

Student Veteran Transition: Social

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Introductions

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Objectives

- Recognize the importance of this topic to Student Veteran success, campus culture, and meeting academia's public mission
- Identify social transition issues for Student Veterans moving from military culture to academic culture
- Identify communication strategies that bridge culture gaps

Recognizing the importance of this topic

Student Veterans: In their own words (1)

- *I feel like I am swinging in the wind.*
- *It's hard to be in a classroom, and serious about learning, with kids who were in high school last week.*
- *Someone [in the classroom] needs to take charge!*
- *People ask me things like have you ever shot anyone? all the time- even professors ask me to explain why the military does what it does- I don't know!*

Staff/Faculty: In their own words (1)

- *I'm not sure how to reach out to students who've been in the military- it's just so far from my experience.*
- *I volunteer at Hero's Day, and it's like my student veteran is a different person there - chatting, laughing- he's stoic in class.*
- *I...draw out military students when talking about related history by asking them their experience.*

Definitions

Culture

The integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behavior that depends upon capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations (2)

Identity

An individual's sense of self defined by a) a set of physical, psychological, and interpersonal characteristics not wholly shared with any other person and b) a range of affiliations and social roles (4)

Transition

The act of moving between or among two situations or cultures. Transition can be fluid and non-directional. (3)

Intersectionality

The interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage; a theoretical approach based on such a premise. (5)

Definitions

Equity

Fair and impartial treatment that implies an individual may need to experience or to receive something different (not equal) in order to maintain fairness and access. (6)

Cultural Competence

The capacity to 1) value diversity, 2) conduct self-assessment, 3) manage the dynamics of difference, 4) acquire and institutionalize cultural knowledge, and 5) adapt to diversity and the cultural context of the communities one serves. (6)

Definitions

Intercultural Communication

The process of sharing meaning between people whose cultural background is different enough to impact understanding and communication outcomes. (7)

Intercultural Communication Tenets or Skills

- 1) *Suspend judgment*
- 2) *Become comfortable with the uncertainty that results from #1*
- 3) *Practice mutual respect*

(8)

Culture Dimensions (1 & 9)

Culture Dimension	Mainstream College Culture (in general)	Military Culture (in general)
Individualistic/Collectivistic	Individualistic	Collectivistic
Feminine/Masculine	Feminine	Masculine
High context/Low context	High context	Low context
High power distance/Low power distance	Low power distance	High power distance

Operationalization	Student Centered	Mission Centered
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Generalizations leave room for exceptions – Each student is an individual!

A Continuum of difference

Collectivistic-----Individualistic

Group orientation

Focus on group harmony/achievement

High value on group membership

Converge to group norms/face saving

Sacrifice self for the group

Individual orientation

Focus on individual achievement

High value in independence

Divergence/individual identity

Sacrifices group for the self

Indirect communication (bottom/up)

Regulated communication channels

Aligns with high power distance

Direct communication

Little hierarchy in communication

Aligns with low power distance

NB: These generalizations are based on Hofstede's Culture Dimensions (9) - individuals are more complex! and can be influenced by context!

Discussion

- Student with student communication
- Student with staff communication
- Student with instructor communication - in and out of the classroom
- Recognizing individuality, intersectionality, and equity

THANK YOU!

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Please feel free to reach out to either of us if you have any questions.

References

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- 2) Oxford English Dictionary online
- 3) Based on: definition in the Merriam Webster Dictionary
- 4) <https://dictionary.apa.org/identity>
- 5) <https://www.ywboston.org/2017/03/what-is-intersectionality-and-what-does-it-have-to-do-with-me/>
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- 9) Based on: Hofstede, G. (2001). Culture's Consequences: Comparing values, behaviors, institutions, and organizations across nations (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage