

'Marching into the Classroom' a Second Career in Education for Ex-Military Personnel

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Abstract : In recent years, due to transitions in teacher education, professional identities are changing. In many countries, the education system is absorbing ex-military personnel. The aim of this research is to investigate the phenomenon of retired officers in Israel who choose education as a second career and the training provided. The phenomenon of retired military permanent-service officers pursuing a career in education is not unique to Israel. In the United States and the United Kingdom, for example, government-supported accelerated programs (Troops to Teachers) are run for ex-military personnel (soldiers and officers) with a view to their entry into the education system. These programs direct the ex-military personnel to teacher education and training courses to obtain teaching certification. The present study, however, focused specifically on senior officers who have a full academic education, most of the participants hold second degrees in a variety of fields. They all retired from a rich military career, including roles in command, counseling, training, guidance, and management. The research included 80 participants' men and women. Data was drawn from in-depth interviews and questioner. The conceptual framework which guided this study was mixed methods. The qualitative-phenomenological methodology, using in-depth interviews, and a questioner. The study attempted to understand the motives and personal perceptions behind the choice of teaching. Were they able to identify prior skills that they had accumulated throughout their years of service? What were these skills? In addition, which (if any) would stand them in good stead for a career in teaching? In addition, they were asked how they perceived the training program's contribution to their professionalization and integration in the education system. The data was independently coded by the researchers. Subsequently, the data was discussed by both researchers, codes were developed, and conceptual categories were formed. Analysis of the data shows this population to be characterized by the high motivation for studying, professionalization, contribution to society and a deep sense of commitment to education. All of them had a profession which they acquired in the past which is not related to education. However, their motives for choosing to teach are related to their wish to give expression to their leadership experience and ability, the desire to have an influence and to bring about change. This is derived from personal commitment, as well as from a worldview and value system that are supportive of education. In other words, they feel committed and act out of a sense of vocation. In conclusion, it will emphasize that all the research participants began working in education immediately upon completing the training program. They perceived this path as a way of realizing a mission despite the low status of the teaching profession in Israel and low teacher salaries.

Keywords : cross-boundary skills, lifelong learning, professional identities, teaching as a second career, training program

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