficits, but instead on how these deficits can be addressed (Wolff, 2010); however, both trauma theories posit the way the individual currently feels or relates to others has been covertly affected (e.g. subconsciously or unaware of impact) and influences future behavior, without an individual having to acknowledge they have been affected. Accepting that there may have been positive aspects of military service in addition to experiences of betrayal may also be difficult for some veterans to identify with because these veterans may remain dependent on the military (resulting VA benefits) for care due to receiving occupational or financial benefits following their service. Veterans may also not identify with institutional betrayal or organizational trauma if there is a positive view of their past service or if they receive beneficial social status and recognition for their military service.

**Theoretical Integration and Understanding**

Applicable themes for program development emerging from the theories of organizational trauma (Vivian & Hormann, 2013) and institutional betrayal (Smith &
Freyd, 2014) include: (a) individual veterans being harmed by organizations and individuals who were entrusted with their care and protection, (b) individual trauma being integral to the entire military organization due to the nature and type of work that is inherently dangerous (personal sacrifice and conducting war), and (c) adjustment and integration following the previous two themes appears to be a both a vulnerable time period (DiRamio et al., 2008; Rumann & Hamrick, 2010), and an opportunity for institutions to address individual and organizational trauma by providing trauma-informed support.

In regard to participation and engagement, program developers may experience student veterans engaging in approach-avoidance behavior, or a “push-pull” relationship, as veterans may test organizational safety and support within their new environment. As veterans have been embedded within systems of highly stratified power and obedience structures, they are likely to be especially aware of relationship and power dynamics related to their perceived ability to succeed in their new environment. Within the military, power structure and rank is openly discussed, visible, and continually reinforced; however, division of power within higher education is usually more concealed and less openly stated. Despite this, student veterans are likely to “read between the lines” and be aware of power dynamics and opportunities for betrayal within their postsecondary institution based upon subtle reminders or generalizations related to their past military experience. For example, although a professor both teaches and supports his or her pupils, they have power over grades and can make arbitrary, subjective, and punitive decisions related to passing the course; therefore, when student veterans engage with
faculty, administrators and staff, they may be especially sensitive to indications of support, genuineness, and trust, while also being alert to insincerity and ambiguity.

Although there are many concrete and isolated ways to communicate support and work to facilitate trust, such as arriving on time or early to meetings with veterans, providing trauma-informed services as an organization can appear a more abstract matter. Moreover, how can an organization demonstrate they can be trusted and the experience of military veterans is valued? Importantly, it is not that there is a lack of care and genuine desire to help veterans (Armstrong et al., 2015); instead, care within many organizations is not trauma-informed and a theoretical component can help postsecondary institutions understand how to externalize or engage with veterans in a way that signals support and safety, in a manner that facilitates trust. Overall, program development for the purpose of supporting student veteran graduation must be aware of how to provide trauma-informed services, and the next section outlines the steps that postsecondary institutions can take.

**What Can Postsecondary Institutions Do to Provide Trauma-Informed Care?**

With the aforementioned information, what can program developers and postsecondary institutions do to engage student veterans, while delivering trauma-informed care? Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA, 2015) identified six key principals for delivery of trauma-informed care: 1. safety; 2. trustworthiness and transparency; 3. peer support; 4. collaboration and mutuality; 5. empowerment, voice and choice; 6. cultural, historical, and gender issues. Each principal is focused on both recovery and resilience. SAMHSA distinguished trauma-informed approaches from interventions in that an approach can be implemented in any type of organization and does not require an intervention. Instead, an approach
requires a set of agreed upon values and a cognitive understanding of trauma-informed principles. SAMHSA (2015) recommended the following four tenets for a trauma-informed approach that are especially important for organizational and program development:

(1) Realizes the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery; (2) Recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients families, staff, and others involved with the system; (3) Responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices; and (4) Seeks to actively resist re-traumatization. (Trauma-Informed Approach section, para. 1)

SAMHSA’s (2015) recommendations fit well within a program methodology based upon PCD that is participatory, empowering, and gives voice to student veterans. Importantly, postsecondary institutions can provide a participatory program that listens to the voice of veterans by incorporating them as part of the change process. Listening to the voice of veterans relates to SAMHA’s (2015) recommendation to avoid re-traumatization because ignoring veterans is a form of silencing them, their experience, and what they have endured to attain the privilege of higher education.

How can members of postsecondary institutions facilitate engagement and listen to the requests of veterans? Caplan (2011) provided key information related to connecting with veterans and listening to their experience. Her book, *When Johnny and Jane Come Marching Home: What We All Can do to Help Veterans*, demonstrated how to provide a supportive reception for veterans returning from war. Caplan explained how civilians could effectively communicate with returning veterans by listening to their stories in a way that is healing. This is described as not making assumptions through asking open-ended questions, listening non-judgmentally and attentively, and not placing the sole requirement of connecting with veterans about their wartime experience on mental health.
providers. According to Caplan, civilians possess the prerequisite conditions for assisting veterans by being another human who listens and bears witness to the stories of war. Moreover, as fellow citizens of a nation that chooses to send a select population of it’s members to war, talking to veterans about their deployment is an important responsibility of the civilians who did not endure military service.

Caplan (2011) stated listening to the stories of veterans can be healing and civilians should assist with this process because society holds responsibility for the actions of our military. Administrators and staff sending veterans off to counselors or psychologists whenever difficulties arise with student veterans may be more effective than peer support in reducing psychological distress (Whiteman et al., 2013), but it is not always the best choice for developing relationships and promoting engagement. Accordingly, listening to veterans’ stories could aid perceived levels of support and provide a sense of belonging. Failing to listen or putting the responsibility to “deal” with veterans on mental health professionals appears to represent the same apathetic, passive diffusion of responsibility that may be responsible for our youth being sent to war in the first place. Additionally, the tendency to medicalize and label a veteran’s response to war as abnormal is a demonstration of the misunderstanding of the horrors of war and the duties of civilians to be actively engaged in whether or not a war happens in the first place. Caplan argued that not only should civilians listen to veterans in a way that is healing, but that it is the duty of civilians to hear the stories of those returning from war. She concluded: “social connection and social support ease people’s pain” (Caplan, 2011, p. 166).
Overall, Caplan (2011) recommended civilians listen actively, non-judgmentally, and attentively. Listening is a way to give voice and acknowledge experience. Acknowledgement of past experience contributing to present difficulty is the first place and starting point for healing to occur (Vivian & Hormann, 2013), which is a central tenet to trauma-informed provision of services. Accordingly, Caplan’s recommendations can be generalized to the organizational level. Establishing trust starts with non-judgmental listening. This comes from not only a trauma-informed perspective, but with the acknowledgement that staff and administration can make a difference by recognizing the difficulties veterans face as a normal experience of war and the organizational structure inherent in carrying out day-to-day military operations. Taking the time to engage veterans and listen, rather than simply sending the veteran to the counseling center and thinking “that’s not my job,” denies the reality and responsibility that all citizens of our nation have to protect our youth, weigh the consequences of war before passively accepting its occurrence, and then support our veterans when they return.

How does an organization listen to the voice of veterans and provide support? Postsecondary institutions can do this by creating programs based upon what student veterans are asking for, and implementing the program in a way that is participatory by facilitating engagement between all stakeholders; especially veterans. The next section outlines Participatory Curriculum Development (PCD). PCD represents an adaptable, building block for postsecondary institutions to listen to the voice of veterans and provide comprehensive support by implementing literature-based recommendations. Following the introduction to PCD in the section, specific strategies for implementing programs are presented.
Conclusions and Limitations

Postsecondary institutions provide trauma-informed services by recognizing how past experience in the military impacts engagement on campus. Although not all veterans identify with coming from an organization that is traumatized, their experience inevitably informs their attitudes and behavior within future organizations, especially if the military was the predominate environment of their adult life. Trauma-informed engagement recognizes the “push-pull” nature of testing behavior as veterans evaluate their willingness to engage in programs; therefore, consistent connection and re-connection may be more effective in building trust and reaching a population who has endured organizational trauma.

Importantly, not all veterans have experienced the broad definition of trauma listed above. It is also not necessary for student veterans to identify with experiencing interpersonal trauma or organizational trauma because program development does not have to focus on deficits, but instead focus on how these deficits can be addressed (Wolff, 2010). Both trauma theories posit the way the individual currently feels or relates to others has been covertly affected (e.g. subconsciously or unaware of impact) and influences future behavior, without an individual having to acknowledge that they have been affected. Also, accepting that there may have been positive aspects of military service in addition to experiences of betrayal may also be difficult for some veterans to identify with because these veterans may remain dependent on the military (resulting VA benefits) for care due to receiving occupational or financial benefits following their service. Veterans may also not identify with institutional betrayal or organizational trauma if there is a positive view of their past service or if they receive beneficial social
status and recognition. Therefore, while it is important to provide trauma-informed care, it is also important to avoid focusing entirely on deficits or attributing all veteran difficulties to trauma.
PART II

PCD Methodology

Methodology Introduction

Participatory Curriculum Development (PCD) was created by Taylor (2003) as an adaptable method for institutions to reach collaborative goals through stakeholder participation. PCD is a constructive learning process designed to develop new behaviors and attitudes that empower participants and organizations to create change and work towards common goals. PCD addresses gaps within other programs that do not allow members of the organization to be involved, shift their attitudes and understandings, and demonstrate their learning. PCD is designed to be sustainable by incorporating stakeholders throughout the process, adapting based upon the results of outcome data, and imparting stakeholders with knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs that facilitate positive organizational change.

Most programs dedicated to student veterans can be seen as a curriculum, or set of procedures implemented and then applied to veterans. PCD adds to curriculum development by incorporating strategies and techniques to increase participation of all involved in a change process. Therefore, PCD is utilized as a framework for developing a program that is applied with veterans, rather than applied to veterans. This is facilitated by the creation of a Student Veterans’ Support Committee that works with veterans throughout the change process, which represents a different approach than existing programs for veterans that do not have a steering committee or “backbone” to assist with stakeholder collaboration (Armstrong et al., 2015, p. 12). A Student Veterans’ Support
Committee implements programs to support student veterans through a five-phase PCD cycle.

The advantage of working within the PCD framework is PCD addresses the weaknesses with traditional methods of implementing programs. Hutchings and Saunders (2001) listed two main flaws related to how programs are designed and implemented. First, development has focused narrowly on building educational resources. This flaw is rampant in support services for veterans as veterans may not even be aware of services or desire ones that are available. Second, there has been little practical guidance and direct instruction on how to implement curriculum methods that produce organizational change. PCD reduces shortcomings within standard curriculum development by providing practical, detailed instruction, and incorporating stakeholders throughout the change process (Taylor, 2003).

Building resources without collaborative participation is ineffective (Hutchings & Sanders, 2001). For example, student veterans have access to a variety of educational resources, such as free educational counseling mandated by law; however, this does not mean student veterans are aware of, or are participating in, these educational resources (GAO, 2014). In addition, it appears methodological guidance is needed to explicitly state how internal and external stakeholders can collaborate to ensure educational resources are being directly disseminated to student veterans. PCD provides direct guidance through a five-phase cycle that incorporates a framework for a Student Veterans’ Support Committee to implement concrete programs, while still allowing flexibility and adaptations to meet the resource needs and mission of each institution.
PCD Cycle Framework: How PCD Operates

PCD is structured in a phase model called a PCD cycle, and it is practical and flexible to meet the needs of each context (Taylor, 2003). PCD falls under the broad umbrella of action research. “Action research aims to contribute both to the practical concerns of people in an immediate problematic situation and to the goals of social science by joint collaboration within a mutually acceptable ethical framework” (Rapoport, 1970, p. 499). Within action research, a problem or need is identified, an action plan is created, and the initiator or developer of the program can be a part of the process and utilize outcome measures using a recursive, case study approach. PCD represent a program framework that incorporates principals of action research.

PCD is not a strict quantitative design or restricted methodology. Data can be adjusted, bent, folded, scratched, and reset all over again within each phase, in order to make the program optimal for each institution. Essentially, adaptations of core and supplemental programs can be mapped onto the PCD cycle, which assists institutions by providing a guided framework for implementation. Institutions can also adapt data from focus groups or surveys; develop an action plan, and engage in a recursive implementation process to modify processes to achieve goals.

Stakeholder participation is central to each phase of the PCD cycle and it is not substituted at the expense of rigidity or adherence to structure. Direct and practical strategies are provided within each phase to enhance the effectiveness of the PCD cycle and avoid common difficulties. Evaluation is conducted as early as possible and throughout the PCD cycle. The phases are circular and recursive; one phase may need to be adapted as another changes. Specific strategies and examples are provided to propel
the Student Veterans’ Support Committee through the phases, avoid stagnation, and limit rework. The following section describes the PCD cycle.

**Applying the PCD Cycle to Support Student Veteran Graduation**

The five-phases (Figure 1) are adapted from Taylor’s (2003) manual on how to develop and implement a training program. Stakeholder involvement occurs throughout each phase. Each phase can be considered a training point where a Student Veterans’ Support Committee will place into action the “how to” steps to implement their program.

*Figure 1. Model of a Five-Phase PCD Cycle. The five-phase Participatory Curriculum Development (PCD) model demonstrates the recursive, flexible process of program implementation. The model represents the overall PCD process and can be referred to by the Student Veteran’s Support Committee as a guideline. Adapted from “How to Design a Training Course – A Guide to Participatory Curriculum Development,” by P. Taylor, 2003, p. 23. London: VSO/Continuum. Copyright 2003 by Voluntary Service Overseas.*
Phase One: Situation Analysis/Training Needs Analysis

During the start of phase one, postsecondary institutions will create a Student Veterans’ Support Committee that will identify key concepts related to supporting student veteran graduation. Phase one entails education regarding PCD, evaluation of institutional capacities to achieve desired goals, and the creation of working strategies to achieve desired goals (Taylor, 2003). Phase one comprises concepts such as the introduction and purpose of PCD, the initial stakeholder analysis, strengths and weaknesses assessment (i.e., SWOT analysis), identification of stakeholders and their roles, an evaluation of the potential for PCD within the institutional setting, carrying out a valid, concrete training needs assessment (i.e., TNA), identifying knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs (i.e., KSAB), and then outline strategy and steps for action (Taylor, 2003).

The goals of each institution will vary based upon characteristics such as the size of the institution, culture, resources, geographic location, amount of veterans, and the goals set by stakeholders. For example, a postsecondary institution that is attempting to support student veteran graduation by adding a single core program would have a different PCD cycle than an institution attempting to implement multiple core and supplemental programs. However, both of these institutions would have the overarching goal of supporting student veterans.

PCD requires an individual or group to start the cycle. This individual or group is critical to ensuring successful implementation and is termed the Student Veterans’ Support Committee. This Student Veterans’ Support Committee or “backbone” (Armstrong et al., 2015, p. 12) is essential in providing the start, implementation, follow-
through, completion, and sustainability of PCD. Some of the main initial tasks of the Student Veterans’ Support Committee may include designing initial workshops, presentations, focus groups, or surveys to raise awareness about the need to support student veteran graduation and assist stakeholders in developing goals. Goals and outcomes identified and presented by the Student Veterans’ Support Committee should be guided by the “SMART” acronym, which stands for specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-bound.

The Student Veterans’ Support Committee will hold meetings until all portions of phase one are complete, which includes stakeholder analysis and validation, SWOT analysis, TNA, and identifying KSAB's (Taylor, 2003). These analyses are discussed in detail in the following section. Each of these components may change and need updating as the program develops because PCD relies upon experiential learning to modify programs and is not a linear process (Taylor, 2003). Finally, PCD includes evaluation at each stage. Evaluation methods vary and each institution may choose what is most appropriate for the campus. Evaluation in the first stage can include validating the stakeholder analysis, reflecting upon progress of meetings and refining as needed, or establishing practical or objective tests. These will be explained in further detail in the evaluation section and additional evaluation options are presented following a description of all stages. The following sections within phase one include descriptions and definitions of key steps the Student Veterans’ Support Committee takes during their first meetings.
**Stakeholder analysis.** Stakeholder analysis is a way to identify the roles and purposes of each stakeholder. Stakeholders are defined as individuals, groups, and institutions that have ownership, or a stake, in common and specific outcomes or goals (Taylor, 2003). Therefore, a stakeholder is a broad term used to identify people, groups, organizations, institutions, literature, and knowledge that support the common goal of helping student veterans graduate.

Stakeholders who are external to the institution are considered outsiders. For example, external stakeholders who are supporting veteran graduation are the VA and other organizations such as the American Council on Education (ACE), Student Veterans of America (SVA), and the Government Accountability Office (GAO). One of the most important external stakeholders is the existing literature on student veterans. External stakeholders may be similar for most postsecondary institutions because they are usually national resources or resources that are widely available. However, internal, or inside, stakeholders are more likely to be unique to each institution. Examples of internal stakeholders include faculty, student veterans, alumni, student affairs staff, student clubs, curriculum writers, support staff such as VA certifying officials, and each institution’s policies, procedures, and strategic plans.

In initial meetings, a stakeholder analysis can be conducted by using a sheet of paper or word processing document. Columns separate internal and external stakeholders and the specific role of each stakeholder is listed. Roles should be concisely stated and clearly relate to how the stakeholder contributes to the established goal of supporting student veteran graduation. Once completed, the stakeholder analysis should be validated. Validation occurs by asking each stakeholder if their role in supporting student veteran
graduation is congruent with the initial stakeholder analysis and then modifying as needed to ensure accuracy.

A meeting that includes all stakeholders may be the best way to validate the stakeholder analysis. However, stakeholders must accurately state their agenda and biases towards achieving common goals to make the analysis and PCD process most effective (Taylor, 2003). A stakeholder analysis can include listing the importance and influence of each stakeholder, which helps to identify who needs to be involved in what portions of curriculum design. Overall, the stakeholder analysis serves as a working document for the Student Veterans’ Support Committee to access throughout the PCD cycle and is modified as needed.

**SWOT analysis.** A SWOT analysis provides insight into the capacities of stakeholders. The SWOT acronym stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. For example, what are the strengths of the Student Veterans’ Support Committee that is attempting to start the program to support student veteran graduation? Also, what are the weakness, opportunities, and threats to those creating the program to support student veteran graduation? The SWOT analysis serves as an accurate assessment of each unique postsecondary institution.

Multiple SWOT analyses can be conducted as needed if stakeholders are added or subtracted during other phases of PCD. For example, an opportunity may exist if a postsecondary institution has a supportive administrator in a key position; however, if an unsupportive administrator replaces the supportive one, this could now represent a threat and a weakness.
Literature on student veterans is a key stakeholder and can help inform and identify key SWOT variables. For example, opportunities reported by student veterans include finding relationships with other student veterans to be helpful (O’Herrin, 2011). Examples of threats reported in the literature on student veterans include existing graduation rates (SVA, 2014); psychological distress, emotional adjustment, and suicide risk (Rudd et al., 2011); difficulties with receiving VA benefits (GAO, 2013b); and visible and invisible disabilities (Tanielian & Jaycox, 2008).

Training needs analysis. A training needs analysis (TNA) will assist in identifying what is needed to support student veterans on campus, which will inform the selection of core and supplemental programs. Identification of needs will vary between institutions due to variables such as resources and the specific support goals each institution is attempting to provide for student veterans. Once support goals have been clarified, a TNA can help postsecondary institutions identify what needs to be done to implement selected programs.

Data is collected during the TNA, which represents a shift from planning to action (Taylor, 2003). Data can be collected both informally and formally. For example, research and literature recommend collecting data through counseling centers with therapists trained in effective treatments for veterans (Whiteman et al., 2013); faculty that understand veteran culture (DiRamio et al., 2008; Rumann & Hamrick, 2010); utilizing screens and promoting awareness to identify early warning signs and risk of suicide (Rudd et al., 2011); helping veterans navigate and understand how GI Bill benefits are received and processed (AACRAO, 2014); trainings to promote healthy behavior
(Widome et al., 2011); promoting faculty engagement with student veterans (NSSE, 2010); and providing supportive transition services (DiRamio et al., 2008).

Using focus groups to conduct interviews is a pragmatic and participatory way to gather data (Taylor, 2003). Multiple levels of personnel within each postsecondary institution should be interviewed to support an ecological and participatory program. Interviewees should include faculty, administrators, staff, students, and student veterans. Interviews should focus narrowly on identifying what each interviewee believes they need to know in order to support student veterans. However, Taylor (2003) recommended interviewers break this large question into smaller questions to make responses easier to analyze, and suggested creating a way to organize interview data into themes or categories.

According to Taylor (2003), once data has been organized into a written report as a proposal that is shared with stakeholders phase one is complete. A meeting can then be scheduled to discuss the results of both interview and literature review data. Data can be summarized into a report that details what each postsecondary institution has identified to support student veteran graduation, and what core and supplemental programs have been selected to implement.

**Phase Two: Develop Curriculum Outlines or Frameworks**

Taylor (2003) outlined phase two of the PCD cycle as containing flexible strategies designed to structure and create the outline for implementing programs to support student veterans. Phase two involves developing the structure of how selected programs will be implemented based upon what the Student Veterans’ Support Committee expects will change, which is identified by developing learning outcomes,
aims, topics, content areas, the method of delivery programs, and what resources are required to train the postsecondary institution on how to support student veteran graduation.

When implementing a program, duplication of efforts represents a major threat to time and financial resources (Wolff, 2010). Duplication of efforts can be avoided by conducting a quality stakeholder analysis to determine what is already available to support student veterans. For example, if focus group data revealed difficulties understanding how the GI Bill is processed, Rumann and Hamrick (2010) recommended partnerships between local resources that are experts in GI Bill policy changes. Therefore, creating and training a new position or expert on campus will not be as cost effective as consulting with organizations that offer free resources.

Many programs already existing can help institutions develop their own program to help student veterans. For example, the ACE (2014) toolkit lists what other institutions are doing nationally to support student veterans. Individuals developing outlines can adapt resources listed at other institutions to meet needs identified in the TNA. For example, if the TNA revealed faculty and administration require knowledge on understanding veteran culture and services, an OPS (2014) or CDP (2015) training could be scheduled to address the identified gap in knowledge, rather than selecting and implementing an entire core or supplemental program to meet this need. However, all recommendations are contingent upon individual resources and expected outcomes identified in phase two.

Overall, the Student Veterans’ Support Committee places core and supplemental programs into a framework or curriculum that helps meet the needs identified in the
TNA. At this point, institutions must consider how they will assess the program: what materials and resources are needed, develop objectives, identify main learning objectives, and determine how stakeholders can use their skills and resources to deliver the program.

**Phase Three: Plan and Develop Detailed Curricula**

Taylor (2003) outlined phase three of the PCD cycle. Phase three is based upon existing curriculum frameworks and contains flexible components such as developing learning outcomes that are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound (SMART), developing/writing detailed content, identifying and preparing learning materials, identifying learning methods, developing assessment/evaluation instruments. The overarching goal of each institution using this program is to support student veteran graduation. However, the overall goal must be divided into smaller goals. Once a framework is developed in phase three, smaller goals are labeled “learning outcomes,” to which the SMART acronym can be applied.

Changes in behavior or institutional policy are required for a learning outcome to occur (Taylor, 2003). The desired change is listed as a learning outcome, and described with SMART objectives. For example, the overarching goal of supporting student veteran graduation can be divided into implementing a core and supplemental program (e.g., specific), by next Spring (e.g., realistic, time-bound), that includes cultural competence training modules and tracking of student veteran graduation starting with students who start in the following fall semester (e.g., attainable). If the TNA identified faculty and administrators need to understand resources and veteran culture to effectively support graduation, an example of a SMART learning objective could be listed as follows:
By the end of program implementation, faculty and administration will demonstrate an understanding of veteran culture and how to connect student veterans to resources in the following two ways: 1. They can explain how to access available referral resources in the community listed in a veteran resource packet; 2. They can identify three key concepts related to veteran culture.

In summary, based upon the first three phases of PCD, the Student Veterans’ Support Committee will select programs to implement based on data gathered from multiple sources using a participatory process. The Student Veterans’ Support Committee delivers the program in phase four.

**Phase Four: Deliver Program**

Phase four includes planning and applying active and experiential teaching and learning methods to deliver programs. According to Taylor (2003), phase four is when program developers discover whether their content and materials have been created in ways that meet institutional needs. Taylor (2003) stated, “you should always expect the unexpected when it comes to the training itself” (p. 116). Even if all previous phases were conducted perfectly, unpredictable human variables can change the needs of each program. However, there are many ways the Student Veterans’ Support Committee can adapt, learn, and be flexible to avoid common pitfalls by strengthening their knowledge base, obtaining consultation, being open to feedback, and tracking data.

**Phase Five: Develop and Refine PCD Evaluation System**

Within PCD, and at phase five, evaluation must be distinguished from assessment. Taylor (2003) stated, “Evaluation is not assessment. Assessment measures the performance of individual learners and the knowledge, skills and attitudes/beliefs they
have acquired” (p. 135). Instead, evaluation is a continuous part of the PCD cycle that allows for constant refinement of the program.

Taylor (2003) suggested many options for evaluation. The context, input, process, and product (CIPP) model provides a way to divide and evaluate specific components of each program. The Student Veterans’ Support Committee evaluates each of the four CIPP domains to ensure specific components of the entire program are being delivered effectively. In addition, Taylor listed alternative evaluation methods that can be used throughout the entire PCD cycle in combination or isolation. These include:

- discussion with participants, informal conversation or observation, interviewing learners individually, evaluation forms, asking colleagues to observe you teaching in a class, video-taping your teaching, organizational documents, participant contract, performance test, questionnaire, self-assessment, written test. (Taylor, 2003, p. 141)

Assessment tools differ from the aforementioned evaluation examples. Assessment tools are often thought of as more objective because they are quantitative, but pass and fail tests may not actually be very helpful to learners (Taylor, 2003).

Questionnaire tests such as multiple-choice or matching is an option for assessing student learning. In addition, essay format or extended response questions are another assessment format. Practical testing can allow participants to demonstrate what they have learned. Taylor (2003) also suggested more informal methods such as a mood-o-meter, which lists faces from happy to sad in order for participants to express their feelings about a workshop or training. Written comments following training can also help to refine programs.

Each institution will determine how to assess their program based upon the attendees and type of program keeping in mind that the overarching goal of the program
is to support student veterans. Institutions may also wish to measure graduation. Measuring graduation has been difficult nationally (Cate, 2013) and this program has diverged from a standardized approach of assessing graduation, instead opting for support programs that may generalize to graduation if institutions do not have the ability or desire to track graduation rates. However, all programs will use the three main types of PCD evaluation to monitor their efforts. The three types of PCD evaluation are: monitoring, summative, and impact evaluation (Taylor, 2003).

**PCD Evaluation**

Once programs have been established for student veterans, they are assessed at regular intervals. The three main types of PCD evaluation (Taylor, 2003) methods are defined in the following section.

**Monitoring.** The ongoing process of assessing and reassessing the progress being made throughout the course, the direction in which the course is heading, and the speed at which the aims and learning outcomes are being achieved. Monitoring is a reflective process with attention to where programs can be modified for improvement. The aim of monitoring is to provide the basis for course improvement, to determine the need for modification, and ultimately to lay the foundations for future planning. It is a continuing process of critical reflection on experience leading to action (Taylor, 2003).

**Summative evaluation.** This is used to determine if learning objectives have been met. It occurs directly after programs have been implemented. For example, if a three-module course was created at an institution, a summative evaluation may include a post-survey after each module to assess whether or not attendees believed they met learning objectives. The program would be refined based upon the results.
**Impact evaluation.** This type of PCD evaluation will be the most critical assessment of whether or not a postsecondary institution has achieved sustainable results in their efforts to support student veteran graduation. Impact evaluation is conducted “when enough time has passed for longer term effects to emerge” (Taylor, 2003, p. 135). Using a questionnaire can assess all levels of the institution. For example, a questionnaire could be tailored to administration, staff, and student veterans to address the impact of programs after a period of time has elapsed, which allows the opportunity to assess sustainability and program effectiveness over time. However, questionnaires can be difficult to write (Taylor, 2003) and institutions may want to enlist the support of a stakeholder who has experience in survey creation and interpretation.

**Conclusion**

PCD provides a flexible framework for the Student Veterans’ Support Committee to implement programs to support student veterans. A five-phase PCD cycle provides a detailed description of how postsecondary institutions can collaborate with stakeholders, evaluate needs, identify how to meet those needs, and involve participants throughout the entire process. Importantly, PCD is a methodology that is done with participants, not to participants. Although the PCD framework is structured enough to provide direct guidance, it is recursive to allow modifications based upon evaluation that occurs throughout implementation. The next section builds upon the introduction to PCD and provides direct guidance on how postsecondary institutions can create and implement a program to support student veterans.
Applying PCD to Support Student Veterans

In this section, the PCD cycle described above is modified to support student veterans. The framework of PCD, or shell, remains and is utilized as a delivery system to map core and supplemental programs onto in order to assist with program implementation by providing institutions with a detailed, “how to” plan to support student veterans. Overall, this section provides further explanation than the introduction in two main ways:

1. PCD is explained in more detail, with specific processes outlined
2. Specific examples related to student veterans are presented

PCD starts with stakeholder involvement. Understanding the intersecting goals and discrepancies between stakeholders can inevitably be challenging. Therefore, a Student Veterans’ Support Committee is created comprised of a group of people or individual person to assist with organizing stakeholders. The Student Veterans’ Support Committee acts as a liaison between the postsecondary institution and individuals who are implementing programs. The Student Veterans’ Support Committee is tasked with carrying out functions integral to implementation such as aligning stakeholders to carry out program implementation. Roles and responsibilities of stakeholders are examined during the first phase of the PCD. Early understanding is key to clearing up difficulties between goals of individuals, and helping to focus and educate stakeholders of the specific goals designed to support student veteran graduation.

While programs inherently require a degree of abstraction, concrete steps are also required and can be even more helpful in long-term planning and engagement. This section provides concrete principles and techniques that can be modified and adapted.
These sections represent a high-level of organization and may be greatly modified, or even bypassed, to fit the needs, size, and support level from a particular organization. For example, if a postsecondary institution is only implementing a peer mentor program, or a transition assistance class for incoming veterans in their first quarter, the entire PCD cycle should be adapted accordingly to match the unique need. It may be helpful to remember these key principles as program developers read through the remainder of this program:

(a) Adapt the sections to meet the needs of your program.

(b) Although it is necessary to have the participation of veterans throughout your program, it is not necessary to complete all steps of each PCD phase in order.

(c) Based on needs, it may be helpful to scan back and forth through previous sections, select what is needed, and leave out what does not apply.

(d) Adapt and implement core and supplemental programs within the PCD cycle that match the needs of your postsecondary institution.

(e) Evaluation is a constant process. Maintain and collect data to allow for informed adjustments. PCD is a recursive process adjusting as it goes to meet goals based on data, feedback, and participation.

The phases, order, and specific charts are adapted from Taylor’s (2003) PCD methodology. Phases are combined with literature recommendations that are synthesized to create core and supplemental programs. An important emphasis within this approach is the participatory nature, which focuses on involving student veterans in the development and change process. Even if the motivation behind starting a program comes from a top-
down administrative request or a grant, this method still emphasizes and requires involving veterans in the change process.

**Considerations Based Upon Resources and Size of Postsecondary Institute**

Institutions must understand critical information prior to implementing their program. The number of veterans related to the total population of their institution can impact both resources and institutional support for creating programs. The size of an institution is important because it may relate to (a) number of veterans and (b) amount of resources. Due to the difference in resources between institutions, three sizes of institutions are described. The three sizes considered are small, medium, and large. Distinctions between each size category is arbitrary and subjective, but it remains important for developers to understand in order to assess relevant data such as the total percentage of veterans compared to population of the entire school, which can assist with garnering support from administrators to implement programs.

A small campus is defined as a having a student population of approximately 2,000 students or less. A medium campus is a site with the size between 2,000 and 10,000 students. Characteristics of a large campus may include a campus that has satellite locations, which may or may not be operating as part of the larger university system. A large campus can be defined as a campus with 10,000 or more students. The main purpose is to highlight the amount of resources an institution can provide, which may be directly related to the size and scope of the institution’s practice. Additionally, a campus size may not even correlate to the population of student veterans in attendance. For example, a school with approximately 5,000 students may have 15% of its population
defined as student veterans, while a school with 20,000 students may only have a little over 1% of its population identified as student veterans.

Due to variability and size of campuses, it is more effective to determine the percentage of veterans within the overall population of students prior to starting PCD. Student Veterans’ Support Committees may be able to have more resources allocated to support programs if veterans make up a larger population of the student body. Despite the size of the institution, mandatory elements within each program are:

1. Create a Student Veterans’ Support Committee for program development;
2. Involve veterans in program development;
3. Identify need for, and select core and supplemental programs;
4. Implement program through five-phase PCD cycle;
5. Evaluate program; and
6. Reassess and adapt as needed.

Initial Steps of PCD Cycle

Creating a Student Veterans’ Support Committee. The first step is to create a Student Veterans’ Support Committee. The Student Veterans’ Support Committee may only start with one person, but it is recommended that it is comprised of a group that should involve at least one student veteran representative. If choosing to start with only one person for expediency, continue to add people to the Student Veterans’ Support Committee as phase one progresses. During the initial steps of PCD, the Student Veterans’ Support Committee executes two main functions:

(a) Conduct awareness raising workshop

(b) Hold focus groups to identify needs of veterans on campus
The Student Veterans’ Support Committee will raise awareness and start the program by conducting the initial assessment of their postsecondary institution to determine additional interest. This could involve sending out an email, collaborating with existing veteran services, or reaching out to a student veteran club or group on campus. While a student veteran club may not yet exist on a small campus, faculty and staff may assist in identifying a student veteran on campus who is also interested in starting a program. The main message is to utilize all available resources to help gather the initial support for an awareness raising workshop, which will detail what PCD is and why it is needed. An awareness raising workshop allows further explanation of PCD to interested stakeholders. Sending out a focused email to faculty, staff, and students could identify interested stakeholders.

Once the Student Veterans’ Support Committee is formed PCD starts. Ideally, a single person, or designated group, reads this entire program then forms a Student Veterans’ Support Committee to carry out their own unique program. While it is strongly recommended that more than one person start the Student Veterans’ Support Committee, it is not necessary. Especially on small campuses, one person can start the initial PCD steps. An individual or group can assemble members to create the Student Veterans’ Support Committee, which can be assisted by holding workshops or meetings to highlight the need for student veteran support. After the Student Veterans’ Support Committee is selected, the next step is to conduct an awareness raising workshop that educates the Student Veterans’ Support Committee and additional participants about principals PCD and the need to support student veterans on campus. The awareness raising workshop utilizes information from the literature review contained within this dissertation and each
institution can build upon the literature review as additional information on student veterans becomes available. The Student Veterans’ Support Committee adapts the literature to match their institution by creating a presentation that demonstrates the need to support veterans.

In summary, the Student Veterans’ Support Committee is created in the following way:

1. An individual or group creates the Student Veterans’ Support Committee.
2. The Student Veterans’ Support Committee holds an awareness raising workshop.
3. The end goal of the workshop is to understand previous sections of this dissertation such as the literature review, PCD process, and support for core and supplemental programs.

**Student Veterans’ Support Committee conducts focus groups.** The Student Veterans’ Support Committee can garner support for completing a PCD cycle by developing a focus group. A focus group represents an option to identify needs, in addition to the training needs analysis (TNA) that will be described in further sections. A focus group can be initiated by advertising in a newsletter, flyers, or mass email. Depending upon the size of the school, focus groups must be tailored to gather enough information about the experiences of veterans that will assist program development. For example, at a small campus with only 10 veterans, a two-hour focus group may be enough to gauge the level of desire for a program to support veterans. However, a larger campus may require additional focus groups. No matter the size of the campus, it is
important to ask veterans what programs they would like on campus by having discussions about what are struggles and areas of success.

The Veterans Training Support Center [VTSC] (2013) recommends annual student veteran focus groups. The VTSC highlighted how listening to veterans specifically at their institution can allow institutions to identify areas in which they could have the biggest impact. Knowledge garnered from focus groups allow institutions to focus efforts and resources in a way that is most effective and addresses the idiosyncrasies of their specific organization because the information is delivered by veterans on their campus. VTSC (2013) listed the following examples of focus questions on their website:

1. What were some of the factors that made you want to attend courses at our institution? 2. Before coming to our institution, did you visit our website? 3. Did the website contain most of the information you needed in order to make a decision? 4. As a student veteran, how well do you feel supported by the institution? 5. Are you aware of the various services that are available to you on campus (writing center, tutoring services, disability services, etc.)? 6. In your opinion, what are some areas that the institution can better support you as a student and as a veteran? (Examples of Possible Focus Group Questions, para. 1)

Again, when engaging veterans, trauma-informed recommendations apply. This means truly listening to both their struggles and successes, asking about their military service and how that relates to their experience on campus, and finding out what the institution can do to support veterans. This gives “voice and choice” (SAMSHA, 2015) to veterans and is a collaborative endeavor. Specifically, providing open lines of communication give voice while choice implies the ability of the veteran to participate or not. Needs identified in the focus group inform selection and adaptation of core and supplemental programs.
Focus groups may not be necessary, but can be helpful. If there are veterans groups on campus that wish to be a part of a committee assembled to support student veterans, this could also occur. Trauma-informed program delivery recognizes the program should not be forced upon veterans, nor should veterans be pressured to disclose their experiences on campus. However, the institution should still act to meet needs of student veterans that have been identified in the literature review if the ability to do so is within their means. Not only is it unlikely all veterans on campus will participate in program development, it is also unnecessary. Postsecondary institutions can still act to support student veterans by implementing core and supplemental programs without requiring student veterans to engage in additional efforts beyond their academic requirements.

**Summary of Student Veterans’ Support Committee initial activities.** Prior to program development, it is essential to evaluate the need for a program, the readiness of the institution to support a program, and the general knowledge base of the campus on veterans issues. Although the literature review presented in this dissertation is essential for the Student Veterans’ Support Committee to know, is not necessary for the entire campus to understand. This is because the Student Veterans’ Support Committee can use the literature information to make informed administrative decisions. In a landscape of higher education that consistently has to deal with budget cuts, it is especially relevant and necessary to know key research that assists with garnering support for programs, what the institution is already doing to support veterans, and how the Student Veterans’ Support Committee can assist by providing support.
In addition to gathering data on the need for programs, the current landscape must be scanned for readiness and support. If an organization is dedicated to supporting veterans, it may not be as crucial for program developers to get the motivational “hooks” for administrators to desire or support a program. Although it is not always necessary to have administrators behind a program, it is strongly recommended and essential to involve key stakeholders in positions of power.

**Outcomes achieved during the start of the PCD cycle.** As PCD is starting and phase one begins to take shape, a Student Veterans’ Support Committee is now formed and acts as an executive team. At this point, the Student Veterans’ Support Committee is aware of:

(a) The literature on student veterans in higher education
(b) Needs of veterans within the institution identified during focus groups
(c) How the literature and focus group data can be addressed by using a PCD cycle to implement core and supplemental programs

**Phase One**

**Goals for phase one.** Phase one consists of several analyses in order to ultimately develop SMART goals and an initial plan that will be refined in phase two. Goals are informed by the needs identified within the literature review, focus groups, and survey data (explained in following sections). The initial plan contains the selected core and supplemental programs, and if applicable, other needs identified by the survey or focus group. Prior to creating goals and the development of an initial plan, the Student Veterans’ Support Committee conducts the awareness raising workshop where the
foundation of the program is started, followed by additional meetings/workshops where detailed analyses of the institution are conducted (Stakeholder, SWOT, and TNA).

**Key components of awareness raising workshops.** An awareness raising workshop is a meeting with a specific set of tasks. The Student Veterans’ Support Committee holds meetings to promote awareness of PCD and conduct analyses related to program development. During the initial workshop, people are given time to express their vision of what their program will look like. Additional workshops are held dependent upon the amount of time needed to complete analyses. The length of workshops could be an hour at a time, all day, or an entire weekend.

The awareness raising workshop brings together the Student Veterans’ Support Committee to set the foundation for the training to occur. The workshop is essentially a meeting with a focus on developing cohesion among the committee and outlining the beginning steps of program development. The committee should discuss their past experience of making courses or program development.

Veterans likely had previous experience in supervisory roles and management positions, which could have included implementing training programs or managing existing programs. For example, a veteran may have been in charge of training other military members in qualifying for rifle marksmen, which could have included providing training courses on gun safety, tracking progress of qualifications, and implementing tests or observing range scores to judge outcome. Listening to these experiences of veterans and helping translate these into program development is an essential task. Veterans may struggle with identifying how their past experience relates to civilian program
development and may find they have had many similar experiences that can help fellow veterans.

Another important function of conducting workshops is the initial stakeholder analysis, which is central to identifying collaborative sources of support. Stakeholders, both internal and external, are identified, their level of influence during program delivery is defined, and the responsibilities of each stakeholder at each time period of program development is delineated. Workshops are closed with a summary of the workshop and an action plan of steps to follow. The next sections detail how to conduct the following analyses that occur in phase one: (a) Stakeholder Analysis, (b) Situation Analysis, (c) SWOT analysis, (d) Needs Analysis, and (e) Survey data collection.

**Stakeholder analysis.** The next step is to conduct a stakeholder analysis. While some steps within the PCD cycle may be abbreviated, it is essential to know what resources exist both internal and external to campus for veterans by conducting a stakeholder analysis. An example of an external stakeholder analysis conducted by the Author for the Seattle, Washington geographic area is listed in Table 1.
Table 1

*Example of an External Stakeholder Analysis*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Services Provided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Veterans Training Support Center</td>
<td>Lynnwood, WA</td>
<td>Provides free trainings and events to educate professionals on best practices for serving veterans. Topics for college campuses include assisting veterans with disabilities and military cultural competence. Offers multiple trainings that can benefit university counseling center staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vet Centers</td>
<td>Everett, Seattle, and Tacoma, WA</td>
<td>Provides free counseling and readjustment services to eligible veterans and family members at no cost. Assists with filing Veterans Affairs forms to obtain benefits and provides referrals to community resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Veterans of America</td>
<td>Washington, D.C.</td>
<td>Advocacy organization consisting of over 1,200 student veteran-led chapters on campuses nationwide. Offers resources, trainings, and scholarships to student veterans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America</td>
<td>New York, NY</td>
<td>Advocacy organization that unites veterans to address common social and political issues affecting veterans. Offers multiple programs to assist and empower veterans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center for Deployment Psychology</td>
<td>Bethesda, MD</td>
<td>Provides University Counseling Center Core Competency (UC4) program to assist staff with providing services to student veterans.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* An external stakeholder analysis can be created based upon the sample by listing organization name, location, and services provided. Additional rows and columns are added as needed.
The analysis in Table 1 identifies community resources external to college campuses in Seattle, Washington. The Student Veterans’ Support Committee can adapt and use this initial analysis to match their geographic area. Although the analysis in Table 1 listed external stakeholders, internal stakeholders within the university must also be listed and can be modeled after the example created by the Author in Table 2.

Table 2

*Example of an Internal Stakeholder Analysis*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Services Provided to Veterans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Certifying Official</td>
<td>Financial Aid Office</td>
<td>Initiates, processes, tracks, and maintains GI Bill records and funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability Support Services</td>
<td>Resource Center</td>
<td>Provides accommodations, study strategies, one-on-one tutoring, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dean of Students</td>
<td>Student Affairs Office</td>
<td>Advocates on behalf of student concerns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Example of an internal stakeholder analysis listing position, location, and services provided. Each row and column is expanded upon to organize internal stakeholders unique to each postsecondary institution.

Once the initial stakeholder analysis is complete, the influence of stakeholders is evaluated. Stakeholder influence is important to understand to determine who needs to be involved and at what process of implementation. Taylor (2003, p. 60) created an outline of an importance and influence matrix that can be adapted to further evaluate stakeholders listed in Table 3.
Table 3

Example of an Importance and Influence Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Importance</th>
<th>Low Influence/Power</th>
<th>High Influence/Power</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Certifying Official</td>
<td>Veteran Family Members</td>
<td>Academic Dean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Veterans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Low Importance        | VFW Organization    | President            |

Note. An importance and influence matrix can be completed based upon the example to assist with understanding individuals and organizations that need to be involved during key PCD processes. Each row and column can be expanded upon to evaluate and organize stakeholders for reference and inclusion. Adapted from “How to Design a Training Course – A Guide to Participatory Curriculum Development,” by P. Taylor, 2003, p. 60. London: VSO/Continuum. Copyright 2003 by Voluntary Service Overseas.

Bryson and Patton (2010) recommended a creative method for completing the importance and power/influence grid. Participants start by drawing a grid on a large piece of paper and attaching it to a wall or placing it flat on a large table. Next, participants write the names of each stakeholder on a note card or sticky label. The note cards or labels listing the stakeholder names are then divided among participants. Each participant places where they think each stakeholder goes on the grid. Once all participants have placed their cards on the grid, a facilitator then polls all participants to judge the accuracy of placements. The group then moves the note cards or labels listing the stakeholders to the appropriate place until the Student Veterans’ Support Committee is satisfied. This exercise is followed by a discussion of the results.

Importance and influence is directly related to the quality of relationships the Student Veterans’ Support Committee creates with stakeholders. Taylor (2003) noted individuals or groups that have a high importance/low influence require direct attention to ensure their interests are met. For example, the table above notes the importance of
individual veterans and their families. When the Student Veterans’ Support Committee gathers data on what veterans desire, they must actively respond to protect their interests due to their low influence. Individuals with high importance/high influence require the Student Veterans’ Support Committee to create strong working relationships because their influence can hinder or greatly help the implementation of programs. These individuals require updates, consistent communication, and are notified of the progress of program implementation. In addition, individuals with high importance/high influence are key allies that can assist with pushing the program forward if roadblocks or difficulties occur. It is helpful if individuals with high importance and influence are included as early as possible in program creation and throughout development and implementation.

Overall, determining the power and influence of stakeholders can be especially helpful for the Student Veterans’ Support Committee. Using the power and influence grid helps program developers advance the cause of those who often have little influence over programs intended to assist them (Bryson, Cunningham, & Lokkesmoe, 2002). The grid also helps to identify individuals who can make rapid changes due to their influence. Those who are highly important and have a substantial amount of influence must be co-opted for a program to run effectively (Bryson & Patton, 2010). For example, setting up a meeting with the president of the campus (or another individual with high influence on a large campus) is highly necessary to receive a verbal approval or acceptance of the program even though the president may not be actively involved in any stages of implementation; it is essential high influence personnel are abreast of the program’s standing.
Closing the stakeholder analysis requires organization of information garnered from the previous steps. The Student Veterans’ Support Committee will organize the overall sections of program delivery and match which stakeholders apply to what sections. Table 4 is an example from Taylor (2003, p. 64) that has been modified to list where the stakeholders will be mapped onto the phases of supporting graduation.

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation Type</th>
<th>Control/Decision-Making</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage in PCD Cycle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial Development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning and Development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Note. Complete the template to assist with organizing stakeholder involvement during key processes of change. Columns and rows list type of involvement by each stakeholder at each stage in the PCD Cycle. Adapted from “How to Design a Training Course – A Guide to Participatory Curriculum Development,” by P. Taylor, 2003, p. 64. London: VSO/Continuum. Copyright 2003 by Voluntary Service Overseas. |

Once a full stakeholder analysis is complete validation occurs. A simple way to validate the stakeholder analysis is to contact each listed stakeholder. Asking the stakeholder what their function is related to veteran services helps to ensure it matches what the Student Veterans’ Support Committee believes the stakeholder provides. This is especially important within areas such as financial aid and receipt of benefits as staff may switch periodically and the person who handled processing of benefits may change.
Asking for clarification and additional information will provide the Student Veterans’ Support Committee with a more detailed explanation of services. When introducing yourself to stakeholders, it may be helpful to tell them you are conducting a stakeholder analysis and seeking to accurately identify their role on campus for assisting veterans. This is also a key opportunity to leave contact information and let the stakeholder know you may contact them in the future for more information. Establishing relationships between program developers early and maintaining them are essential for program efficacy.

Another benefit of validating the stakeholder analysis is to ascertain whether or not a specific internal or external agency performs the tasks they advertise. For example, agencies may no longer provide the same services they initially did or they may now offer more services that will help veterans. Internal stakeholders may also perform different functions than the Student Veterans’ Support Committee initially thought. Due to the large influx of veterans on college campuses, new positions may be created or augmented, which could require further clarification of the functions of stakeholders. Therefore, keep in mind the stakeholder analysis is recursive and the main function is to establish relationships with stakeholders and inform them of your program goals. Initial contact may be more helpful if the focus is on establishing a relationship and asking questions with open curiosity, taking notes, and being attentive to how the services provided by each stakeholder directly relates to assisting student veterans with graduation.

The working draft of the stakeholder analysis is established once the role and function of each stakeholder has been clarified. While validating the stakeholder analysis,
the Student Veterans’ Support Committee may become aware of additional stakeholders, both internal and external, that can help assist program development, which are added to the stakeholder analysis; therefore it is important to highlight that stakeholder analysis may be a recursive process.

**Situation analysis.** A situation analysis evaluates the context where programs will be applied. It builds upon stakeholder analysis by exploring the setting of where the programs will be implemented. The Student Veterans’ Support Committee will determine how the environment both supports and impedes the implementation of their program designed to support veterans. The Student Veterans’ Support Committee formulates questions about how the social and political climate of the institution interfaces with initiating and sustaining programs for veterans. A situational analysis is a brief exercise that generates organizational thinking and understanding.

The Student Veterans’ Support Committee can use both formal and informal methods depending on the size of the institution to complete a situation analysis. For example, a small technical institute could informally discuss the support systems on campus. This could be a discussion of stakeholder commitment to establishing a veteran space on campus, where the possible spaces could be, and who needs to be contacted to obtain the space. However, formal methods such as a SWOT analysis will create an effective picture of organizational context.

**SWOT analysis.** A strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis can be the “difference between a rather superficial analysis and a really penetrating examination of a situation” (Taylor, 2003, p. 67). The Student Veterans’ Support Committee utilizes a SWOT analysis completing the worksheet illustrated in
Table 5. The Student Veterans’ Support Committee lists the perceived barriers and supports to program implementation. Following completion, Student Veterans’ Support Committee members discuss how aspects of the SWOT analysis will impact program implementation, and evaluate strategies to reduce the impact of weaknesses and threats.

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Template for Conducting a SWOT Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strengths</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opportunities</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* List strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) under each corresponding heading to analyze the organizational context related to successful implementation of support programs. Adapted from “How to Design a Training Course – A Guide to Participatory Curriculum Development,” by P. Taylor, 2003, p. 69. London: VSO/Continuum. Copyright 2003 by Voluntary Service Overseas.

**Identifying knowledge gaps through a needs analysis.** The gap in what the institution has and what it needs consists of the target area where the program is implemented to achieve goals. Getting from point A to point B requires identification of what the knowledge gap is. It is at this point the program diverges and begins to engage veterans by listening to what exactly the gap is and what can be done. This could occur by the committee conducting a focus group or using surveys to ask veterans what is needed to get the committee to achieve its goals. Following the engagement and gathering of the data, or gap to be addressed by the program, data report summaries are used to share the results to all stakeholders and maintain transparency.
A training needs analysis (TNA), or needs analysis, is conducted by asking veterans what services they require to assist them with graduation. Although a TNA can be very complicated and nuanced (Taylor, 2003), it is adapted within this program to keep the focus of the program on the voice of veterans. Therefore, veterans will be asked what they need on campus, which may overlap with components of core and supplemental programs or require an additional program unique to their campus. The Student Veterans’ Support Committee conducts a needs analysis by adapting or using the sample survey in Appendix A. It is the Student Veterans’ Support Committee’s task to determine what can be implemented based upon what the stakeholders can do, and what the SWOT analysis has determined the resources within the community and on campus can provide.

**Data collection through surveys.** Survey questions should be single-barreled (contain one subject, combined with a forced choice option to provide clear results) so they can be readily interpreted (see survey sample in Appendix A). Asking open-ended questions may provide a lot of data, which can be more difficult and time consuming to analyze. A quality survey combines data gleaned within a literature review with resources that stakeholders can provide; therefore, it is not helpful to ask veterans about specific services they need if the Student Veterans’ Support Committee does not have the ability to provide them. A few open-ended questions at the end of the survey may be useful to obtain data, however, the program is more about delivery and action, rather than assessing the overall climate for veterans at the institution.

Common mistakes that can be avoided when writing a survey include:

(1) The question asks about more than one thing, (2) Some of the terms used are not familiar to some respondents, (3) The response options are not mutually
exclusive, (4) the questions with scales do not offer balanced alternatives, (5) The information asked for is redundant because it can be obtained from another source, (6) Not all respondents will have the same interpretation of the question, (7) The time frame is not clearly stated or is not reasonable for recall questions, (8) There will be little variation in response because almost everyone will provide the same answer, (9) The question contains a double negative, (10) The question asks respondents to rank too many items or to do some other difficult task, (11) The possible answers include an unnecessary “don’t know,” “no opinion,” or neutral opinion, (12) The intervals for numerical response options are not reasonable, (13) The wording seems to advocate a particular answer (that is, it leads the respondents). (Newcomer & Triplett, 2010, p. 282).

Newcomer and Triplett (2010) also encouraged survey designers to leave out a “no opinion” or “don’t know” option, stating “Recent cognitive studies have indicated that respondents who choose these options could, if encouraged, provide substantive answers” (p. 282).

Identifying what is needed serves as the initial baseline measurement to evaluate program effectiveness. Using a survey will allow the Student Veterans’ Support Committee to ask student veterans what it is exactly that they need to assist them with graduation; however, the Student Veterans’ Support Committee is not going into survey development “blind.” An example of a forced choice, single-barreled survey created by the Author is based upon Newcomer and Triplett’s (2010) recommendations and listed in Appendix A. Key words and phrases listed in the survey should be clarified. Specifically, the term veteran may need to be elaborated at the top of the survey.

Additional surveys can be developed that also ask faculty or staff members what information they need to provide services to help support graduation. There are multiple web based platforms to develop surveys (listed in further sections) and the Student Veterans’ Support Committee can select one that is either offered by the institution or create their own.
Resources and time for survey development. Avoiding duplication of efforts is a key part of program implementation (Wolff, 2010). When creating a survey, utilize resources that have already been created and ensure they fit the culture of the institution. For example, the survey listed in Appendix A can be adapted or a survey found online could be modified. This can save a lot of time and resources.

Survey delivery should be web-based or completed as part of a focus group. Difficulties related to delivering the needs survey may include accessing emails of veterans. This can be bypassed by sending the survey through the certifying official who has access to veterans using the GI Bill benefits. The certifying official can also give the total number of veterans on campus. Although a survey return rate of approximately 50-70% is generally accepted as more valid (Newcomer & Triplett, 2010) and less affected by non-response bias, the Student Veterans’ Support Committee needs to have a timeline and may have to take action with the responses they receive.

Sampling also must be determined. Key questions related to selecting a sample follow: Do you want to survey the entire veteran population? Do you want to survey an entire focus group? Do you want to survey financial aid or faculty? If the Student Veterans’ Support Committee wants to focus the survey on identifying if a specific program is needed, they should select their sampling based upon what they are implementing. For example, if they are implementing a transition program, the population under study could be financial aid staff, professors, members of a campus wide welcome or transition program being provided specific resources about veterans. Overall, a narrow selection of the population who is directly being affected by specific programs will yield higher response rates than attempting to survey all veterans.
Incentives for survey completion. Adding incentives can increase response rate for surveys. Newcomer and Triplett (2010) listed the following key tips for creating incentives to increase response rates:

1. Incentives are more effective with self-administered surveys
2. Response rate gains are the same when using either prepaid or promised incentives with telephone or face-to-face surveys
3. Money is more effective than gifts (equal in value) for all modes of data collection
4. A positive linear relationship exists between money and response rate
5. On average, there is a one-third percentage point gain in response rate per dollar spent on incentives in telephone surveys
6. On mail surveys, incentives have been found to increase response rates as much as 20 percentage points
7. The more burdensome a survey is, the more effective incentives are. (p. 278)

After collecting survey data and identifying student veteran needs on campus, the Student Veterans’ Support Committee implements requests. It is important to note that just because student veterans may ask for something within a survey, it does not mean they will utilize the services once they are implemented, which may be especially true on a campus with a small amount of veterans. Therefore, combining requests with core and supplemental programs may increase the chances that veterans utilize and benefit from support programs.

Presenting findings of needs survey. Communication with stakeholders and their involvement is key. Data from the survey is presented to gain support for implementing the requests of student veterans. Although it is important not to skew or misrepresent the survey data, selecting what to report should be based on demonstrating value and gaining support. The most salient point of data to include is who completed the survey, the response rates, and how the needs identified within the survey can be addressed by implementing core and supplemental programs on campus. List weaknesses of the survey.
at the end of presentation, but also list ways to compensate and ways to make the data
generalizable and valuable to stakeholders.

Forums for presentation are key. It is suggested stakeholders with high
importance, influence, and power receive the results because information from survey or
focus groups can be asked for in these forums/ settings. It is important to note there is a
common misconception between strict academic information or data and action. For
example, presenting statistics is not the only way to gain support and organizations may
be more supportive of data that is presented in a way that is congruent with the
institution’s values.

Developing a proposal presentation with an emotional pull, supported by
meaningful data may be the most effective way to receive support from stakeholders.
Examples include making the data fit the mission of the institution as a whole, or holding
the participants accountable to core values of the institution, or asking the forum what
made them want to be an educator, leader or interested in veterans in the first place and
tying the presentation to capitalize on those values or interests, while making values
congruent with the purpose of implementing programs.

**Initial Action Plan.** Throughout the program, action plans can clearly delineate
responsibility and accountability. The Student Veterans’ Support Committee completes
action plans following meetings or conversations about future steps of program
implementation. Action plans list what is to be done, by whom, how, and when. An
example of an action plan template created by Taylor (2003, p. 65) is listed in Table 6.
Table 6

Template for Conducting an Action Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action (to do)</th>
<th>By whom</th>
<th>By when</th>
<th>Where</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Note. The sample action plan template can be completed to assist with organization and accountability. List the details associated with each specific action under each column. Add additional rows for each action as needed. Adapted from “How to Design a Training Course – A Guide to Participatory Curriculum Development,” by P. Taylor, 2003, p. 65. London: VSO/Continuum. Copyright 2003 by Voluntary Service Overseas.

Outcomes at the end of phase one. Outcomes at the end of phase one include completed analyses (stakeholder, situation, and SWOT) and assessment of needs based upon surveys and focus groups. Additional outcomes are the result of analyses and needs assessment and include SMART goals and the initial action plan. Once stakeholders are cognizant of the needs of veterans on campus and the initial plan is created, the Student Veterans’ Support Committee starts phase two. Phase two begins with matching the needs of veterans and the institution with core and supplemental programs. Phase two also contains the format in which the programs are implemented.

Phase Two: Develop Program Outline

Information garnered during the first phase becomes sifted, sorted, and organized in phase two. The Student Veterans’ Support Committee views the data from phase one in its entirety to determine what programs to select, how to avoid duplication of efforts, how to increase collaboration, and how to set up the initial framework for the delivery of the program.

Needs survey and focus group data determine what core and supplemental programs are selected. Additionally, the Student Veterans’ Support Committee selects
from the list of core and supplemental programs based upon what was identified within the needs survey and focus groups. Selection of programs is based upon resources and the stakeholder support garnered in phase one. Overall, the stakeholder and SWOT analyses are used in combination with the needs survey and focus groups to select the individual programs that make up their main program.

The main program is designed under the designation of a training course to be delivered by the Student Veterans’ Support Committee to participants. Participants are anyone who is the target of the delivery of the program, which can be faculty, veterans, or support staff. Within phase two, the Student Veterans’ Support Committee begins to develop the framework related to how the programs will be delivered. As part of this effort, phase two involves developing learning outcomes, aims, topics, content areas, the method of delivery programs, and what resources are required to train the postsecondary institution on how to support student veteran graduation.

Once the Student Veterans’ Support Committee has selected core and supplemental programs to create the overall program, the course format is decided. Options include module based, stand-alone single training event, or an ongoing training course that acts as the vessel to deliver a core or supplemental program. A standalone course is a good option if the content can be presented in a day or less. However, module based delivery of programs can be a better fit for a weekend training or multiple day event.

**Incorporate Existing Programs/Resources**

Importantly, do components of the selected programs exist within the community and can they be included in your program without duplicating services that are already
offered veterans? The Student Veterans’ Support Committee makes this determination based upon the results of the stakeholder analysis. For example, if stakeholders are already providing a cost-effective component of a desired program, do not duplicate; instead, collaborate with the stakeholder to incorporate their services within the framework of the program.

The stakeholder analysis is key in identifying external stakeholders that provide services for veterans. Reach out to these organizations to ask what resources they provide veterans and how they could tailor these resources to match the requests of veterans on campus. It is recommended relationships be established prior to asking organizations to provide services, however, asking an organization what services they provide veterans may be the initial step to forming a relationship. This could have been done during the stakeholder analysis validation, which is a key time to notify external stakeholders you may call them back to ask for participation. Therefore, having a set mission statement, quality contact information such as business cards, and clear goals can assist with easing the transition from initial contact to sustained partnerships with stakeholders.

**Identify Partnerships to Avoid Duplication of Efforts**

The stakeholder analysis is key to avoiding duplication of efforts. Scan the community to identify what is offered, and by whom, to assist with meeting the needs identified in the needs survey(s) and focus group(s). Avoiding competition and meeting the needs identified by external stakeholders helps with both resources and reducing duplication of existing services. Being holistic and participatory requires collaboration. Scanning the community for non-profits, or agencies, that may deliver components of your program is essential in being both holistic and saving money.
Some organizations may provide resources at no cost to the community. For example, VTSC (2013) provides training and continuing education credits for mental health and direct service providers in the Seattle, Washington area. Courses are offered to campuses and training on topics such as disability accommodations and cultural competency. Thus, it becomes a duplication of effort to create your own program if you live in an area that provides the service already. Additionally, it is worth the effort to ask stakeholders if they will provide pro-bono or reduced cost services.

**Design Program Framework**

Once partnerships have been established and created, duplication of efforts avoided, and an outline for what topics or programs will be offered by whom, both internal and external, the shape of the program has started to take place. At this point, synthesis of the data is needed. Bring together all resources (what external and internal stakeholders are providing) and match to a timeline that incorporates the course type (i.e., module and/or stand-alone) into a detailed structure (see example in Figure 8). In summary, phase two is complete when the Student Veterans’ Support Committee has organized the following aspects of the program framework:

(a) Match the needs identified in phase one to core and supplemental programs.

(b) Avoid duplication of efforts by meeting needs through external resources and partnerships.

(c) Create course framework based upon programs selected (see sample in Figure 8).

(d) List aims and outcomes within course framework.
In order to organize who will be doing what and when, topics and programs are now divided and names placed on who is providing what training or who is delivering what specific program. This lists both external and internal stakeholders who are providing the programs to ensure accountability. Within an outline, aims or expected outcomes are also listed.

Listing the aims and outcomes provides accountability for implementation. Each program should be delivered to address a need of the campus and/or student veteran population. Listing what the need being addressed is helps the Student Veterans’ Support Committee remain accountable to stakeholders, stay organized, and track how they are specifically addressing needs. The overall aim is to support student veterans, which can be narrowed based upon the needs of each institution. An example of a more narrowly focused aim that matches core and supplemental programs could be listed as follows: To support graduation by tracking graduation rates, to provide annual cultural competence training, and implement a mentorship program.

The sample table adapted from Taylor (2003) is presented in Table 7 and can be modified in order to meet the specific programs selected by each postsecondary institution. The main takeaway for the Student Veterans’ Support Committee is to remain organized, avoid duplication of efforts, and actively track what programs are addressing each specific need identified during phase one. Table 7 is provided as guidance for creating a program framework and can be modified as needed.
Table 7

*Example Program Framework*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Aim</th>
<th>Organization Responsible</th>
<th>Resources Required</th>
<th>Date of Completion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mentorship</td>
<td>Reduce social isolation</td>
<td>Student Veterans’ Support Committee</td>
<td>Mentors, meeting space, time management</td>
<td>October 25, 2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* The example program framework can be completed by listing the aim, responsible organization, resources, and date of completion in order to create a succinct, detailed document listing the function and key components of each program. Add additional rows for each program. Adapted from “How to Design a Training Course – A Guide to Participatory Curriculum Development,” by P. Taylor, 2003, p. 93. London: VSO/Continuum. Copyright 2003 by Voluntary Service Overseas.

**Transitioning to Phase Three**

Once the programs have been selected and listed during phase two, transitioning into phase three requires focusing on outcomes. Phase three focuses more narrowly on the details of what the programs are expected to achieve. Specific outcomes are established and serve as the baseline to measure how successful programs are following implementation in phase four. So far, the Student Veterans’ Support Committee should have selected programs in phase one and designed a program framework in phase two in which each program is listed in the format provided in Table 8. Phase three provides detailed steps on how to establish specific outcomes, identify resources required to deliver programs, and develop a budget.

**Phase Three: Plan and Develop Detailed Program Framework**

During phase three, the abstract components of the program become specific. At this point, the Student Veterans’ Support Committee has identified the landscape of their postsecondary institution and external resources. Core and supplemental programs have been selected and listed within a framework. The aim of each program has been
identified and the Student Veterans’ Support Committee has ensured the programs they are providing do not duplicate existent programs. Overall, the Student Veterans’ Support Committee has selected programs and a framework for delivery; phase three requires listing goals to be achieved by implementing programs. Specifically, this requires the Student Veterans’ Support Committee to identify how they are supporting veterans with programs and what is expected following program implementation. This requires going beyond simply listing aims of the programs, which was conducted at the end of phase two.

**Learning Outcomes**

First, learning outcomes are identified. Learning outcomes are defined as the results or what the participants (recipients of programs) will know following the aspects of program implementation. Taylor (2003) reported learning outcomes can be difficult because it is almost impossible to predict what participants will actually learn through program implementation. Although it is necessary to develop specific, concrete, and measureable learning outcomes, flexibility is needed as stakeholders participate in helping to develop and shape the outcomes.

**Collaborative Development of Learning Outcomes**

Learning outcomes can be developed collaboratively and also depend on the context, budget, and scope of what core and supplemental programs have been selected, although key principals of learning outcomes will occur across all programs no matter what the size or scope of program implementation. According to Taylor (2003, p. 95), learning outcomes must:

1. Be written in terms of the learner. This means that they should express what the learner will be able to do after the course or learning experience.
2. Identify the desired behavior by name and specify behavior, which can be observed. It must be possible to assess the activity in some way.
3. State the conditions or restrictions under which the desired behavior will occur.
4. Include a criterion or performance standard, which the learner must achieve to be considered acceptable.

The Student Veterans’ Support Committee and select stakeholders hold workshops or meetings to identify collaborative goals related to each selected core and supplemental program. The Student Veterans’ Support Committee can be more efficient by refining initial goals to have them conform to the SMART acronym of specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, time-bound. Here are examples of SMART goals for student-veteran specific programs:

1. By the end of the cultural competency training for student veterans, attendees will be able to recognize common misunderstandings related to military service that impact their college experience.
2. By the end of the community resources training, peer mentors will be able to list five resources to assist student veterans with transitions.
3. Following the two-day workshop, attendees will pass a group, post-test comprised of questions related to student veteran difficulties in the domains of transitioning into college, sustaining enrollment, adapting to common difficulties veterans face in staying in school, methods to engage veterans, ways to assist veterans in transitioning out of college and into the workforce.

Learning outcomes are identified as higher and lower ordered. Taylor (2003) listed six levels of learning ranging from lower to higher: “1. knowledge 2. comprehension 3. application 4. analysis 5. synthesis 6. evaluation” (p. 97).
Consideration of each level is key and should be done from lower to higher in order to have more effective learning occur. Training is less effective when participants need knowledge, yet the program involves application. For example, stakeholders need to have the knowledge of what specific difficulties veterans face on campus prior to asking them to synthesize multiple difficulties and apply interventions to assist with graduation. Therefore, in example number three listed above, the two day workshop would attend to lower level training needs such as giving definitions, gaining knowledge, and then demonstrating the knowledge learned in a group post-test. Assessing lower and higher level components of learning requires different means of evaluation. Programs delivered on campus will most likely require knowledge, comprehension, and application from most stakeholders (especially student veterans), although the Student Veterans’ Support Committee is required to have an analytic, synthetic, and evaluative understanding throughout program implementation.

A table can list a core or supplemental program, and what the desired learning outcome is. List the outcome as a SMART goal according to the examples adapted from Taylor (2003, p. 100) in Table 8. Each selected core or supplemental program is listed in the left column and the SMART learning outcome is listed in the right column.
Table 8

*Template for Listing Each Program and SMART Learning Outcome*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>SMART Learning Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mentorship Program</td>
<td>By the end of the mentorship community resources training, peer mentors will be able to list five resources to assist student veterans with transitions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Competency Program</td>
<td>One-hour cultural competency training attendees will be able to recognize common misunderstandings related to military service that impact their college experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Veteran Competency Program</td>
<td>Following the two-day workshop, attendees will pass a group, post-test comprised of questions related to student veteran difficulties in the domains of transitioning into college, sustaining enrollment, adapting to common difficulties veterans face on campus, methods to engage veterans, and ways to assist veterans in transitioning out of college and into the workforce.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Adapt the sample template by listing each program in the left column and the expected specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-bound (SMART) outcome in the right column. Additional rows and columns can be added in order to modify the template to serve organizational needs. Adapted from “*How to Design a Training Course – A Guide to Participatory Curriculum Development,*” by P. Taylor, 2003, p. 100. London: VSO/Continuum. Copyright 2003 by Voluntary Service Overseas.

**Select Content, Identify Materials, and Implement Methods of Program Delivery**

Learning outcomes shape how each program is implemented. However, more than SMART goals are needed. The specific content, teaching and learning methods, and learning materials need to be identified in order to achieve the learning outcome. The following depiction in Figure 10 is adapted from Taylor (2003, p. 102).
Figure 2. Model demonstrating the creation of learning outcomes. The model demonstrates how learning outcomes are created by integrating program content, materials, and teaching and learning methods. Learning outcomes are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-bound (SMART) because they are based upon a practical evaluation of multiple resource inputs. Adapted from “How to Design a Training Course – A Guide to Participatory Curriculum Development,” by P. Taylor, 2003, p. 102. London: VSO/Continuum. Copyright 2003 by Voluntary Service Overseas.

**Program Content**

First, select the content. The longer and more complicated the program, the more difficult selecting the content may be and this depends on final output or learning outcomes when selecting the content for training and program development. PCD asks what the learner needs first, before adding content (Taylor, 2003). Therefore, using the learning outcomes and keeping the end goals in mind helps the Student Veterans’ Support Committee select what content is required to meet the learning objectives.

Taylor (2003) recommended a useful technique to help content match learning outcomes in an effective way when a lot of content is required. Taylor set priorities for
content in the following three categories to divide a large amount of detail and add efficiency:

(a) content participants must know

(b) content participants should know

(c) content participants could know (not explicitly required, but would be nice to know)

Content participants must know is given precedence. The knowledge, skills, and attitudes/beliefs (KSAB’s) required to achieve learning outcomes takes priority. For example, when implementing a mentorship program, mentors need to not only have the attitudes and beliefs related to having values that relate to increasing human connection, but they also must be provided with skills to assist with connecting with veterans and the knowledge of how to provide available resources to veterans. Individuals with varying roles also require diverse KSAB’s. For example, if implementing a program to connect veterans to mental health services, faculty may only need the knowledge of how to provide resources, while individuals involved in a transition program will be required to develop relational skills in addition to attitudes and beliefs that connect veterans with mental health services without conveying stigma. Once KSAB’s are identified, the content is sequenced to assist with learning and program implementation.

**Sequence the Content**

Each program implemented may require the Student Veterans’ Support Committee to hold a workshop or meet with participants to educate those who assist with implementation on the purpose of the program. The level of knowledge provided by the Student Veterans’ Support Committee will vary depending on what core or supplemental
programs are being provided. For example, implementing day care services may require less teaching than implementing a transition program. Taylor (2003) recommended four rules for sequencing content. Each have been adapted to apply to student veterans.

1. Start with simple information prior to moving to complex information. Key definitions and concepts should be explained prior to moving on to complex information that requires synthetic thinking.

2. Use an organized timeline such as matching the programs to the academic calendar. Integrate literature in a timeline that matches the academic calendar year. Show how veterans enter in the fall and face common difficulties. As the year progresses, show how continued resources are needed, and how these differ as student veterans get closer to graduation or transition into the next academic year. This will help organize content by sequencing training to match needs during the entire academic year.

3. Identify what the postsecondary institution already knows about student veterans. Ask what participants believe makes it difficult for student veterans to graduate. Move from this knowledge into what participants do not know. Assist in integration of the new knowledge by augmenting it to what they already know. Engage participants to share their knowledge while providing additional knowledge to synthesize.

4. Make content specific to populations on campus who already provide services to veterans as a direct part of their job. For example, financial aid, or faculty, university counseling centers, peer mentors, or alumni may already provide unique services and programs to veterans. Starting with what
these populations already do and then building upon that can assist with sequencing to higher level synthesis that incorporates new knowledge and delivery of services to student veterans.

**Methods of Teaching and Learning**

Many of the core and supplemental programs involve a teaching and learning aspect. External stakeholders who provide programs may already have set ways of teaching; however, internal stakeholders can benefit from tailoring their presentations to provide effective learning principals. Taylor (2003) stated, “teachers should think more about learner-learning than teacher-teaching” (p. 104). Taylor was speaking of being an effective facilitator who engages participants by making the material enjoyable. Topics related to veterans issues may be emotionally taxing, such as discussions of trauma, which may require the presenter to space the material on trauma or limit exposure depending on the context and audience.

Understanding bias and keeping a balanced discussion when talking about results of war may be difficult. When talking about a strongly emotionally charged topic such as invisible and visible injuries of war, the audience may have personal experience that can both add great depth to the conversation or detract if tangential and time consuming. Therefore, strong facilitation skills such as tactful redirection and understanding common misconceptions asked about military service can assist with the flow of the presentations.

When implementing programs, select internal stakeholders to present who have a strong facilitation background and knowledge of the topic under discussion. Although it is likely there are many internal stakeholders with teaching backgrounds at postsecondary institutions, these facilitators can benefit from exploring topics related to facilitating
veteran related activities. These could be developing cultural competency in areas such as
the branches of the services, common military terms and vocabulary, and involving a co-
facilitator who is a veteran. These extra steps may help the audience identify with both
the materials and the facilitator.

Involving student veterans to facilitate material on veteran issues in academia is
highly recommended. This is a form of direct engagement and also assists the veteran in a
way to give voice to their experience. It is important not to put a facilitator outside their
comfort zone or have them speak about a topic they may be having emotional difficulty
with, including student veterans. If a student veteran is presenting on a topic and they do
not have a lot of experience with presentations, it may be helpful to add a co-facilitator
who can assist with the development of presentation format.

The format of delivering knowledge does not always have to be lecture based or
occur in the traditional “facilitator stands in the front of the class” and tells the audience a
set of rote procedures to accomplish tasks. Instead, the learning should be participatory
and contain a variety of methods that may better fit the topic and audience. Taylor (2003)
recommended the following learning methods or ways facilitators can present the data:

practical activities, questions and answers, lectures or presentations,
visualization, individual exercises and assignments, opinion exchange and
discussion, problem-solving exercises, demonstrations, group activities, case
studies, projects, role-plays, experiments, simulations, excursions. (p. 106)

Matching learning methods helps with delivery of content in a way that enhances
the learning of participants. For example, if facilitators are raising awareness about sexual
assault rates of women in the military, showing sections of the film “The Invisible War”
(Dick, Ziering, & Barklow, 2012) may be more effective than having an open discussion
or class lecture because participants may be more receptive to the visual presentation than listing statistics in a power point format.

At this stage in the program, the Student Veterans’ Support Committee and stakeholders should have an outline of what topics, training, programs, seminars, or module formats they plan to implement and begin to match the presentation style to make the training learning directed, participatory, and focused on the most effective delivery of content. Further examples on methods of teaching and learning will be elaborated upon in phase four when the delivery of the program is discussed.

**Teaching and Learning Materials**

Utilizing materials to engage participants, in addition to matching the format of delivery to the topics being presented, can increase the effectiveness of learning. Taylor (2003) recommended “posters, slides, photographs, TV and videos, handouts, overhead transparencies, drawings on a board, cartoons, written case studies, games and so on” (p. 106). Creating materials may be time-consuming and it is important to examine the cost and benefit. Scanning the web for slide formats, YouTube videos, or searching a library may prove useful. Making a video that is unique to your institutions may be very helpful, but weighing the costs with the benefits is necessary especially if a similar video has already been created that could suffice and get a similar message across.

If materials are used, ensure they are durable and not time-bound. For example, spending a lot of time to make a video that only applies for one quarter or semester, or to a specific event, is not advised. Instead, making a video that could be generalized to future students, such as a video of veterans describing their transitions into the college environment would apply for years to come. Poster boards, tri-folds, and handouts should
also contain current information that does not often change so that materials do not have
to be created and re-created many times as things change. For example, listing the
specific title of a person and their phone number may be better than listing a name of a
person in a position that rapidly changes because this could be mentioned within the
presentation and left off of the materials.

Taylor (2003) recommended the following considerations when deciding on
preparation of materials:

Establish the purpose of the materials and the target audience; Decide the general
types of materials needed, Identify the learning outcomes which the materials will
support, Decide the content which the materials will deliver, and which teaching
methods will be used with the materials, Organize the presentation; choose and
attractive format and style, Test prototype materials with learners and change the
materials if necessary, Think of how you will assess whether the materials have
been effective in your training course, Use the materials in your training course,
Revise them if necessary. (p. 107)

Program Proposal and Budget

A program proposal assists with data organization and communication of program
goals to stakeholders. This can be done by listing individual core and supplemental
programs, or by listing all planned sections of the program that will be implemented
during the academic calendar year or beyond. The proposal should include the following
elements adapted from Taylor (2003, pp. 109–110):

1. The title of the overall program. Examples could be, “Supporting Student
Veterans on Campus 2016 - 2017” or “Peer Mentor Program for Student
Veterans.” The first title reflects a program that may have many core and
supplemental programs, while the latter title may be the entire program of a
small postsecondary institution.
2. Key individuals involved in the program (total number, role, title, position).
3. Proposed logistics (location of trainings, events, or gatherings, times, dates)
4. Why the program is needed and the rationale for implementation. (Did the
literature identified the need? Was a specific program requested during a focus
group or through a survey? Is the training from a reputable organization that
states it would help veterans on our campus? Is there outcome data on a
specific program that an external stakeholder will present on campus? Do the benefits of implementation outweigh costs?) These key questions are salient when presenting the proposal to administrators and campus leadership who have the ability to support the program.

5. What is the aim of the proposal? The learning outcomes are critical here. Remember the SMART goals to specifically list what the training will aim to improve and how this is proposed to support student veteran graduation. The aims directly address number four listed above, which should flow from the rationale of the program (why this is needed) to how the program aims to address these requests. It is important to demonstrate how the aims of the program add value to the postsecondary institution.

6. Framework for the training that incorporates previous components of phase three such as: SMART learning outcomes, content, methods of teaching and learning, learning materials and resources, and time frame to completion.

7. A practical budget (listed in following section).

8. Evaluation procedure. How will you know if programs are working; what is considered success in your program? Remember to set these goals SMART; be realistic about how it will be evaluated and do not promise lofty expectations to stakeholders; remain remaining optimistic and positive.

9. Follow-up and reassess previous components. It may help to relate the program to other activities you plan on doing or programs that have already been implemented for student veterans. In addition, the program may be a pilot to test the engagement or participation that will inform future implementation of additional programs proposed.

The aforementioned elements are the crux of the program and culmination of steps thus far. At this point the Student Veterans’ Support Committee has answered key questions that must be addressed prior to program implementation. The program proposal becomes a working document to “pitch” to stakeholders and gatekeepers on campus who can assist with implementation. The more detailed the proposal, the more effective it is in communicating purpose, organization, and sustainability of the program.

Organizing the program proposal in a cogent manner that clearly communicates the intention of the program, its need and rational for existence, the requests of veterans, the literature recommendations, and a detailed program curricula with specific learning outcomes helps the Student Veterans’ Support Committee state what they are going to do and how they are going to do it. It is key to relate the program to the mission of the
school or other successful programs that have been conducted for other student populations, or how the program may fit within another larger program aimed at multicultural student populations, first generation students, or additional students who are at risk for dropping out of school.

Importantly, the proposal is a strong working draft that may allow the Student Veterans’ Support Committee to co-opt additional members. It is likely once the program is in this stage and a lot of the initial work has been completed, people may more likely assist with the program now that roles are clear, and programs are listed, which can allow the Student Veterans’ Support Committee to ask for resources and show the value of implementing the program. The “ask” within the proposal could be for assistance, or the Student Veterans’ Support Committee may be missing a gap in the proposal they are asking the postsecondary institution to fill. For example, the Student Veterans’ Support Committee may ask for money or personnel, or a veterans’ space/lounge on campus, to assist with program development, meetings, and organization and coordination of services such as having a staff position on campus to assist veterans. If the Student Veterans’ Support Committee is asking for resources, having a budget that shows how the money will be spent is critical (the next section lists a way to develop a practical budget).

Taylor (2003) listed ways to pitch the proposal in a manner that increases interest and support. Specifically, the Student Veterans’ Support Committee can increase interest and support by demonstrating the quality of the program by providing answers to questions adapted from Taylor (2003, p. 110) such as:

1. What is the relationship of the program to best practices and principals related to student veterans? How does the program relate to other program concepts
that have been effective elsewhere and how have these been adapted to match the needs of this postsecondary institution?

2. How does the program relate to overall initiatives of the postsecondary institution? Do the goals of the institution include support dedicated to veterans and is the program helping with that need?

3. Does the program relate to staff development plans or organizational development plans? For example, is a cultural competency training congruent within institutional focus on increasing cultural understanding of the diverse student body?

4. Is the program both innovative and well grounded in the literature reviewed? Is the program intended to be a pilot program? Is the program delivered by an outside agency (external stakeholder) who already has outcome data? Are new learning outcomes being developed that are worth the time and resources to deliver? Has the literature on student veterans been incorporated into the program or is it based upon survey and focus group research on campus?

5. Does the program fill a need or a gap that is not addressed elsewhere on campus?

6. How much support does the program need from stakeholders? Is the postsecondary institution required to give time and resources for support? Are faculty members required to attend events or trainings and miss their daily routine?

7. Is the program appropriate for the learning level of the intended audience and participants? For example, is training on trauma-informed services for veterans matched better for student engagement staff or for financial aid staff? For example, mental health laden trainings are more appropriate for counseling center staff.

8. What is the cost of the program? How do the costs result in adding value to the institutions and show how the benefits outweigh costs. Using the budget suggestions in the next section will help assist with clearly communicating costs to stakeholders.

**Organizational Budget**

Cost, duplication of efforts (Wolff, 2010), and personnel resources are considered throughout the program. When determining the cost, divide sections of the overall program and list them. Dividing the program into sections can help to attribute where the costs are within each individual subsection of the program. For example, what is the cost of the cultural competency program, including guest speakers if needed, and faculty participation at meetings? Table 9 lists a practical budget sample adapted from Taylor
The Student Veteran’s Support Committee can adapt the sample budget as needed.

Table 9

Sample Template to Create a Program Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Title</th>
<th>Design Cost</th>
<th>Implementation Cost</th>
<th>Evaluation/report-writing Cost</th>
<th>Total Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Human Resources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Food</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Participants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Travel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Materials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Cost: Sum Total:

Note. The sample budget can be used to list applicable factors within each core and supplemental program and the total cost during phases of design, implementation, and evaluation. List the total cost of each program, throughout all phases of implementation, at the bottom right of the table. Use additional templates for each program or adapt the sample budget to include additional programs. Adapted from “How to Design a Training Course – A Guide to Participatory Curriculum Development,” by P. Taylor, 2003, p. 111. London: VSO/Continuum. Copyright 2003 by Voluntary Service Overseas.

Transitioning to Phase Four

Once the detailed proposal and budget are complete, the Student Veterans’ Support Committee begins to implement the programs in phase four. Phase four is most applicable to core and supplemental programs that resemble trainings, such as cultural competency; however, all programs will require a certain level of teaching due to the Student Veterans’ Support Committees standing as a liaison for student veteran needs. For example, within a mentorship program, mentors require a workshop or training that teaches them what resources are available on campus and within the community, how to
connect with veterans, and how to offer support. The Student Veterans’ Support Committee can tailor their selected program to match parts of phase four, while omitting aspects that do not apply.

**Phase Four: Deliver and Use Program Framework**

At this point, the program proposal has been approved and now implementation occurs. It is important to remain flexible as implementation has its own unique pitfalls. Although the Student Veterans’ Support Committee has gathered the data, resources, and institutional support for their program, implementation can be the most difficult process due to the transition between gathering data and implementing data. The time and energy spent hypothesizing how a program will work for veterans now intersects with the “real world” variables, which require the Student Veterans’ Support Committee to be responsive to program needs as they change. Therefore, remaining flexible and adapting as needed can assist the central committing with avoiding common pitfalls associated with program implementation.

Programs delivered to veterans do not exist within a vacuum. Instead, they intersect with the institutional environment on each campus. Environmental variables can both enhance the effectiveness of program delivery or impede the Student Veterans’ Support Committee’s effectiveness. Address environmental variables as they occur to avoid common pitfalls existing within program delivery. Wolff (2010) stated the following variables contribute to shortcomings when programs are implemented and problems are attempted to be addressed: “fragmentation, limited information, duplication of efforts, competition, crisis orientation, lack of connection to those most affected and their communities, blaming the victims and ignoring social determinants, lack of cultural
competence, focus on deficits, excessive professionalism, and loss of spiritual purpose’’ (pp. 4–5).

Previous sections within this program provide the Student Veterans’ Support Committee with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs to address common pitfalls identified by Wolff (2010). Best practices from organizational development such as stakeholder and SWOT analyses, combined with needs analysis help provide information about the institutional climate and stakeholder support. The theoretical section acknowledges sociocultural determinants to avoid victim blaming, while the literature adds to the understanding of difficulties student veterans face on campus. Rather than focusing on deficits, the literature review transforms literature-based difficulties into opportunities for postsecondary institutions to support student veterans by implementing core and supplemental programs. Importantly, programs are not delivered to veterans out of pity, but with veterans as participants from a standpoint of recognizing the significant perspective student veterans bring to campus and their ability to shape their educational goals with the support of the institution.

Planning the Delivery of Programs

This section directly applies to internal stakeholders who are providing trainings or workshops on student veteran issues as part of a core or supplemental program. Individual programs can be enhanced by developing lesson plans. These could be trainings on topics such as mentorship, resources, cultural competency, or veteran benefits. External stakeholders are likely to have their own training and workshop plans; however, if the Student Veterans’ Support Committee is incorporating a day long workshop, it is
necessary to create a schedule for the order of events that can be modified from the lesson plan adapted from Taylor (2003, p. 113) listed in Appendix B.

Taylor (2003) stated a lesson plan should include the title, duration, location, aim, and the learning outcomes. The learning outcomes should be listed at the top of the document. The lesson plan should separate different components of the training with key points for each section. Resources needed are placed next to the learning points and the methods to achieve the learning points are listed, including the time it takes to achieve results. List any activities that will help to achieve the learning points.

Developing lessons plans does not ensure all components of the training will be implemented perfectly. Taylor (2003) stated, “expect the unexpected” when delivering a lesson plan (p. 116). Flexibility may result in one component of the program being modified or even removed all together. Timing is also essential and adapting the lesson plan to be responsive to the needs of participants can help assist with learning.

**Flexibility in Program Delivery**

Achieving established goals and learning outcomes requires flexibility, adaptation, and accommodation. While it is important to stick to initial plans established within the proposal, informing stakeholders early and often that flexibility is needed will help to assist with adaptations and response to environmental demands. Adherence to the initial proposal goals is ideal and should be strived towards, however, many unknown variables can occur requiring shifting details of the program. For example, schedules can be changed, school closures occur, and tasks may take longer than initially planned. Major changes or modifications should come from the Student Veterans’ Support
Committee, who is then tasked with keeping key stakeholders abreast of proposal adaptations.

Taylor (2003) reported how the delivery of a new program can be difficult if the presenters and developers do not possess the requisite knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs (KSAB’s) to deliver the course in the first place. Therefore, it may be helpful for the Student Veterans’ Support Committee to first train the trainers, or allow room for participants to develop skills necessary for the program by remaining flexible and patient. This requires thoughtful oversight and avoidance of micromanagement. Additionally, the Student Veterans’ Support Committee can provide guidance and answer questions as they occur depending on preferences.

Taylor (2003) also recommended having back-up and contingency plans, which could include alternative dates, presenters, and program structure if initial plans do not work. For example, if an initial peer led mentorship program consisting of veterans does not work, an alternative mentorship program could be developed that utilizes faculty, veterans in the community, or business leaders. Taylor also recommended thinking of evaluation early and often. Monitor what works after each training by keeping meaningful, brief records. Creating a program binder with a note template that lists the training topic, meeting, or event, along with what went well and areas to improve upon can be used as a tracking method for lessons learned to improve future courses.

**Methods of Communication, Teaching, and Learning**

The Student Veterans’ Support Committee will often be in roles that require communication of data or teaching to participants. The Student Veterans’ Support Committee can help train presenters by assisting with PowerPoint presentations or
moving to a more in-depth style of delivering information. While standard PowerPoint presentations are sufficient with delivering information, PCD goes beyond a didactic presentation to involve participants in order to make learning more effective.

PCD posits participatory delivery of information allows learners to retain more information. Therefore, having a skilled professor who is fluent in classroom teaching methods is recommended. It may also be helpful to co-opt a professor for the Student Veterans’ Support Committee who can teach group teaching and communication formats to assist with learning. For example, and if needed, a stakeholder could teach the Student Veterans’ Support Committee about basic use of charts on the blackboard and how to use a PowerPoint effectively (i.e., minimal words per slide and use of graphics and charts). Additional teaching methods could include using brainstorming to generate ideas or making a pros and cons list to evaluate aspects of selected programs.

**Phase Four Conclusion**

Implementing the program requires a balance between structure and flexibility. Detailed lesson plans are used to provide structure; however, fidelity to a lesson plan should not be at the expense of learning. The key take-away for communication during workshops, meetings, or trainings is to be participatory. Involve the audience and stakeholders as much as possible to facilitate participation and learning. Keep communication a two-way process between the learners and the teachers.

**Phase Five: Evaluation**

Evaluation is a continuous component of PCD. It occurs throughout each stage as the Student Veterans’ Support Committee is refining and adapting the program. Evaluation represents the bottom line that demonstrates the value of the program to
stakeholders. Although there are many ways to evaluate a core or supplemental program, selecting one that communicates the impact of changes is crucial. Evaluation should be straightforward and to the point, with results presented in a clear and concise manner to stakeholders. Overall, PCD evaluation is practical and adheres to the KISS principal, which stands for Keep It Short and Simple (Taylor, 2003). First, the three types of PCD evaluation are presented, followed by a discussion of the difference between evaluation and assessment. Then, types of evaluation are listed, including additional options for evaluation, and how to maintain the PCD process following phase five.

Three Types of PCD Evaluation

PCD uses three main types of evaluation (Taylor, 2003).

Monitoring. Monitoring is the ongoing process that assists with adapting the program as it unfolds. Monitoring includes checking-in with participants and taking time to reflect upon the program implementation as it occurs. Planning sessions and continued meetings offer opportunities to assess the quality of the program and discuss ways to improve the program. Evaluating components and modifying as needed allows for improvements to be made as the program is running.

Summative. Summative evaluation “looks at whether aims and learning outcomes have been achieved” (Taylor, 2003, p. 135). This is conducted at the end of a core or supplemental program. For example, following trainings included as part of a cultural competency program, participants are evaluated to see if they have met learning outcomes.

Impact. Differing from summative evaluation, which occurs following a program, impact evaluation is conducted following a longer period of time. This could be
quarterly or annually, the key point being that the effects of a program are likely to have appeared. Changes within the institution can take time and impact evaluation is conducted after enough time has passed to assess what these may be. Impact evaluation is practical. For example, a concise impact statement could be: “The establishment of a student veteran lounge on campus has resulted in 20 veterans per week using the space. Qualitative statements gathered from veterans include comments about how the space has assisted with them meeting other veterans, and having a place to study, converse, and relax.”

**Evaluation Versus Assessment**

Taylor (2003) clarified the difference between evaluation and assessment, the latter measuring individual learners and the former examining programs as whole. Evaluation helps determine the value or worth of the program. Evaluation is used to identify the effectiveness of programs to support student veterans. Importantly, the focus is on whether the intended program has achieved stated goals and if stakeholder resources have made an impact on the institution. A clear way to demonstrate how and what is evaluated is to use logic models for program evaluation.

Evaluation is conducted at the program level. It helps to refine the process of the program and ensure learning outcomes are achieved. Evaluation is concerned with the process and progress of the program. Assessment is concerned with the behaviors and learning of individuals within programs. Assessment allows program developers to determine if individuals are changing behaviors and attitudes. Participants and stakeholders continually evaluate the entire program, by assessing the performance of individuals.
Types of Assessment

There are many ways to assess how individual participants within the program are performing. Asking what individuals have learned following a training, lecture, or program can serve as a tool to assess if learning has occurred. PCD is concerned with changing and modifying the knowledge, skills, abilities, and beliefs of participants, by utilizing assessment tools. Therefore, evaluation can also be conducted by generalizing the results of assessment to the program level by identify outcomes of participants following programs.

Creating a questionnaire is an effective way to evaluate a program such as a training or didactic presentation. More commonly referred to as an evaluation form, questionnaires allow for the creation of a way to assess what was learned. Utilizing a likert-scale or a pre-existing form can save time. Scan the internet and poll sources to see what is available and can be modified.

Taylor (2003) listed more novel, or less common ways to evaluate a training event or didactic, that can be used following a workshop, presentation, meeting, or focus group. These include an evaluation dartboard spider web, moodometer, written comment cards, or a process versus product graph (Taylor, 2003, p. 147). Each of these methods are suggested as options and are not required to assess an individual program. A simple question and answer session following a program can allow participants to demonstrate knowledge; however, it is up to the Student Veterans’ Support Committee to select an assessment method that matches the culture of their postsecondary institution.
Additional Ways to Evaluate Programs

Taylor (2003, p. 141) listed the following ways to evaluate programs, which range from least to most formal:

(a) discussion with participants
(b) informal conversation or observation
(c) interviewing members individually
(d) use of evaluation forms
(e) performance test
(f) questionnaire or survey
(g) self-assessment
(h) written test

Selection of evaluation measures should match the culture of the institution. For example, it is unlikely that a group of faculty members or staff would be required to complete a written test. Instead, it may be more useful for the faculty to fill out a self-assessment listing broad categories of what they found useful and what further information they need to support student veterans. Select the type of evaluation that matches the audience, culture of the institution, and will allow the Student Veterans’ Support Committee to gather meaningful data to inform future program implementation.

Internal Versus External Evaluation

Outside evaluation can be expensive. PCD favors internal evaluation led by peers or conducted through self-assessment. Peers evaluating the program may present weaknesses related to objectivity. Benefits of self-evaluation include allowing the stakeholders to be a part of the evaluation process. Having student veterans assess
whether or not core and supplemental programs have been effective or meet their goals represents participation in the evaluation process, which is central to PCD.

**Maintaining the PCD Process**

Taylor (2003, p. 153) described how it is critical for organizations utilizing PCD to embrace transformative change. Difficulties and barriers occur when organizations resist change or modifications to present structures. Taylor (2003) discussed how both bureaucratic processes can halt or stall a program and even “key persons in a system do not want to give up power or to allow others to be empowered” (p. 153). At some institutions, it may be difficult for administrators to accept the intentional transformation of resources to support student veterans. Therefore, it is essential to utilize aspects of this program that help garner stakeholder support and demonstrate the value of implementing programs for veterans. Collaboration is another key variable to ensure maintenance of the PCD cycle.

The collaborative nature of this program considers all who are acting to support student veteran stakeholders, whether internal or external to the institution. Keeping stakeholders involved throughout PCD can help maintain the structure of the program. Key stakeholders with power can change or transfer positions while the PCD cycle is unfolding. Keeping the programs flexible will allow for absorption of difficulties and adaptation to support veterans in a way that matches the context and ever-changing landscape of the postsecondary institution.

**PCD Evaluation: In closing**

A PCD cycle is recursive, with evaluation a continuous process. Continuous evaluation is most often in the form of monitoring, while adapting and making changes as
the PCD cycle unfolds, and summative, which occurs following the delivery of applicable core and supplemental programs. Impact occurs less often due to time requirements to measure long-term change. The three types of PCD evaluation allow for the Student Veterans’ Support Committee to remain practical and meet the needs of stakeholders.

PCD evaluation can be effective in evaluating the core and supplemental programs; however, a more detailed section on evaluation is presented in the next section. Logic models are addressed in the next session in order to evaluate how the overall program, or sum of core and supplemental programs, are supporting student veterans, which represents an additional option to evaluate programs at the organizational level.
PART III
Evaluating Programs Using Logic Models

Although PCD utilizes evaluation in phase five and throughout the PCD cycle, additional practical methods of program evaluation are presented to assist the Student Veterans’ Support Committee with evaluating organizational or systemic impact. While PCD evaluation in phase five includes built-in measures, logic models can be incorporated to provide an organizational guideline to track inputs and outputs of both individual core and supplemental programs, or the entire program as a whole. Taylor (2003) recommended a CIPP (context, input, process, product) logic model for PCD.

Logic models such as CIPP are practical and clearly communicate to stakeholders the value of the program. Prior to program implementation, the initial state, or context of the institution is analyzed (i.e., needs, situation, SWOT, and stakeholder analyses). Baseline, or the current level of student veteran support, is then measured. Baseline can be measured in simple or complex ways. For example, an institution could count the number of programs currently offered to support veterans to establish a baseline. Or, institutions could conduct a pre-survery to assess current satisfaction. The development of programs to address the gaps or needs identified at baseline (by the literature review, survey data, and/or focus groups) are considered inputs within a logic model. Process is monitored and adaptations are made as the program unfolds. The product is measured in a similar way the baseline was assessed to maintain consistency. For example, use the pre and post survey example listed in Appendix C and compare data to evaluate the product.

Although it is assumed that a program has positive effects related to assisting student veterans with graduation, a logic model represents a concise way to evaluate the
outcomes of the program. Logic models allow for clear tracking of efforts by establishing a baseline. Efforts to support student veterans are compared to a baseline to measure the success of programs. First, methods to establish a baseline by using surveys are discussed followed by specifics related to survey creation. Then, a practical logic model is presented to compare the results of program implementation to the baseline at the organizational level.

**Using Surveys to Assess Outcome**

The Student Veterans’ Support Committee can use a survey to create a pre-post design, which allows outcome measurement. For example, use a pre-assessment survey prior to implementing programs to support veterans. Following the implementation of programs, use a post survey to assess outcomes. The survey administered prior to program delivery represents a baseline assessment, which efforts to support veterans will be compared to during outcome assessment.

Newcomer and Triplett (2010) recommend using scales when crafting surveys to avoid ambiguity in the meaning of questions, keeping questions brief, and providing both extremes (i.e., range of numbers within a likert scale) and moderate selections to best evaluate data. For example, the pre and post-surveys in Appendix C list brief, concise questions that can be asked of support staff that are unlikely to result in ambiguity on the part of the reader. The surveys in Appendix C represent a starting point, and can be adapted, with additional questions developed as needed to allow for comparison between pre and post program administration.
Specifics of Survey Creation

Although the example in Appendix C assists with the initial development of a survey, components of survey creation are described further to help establish the format and structure of additional surveys. Question sequencing is important when preparing a survey. Going from specific to general questions helps lead-in the respondent to understand what the question is about (Newcomer & Triplett, 2010, p. 281). For example, if the respondent is being asked about how effective various services are for veterans a lead-in can provide clarity. Consider using a lead in statement such as “Now I’d like you to tell me how effective financial aid, professors, peers, or the student veteran club has been with assisting your transition on campus. First, how effective are financial aid services.”

Newcomer and Triplett (2010) recommended using a web-based survey. Use a web survey or face-to-face survey. To conserve financial resources, avoid contracting with external services for survey creation if a member of the Student Veterans’ Support Committee or another volunteer has survey experience. Types of online surveys include “EZ-Survey, Apian, SurveySaid, SumQuest, Remark Web Survey, Survey Monkey, QuestionPro, Zoomerang, and Snap Survey Software” (Newcomer & Triplett, 2010, p. 285). Before paying a subscription for a web-based survey, check with your campus to see if they already have an agreement with one of these companies or a designated individual that assists with surveys.

Differing from an online format, in-person surveys can be given during the start of training events or seminars to establish a pre-test related to knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs (KSAB’s) followed by a post-test following training to determine newly
developed KSAB’s. Additionally, a combination of online and in-person surveys can be used to establish a baseline to create a pre-post design.

**How to Increase Response Rates**

According to Newcomer and Triplett (2010) “The most important factor in getting good response rates is making additional contact attempts. For mail, e-mail, and Web surveys, a single mailing often yields a very low response rate” (pp. 290–291).

Newcomer and Triplett also recommend a professional looking survey, that includes a strong introduction to increase response rate, which could include font and design or a cover letter that states professional credentials or lists the incentives and benefits that respondents could enact such as greatly helping veterans on campus or assisting with innovative designs that shape future policy. Newcomer and Triplett (2010) stated the standard is to mail two or three times, on days the population under study is likely to receive it (not weekends, holidays, etc.). Don’t wait a week to remind people to participate, only wait a few days, then maybe a week to send the third round. If time is not a factor, you can send a fourth inquiry a week after the third.

The most effective recommendation may be to tie the survey to a mandatory requirement of the institution. Importantly, if there are other requirements or measures in place that gather the same data that is listed on a created survey, do not duplicate your survey questions; instead, collaborate to gather the data from the alternative source. For example, in order to register, or when filling out paper work with the certifying officials, or prior to starting or discontinuing financial aid or dropping classes or registration, prior to deployment, or when returning to deployment to resume classes.
It is important for the Student Veterans’ Support Committee to monitor responses to surveys as they are filled out and make changes as needed. Checking the responses as surveys arrive is a form of monitoring evaluation. It can identify if a part of the survey is not being filled out or contains errors. Even if it is too late to fix errors, responses can be taken to minimize their effects on the survey. Once surveys are created, tailored, and delivered, the Student Veterans’ Support Committee can use a logic model as an organizational guideline to compare the data collected with a pre and post design.

Using a Logic Model to Evaluate Organizational Outcomes

Logic models help with organization and represent a clear way to communicate and evaluate the results of program development. “The process of developing a logic model helps build shared understanding and expectations among program staff and other participants” (McLaughlin & Jordan, 2010, p. 55). Figure 3 is an example of a basic logic model that can be modified to serve an organizational function and assist the central committing in communicating intentions to stakeholders.

![Resources: Programs](Resources: Programs) → ![Outputs for Student Veterans](Outputs for Student Veterans) → ![Short-term Benefits for Veterans](Short-term Benefits for Veterans) → ![Intermediate Benefits for Veterans](Intermediate Benefits for Veterans) → ![Long-term Benefits for Veterans](Long-term Benefits for Veterans)

*Figure 3. Sample logic model.*

The sample logic model provides an organizational function and can be used by the Student Veterans Support Committee to communicate information to stakeholders. The logic model also serves as a chronological demonstration of how programs will be implemented and evaluated from start to finish.
Within Figure 3, the resources, or programs, and outputs/benefits for student veterans represent the actions taken to support student veterans. Short-term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes are measured. These outcomes are considered benefits that impact student veterans. Keep in mind that the context provides mediating variables. For example, the literature review specifically addressed possible mediating variables that may impact the outcomes of the program. Because human variables are difficult to control for, a logic model represents a container, but should not be used as a rule to guide human behavior or determine direct causal results of programs. For example, the Student Veterans’ Support Committee would not say, “Because of program implementation student veterans believe they have more support.” Instead, a more accurate statement would be, “Since implementation veterans have noted more support than at baseline.”

**Conclusion: Logic Models**

Logic models represent an additional way to evaluate programs. Logic models compliment evaluation measures outlined in phase five of the PCD cycle. Examples and descriptions of logic models provided users with additional options to organize intentions and measure outcomes. The Student Veterans’ Support Committee can use a pre and post survey to compare the results of the programs with baseline measures. Logic models present a clear and concise way to demonstrate outcomes to stakeholders.
Conclusion and Limitations

A structured, yet flexible program to support student veteran graduation was outlined. Users of this program have been provided the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs (KSAB’s) required to support student veterans. Users of this program are instructed on how to create a Student Veterans’ Support Committee. The Student Veterans’ Support Committee selects from examples of literature based, core and supplemental programs and identifies additional needs based upon focus groups and survey data to create a main program to support student veterans. A theoretical section assists with developing attitudes and beliefs required to engage individuals in programs with a history of trauma. PCD methodology is utilized as the framework for implementing core and supplemental programs. Practical ways to evaluate core and supplemental programs were presented to assist the Student Veterans’ Support Committee with demonstrating clear and concise outcomes.

Although the program provides specific steps to support student veterans, limitations include the attempts of the program to remain flexible while still meeting the needs of diverse institutions. In order to remain adaptable and useable for a range of postsecondary institutions (i.e., technical institutes, distance learning, and traditional), the program requires users to match the program to the culture of their institutions. Additionally, a PCD cycle requires a group or individual to read or scan through the program and select sections that are applicable prior to starting the PCD cycle. Although a PCD cycle is a recursive process that allows adaptation and continuous evaluation to enhance program delivery and learning, the initial development requires an understanding of the structure of PCD, which may be a time consuming endeavor by requiring the
Student Veterans’ Support Committee to be cognizant of evaluation measures throughout program implementation.

There are many challenges to implementing a PCD cycle. Collaboration and participation require deliberate, focused effort. Taylor (2003) noted that PCD can be long and takes effort from multiple stakeholders to complete, which can require strong communication, organization, and interpersonal skills. PCD may also require the Student Veterans’ Support Committee to make executive decisions, which may be contrary to goals of participation if veterans are not involved in the committee or actively sought out for their input. Involving multiple people to create a program can also require a lot of resources. With this program, resources in the form of time requirements may likely outweigh the need for financial resources. Therefore, it is important for postsecondary institutions to assess their capacity to implement a PCD cycle at the outset. Additionally, institutions can constantly refine their programs as resources change.

Additional limitations relate to the nature of an innovative program dissertation versus a program evaluation dissertation. For example, the selection, organization, and demarcation of core and supplemental programs were determined subjectively by the Author and were not based upon an established or previously evaluated format. Instead, the core and supplemental programs were selected subjectively from literature-based recommendations. Although ways to evaluate outcomes were provided, each institution will be required to ensure outcomes facilitate student veteran support.

Program evaluation can also be a complex endeavor and a learning process in itself. Evaluation can be subjective when conducted internally to a program; outside evaluators or accrediting bodies, which may be more objective, are often more expensive
and can require the use of testing to determine effectiveness (Taylor, 2003). There is the potential for dual relationships as individuals within evaluative roles can have a strong bias towards wanting programs to demonstrate success when evaluation is conducted internally (i.e., a member of the Student Veterans’ Support Committee also evaluating effectiveness), which may interfere with needed adaptations. Additionally, there is limitation when asking student veterans whether or not programs are effective, due to surveys and focus groups often assessing the perceptions of outcomes versus actual change. Evaluating satisfaction with resources and programs is also limited historically due to evaluation measures occurring at two separate points in time, meaning change can occur without immediate perception as student veterans may not be cognizant of all resources offered without adequate marketing and dissemination.

Overall, the PCD evaluation listed within this program allows postsecondary institutions to meet the minimum needs requested to support student veterans, while allowing institutions with greater resources to incorporate more programs. The comprehensive nature of this program requires institutions to sift, select, adapt, and accommodate, which can be time consuming and render large amounts of the program unnecessary to certain institutions; however, the intention of the program is to provide a high “ceiling” so that institutions can select as many core and supplemental programs as possible, or select a minimal amount of programs (even just one) and still be supporting student veterans. Institutions must remain flexible in their use of the manual rather than view it as a strict instructional guide that requires fidelity in order for it to be most effective and match the culture of their institution.
References


Crawford, J. (2005). The last true story I’ll ever tell: An accidental soldier’s account of


Appendix A

Sample Needs Assessment Survey

For the purpose of this survey, Veteran includes any prior history of military service and current status as inactive, active, or reserve. College success is a term used to describe direct support towards your individual academic goals.

1. I would attend a veteran-led peer group that meets weekly to discuss veteran concerns on campus.
   Yes
   No

2. In addition to other student orientations, I would benefit from a brief orientation with people from the financial aid office to clearly demonstrate how the GI Bill and student loans are processed.
   Yes
   No

3. I would like a specific, single point of contact on campus to answer my questions about all veteran issues related to college success.
   Yes
   No

4. I would prefer to speak with a veteran about issues related to college success.
   Yes
   No

5. In addition to other student orientations, I would benefit from a 1-hour quarterly orientation to campus services and community resources for veterans.
   Yes
   No

6. I would attend a class comprised of veteran students designed to help veterans succeed in college.
   Yes
   No

7. I would attend a class designed to assist with transitions into college life.
   Yes
   No

8. I would attend a class designed to create a veteran community on campus.
   Yes
9. I would like a peer-mentor who is another veteran student that is specially trained in campus services and veteran community resources.
   Yes
   No

10. I am interested in becoming a peer mentor for other veterans.
    Yes
    No

11. I would like information on how the phrase “having a disability” in college is different than the VA rating process for “service connected disability.”
    Yes
    No

12. I would like a handout that clearly demonstrates the “chain of command” for resolving difficulties on campus.
    Yes
    No

13. What is the campus doing that is helpful?

14. What could the campus do to be more helpful?
Appendix B

Sample Lesson Plan

Title: 
Location: 

Duration: 
Aim: 

Learning outcomes: By the end of the lesson, the learners will be able to:

1.
2.
3.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Method</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<td>Development of Main Content of the Lesson</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>-Review main points, reference learning outcomes</td>
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<td>-Evaluation</td>
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Notes
Appendix C

Pre and Post-Survey Example

Pre-Survey

Example: Please rate your current confidence with your ability in assisting veterans with the following services, where 1 = not confident and 7 = extremely confident I could assist with this domain.

a. Assisting veterans with transitioning to campus  1 2 3 4 5 6 7

b. Referral for financial aid difficulties  1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Post-Survey

a. Assisting veterans with transitioning to campus  1 2 3 4 5 6 7

b. Referral for financial aid difficulties  1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Appendix D

Glossary of Key Terms

**Campus Engagement:** Time spent in activities related to acquiring higher education, including extra-curricular involvement with peers, faculty, and administration leading to social visibility. This also includes emotional investment related to feeling a sense of belonging and personal identification with the postsecondary institution.

**College Success:** Includes graduation, but also further encompasses individual goals that do not result in graduation in order to account for the variety of ways student veterans may choose to use their college benefits. For example, student veterans may be using their education benefits to gain knowledge through academic coursework while applying for employment.

**Core Programs:** Offered as examples for institutions to adapt based upon literature support suggesting these types of programs are essential in supporting student veterans.

**Curriculum:** An organized, detailed program (i.e., core or supplemental program). For example, this can be an individual training, mentorship program, a plan to implement a student veteran space on campus, or a tracking program to measure veteran graduation.

**Graduation:** Completion of an undergraduate or graduate degree, vocational training, or certification program.

**Impact Evaluation:** An evaluative PCD process that assists the Student Veterans’ Support Committee with measuring the outcome of the main program after enough time has passed to determine impact and support for student veterans.

**KISS Principal:** An acronym standing for Keep It Short and Simple. The KISS principal focuses on keeping program evaluation and implementation practical and parsimonious.
**Main Program:** The combination of all core and supplemental programs dedicated to support student veterans. A single curriculum may be the main program of an institution due to limited resources or need.

**Monitoring:** A continuous evaluative process during a PCD cycle that assists the Student Veterans’ Support Committee with making a conscious effort to remain flexible and adapt programs based upon changing demands.

**Participatory Curriculum Development (PCD):** A participatory methodology developed by Taylor (2003) that serves as an organizational platform for the Student Veterans’ Support Committee to implement programs to support student veterans.

**PCD Cycle:** The recursive, five-phases that contain detailed steps to conduct PCD.

**Program Proposal:** A detailed, cogent document developed by the Student Veterans’ Support Committee that clearly communicates the intention of programs, their need and rational for existence, the requests of student veterans, literature recommendations, and a detailed curricula with specific learning outcomes.

**Situation Analysis:** An informal, brief exercise conducted by the Student Veterans’ Support Committee to generate organizational thinking by evaluating the social and political climate of the institution and how this relates to initiating and sustaining programs.

**SMART Goal:** An acronym for goals that are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-bound. Learning outcomes and program goals can be listed in a SMART format to assist with understanding accountability, feasibility, and organization.

**Stakeholders:** Individuals, groups, organizations, literature, and knowledge contributing to the common goal of supporting student veterans.
Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis: A formal analysis conducted by the Student Veterans’ Support Committee to identify internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as external opportunities and threats that affect implementing programs.

Student Veterans’ Support Committee: A centralized organization whose purpose is to facilitate collaboration between stakeholders and implement support programs for student veterans through PCD.

Summative Evaluation: An evaluative process during a PCD cycle that assists the Student Veterans’ Support Committee with measuring the outcome of individual programs immediately after they are implemented.

Supplemental Programs: Offered as examples for institutions to adapt based upon literature support suggesting these types of programs are helpful in supporting student veterans.

Training Needs Analysis (TNA): An analysis conducted by the Student Veterans’ Support Committee to evaluate the needs of student veterans and additional stakeholders. The two main ways to conduct a TNA are by using focus groups and surveys.

Trauma-Informed Care: An approach to supporting and engaging individuals with a history of trauma in a manner that recognizes how trauma relates to service or program delivery.
Appendix E

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