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Costs, Compromises And Opportunities:
The Experiences Of Mature Women
Students In Flexible Delivered
Teacher Education

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Abstract

This case study research examines the factors that shaped the distance study experiences of eight mature women students who completed a three-year teacher education qualification through flexible delivery at a New Zealand tertiary institution. To obtain perspectives on their experiences as mature students, individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with the women following their completion of three years of study.

The women encountered challenges in their dual contexts of study and family. Study was a cost to the women's family situations, particularly family relationships. The results convey the compromises the women made in their personal and academic spheres. Overwhelmingly the findings confirm personal and professional opportunities gained from the study experience, including positive outcomes for self and family. Support and connectedness generated new meanings for the women. Experiencing academic success, self-growth and transformation of identity were considered ultimate outcomes of the study experience.

This research enhances understanding of the intersecting aspects of family and study for women distance students. Recommendations have been made for addressing the specific needs and supporting the study experiences of mature women students.

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