Research Update
Student Teaching: Reflections of a Relentless Journey

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Method: Pinholster used a methodology of action research by conceptualizing, collecting, and interpreting data through her journal and reflections of her student teaching experience. She first conceptualized what the problem was, then she collected data through specific strategies, and finally interpreted what she found through all reflections, before, during and after, the whole semester.

Results: Results from the strategies utilized were positive in that Pinholster did grow and develop as a teacher. This research is a step in the right direction for student teachers to improve their experience and knowledge as educators.

Discussion: The strategies that were used had a positive effect on the student teacher. Journaling, the first strategy, helped relieve stress and was a source of therapy. The entries were a source of data for self-reflection, which was highly focused on during this experience. The second strategy was to use positive self-talk. Paying attention to the mental conversation, and making sure that the positive did not go unrecognized, as there was a pattern of putting herself down. Talking with supervisors, mentors, and peers can also relieve stress by not letting everything build up inside and discovering advice and strategies for use with the children. The third strategy, videotaping, helps an individual watch themselves objectively allowing the discovery of behaviors that they may not be aware of or realize beforehand. It also helps for the student teacher to look at the positives as well. Finally, the last strategy is humor. This strategy is known to reduce stress, improve self-esteem, and improve the attitude and relaxation. Using all strategies will help a student teacher grow professionally, develop teaching and classroom management skills, and increase their sense of efficacy.

Overview: The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and other teacher accreditation agencies require field experiences and student teaching, as part of the pre-service teacher training to develop knowledge, skills, and dispositions desired and needed to be able to perform the job of the teacher effectively. The purpose of this article is to show how a student responded to the challenges of student teaching using 5 different strategies and how those coupled with self-reflection resulted in a successful student teaching experience.

IMPLICATIONS FOR COOPERATIVE EXTENSION:
Student teaching is one of the most rewarding experiences that a pre-service teacher will encounter. However, it isn’t always that perfect semester that many student teachers often imagine. In this journal article, one of the authors, Pinholster, reflects on the difficulties and challenges she experienced during her student teaching. She identified specific strategies (journaling, positive self-talk, talking to supervisors and peers, videotaping, and humor) in order to learn and gain more knowledge and feel more efficacious. While utilizing these strategies, she also reflected, which would ultimately result in better classroom management and a successful student teaching experience as a whole. Extension educators in many ways are like teachers in that they deliver a variety of trainings to the general public. The strategies used by Pinholster and discussed by Atiles in this manuscript can be very useful for extension educators to develop their teaching skills. Extension professionals working with the 4-H youth development program can teach these skills as part of the trainings the 4-H participants receive to develop their public speaking and other relevant skills related to the mission of their involvement with 4-H.