

Exploring the Lived Experiences of Teachers when Enrolled in Asynchronous Certification Program: A Phenomenological Study

Dissertation Defense
By Sara Allen

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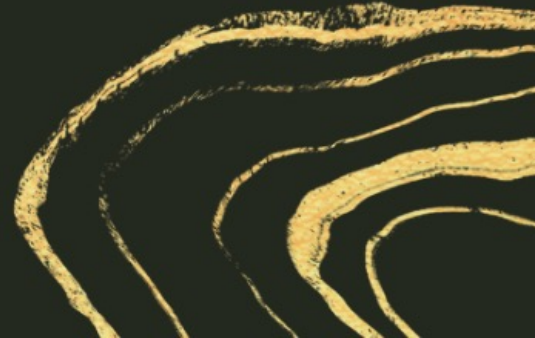
Problem

The problem was that pre-service teachers face challenges during their asynchronous teacher certification program (Korucu-Kış, 2021; Mehrabi et al., 2022; Yang et al., 2021)

- Skills obtained from graduates of asynchronous teacher certification programs may be affected by the motivation and actions experienced during the program (Tareen & Haand, 2020)

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences teachers had when enrolled in an asynchronous pre-service teacher certification program (Korucu-Kış, 2021; Mehrabi et al., 2022; Yang et al., 2021).



Research Procedure

- Procedure
 - Used convenience sampling to gain initial participants from gatekeeper
 - Used snowball sampling to gain participants from other potential participants within the school district
 - Interviewed all participants individually
 - Four in person
 - Six virtually using Zoom
 - Interviewed five participants during focus group virtually
 - Received program description letters from all participants



Participants

Teacher Pseudonym	Years Taught	Highest Degree Earned	Age	Grade Level
Penelope	4	Masters	31	2 nd
Karen	3	Bachelors	32	5 th
Sally	10	Masters	47	7 th
Sara	3	Bachelors	25	5 th
Laura	8	Bachelors	35	4 th
Wendy	11	Masters	36	3 rd
Victor	3	Masters	29	8 th
Kent	5	Masters	32	2 nd
Hannah	9	Educational Specialist	43	6 th
Sam	3	Bachelors	28	5 th

Data Analysis

- Data Analysis:
 - Transcribed all individual interviews and focus group interview
 - Removed identifiable information from transcriptions and program description letters
 - Participants checked their transcriptions through member-checking
 - Uploaded data to NVIVO
 - Open-coding determine the 23 codes
 - Axial coding determined eight themes and five subthemes

Theme and Subthemes

Codes	Frequency	Themes	Sub-themes
Schedule and Location Flexibility	13	Theme 1 Lifestyle Preference for Asynchronous Learning	Schedule and Location Flexibility
Completing Assignments on Time	11	Theme 2 Procrastination during Asynchronous Learning	
Time Management	10		
Overwhelmed Feelings	4		

Themes and Subthemes-Continued

Codes	Frequency	Themes	Subthemes
Student Teaching	9	Theme 3 Competencies of the Program	Competencies Through Student teaching
Classroom Management Skills	8		Classroom Management Competency
Mastering Content	8		Learning the Program Competency
Assignments Throughout the Program	8		
Virtual Teaching Competency	5		
Technology Issues	6	Theme 4 Technology Challenges	

Themes and Subthemes-Continued

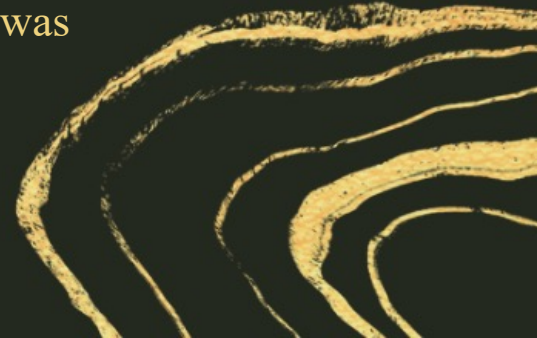
Codes	Frequency	Theme	Subthemes
Feedback	9	Theme 5 Community of the Program	Program Communication
Instructor Communication	8		
Program Connection	8		
Hidden Information	3		
No Connection with Peers	9	Theme 6 Meaningless Peer Communication	
Minimum Word Discussion Post	5		
Meaningless Replies	4		

Themes and Subthemes-Continued

Codes	Frequency	Themes	Subthemes
Self-Disciplined Techniques	10	Theme 7 External Factors for Self-Motivation	
Program Cost	8		
Program Completion Time	7		
Desire to become an Educator	5		
Mentor Check-In	8	Theme 8 Mentorship	
Instructor Communication	5		

Theme 1-Lifestyle Preferences for Asynchronous Learning

- Sub-theme: Schedule and Location Flexibility
 - Participants chose an asynchronous learning program due to convenience and flexibility
 - "With the flexible schedule, the program allowed me to work on things outside of normal business hours. It was more compatible with my lifestyle."

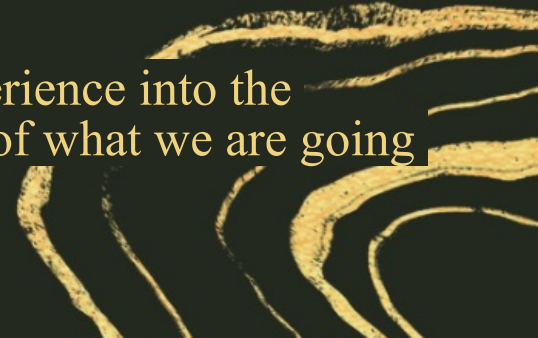


Theme 2-Procrastination of Asynchronous Learning

- Completing Assignments on Time
 - “Since I worked at my own pace, I procrastinated often. Next thing I knew, the deadline was just days away, but I had well over a week of work to do.”
- Time Management
 - ”Finding the time to do the assignments was the main challenge I had throughout the program since I was working and recently married”
- Overwhelmed Feelings
 - “The self-motivation and putting life things aside was hard and could get overwhelming.”

Theme 3-Competencies of the Program

- Sub-theme 1: Competencies through Student Teaching
 - “Out of my four years in my program, I feel I gained the most out of one semester of student teaching.”
- Sub-theme 2: Classroom Management Competency
 - “These type of programs need multiple classes on classroom management to help teachers comprehend how to successfully manage the behaviors of a classroom.”
- Sub-theme 3: Learning the Program Competency
 - “I think incorporating assignments tailored to life experience into the program would be more helpful to gain a better sense of what we are going to experience as teachers.



Theme 4-Technology Challenges

- Participants voiced concerns regarding technology issues
 - “I was challenged while working with technology when the internet was spotty. When the Internet went out, I couldn’t work. When living in a rural area, the Internet could be terrible.”

Theme 5-Community of the Program

- Sub-theme 1: Program Communication

- Feedback

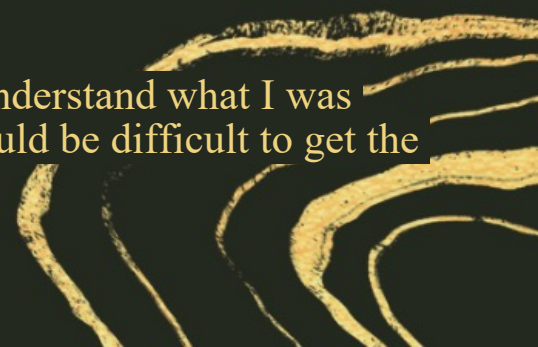
- “I had some difficulty understanding the feedback I received. There were some courses that were harder than others.”

- Program Connection

- “The university would send out mass communications through email, but it was always impersonal or suited toward the people who stayed on campus.”

- Instructor Communication

- “Most instructors responded quickly but did not always understand what I was actually asking. Communicating strictly through email could be difficult to get the meaning across.”



Theme 6- Meaningless Peer Communication

- Most participants felt little connection with peers of their program
 - “Most feedback I received from my peers was mainly repeating what was already said or just agreeing with me.”
- Completed bare minimum requirements for discussion post and replies
 - “Most of my discussion board responses were filled with meaningless words to stretch the post to meet the minimum word requirements.”

Theme 7-External Factors for Self-Motivation

- Self-disciplined techniques
 - “I started to complete one task at a time for a course, making me feel like I was accomplishing things within my program. I also began creating lists to have a visual aid.”
- Program cost and completion time
 - “I could take more classes to finish the degree sooner and pay less.”
- Desire to become an education
 - “My motivation to finish my degree was my desire to be a teacher. I was motivated to finish so that I could have my own classroom.”

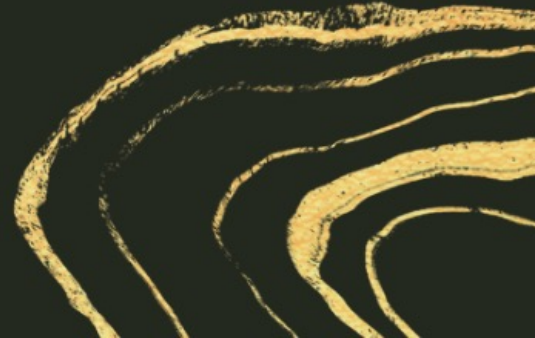


Theme 8-Mentorship

- Mentor check-in
 - “My mentor checked in often and offered additional times to contact him when I needed it”.
- Instruction Communication
 - “I had an amazing advisor who was also an instructor of a course I was in. She pushed me to continue to stick with the program. She was there to support me with many issues.”

CRQ-What lived experiences did current residential teachers face during their asynchronous teacher certification programs?

- Common Experiences during program
 - Schedule and Location Flexibility
 - Similar Lifestyles while enrolled in program
 - Successful Student Teaching
 - Common peer experience

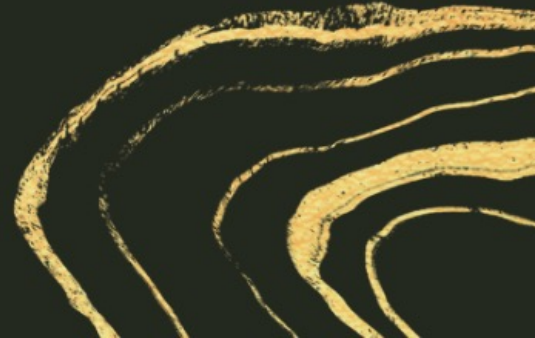


SQ1-What were the challenges current residential teachers faced during their asynchronous teacher certification programs?

- Challenges participants discussed included
 - Procrastination
 - Feedback received
 - Instructor communication
 - Hidden information

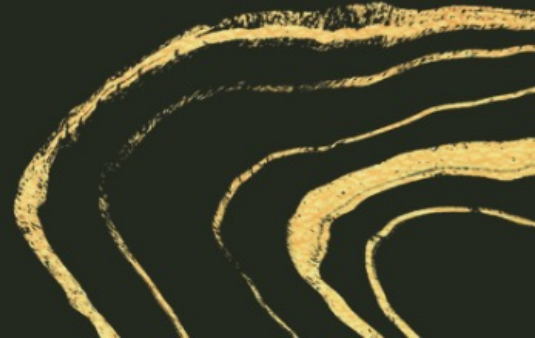
SQ2- What motivating factors did graduates of asynchronous teacher certification programs identify during their program?

- Quicker and cheaper program completion
- Personal Gain
 - Self-disciplined techniques
- Positive Connection
 - Mentor Connection



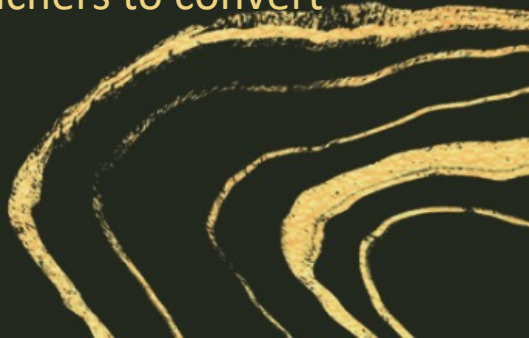
Interpretations of the Findings

- Type of Program Affects Experience
- Need for Additional Real-Life Experiences
- Communication



Practical Implications

- Admin and instructional designer should:
 - Evaluate the structure of the program
 - Incorporate academic coaches or tutors within the program
 - Offer better accessible pacing and course guidelines
 - Offer more opportunities for hands-on training during current courses
 - Incorporate more training toward preparing pre-service teachers to convert their teaching to virtual teaching



Theoretical Implications

- This study showed viability of Keller's theory of motivation
 - Student teaching field experience of this study concurred with the findings of the studies regarding blended learning or flipped classroom approach
 - During Student teaching, learners
 - Keep their Attention
 - Experience Relevant real-time activities
 - Build Confidence toward teaching
 - Become Satisfied with their degree

Empirical Implications

- Minimum studies focused on the motivation of asynchronous teacher certification
- Findings concur with
 - Studies conducted by Barak & Meler (2022) and Xavier & Menses (2022) regarding study habits
 - Studies conducted by Wang & Wang (2020); Oh et al., (2018), and Terras et al., (2018) regarding meaningless peer interaction
- Present study adds to existing literature regarding the experiences pre-service teacher have during their asynchronous teacher certification program

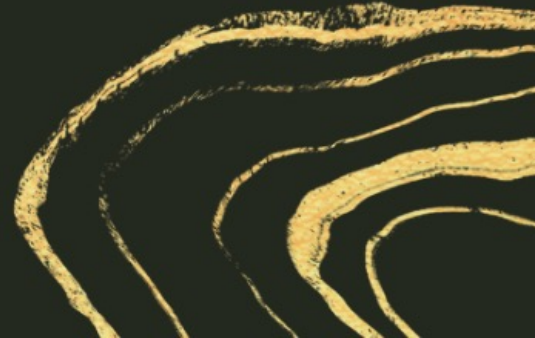


Limitations

- Sample Size of Participants
 - Limited representation of various grades and subject
- Same School District
- Technical issues
- Netiquette for Focus Group

Delimitations

- Purposeful recruitment location
- Participants had to
 - Graduate from an asynchronous program
 - Work a minimum of three years in a K-12 public education



Recommendations for Future Research

- Compare Comprehension-based asynchronous and traditional credit-based certification with more participants.
- Study residential teachers from other areas
- Study learners who quit their asynchronous teacher certification programs
- Conduct a longitudinal study of graduates as they progress to veteran teachers
- Study the use of AI in asynchronous teacher programs

Questions?

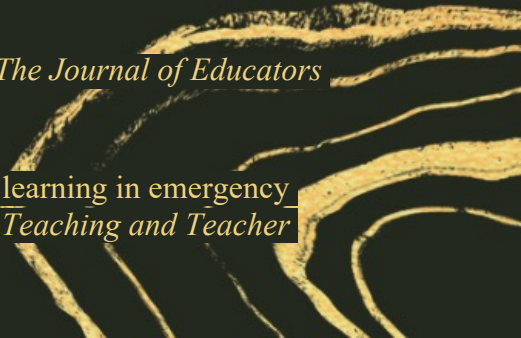


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