

Preparing Teachers for a Mission: Six Lessons Shared With the Military

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Abstract: *Vast research and personal testimonies provide strong evidence that a highly effective teacher plays a critical role in the successes of their students, particularly those at risk of underachievement. That same evidence is now being demanded of teacher preparation programs. By comparison, military preparation programs have long been outcome-based and scrutinized for their ability to prepare military professionals for readiness in the field or their failure to do so. In this paper, authors with extensive backgrounds in teaching and/or military preparation examined their respective strategies of preparing students for professional missions. They identify and discuss six lessons shared by both teaching preparation programs and military preparation programs, which based on their experience and extensive relevant research, have contributed to the effectiveness of education and military professionals in the field. In their conclusion, the authors discuss the critical importance of developing a Battlemind, defined as an empowering mindset for promoting professional sustainability and success in achieving specific, meaningful outcomes in the field.*

A widely held belief, gleaned from personal testimonies and research, is that a highly effective teacher plays a critical role in the successes of students, particularly those at risk of underachievement (National Dropout Prevention Center/Network, n.d.). That same evidence is now being demanded of teacher preparation programs. Leaders of teacher education, or more specifically preparation programs, are examining the strength of their programs and seeking to modify them to meet current and future standards of excellence and accountability. By comparison, military preparation programs have long been outcome-based and scrutinized for their ability to or failure to prepare military professionals for readiness in the field. The stakes for military programs and their graduates to achieve excellence have always been high. The focus on outcomes for the military is based on a long history of dealing with life and death on the battlefield. With the education reform movement, and more important, knowledge of the dire impact of students not completing high school, battles are being waged in public schools. The stakes for teacher preparation programs and their graduates have never been higher.

It is crucial for teacher education programs to look inward, but equally crucial to look outward for training models with documented success that can be replicated in teacher education programs. Teacher education leaders would be well advised to examine the valuable lessons modeled by other training programs that have successfully prepared professionals to achieve their career goals. The authors of this article, although from seemingly different backgrounds, have discovered striking commonalities within their respective preparation programs.

A small island is host to two outwardly dissimilar higher education institutions—a small liberal arts university and a military college. Yet upon further examination, one finds that the preparatory education that takes place in each institution has remarkable similarities. Through their respective programs, one at the liberal arts university with teacher preparation and the other at the military college with military preparation, they both cultivate a talented group of individuals who can successfully perform a mis-

sion. Both strive to create leaders who possess the wisdom and knowledge to transfer their skills to real-life settings. Both must effectively integrate innovative technologies into the curriculum and support sustainable preparation programs that achieve meaningful outcomes that promote a better world.

Few would question the need for the military to maintain sustainable preparation programs and achieve meaningful, measurable outcomes. In light of the accountability movement regarding teacher preparation and the need for highly effective teachers, few now question the need for teacher preparation programs to follow the same course of action. The quality and effectiveness of teacher preparation programs are becoming increasingly determined by outcome measures, including the results of value-added student assessment, administrator and teacher satisfaction ratings, job placement, and retention data. Graduates of teacher preparation programs are being examined not only for their course of study, demonstrated skills, and knowledge upon graduation, but more important, what they can deliver in measurable outcomes when they are practicing teachers as well. Graduates of military preparation programs have long been held to this standard of achieving success in the field, making examination of their training particularly meaningful and timely.

In scrutinizing the work that goes on separately in military preparation and in teacher preparation programs, the authors find striking alignment of strategies that prepare, first, military professionals for a military mission and, second, teachers for an educational mission in public schools. In this article, the authors discuss the similarities found in both programs and the value and purpose of the shared lessons. Both preparation programs seek to cultivate human resources that can successfully perform their respective missions. The authors have come to realize that both institutions strive to develop knowledgeable and skilled professionals who, through their successes in the field, do much to enhance the reputation of their respective preparation programs.

Research by McCree (1993) has suggested that military training provides skills that can be transferred to

the teaching profession. In his study, McCree found that career enlisted personnel are highly trained in skills directly transferable to the civilian sector, such as personnel management, resource allocation, high level technologies, counseling, and training skills. He writes:

Considered as a group, post-military personnel possess characteristics, such as the belief that all can learn the ability to function under stressful conditions, a strong sense of dedication to the community, pride and self-confidence, and a desire to excel. (p.1)

Preservice teachers and beginning teachers, now more than ever, need to develop these skills and dispositions that will empower and sustain them in the field. Both military professionals and teachers need to be prepared to face the challenges of their defined mission and demonstrate resiliency and grit. The six shared lessons provide a toolkit for achieving those goals. A Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR) document prepared by the Land Combat Study Team (WRAIR, 2010) provides a model of training that also mirrors the *basic training* of preservice teachers.

The authors with extensive teacher preparation and/or military experience identify and discuss six lessons shared by both military preparation and teacher preparation that contribute to the quality and effectiveness of their programs. The purpose of these lessons is to cultivate the acquisition of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions essential for success in the field. The six shared lessons are:

1. Trust Your Training
2. Be a Battle Buddy
3. Be a Leader
4. Nurture Yourself
5. Steel Your Battlemind
6. Foster Reflective Practice

These lessons are examined from the perspectives of both teacher preparation and military preparation. Preservice teachers, discussed throughout, are defined as aspiring teachers who have been accepted into an accredited teacher preparation program and who are working towards graduation and teacher certification.

Trust Your Training

“Your combat training is high; trust it . . .
When under strain, stress, or enemy attack,
do as you were trained.” (WRAIR, 2010)

Classroom training for preservice teachers must provide realistic opportunities to practice learned skills. Throughout their training, teacher candidates are required to work with diverse populations and to address the needs of all students from gifted to challenged learners. They are provided with numerous opportunities to plan and execute effective and meaningful lesson plans, which include setting clear and measurable learning objectives,

differentiating instruction, and assessing student work. Preservice teachers must develop their content knowledge and pedagogical skill to promote student learning and to prepare their future students for college and careers. Teacher candidates need to become knowledgeable of high-stakes standardized tests and must be able to support students faced with the demands placed upon them during testing. Teacher preparation programs also must provide a comprehensive and realistic support system for the aspiring teacher to understand and respond to both the written and informal curriculum of a school and how to effectively work with students, parents, and colleagues.

Teacher preparation programs, as do military programs, need to be cutting edge and incorporate innovative technologies that support teaching and learning. Not to do so potentially places graduates as underdogs in their effort to carry out their respective missions. Military programs will avoid this at all costs which taxpayers know are massive. Maintaining a state-of-the-art profile by teacher preparation programs, while far less costly, will require a commitment on the part of all teacher preparation faculty to remain current and willing to use technology in their coursework, modeling its use to foster student engagement. In their award-winning book *Disrupting Class: How Disruptive Innovation Will Change the Way the World Learns* (2010), Christensen, Horn, and Johnson provide a clear wake-up call that all teacher preparation programs need to heed: Technology has changed the way students learn and disruptive innovation is essential for improving schools. This will also necessitate greater understanding of current research on the impact digital technologies have on the brain and learning, as brilliantly discussed by renowned neuroscientist Susan Greenfield in *Mind Change* (2015).

Graduates of both preparation programs will be entering a world that will require knowledge of and skill using current and future technologies. For teachers, that will include learning management systems, e-learning, education apps, and social media. A commitment to ongoing professional development to explore the use of new technology tools as they emerge will be essential for candidates in both preparation programs.

Leaders of military preparation programs know the human cost that can result from failure to provide military professionals with proper training: It is not an option. The military today emphasizes battle drills in training to acclimate service members to stressful situations. Under stressful situations, when there is little time to think, military professionals have to trust their training and rely on it to instinctively do the right thing and ultimately get the job done. New pilots are taught emergency procedures and drilled consistently during flight training so that they instinctively execute the correct procedure. Consequently, in an actual emergency while under stress, they are prepared to react and do the right thing rather than respond indecisively.

The same training must take place in teacher preparation courses with the goal that indecisiveness does not set in when novice teachers find themselves in difficult situations in the classroom. For example, a high school

teacher needs to be prepared to deal with classroom management issues, such as a blatant power struggle with a challenging adolescent or a disengaged student who sees no relevancy in learning. Teachers make countless instructional and management decisions every day; they must be able to trust their training and act decisively. To enter the field confidently, preservice and new teachers need to trust their training as they respond to classroom demands and, at times, exceptionally stressful situations. During the course of teacher preparation, preservice teachers need to be provided with extensive opportunities to practice acquired skills in supervised field placements in urban, suburban, and rural settings. With societal changes and demographics changes in schools, an ever-expanding body of educational research, and the demand for accountability, the teacher preparation program curriculum needs to be continuously reviewed and responsive to current needs of the students they serve in the field.

Once candidates have provided evidence that they meet the criteria for admission into either a teacher preparation or a military preparation program, then one of the most important tasks becomes fostering the growth of those individuals so that they are prepared to enter their respective professions with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to be highly effective and successful. However, an equally important task of preparation programs is to engage in ongoing assessment of those individuals and *counsel out* those individuals who do not meet the performance standards of their preparation program. Another lesson we could take from the military is that attrition identified during initial training is less costly attrition relative to attrition that occurs after major investments have been made. The military services are conscious of the need for the disposition to serve in an all-volunteer military environment, and basic training provides an opportunity to send a young recruit home prior to costly investment. Teacher preparation programs can and should judiciously assess a candidate's disposition to teach, particularly at the secondary level, and assess a candidate's eagerness to focus on students as well as content. As military preparation programs do, teacher preparation programs need to assist those candidates they find who lack those dispositions to transition to other pipelines better suited for them.

Be a Battle Buddy

“Buddies make a difference. Most soldiers say they made it through the deployment because of their buddies.” (WRAIR, 2010)

A powerful activity developed by Skip Downing (2005) simply, but brilliantly, demonstrates the critical importance of collaboration with others—*one's buddies*. In an exercise that fosters a deeper understanding of the power of collaboration, a student volunteer is asked to “cause a chair with another student sitting in it to be 18 inches off the ground” (p. 145). Routinely, the volunteer becomes dismayed upon realizing that this task cannot be achieved through the individual volunteer's manpower. In reality,

the directions do not preclude teamwork. When this fact is realized, often by a classmate, the task is successfully accomplished. Through this quick and meaningful exercise, all involved feel useful, successful, and connected. Both leaders of teacher preparation and military preparation programs include these types of activities to instill in candidates that when they are in the field and faced with seemingly impossible tasks, they can take on those tasks with battle buddies.

The military services have embraced war games, simulations, and battle drills for over two centuries to prepare military professionals for their combat missions. For the remainder of his life following World War II, Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz talked about the preparation and war gaming that took place at the United States Naval War College and how most critical strategies and tactics had been practiced by working teams before they were actually used during the war. Teacher preparation programs are now incorporating more on-site supervised clinical placements and simulations, case studies, and exercises into the classroom experiences.

The demands of teaching can be overwhelming and having collaborative battle buddies can prove to be critical to the success of new teachers. When teacher candidates were asked to interview veteran teachers, invariably, experienced teachers expressed that such collaboration was critical to their success. Ed Joyner, Executive Director of the Yale School Development Program, speaks of the need for staff development that helps teachers learn to work together and develop *esprit de corps* (Senge et al., 2000). When teachers look back at their best years in education, those memories usually center on supportive colleagues and positive working relationships.

New military recruits become part of a large organization, the U.S. military, an entity larger than themselves or any other entity to which they have ever belonged. New recruits are members of a team and, as members, they share rights, privileges, and responsibilities, a characteristic they have in common with new teachers. New recruits soon realize that they have to rely on other team members, especially in combat. They rely on their *battle buddies*.

Why do members of military units fight when they are tired, hungry, and thirsty and are far from home and a familiar way of life? Do they fight for ideals and political rhetoric? Do they fight for medals and ribbons? Overwhelmingly, military professionals will say that they fight for each other—the man or woman on their left or right in the foxhole, in a tank, or standing watch at sea. Military professionals risk their lives to protect the other members of their team, their officers, their battle buddies.

Teaching can be a very lonely profession in the absence of enlightened school leaders and in the face of a set of job responsibilities that can remain stagnant over time. Such circumstances can leave teachers feeling burnt out and even lead to the complete loss of effectiveness. There are some simple low-cost ways to counter stagnation and isolation and they need to be introduced to candidates in teacher preparation programs. Some examples of how schools can support teachers in developing their connections to their battle buddies follow.

In her multiple roles in education leadership both in the U.S. Navy and in public education and having served as Rear Admiral/Provost of the U.S. Navy War College and superintendent, respectively, co-author Barbara McGann found that teachers love to observe other teachers. The simple act of watching a colleague teach can be a source of renewal in itself. Such experiences provide very valuable professional development when a teacher sees a colleague intervening to resolve a situation the teacher may have faced in his or her own classroom.

Team teaching is another source of renewal that is extremely easy to implement with no additional cost by combining two classrooms to pursue a common learning objective. In Baltimore, teachers are given the opportunity to remain in their classrooms for part of the day, but then to spend some time leading their colleagues in lesson planning or instructional coaching (Goldstein, 2014). Common planning time, when all of the teachers in a grade level plan together irrespective of discipline, can be a powerful opportunity to discuss individual students and how each student will be supported across content areas. Common planning time can also be a source of professional renewal as teachers, through collaboration, finally discover a way to support a struggling student.

Some of the most meaningful work in education over the past several decades may be the development of the concept of professional learning communities, or PLCs (Dufour, Dufour, Eaker, & Karhanek, 2004). Ironically the concept of a PLC reflects the human biological need to be a part of a community and has been characteristic of military professionalism throughout its history, perhaps a fact that brings the military services and the teaching profession closer together than ever before. Embedded in the concept of a PLC is the idea of collaborative coaching and learning where teachers foster peer-to-peer leadership as technical experts of the teaching profession in the same way medical doctors are empowered to lead the medical profession. Instructional rounds are a logical parallel to medical rounds and peer-to-peer leadership of learning communities in America's teacher preparation and military preparation programs. Peer-to-peer observations are not only a meaningful way to improve teaching practice, but a way to simultaneously foster the powerful positive relationships critical to an effective learning community as well.

The days of isolation for aspiring and new teachers need to end, and teacher preparation programs need to place teacher candidates in schools where they see collaborative approaches being utilized. In preparing candidates for job interviews, faculty should encourage candidates to ask during interviews about the availability of such collegial practice in prospective school settings. The response they receive will give job seekers important information about the school culture and opportunities to work as part of a team. Information regarding school culture and the opportunity for team work is particularly important with respect to those dedicated teachers who choose to work in struggling, underperforming school environments or schools with a history of violence. Given the stressful working conditions often found in many impoverished

urban and rural area schools, teachers share a common bond with military professionals in combat and need to work together to get the job done and to demonstrate the same *esprit de corps* found in the military.

Be a Leader

“If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.” John Quincy Adams

Leadership development for military professionals begins the first day of basic training, but something else transformative happens. The new recruit becomes part of a team and, for the duration of that person's military professional experience, the person embraces the philosophy that the team is always smarter than the smartest person on the team. Every person on the team, in essence, has leadership responsibilities. History itself is filled with case studies of leadership failures when the leader rejected or ignored this principle. Very quickly, military professionals learn that the potential life-threatening circumstances being faced will require the collective wisdom and problem solving capabilities honed by years of practice in a wide range of diverse missions practiced in drills and war games. Perhaps more important than the drills and war games is the after action work that analyzes input on how the operation was executed and proposes changes in strategy and tactics necessary to correct whatever went wrong. The voices of all involved are critical.

The authors would argue that the challenges faced every day by teachers are as complex as those faced by military professionals. The stakes are equally high when the success or failure of a child hangs in the balance. For this reason, teacher preparation must foster and leverage the leadership potential and capabilities of preservice teachers by requiring them to work collaboratively, evaluate effectiveness, and propose changes to correct what went wrong. This cycle of collaboration and continuous improvement leads to greater success in both military and educational arenas.

Throughout their development, military professionals are used to practicing for positions of increased responsibility. Using a concept referred to as acting, members of a military team are designated the responsible official in the absence of the commander, the department head, the leading petty officer, or other key leader in the organization. Military professionals practice for the day when they will pass the baton to someone equally prepared because of practice. Without question, teacher preparation is on the right track when a preservice teacher is able to take over responsibilities in a clinical setting, exhibiting a commanding presence as the educational leader in a classroom by creating a learning environment in which children demonstrate joy about being there and learning.

Powerful positive relationships between and among adults and students in a learning community are essential. In fact, our biology demands those relationships as is now scientifically proven by a large body of cognitive neuroscience

research. Content teachers, physical education teachers, music teachers, art teachers, custodians, bus drivers, and cafeteria teams can be the key to a positive experience and outcomes for a particular student. They must all be viewed as potential leaders of change. A visitor to the team meeting of a highly effective learning community probably would not be able to tell which member of the team is the principal of the school. Again, teacher preparation programs need to provide preservice teachers with specific learning experiences within the learning community, such as scavenger hunts which require preservice teaching students to find and communicate with the numerous human resources within their clinical settings and communities. For some preservice teachers, requiring community involvement places them outside their comfort zone, but it is essential for developing their roles as community contributors as those roles are assessed by our current state teacher evaluation process.

Military professionals are also part of cultures of recognition that are easy to replicate in teacher preparation programs and schools. The Golden Apple, an award for exemplary teaching, is a particularly meaningful example of teacher recognition because nominations come from students, parents, or other teachers. However, the much more frequent, spontaneous, and informal recognition that takes place in military units is also possible in school settings and can be facilitated by information technology. Military leaders have many sources of on-the-spot recognition and routinely look for on-the-spot recognition opportunities. The same opportunity exists in schools for principals and school leaders to surprise a classroom teacher with an unexpected recognition of sustained superior performance or any noteworthy contribution to the learning community and student growth. Advances in information technology provide the means to create inexpensive awards and certificates for spontaneous presentations in front of students that will be treasured by unsuspecting recipients. Students will return home that day and talk about the celebration of their teacher, fostering positive energy about what happens at school. Teacher preparation programs have long recognized the value of awards, such as acknowledging students who make the Dean's List or have the highest GPA in a content area. Good work deserves recognition and such recognition can inspire individuals to seek out greater leadership responsibilities.

Nurture Yourself

“Your relationships back home are a source of support and strength.” (WRAIR, 2010)

Teacher preparation programs must address the academic and socio-emotional needs of preservice teachers, and it is becoming increasingly important to prepare these aspiring teachers to actively and personally address those needs after graduation. Job satisfaction and professional effectiveness may depend upon it. New and proposed state and federal regulations that examine teacher program quality and effectiveness require the collection of data on teacher retention. Retention, in the personal experiences

of the authors, is highly influenced by job satisfaction, something near and dear to millennials. The authors have seen that when young teachers' needs are not being met, they seriously reconsider their decision to go into teacher education, regrettably often after committing significant funds and time earning a teaching degree.

New teachers leave the field for many reasons. Reports on teacher attrition (Boe, Cook, & Sunderland, 2008; Brill & McCartney, 2008; Darling-Hammond, 2003) discuss many variables contributing to stress experienced by teachers. Teachers do not enter the profession with the intention to leave and circumstances outside of their control, often related to economics, can result in their unemployment. Friends and family can play a key role in helping teachers maintain an optimistic attitude and weather the storms they face in their careers. For example, in one local community, scores of beloved and talented teachers received letters of termination. In Providence, RI, all teachers, nearly 2,000, were fired (Johnson, 2011). Teachers reached out to their colleagues and their families to address their personal needs, a healthy and needed step in restoring the teachers' confidence in themselves as professionals and in the educational system. Following this temporary employment crisis, educators were able to return to their teaching positions with the ability to focus on their mission of meeting the needs of their students.

Military professionals are trained to be resilient and recover from temporary setbacks. Fortunately, now more than ever, the military services have embraced the importance of openly and transparently addressing combat stress and actually employ Battalion Aid Stations and Combat Stress Control Teams in recognition that buddies and leaders are the most critical resource in managing stress. It is also important for military professionals, especially those involved in combat, to “maintain contact back home” (WRAIR, 2010) so that they do not lose their perspectives and grounding beliefs. Stress can eat away at military professionals and there needs to be an outlet for it. Talking to others about problems is good therapy, and family members at home can provide a welcome ear when an individual is under stress.

Burnout and stress-related issues can also be intense for those working in schools, even for the most dedicated teacher, whether the burnout and stress comes from dealing with the day-to-day challenges or following a violent incident that claimed the life of a student or teacher. Recognition that public education has been and continues to be one of America's most embattled professions is increasing, but teachers themselves remain the greatest asset in keeping teams of teachers focused on the mission of educating our youth. Although the circumstances faced during teacher preparation are far less extreme, stress can take its toll on preservice teachers. Stress reduction training and learning how to access support systems need to be part of every teacher preparation program, given the teaching profession's many challenges, including economic and safety challenges.

Teacher preparation programs can respond to their preservice teachers' stress-related needs by building in

quality time for communication between students and their supervisors and advisors. In our teacher education program's student teaching seminar, less time is now spent in structured, planned discussions and more time allotted for fielding questions and addressing concerns from teaching candidates in the field. Each week in seminar, students valued the time and confidential space to address their concerns with classmates and instructors. In addition, professors have found that being available online and through mobile device support has proven to be invaluable for quickly addressing candidates' concerns before they become more unmanageable and result in a crisis.

On a day-to-day basis, the work of teachers can be exhausting and all-consuming. Our preservice teachers are taught ways to nurture themselves, identify and respond to signs of stress, and know when and how to grab a lifeline. They must also show evidence of their commitment to ongoing professional development, such as membership in a professional organization that gives opportunities for professional stimulation and renewal.

Such opportunities for personal and professional renewal are built into the lives and careers of military professionals. Periods of rest and recuperation, periods of leave in the course of assignments, and training that provides sources of additional expertise or preparation for a particular military assignment not only improve the professional capacity of individuals, but also provide a source of refreshment and renewal.

Based on brain-based research, Willis (2007) emphasized the importance of fun in learning. Therefore, the many effective education and military professionals who name their most enjoyable work settings as ones in which they worked hard and played hard is not surprising. Given that teacher preparation programs must now remain vigilant regarding the retention of their graduates in the field, it becomes increasingly important to guide the graduates in their selection, whenever possible, towards jobs that will support a rewarding and, on occasion, fun-filled professional experience for them. The military, with an all-volunteer force, has long recognized the importance of creating work environments that support its members, from the quality meals the military serves to the social outlets and entertainment it sponsors.

Steel Your Battlemind

"Expect success . . . Remember that obstacles and setbacks are part of all deployments."
(WRAIR, 2010)

New military recruits are indoctrinated from day one of basic training with the *Warrior Ethos*: "I will always place the mission first. I will never accept defeat. I will never quit. I will never leave a fallen comrade" (U.S. Army, n.d.). The *Warrior Ethos* becomes a part of their lives so that, if and when they are faced with a life-and-death situation, they react instinctively and complete the mission successfully with minimal losses. This ethos is what Battlemind is all

about. Programs that have provided preservice teachers with extensive classroom and clinical experiences to steel their Battlemind in training will prepare them for difficult situations they may encounter in the classroom of the future. These teachers will be better able to make good decisions with a guiding and empowering mindset.

Success in the classroom is rarely immediate. Mistakes are made and reflection leads to corrective action. Teachers need to possess the characteristics of strong self-efficacy, resilience, and a confident and optimistic mindset. Saphier, Haley-Speca, & Gower (2008) stress that teachers must continuously communicate three messages to students: "This is important, you can do it with effective effort, and I won't give up on you" (p.82). While there are challenges in working in schools where there is poverty, violence, and resistance to learning, these challenges can be overcome by determined teachers who have steeled or fortified their Battlemind. These teachers have developed an unyielding sense of purpose and conviction. Movies based on true stories, such as *Freedom Writers* and *Stand and Deliver*, portray the amazing power of individuals who have steeled their mindset, their Battlemind, and taught with guiding, unshakable beliefs. Their empowering mindset allowed them to overcome major obstacles, identify and focus on meaningful long- and short-term goals, and accomplish great things in the classroom. Carol Dweck in *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* (2006) writes, "Those with a growth mindset found success in doing their best, in learning and improving. And this is exactly what we find in the champions" (p. 98).

An effective exercise used by co-author Kathleen Vespia for helping preservice teachers identify their personal sense of purpose is modeled after the National Collegiate Athletic Association's March Madness brackets, used in selecting the winning team in college basketball in the United States. In her exercise, preservice teachers identify the four most personally meaningful outcomes they hope to achieve with their students by the end of the school year. Then, they are asked to narrow those outcomes to two and then one. Responses have included:

- being lifelong learners
- being confident in themselves as learners
- developing a passion for the study of history
- learning to love learning
- learning they are beloved members of a community

Helping preservice teachers steel their Battleminds or mindsets is like putting a compass in the hands of a navigator. It can help them to find their way when they feel they are lost and to focus on their purpose.

In preparing for the mission of educating all students, extensive training and support helps a preservice teacher develop a realistic and guiding mindset. The preservice teacher will be better prepared and mentally ready for the challenges and, more important, opportunities the teacher will face in the future.

Foster Reflective Practice

“A battle lost or won is easily described, understood, and appreciated, but the moral growth of a great nation requires reflection, as well as observation, to appreciate it.” Frederick Douglass

The final, and perhaps most important, lesson shared by teacher preparation and military preparation programs is the need to foster reflective practice. In our teacher preparation program, students are required to submit personal reflections on all delivered lesson and unit plans, classroom observations, and videotapes of delivered lessons in both classes and clinical settings. The two essential questions directed to students are:

- What have you learned from this experience?
- What would you do to enhance your performance in the future?

Such metacognitive exercises provide preservice teachers with opportunity to grow and improve their practice, an essential skill for remaining effective throughout their professional careers. In the military, the same applies. Reflection is a simple, but important, process that enables one to contemplate and think about what went right, what went wrong, and what can be changed in the future to improve the military operation. Reflection takes only five to ten minutes each day but can pay big dividends in saving lives, equipment, and property, especially in combat. Reflection enables leaders at all levels to leverage learning opportunities.

In combat aviation, reflective processes are employed after every mission to make sure the lessons learned are captured and then shared in pilot briefs with the rest of the squadron. These reflective processes are especially critical when resources are tight because other pilots do not have to make the same mistakes again and again to learn these lessons themselves. Military training centers conduct an After Action Review (AAR) with key players after every operation. In many cases, these AARs are explicit and even brutal to watch because they do not hold anything back. Observer controllers point out discrepancies and highlight what could have been done differently to impact the mission.

Teachers would be well served to incorporate reflection into their daily routine. Reflection takes only a matter of minutes, but the payoff can be important. One of the U.S. Army's leadership principles is to *know yourself*. The Army maintains that a person must understand his or her own strengths and weaknesses to lead others. Knowing and understanding ourselves and our students better is accomplished through reflection.

Conclusion

The purpose of this article is to examine a model for developing highly effective teachers. Such teachers maximize student learning in the classroom and skillfully

address the needs of their students. This is the primary goal for aspiring teachers. Through analysis of the critical components of effective teacher preparation and military preparation programs, the authors have identified six shared lessons deemed critical for developing highly effective professionals.

Core values matter and career satisfaction of new teachers can be greatly influenced by the developed core values or Battlemind of program graduates. While great emphasis is placed on achieving professional teaching standards, equal attention should be directed towards the development of each teaching candidate's core values. In the military, these values serve as a moral compass for soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines to guide their ethical decision making on a daily basis. The U.S. Army's core values are loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage. The first letters of each spell out the acronym LDRSHIP, making the core values easy to remember.

Teachers, by the nature of their chosen profession, are all leaders. They are responsible for leading their students to social, emotional, and academic growth. Teacher preparation programs are well served by examining models that promote career sustainability, professional commitment, and satisfaction in a future work environment in which either peace or tension may reign. When teacher preparation programs focus on these criteria, new teachers are better prepared for rewarding careers in which they achieve the meaningful goals they set out to achieve in working with youth.

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