

# HOW TO USE: Toolkit for faculty training to better work with Veteran/Active Duty/ Guard/ Reserve students (pdf version)



## Origins: Sabbatical Project

This toolbox of tips and suggestions comes from a 6 month sabbatical at Chandler-Gilbert Community College, to collect, create and share tips and ideas for faculty training when working with veteran students in the classroom.

## Toolkit available at:

<http://miguelfernandez.com/?p=65>

## Main goals are:

- 1) Provide quick prep tips and recommendations to avoid issues between faculty 'wants' and student veterans' 'needs'
- 2) Provide just in time strategies and examples to anticipate/prevent issues or problems related to student veterans in the classroom from escalating
- 3) Lead faculty to anticipate and perform accommodations, not exceptions, with their existing content and syllabi.
- 4) Provide a few real world scenarios, based on the chapter's primary topic, where the questions, risks, and context are much more important than a canned solution. The faculty will develop localized solutions proper to their college's culture, resources, and student veteran/active military populations.

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I'm not a veteran, but a well-qualified faculty member, recognized for my TEACHING and work with the student veterans at my college. I volunteer as faculty liaison for student veterans at my college.

You can examine a short bio at:

<http://www.miguelfernandez.com>

(click 'About Me')

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## PURPOSE:

Organize a toolkit of practical, out of the box, ready to use tips for faculty (primary audience) interested in improving the classroom experience for student veterans (the down range recipients of tips and best practices).

## It is a toolkit :

It is a use-as-needed set of chapter-organized PDFs (originally modules for an online course) designed for prep and triage: not a journal article, not a scholarly book, not a dissertation. The goal is to create a minimally time consuming, digestible buffet of 'take aways' to apply just in time/live of need, or in preparation for teaching at the college level (with a focused awareness of the time pressures and

other constraints of all faculty, but especially adjunct faculty). It's for teaching – not necessarily for research or essays or studies. Many tips and observations are anecdotal, but battle-tested in day-to-day teaching and work as faculty liaison for Student Veterans. About 70% of the time/effort spent developing this sabbatical project went to shrinking content into (for better or worse) tip-lists and titles of ideas, observations, contexts and experiences. It wouldn't pass a dissertation committee (low focus on quantitative). **It will help you as an instructor.**

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## **How to use: (3 FACULTY RECOMMENDED PATHS):**

**1)If you HAVE no/little experience with student veterans, and/or many student vets in class,** start with:

**1)INTRODUCTION** to \_Student\_vets\_At-A-Glance (12 page guide)

**2)Read each of the 10 chapters as relevant**

**2)IF you HAVE SOME Experience with student veterans but very limited time:**

**Read Chapter 1:** Prep for First day of class, First office hour: Syllabus, tone, common situations.pdf

**Read Chapter 2:** Teaching Spaces (campus, classroom, Elearning).pdf

**Read Chapter 3:** In-Class Behavior

**3)IF YOU HAVE NO TIME:**

**Read Chapter 1:** 1)Prep for First day of class, First office hour: Syllabus, tone, common situations.pdf AND

**Read Chapter 3:** In-Class Behavior

## **CONTENTS of EACH CHAPTER:**

**There are 2 background/At-a-Glance sections (optional) and 10 chapters/modules.**

**Most CHAPTERS/MODULES (other than 2 intro/at-a-glance sections) are broken down into:**

**A)Abstract** (description between 100-200 words)

**B)Three Learning Goals**

**C)Briefing:** Perspectives and questions to front-load an understanding of the topic

**D)Tips:** Tips, Recommendations and Observations, in briefest terms possible, ready to use and apply

**E)Scenarios:** A list of a few common situations to imagine, roleplay, and answer locally with your faculty, veteran services personnel, and student vet allies.

**F)Deeper look/Links/Recommendations: (on a few only):** Links & relevant recommendations to build on what you've learned.

## **How to use SCENARIOS:** Teachable Moments strategy or as Faculty

### Development exercises:

The best way to teach scenarios (from throughout chapters) are to print each (without suggestions/starter solutions), randomize, and give each to a work group (faculty, student veterans steering committee, mixed membership learning group, etc) – or to individual participants at faculty development and have them brainstorm and share solutions.

**Where are the solutions?** *There are too many different ways to ‘solve’ each, agreeing and disagreeing, similar and dissenting, so instead you have 1)the scenario 2)suggested steps below to find your own localized solutions. Forcing people to start discussions - active learning -- rather than reading/skimming what I thought/found worked in MY location/culture is the key to action and owning the problem and approaches. Only homegrown solutions SOLVE WITH PURPOSE. (Though I will share some solutions that worked for me on youtube soon).*

WHY? The suggestions/starter solutions usually work, but don’t take into account ‘mileage may vary’ localization: your university or college’s culture, demographics, geography, and existing experience with or lack of exposure to student veteran populations. Participation also encourages buy-in from your specific cohort, and exposes specific blindspots and resources for your particular group, not to mention all the value of active learning. You can then compare/contrast group sourcing of scenario solutions to the starter solutions below and mediate as necessary. The specific ‘builds’ on the shoulders of the general/generic suggested approach.

### **Example Scenario training WALKTHROUGH [From 1st day, 1st office hour, chapter]**

**SCENARIO 1:** Issue concerning Hat or Jacket or Insignia worn in class or at campus event:

**STEP 1: GIVE INSTRUCTIONS/BACKGROUND:** (for example) There are several versions of this scenario: A)Hat during exam day (Well documented Sample scenario from U of Arizona<sup>1</sup>), B) Others NOT removing hats during a pledge of allegiance or flag related ceremony; C)Hat worn in class everyday (for comfort, totemic, promise-keeping) and D) reaction to ironic, slogan, or 'unearned' clothing worn by other students

**STEP 2: Give groups/individuals a Worksheet for their notes towards solutions and allow them discussion/ break down time**

Your task: write down or collaborate on the following:

**A)ISSUE/What’s at RISK:**

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<sup>1</sup> “The Hat Incident.” DVRE – Disabled Veterans Reintegration & Education Project. University of Arizona. <http://drc.arizona.edu/veterans-reintegration-education/increasing-awareness/faculty-development/characteristics>

## ***B)Recommendation for Faculty:***

## ***C)Questions, Prevention, Prep:***

## ***D)Impact of your recommendation:***

**STEP 3:** After allotted time, have groups present/share their scenario + their answers to the group OR rotate to the next table's scenario and repeat as above until all potential solutions gathered and group discussed

## **ANSWERS(?) to Scenarios:**

SURPRISE: On beta testing the toolkit with peers and reviewers (faculty, instructors, veteran student services coordinators and AZ Coalition for Military Families), one of the first things discovered was that canned (my suggested) 'answers' for scenarios were not as important as the actual listing of potential sample scenarios. Particulars and opinions varied too much; canned solutions actually stifled work-through-it critical thinking and problem solving. Answers change based on localization, college culture, what departments/disciplines, what administration, what forms of faculty development/learning centers existed at a particular college. So long story, short: scenarios are listed but suggested answers are not, at least not in this format prepared for quick bites of digestible faculty development. Faculty are smart. Scenario 'answers' will be stored and shared elsewhere, once they build critical mass in actual application.

## **What about hard data and studies?**

When it comes to faculty development related to student veterans, we are at a stop loss level. I'm looking to 'toolbox' teaching tips and remedies to employ immediately in the classroom, and present scenarios for faculty to assuage together. I leave it for the PhD candidates and titled faculty developers (I am primarily Composition and Literature faculty and volunteer as faculty liaison to 'get needed stuff done'). There is good work out there and more to come.

## **Consumer products or ZIP pack for eLearning?**

Demand for Canvas eLearning modules (Where the toolkit was originally developed) just wasn't there. PDF was by far the most requested format.

There are a few commercial 'diversity training' types product out there for working with student veterans.

One example of Veterans-on-Campus training is software from Kognito:

[http://resources.kognito.com/voc/Product\\_Description\\_VOC\\_Fac\\_v4.pdf](http://resources.kognito.com/voc/Product_Description_VOC_Fac_v4.pdf)

**A secondary goal** is that you customize the hell out of this toolkit: localize it to your college, location, experiences. Put it into an eLearning platform (Canvas at my college, but can adapt to anything – Coursera, MOOC, Moodle, etc). Use it as an ingredient at your centers for teaching and learning or for faculty development workshops. Point out where it didn't apply/didn't work. Share out [share back you must, in Yoda voice] your solutions and steps and tips. It's a seed. It's in creative commons license. Mileage may vary, but there's something in each chapter for use at any level of faculty experience with student vets.

**Creative Commons: Where do I send/share my additions, changes, exceptions, comment, for/regarding the original toolkit?**

For now, simply email to [me@miguelfernandez.com](mailto:me@miguelfernandez.com) or [Miguel.fernandez@cgc.edu](mailto:Miguel.fernandez@cgc.edu)

Make sure to include contact information and that you are 'sharing back' in keeping with a creative commons type license. Eventually a wiki or other type of dynamic page will be set up for changes.