ABSTRACT

DISSERTATION: Veterans in Higher Education: An Ethnographic Study of Veterans’ Higher Education Experience

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DATE: July, 2014

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This ethnographic study examined the higher education experience of six Global War on Terrorism combat Veterans, using two research questions: 1) How does a Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) Veteran student perceive his/her educational experiences at a four year university? 2) What are the educational, emotional, and psychological needs of the (GWOT) combat Veteran while pursuing higher education? The findings indicated that the Veterans interviewed experienced three major themes through their higher education process: 1) Transitions, all Veterans interviewed experienced a series of rapid transitions which forced them to shift their focus and daily routines from extremes of rigidity during military service to the non-directive life as student. 2) Alienation, all Veterans interviewed expressed a sense of isolation and alienation as they transitioned from military life to the life of a student. 3) Disability, all Veterans interviewed discussed stereotypes of disability to include PTSD, not necessarily their own, but of other Veterans they knew.