The Evolution of Asynchronous Instruction Pre and Post COVID: Program Review of an Accelerated Teacher Credentialing Program

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ABSTRACT

At one time, the leading approach to a traditional credentialing educational preparation program (EPP) was typically conducted in an on-campus, face-to-face synchronous learning environment. In 2017, an accelerated graduate-level teacher credentialing EPP, shifted from a traditional synchronous instruction to an asynchronous distance learning modality. Although the program's enrollment was steady, there was a lack of engagement, creativity, and rigor in courses and with instruction. In 2020, all EPPs had to pivot their learning environments and instructional modalities due to COVID-19. To comply with COVID guidelines and flexibilities, EPPs embraced a non-traditional learning experience through virtual instruction, taking the term distant learner to new heights. To ensure EPPs continued to meet accreditation requirements, identifying research-based innovative instructional strategies became a priority. In this program review, the researchers will examine the impact of instructional methods on teacher candidates enrolled in an accelerated, asynchronous teacher credentialing EPP. Our focus will be on identifying innovative strategies to enhance engagement, foster creativity, increase academic rigor, and program completion rates.

Keywords: Accelerated, Asynchronous, Educational Preparation Programs, Innovate Teaching Strategies, Virtual Instruction

1. Introduction

In the rapidly evolving landscape of higher education, the transformation of a private institution in San Diego, along with its partnering campuses in San Francisco and Los Angeles, offers a compelling study. This article delves into the institution's ambitious restructuring of its teacher credentialing education preparation program (EPP), transitioning from a traditional face-to-face format to a hybrid model, and ultimately to an entirely asynchronous structure. This pivotal shift in instructional delivery was driven by the goals of enhancing flexibility, accessibility, and engagement for teacher candidates pursuing preliminary teaching credentials.

Over a span of six years, the evolution of learning modalities and the implementation of innovative instructional strategies have significantly influenced enrollment patterns and program completion rates. By examining three distinct periods—pre-COVID, during COVID, and post-COVID—this article provides a comprehensive analysis of the factors shaping the program's development and effectiveness.

The transition to an asynchronous format introduced both opportunities and challenges, necessitating a reimagining of course design, faculty engagement, and student support

systems. It underscored the importance of adaptability in teacher education, especially during a nationwide school closure. This experience highlighted the need for dynamic teaching methods, the integration of technology, and continuous assessment of candidate learning outcomes. Moreover, it reinforced the significance of equitable access to quality education, particularly for non-traditional and remote learners.

1.1. Background

This study focused on a professional practice institution created by the merger of three legacy institutions in 1969. The campuses expanded in San Francisco, San Diego, Los Angeles, and internationally. It was not until 2001 that the College of Education was established, named after a founding secretary of the U.S. Department of Education. Soon after, the graduate teacher education preparation program (EPP) became the first in the state to offer an accelerated teacher credentialing program (Alliant International University [AIU], 2009).

The early stages of the postsecondary graduate teacher credentialing EPP (2014-2017) included program tracks for Education Specialist, Multiple Subject, and Single Subject preliminary credentialing. Each track offers three pathways: Beginner - Student Teacher, Intermediate - Intern, and Advanced - Early Completion Option. Enrolled candidates attended sixteen-week semester courses on the San Diego campus, and university clinical practice mentors conducted formal evaluations in person and via phone conferences. It was not until 2017 that the teacher credentialing EPP transitioned to a hybrid learning model. Candidates completed comprehensive foundational, pedagogical, and methodological courses through Moodle, a Learning Management System (LMS), while also participating in face-to-face clinical practice, with seminars led by university mentors at each of the California campuses (Block, Cochrane, Pancer &, Zanker 2025).

Although the teacher credentialing EPP enrollment and program completion rates continued to rise, the program experienced challenges in retention rates and in keeping candidates actively engaged in the online learning environment. Instructor autonomy and academic freedom, a misalignment of professional teaching and program standards, and disjointed leadership may have contributed to variability in instructional quality and newly appointed executive and program leadership (Block, Cochrane, Pancer &, Zanker 2025).

 A new President, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), and Dean were appointed, ushering in a series of transformative adjustments. The graduate teacher credentialing program was revised to an eight-week accelerated asynchronous format. The program also transitioned to a new Learning Management System (LMS), Canvas, which facilitated data collection and streamlined instructional delivery with scripted syllabi to ensure alignment with the California Professional Teaching Standards (CPTS) for all culminating projects. Additionally, a formalized assessment process was introduced using Insight Advance to complete formal evaluations, providing a more standardized and transparent evaluation of candidates' field experiences (Block, Cochrane, Pancer &, Zanker 2025).

Foundational, pedagogical, and methodological courses and curricula were restructured to align more closely with CPTS, Teacher Performance Expectations (TPEs), and program standards. The asynchronous program required all Clinical Practice Seminars to transition to Canvas, and all formal evaluations were conducted using Insight Advance, a video assessment tool. The teacher credentialing program now offered open enrollment, allowing for a continuous enrollment model, unlike the previous traditional cohort model. This period served as a transition phase, laying the groundwork for refining distance learning models and enhancing instructional consistency in subsequent years. The approach was a crucial step in the program's ongoing efforts to improve accessibility, streamline operations, support

enrolled teacher candidates, and increase enrollment, program completion, and retention rates (Cochrane, Pancer, & Block, 2025).

As the teacher credentialing program gained momentum with the new implementations, both enrollment and program completion rates increased. However, during the 2018-2019 period, the program faced a setback due to an unsuccessful accreditation. By 2019-2020, the program underwent a significant transformation, altering its scope and sequence to support a more inclusive learning experience for an asynchronous distance learning modality. The implementation the theory-to-practice approach to learning, which increased its depth and breadth, while adopting a cognitive theory of the spiral instructional approach, allowing candidates to revisit pedagogies and methodologies throughout the curriculum, increasing in complexity to reinforce and deepen understanding, while applying learned concepts to the classroom setting (Johnston, 2012). These changes resulted in the removal of all probationary stipulations, making the teacher credentialing program a fully accredited EPP.

Courses and clinical practice materials continued to be refined to enhance online engagement and prepare candidates for the Education Teacher Performance Assessment (edTPA). Additionally, comprehensive training was implemented for faculty and staff to ensure consistent program delivery and ongoing support for candidates. These strategic revisions not only restored the program's standing but also established a robust foundation for sustained academic excellence and continuous growth.

During the 2020-2021 academic year, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the closure of all TK-12 schools and universities nationwide. Despite these disruptions, this teacher credentialing program continued to operate by leveraging COVID-related flexibilities to help candidates meet their credentialing requirements (Commission on Teaching Credentials, 2020) Asynchronous instruction remained the primary mode of delivery, with candidates utilizing virtual reality simulations, pre-recorded lessons, and instructional CPTS and TPE webinars for candidate and faculty professional development. Additionally, vetted TK-12 videos, corresponding reflections, and lessons were used to fulfill the teacher candidate's field experience hour requirements. Additionally, state assessments were either postponed or waived, granting candidates greater flexibility in their academic progress.

Furthermore, program policies and procedures remained unchanged. Program handbooks and other course-specific documents were updated to reflect the realities of virtual instruction in TK-12 environments, ensuring alignment between candidate preparation and current educational practices. This is an essential component of growth for any program (College, 2025). A notable late-stage adjustment was the transition to the Teaching Channel for field experience assessments, which provided a streamlined and effective evaluation process. These adaptive measures exemplify the program's resilience and dedication to supporting future educators during a time of extraordinary uncertainty as enrollment and program completion rates reached record highs.

By 2022, all pandemic-related flexibilities had ended, and teacher candidates were once again required to complete state assessments and exams. The use of alternative field experiences, such as video simulations, video reflections, and delayed assignment and assessment submissions, also ceased, and emergency funding was discontinued. Many teacher candidates faced exposure to respiratory illnesses as well as mental and physical fatigue, and with limited sick leave, they returned to the classroom (Santiago et al., 2023). There, teacher candidates encountered inconsistencies in student enrollment and participation, as well as significant academic learning gaps among students in TK-12. It was also noted that many educators were leaving the teaching profession, which may have been a leading result of many teacher credentialing EPPs closing their programs permanently.

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, the teacher credentialing EPP experienced a significant decline in both enrollment and program completion rates, despite new marking methods and the approval of the Arizona Special Education application. As the teacher preparation EPP continued its forward trajectory and evolved its instructional modalities to enhance support for both faculty and teacher candidates, the program maintained its fully online, asynchronous, accelerated 8-week graduate structure, preserving many of the innovative instructional practices employed during the pandemic. Coursework was delivered through interactive modules, relevant and authentic readings, recorded introductions and lectures, and discussions, alongside more collaborative work experiences for teacher candidates, fostering a dynamic and engaging learning experience.

To further strengthen faculty and candidate support, in 2023, the program implemented continuous training for faculty and staff, developing resources such as a Clinical Practice Resource Page and the Instructor Resource TEAM within Microsoft. Additionally, the collection and analysis of program data, which was previously managed manually, prompted a search for an Assessment Management System (AMS). This transition culminated in the adoption of Anthology, streamlining data management and program evaluation. The Teaching Channel also integrated into Anthology, providing a centralized platform for video analysis and assessment. These strategic advancements reflect the program's commitment to continuous improvement and ensuring accessible, high-quality teacher preparation.

1.2. Learning Modalities

Since this article examines how different learning modalities may have influenced outcomes, it is important to identify the various forms. Synchronous instruction involves real-time engagement, including live discussions, lectures, and chat interactions, which are typically associated with traditional face-to-face, on-campus learning. Asynchronous instruction offers flexibility by enabling teacher candidates to access course materials, complete assignments, and participate in discussions at their convenience through learning management systems (LMSs), such as Blackboard, Moodle, or Canvas (Morris, 2020). When synchronous and asynchronous methods are used together, they create a hybrid model that supports both on-campus and online instruction during the course or program.

Although asynchronous programs offer flexibility, accessibility, and the convenience of completing weekly assignments in the comfort of one's home, the university faced challenges regarding course alignment and grading among faculty and instructors. To tackle this issue, leadership introduced mandatory training for faculty and instructors at the beginning of the eight-week term, a mid-term check-in to address questions, comments, and concerns from instructors, and an additional meeting before the term's end. A forum was also developed within the online management system (Canvas), allowing access to resources such as utilizing Canvas, grading guidelines, results from calibration training, and course-specific faculty instructional guides. The forum also provided supplementary resources for professional and program standards, online instruction supported by theory aligned with online education, and methods for incorporating virtual weekly office hours. Faculty and instructors were given resources and examples on delivering detailed feedback and addressing questions posed by candidates. The forum included a question-and-answer section, allowing queries regarding courses, grading, and other topics to be asked and answered within 24 to 48 hours. This forum was managed and maintained by a member of the leadership.

The mandatory training provided cohesive instructional practice among faculty and instructors, which helped align instructional expectations; however, candidates struggled to locate course content and program-specific resources. This struggle led to the development of a Program Resource Page, which offered roles and responsibilities, and contact information of leadership, resources for Canvas, video platforms, and the new assessment management system. The page also included essential information on Clinical Practice requirements and expectations, Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs), and Teacher Education Program Clinical Practice resources categorized by the candidate's enrolled program and pathway. Furthermore, additional information was added to inform and support state assessments and exams (Basic Skills, Subject Specific Exams, Teacher Performance Assessments, Literacy Exams, etc.), Student Resources, Credentialing, and Advising Support. However, the candidates still indicated difficulty locating and accessing information, resulting in a 'how-to' video resource on using and finding resources within the Program Resource Page.

During COVID, program enrollment increased, which required hiring more faculty, instructors, and staff to support the growing needs of the teacher credentialing EPP. Although the accrediting body provided flexibilities such as virtual simulations of classrooms and alternative means to obtain Clinical Practice field experience with vetted instructional videos and corresponding lesson plans, teacher candidates needed additional guidance and training on online instruction due to the shelter-in-place ordinance. On a voluntary basis, faculty and instructors developed synchronous training webinars and workshops, enabling candidates to gain a deeper understanding of the teacher performance standards and examples of how those standards appeared in early childhood, primary, intermediate, and secondary grades while teaching online, as well as in TK-12 on-ground facilities.

To continue supporting teacher candidates and introducing more asynchronous innovative instructional practices, the teacher credentialing EPP reviewed all course syllabi, curriculum, and candidate feedback from the End of Term Course Surveys to drive the modification of all scripted syllabi. Each course syllabus would now be student-centered, allowing for standard course information while emphasizing the candidates' needs and learning goals. According to Spangler (2021), the Student-centered syllabus design "promotes a positive tone and provides humanizing personal information." In addition to the syllabi serving as a detailed roadmap of the course and expectations, the curriculum requires updates and the implementation of literacy standards. The course modification included each course incorporating a video introduction (from the instructor and candidates) identifying key information about their enrolled program, current grade level being taught, and their habits and hobbies. In addition to candidates getting to know their classmates, the instructors also gain a method to group candidates when collaborative learning groups are incorporated in the foundational and content knowledge and instructional practice courses.

Hummel states that "the core element of cooperative learning is to showcase the positive effects of interdependence while underlining the importance of personal responsibility" (2024). Each course (foundational, content knowledge, and instructional practice) includes at least one assignment incorporating cooperative learning groups. Examples of assignments include, but are not limited to, general and special education teacher candidates developing inclusive and co-teaching lesson plans and assignments that require candidates to utilize technology to demonstrate their knowledge and application of the professional teaching standards. This approach also promotes instructional opportunities that illustrate the incorporation of instructional standards necessary for formal evaluations within the Clinical Practice courses.

Modified courses also promote options for instructors to model instructional strategies, such as demonstrating differentiated instruction within selected assignments. Differentiated instruction supports various learning styles and authentic learning experiences, fostering an inclusive educational environment and promoting equity in learning (American University School of Education, 2023). For example, using the assignment directions and criteria from the corresponding rubric, candidates could respond by submitting an APA research paper, a video recording of breaking news based on the assignment topic, or providing a video recording of the candidates presenting the information with a slide deck, as if they were presenting the content to the school board, administrators, or even faculty.

Asynchronous programs offer important flexibility, but challenges such as course alignment and resource accessibility required thoughtful solutions. Through targeted initiatives like mandatory training, the development of a Program Resource Page, and enhanced instructional practices, the program strengthened support for faculty, instructors, and candidates. The adoption of student-centered syllabi, cooperative learning assignments, and differentiated instruction has allowed the program to better meet the diverse needs of its candidates. By remaining committed to continuous improvement and responsive to feedback, the program fosters a dynamic environment that promotes engagement, collaboration, and academic success for all members of the learning community.

2. Methods

This explanatory mixed-methods research study examined how quantitative and qualitative data illustrate the cause-and-effect relationship between innovative instructional practices, fluctuating enrollment, and program completion rates (Hassan, 2024). This study required a method to assess the effectiveness of the teaching credential EPP, along with a framework to better understand the reasons behind these changes. A visual blueprint will be necessary for evaluation, complete with measurable success indicators and areas for improvement. To explore and clarify the set of assumptions regarding the steps, long-term goals, and connections between program instruction and outcomes at each stage, a Program Review and components of Change Theory were utilized to identify both the positive and negative impacts of the implementations, along with specific factors that may have influenced the outcomes of the teacher credentialing EPP (What is theory of change?, 2023; Goerge & Merkus, 2025).

Change Theory was applied to conceptualize and trace the logical pathway of change within the program, clarifying the assumptions about how and why desired improvements in enrollment and completion rates would occur as a result of specific instructional innovations. It provided a structured approach for identifying the necessary preconditions, activities, and both short- and long-term outcomes that support sustainable programmatic change. In this context, Change Theory served as a planning tool and an evaluative framework that aligned expected results with actual outcomes. Change Theory and Program Review work together by providing a framework for understanding and enhancing programs. Change Theory informs the rationale and assumptions underlying a program's design, while Program Review evaluates its effectiveness and alignment with these assumptions (Better Evaluation Knowledge, 2025). An academic program review (APR) was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness, quality, and relevance of the EPPs' instructional practices and modalities for continuous improvement and accountability (Johns Hopkins University, n.d.).

The insights from the review provide a critical look at how asynchronous instruction has evolved over six years. The review considers the broader implications of this asynchronous model within the landscape of teacher credentialing EPPs. The APR evaluates the impact of

implementing learning modalities and innovative instruction on teaching methodologies, student-teacher interactions, and overall program success. Through this examination, the findings contribute to a growing body of research on online education and its role in shaping the future of teacher credentialing programs.

2.1. Teacher Candidates

The candidates of the teacher credentialing EPP for the APR Education Specialist (ES), Multiple Subject (MS), and Single Subject (SS). Each program track offers three pathways: Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced. The Preliminary Education Specialist, Multiple Subject, and Single Subject Teaching Credential Tracks prepare teacher candidates for various instructional settings. The Education Specialist Track focuses on supporting learners with mild-to-moderate intellectual disabilities from birth to age 22. The Multiple Subject Track certifies candidates to teach in early childhood, primary, and intermediate settings, while the Single Subject Track certifies candidates to teach specific subjects in middle and high schools, including areas like English, Math, Science, and the Arts.

The Beginner Pathway involves *unpaid* student teaching, offering guided observations and hands-on experiences and solo teaching under the supervision of a district Cooperating Teacher. The Intermediate Pathway, also known as the Standard Intern option, is designed for teachers of record who are hired by the district while completing coursework, with support and supervision from a District Support Provider. The Advanced Pathway, also known as the Early Completion Option, is a fast-tracked version of the Standard Intern pathway designed for experienced educators. It enables teacher candidates to complete credentialing requirements while serving as salaried teachers. University Clinical Practice Mentors are assigned to each enrolled teacher candidate throughout their field experience. All teacher candidates complete comprehensive foundational, pedagogical, and methodological courses that align with Clinical Practice courses. In these courses, teacher candidates acquire a minimum of 600 hours of field experience in various inclusive general education, special education, and co-teaching classroom settings, supporting all students (AIU, 2023, p. 9).

3. Results

Title II of the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HOA) requires Commission-approved institutions to report specific information about their teacher credentialing EPPs. The data obtained for the Academic Program Review (APR) contributed to the findings. Data collected from the CCTC focused on enrollment and program completion rates for Student Teachers and Standard Interns (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing [CCTC], 2023). Charts throughout the article will help display how.

3.1. Pre-COVID

When evaluating the program's completion and enrollment rates during the pre-COVID period, the traditional sixteen-week teacher credentialing EPP reported an increase in their enrollment and program completion rates, with previous years showing figures not exceeding 100 enrolled teacher candidates (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing [CCTC], 2023).
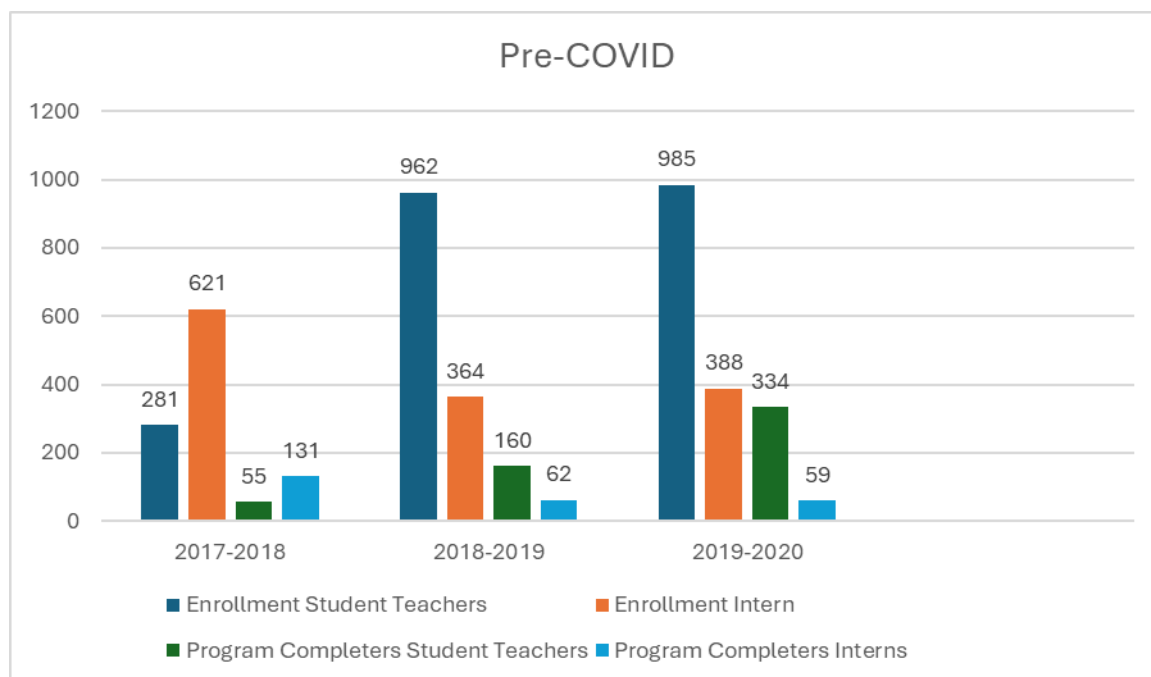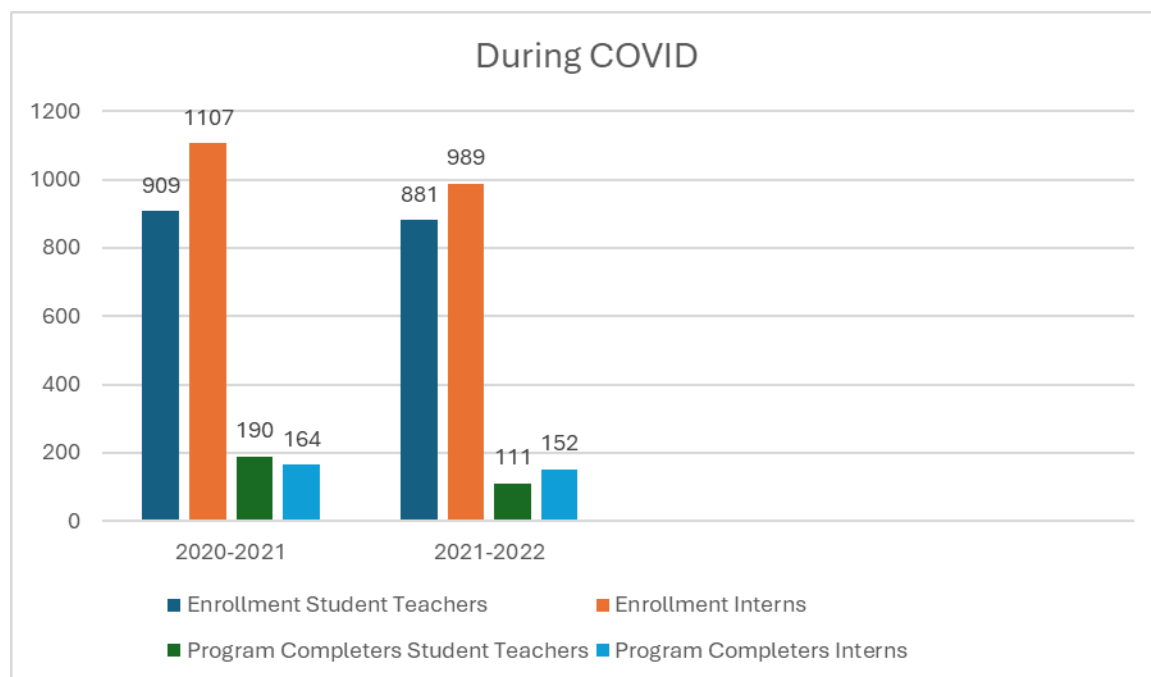
Graph 1: THE PROGRAM 2017- 2019- PRE COVID
Source: (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing [CCTC], 2023)

The data in Graph 1 reflects the program's capacity to attract and support aspiring educators through the credentialing process. The enrollment numbers indicate a significant interest in the three program tracks, while the number of program completers demonstrates the proportion of teacher candidates who successfully navigated the necessary coursework, fieldwork, and assessments. By examining these figures, further insights can be gained into completion rates, retention trends, and potential areas for program improvement. Additionally, this data serves as a baseline for evaluating the impact of subsequent programmatic changes and external factors on candidate success in later years (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing [CCTC], 2023).

3.2. During COVID

According to data from the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC), enrollment for the combined Teacher Preparation Program — which includes Single Subject, Multiple Subject, and Education Specialist credentials, as well as the preparation of Arizona teacher candidates — experienced a significant increase during the 2020-2021 academic year, as illustrated in Graph 2.
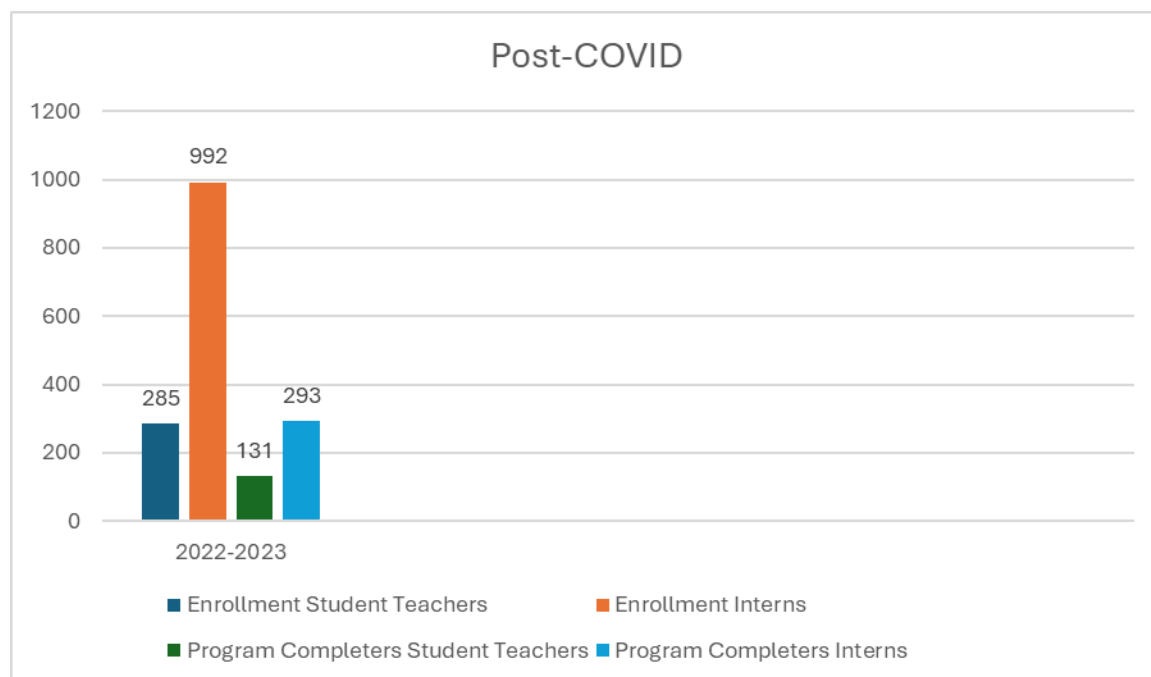
During COVID

	2020-2021	2021-2022
Enrollment Student Teachers	909	881
Enrollment Interns	1107	989
Program Completers Student Teachers	190	111
Program Completers Interns	164	152

Graph 2: The Program 2020 – 2022- COVID
Source: (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing [CCTC], 2023)

This represented notable growth compared to the period preceding the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, the teacher credentialing program demonstrated resilience and adaptability. This growth highlights the program's commitment to supporting and preparing educators in the face of unprecedented uncertainties and school closures (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing [CCTC], 2023).

3.3. Post-COVID

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, the teacher credentialing EPP experienced a significant decline in both enrollment and program completion rates, despite implementing innovative instructional approaches, utilizing marking tactics, and introducing additional out-of-state credentialing programs. Enrollment for student teachers dropped by 67 percent, and for interns, it dropped by 5 percent. When examining program completions, the number of student teachers decreased by 12 percent, while the number of interns increased by 85 percent.

Post-COVID

Graph 3: The Program – Post-covid
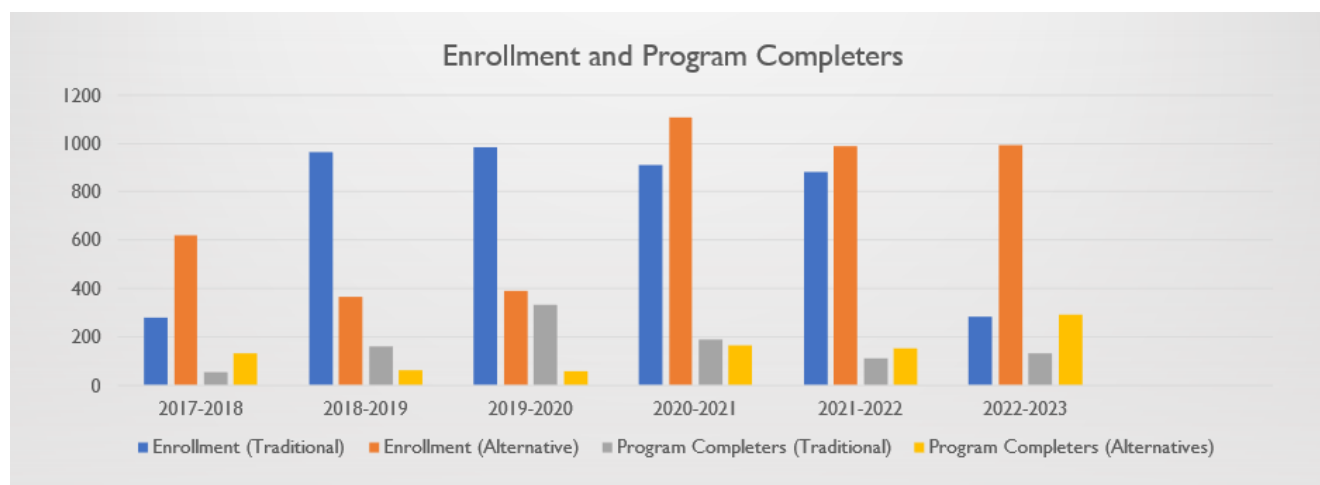Source: (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing [CCTC], 2023)

3.4. Findings

During the COVID-19 pandemic, enrollment in teacher credentialing education preparation programs (EPPs) reached an all-time high, despite the widespread challenges posed by the crisis. This peak was influenced by the temporary suspension of in-person courses and the closure of TK-12 schools due to COVID-19 guidelines, which affected traditional on-campus teacher credentialing EPPs. COVID-19 flexibilities allowed candidates to satisfy program requirements through additional opportunities, and personal beliefs about vaccinations may have also limited some individuals' ability to return to campus or their workplaces due to strict regulations. Another contributing factor that may have impacted enrollment and program completion rates is the permanent closure of other teacher credentialing EPPs.

Teacher candidates may have viewed the accessibility of this postsecondary graduate online asynchronous accelerated teacher credentialing EPP as an opportunity to complete their preliminary credentialing program as distant learners. Throughout COVID-19, the teacher credentialing EPP implemented various innovative instructional practices, frequent faculty and candidate training, and professional development, in addition to collaborative work sessions with the university marking team to draw attention to the thriving teacher credentialing program.

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, enrollment in the teacher credentialing EPP experienced a decrease. However, both the student-teacher and intern pathway experienced an increase in program completers. The researchers believe that the surge in enrollment was influenced by multiple factors. The removal of COVID related flexibilities reduces the accommodations previously available to teacher candidates, making it more challenging for some to continue. Additionally, competing universities offering similar programs provided alternative options, attracting prospective teacher candidates. Furthermore, the elimination of clinical practice training for both teacher candidates and faculty diminished hands-on opportunities, impacting the program's appeal and effectiveness. These combined factors contributed to the observed

shift in enrollment patterns and changes made to the program such as no longer having clinical practice training for both teacher candidates and faculty.

Graph 4: The Program – Post-covid
Source: (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing [CCTC], 2023)

3.5. Moving Forward

As the credentialing teacher EPP continues to evolve, a data-driven approach is essential to sustaining growth and improving candidate success. A critical next step involves analyzing instructional, assessment, and program alignment data for the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 academic school years and identifying areas for refinement. Instructional modalities must be continuously assessed and enhanced to ensure a structured process for course revisions, the use of scripted syllabi, and faculty collaboration training—particularly as continuous training efforts declined in the past academic year. Additionally, assessment practices will be strengthened through the integration of the automated data collection platform, Anthology, to ensure alignment with CPTS, TPEs, and the teacher credentialing program standards.

To enhance candidate support, the program will maintain structured candidate orientations, increase faculty accessibility through frequent one-on-one meetings and open office hours, and expand the roles of Intern & Student Teaching Support Specialists and EdTPA coaches. Maintaining flexible learning options, including virtual asynchronous courses, remains a priority to support the diverse needs of teacher candidates. Expanding virtual fieldwork by offering recorded and live-streamed classroom observations will further enrich the practical experience for candidates. Moreover, leveraging data to analyze enrollment and graduation trends will inform continuous program refinements. Best practices from the program's successful strategies will be shared across other academic programs, alongside faculty training on effective online instruction. Strengthening virtual advising, tutoring, and career services for online learners will enhance overall teacher candidate support. Lastly, increasing alumni engagement through mentorship and feedback opportunities will contribute to long-term program improvement, ensuring continued alignment with the evolving needs of teacher candidates and the broader educational landscape.

3.6. Future Research

As the Teacher Preparation Program continues to evaluate ongoing data, several key research questions will guide future analysis and decision-making. One of the most essential inquiries

is how the university can leverage recent positive changes to sustain growth and enhance the program's overall effectiveness. It would be beneficial to analyze how trends differ across the single subject, multiple subject, and education specialist tracks after the removal of COVID-19 flexibilities and programmatic changes. Exploring strategies to maintain and expand successful instructional modalities will be a critical focus. Additionally, analyzing data on increased enrollment and graduation rates will provide valuable insights for informed program development and resource allocation. Understanding how effective distance learning practices can be scaled across other programs will also be a priority, offering opportunities to enhance accessibility and engagement throughout the university. Through this continuous research, the university aims to build on its successes, further supporting faculty, teacher candidates, and long-term institutional growth.

4. Conclusion

The transformation of the credentialing teacher EPP from a traditional face-to-face synchronous model to a hybrid model, and eventually to an entirely asynchronous format, reflects the program's commitment to adaptability, accessibility, and innovation in teacher education. From 2017 to 2023, the teacher credentialing EPP has navigated significant challenges and opportunities across the pre-COVID, COVID, and post-COVID periods. The rapid shift to asynchronous learning during the pandemic demonstrated the program's resilience and capacity for innovation, particularly through video capture assessments, virtual simulations, and flexible instructional methods. These strategies not only sustained operations but also facilitated substantial enrollment growth and increased program completion rates during a time of unprecedented uncertainty.

The evolution of the teacher credentialing EPP over the past six years exemplifies the resilience and adaptability of higher education in the face of significant challenges. By transitioning from a hybrid model to a fully asynchronous format, the program expanded access to diverse teacher candidates, illustrating the potential of innovative instructional practices to enhance educational equity. An analysis of the pre-COVID, pandemic, and post-COVID periods highlighted both the strengths and limitations of asynchronous learning, offering valuable insights into the long-term sustainability of these approaches.

While enrollment and graduation rates increased during the pandemic due to flexible learning options and temporary regulatory adjustments, the subsequent decline post-COVID highlights the need for strategic planning and continuous improvement. Moving forward, the university can leverage successful instructional strategies, enhance faculty training, and implement robust data management systems like Anthology to guide informed decision-making. Maintaining flexible learning modalities, providing targeted candidate support, and expanding virtual fieldwork opportunities will be critical to sustaining program growth and enhancing candidate success outcomes.

This study further emphasizes the importance of continuous evaluation through program reviews and the application of Change Theory. By systematically analyzing instructional efficacy and candidate performance data, the university can refine its curriculum, assessment methods, and student support initiatives. Engaging stakeholders- including alumni, faculty, and district partners- will further strengthen program relevance and impact. Ultimately, the findings contribute to the broader discourse on the future of teacher education, offering a replicable model for institutions seeking to navigate the complexities of online learning in credentialing programs. Through ongoing reflection and adaptation, the teacher credentialing EPP remains committed to preparing effective, compassionate educators equipped to meet the diverse needs of today's classrooms.

Following the pandemic, the program experienced a decline in enrollment and graduation rates as COVID-related flexibilities were lifted and traditional state assessments were reinstated. This decline highlighted the challenges of maintaining engagement and completion rates in a rigorous, standards-aligned teacher preparation environment. However, the continuation of the fully online, accelerated 8-week structure remains a preferred model for diverse teacher candidates balancing professional and personal commitments. The integration of data management systems like Anthology, along with the implementation of comprehensive faculty and candidate support resources and ongoing faculty training, has further strengthened program quality and candidate outcomes.

Looking ahead, the program is well-positioned to build on these successes by maintaining flexible learning options, expanding virtual fieldwork opportunities, and leveraging data to drive continuous improvement. By applying effective strategies across other academic programs, engaging alumni in mentorship and feedback initiatives, and enhancing faculty development in successful online instruction, the institution can sustain its commitment to preparing high-quality educators. This evolution serves as a testament to the program's dedication to equitable, accessible, and innovative teacher education, ensuring it continues to meet the diverse needs of future educators and the communities they will serve.

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