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Learning to Teach Under Pressure: Anxiety and Coping in Pre-Service English Teachers' Microteaching

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ABSTRACT

Microteaching gives pre-service English teachers teaching practice, but its performance and evaluative demands can provoke anxiety, and how specific sources of anxiety relate to specific coping strategies is unclear. Using an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design in one class, this study examined relationships between dimensions of teaching anxiety and coping strategies among pre-service English teachers who had completed a microteaching course and explained them through participants' accounts. Twenty students completed an adapted Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale and a coping questionnaire, and Spearman's correlations were exploratory and corrected for multiple comparisons. Six respondents, selected at the extremes of each anxiety category, were interviewed, and reflexive thematic analysis was combined with the questionnaire results in a joint display. Fifty-five percent of respondents were in the high anxiety category, with evaluation and observation rated highest, and the interviews linked anxiety to evaluation by the lecturer and classmates and to perceived readiness. Preparation and practice and learning through observation were rated the most helpful strategies. Two correlations (communication apprehension–learning through observation, $\rho = .56$; anticipatory performance anxiety–acceptance and avoidance, $\rho = .48$) were not significant after correction, and total anxiety was unrelated to total coping; coping differed across individuals, not by level of anxiety. The study adds a dimension-level mapping of anxiety sources and coping strategies in microteaching. Because anxiety appeared to be shaped by evaluation and readiness, lecturers can state assessment criteria early and provide structured rehearsal and peer observation. The small, single-class sample makes the findings exploratory.

Keywords: Coping Strategies; Microteaching; Pre-Service English Teachers; Teaching Anxiety; Teacher Education

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INTRODUCTION

Learning to teach requires pre-service teachers to develop not only pedagogical knowledge and instructional skills but also the ability to perform, make decisions, respond to learners, and manage the emotional demands of teaching (Ji et al., 2022; Jordan, 2016; Lindqvist et al., 2023). Microteaching provides a structured setting for practicing teaching skills and receiving feedback (Arsal, 2014; Iliasova et al., 2025), and integrating pedagogical and content knowledge (Shulman, 1987). It can therefore serve not only as a rehearsal space but also as a context for developing professional identity.

Teaching anxiety is an important aspect of pre-service English teacher development, yet it has been investigated mostly in practicum settings. Foreign language anxiety is a situation-specific form of anxiety that affects language performance (Horwitz et al., 1986), whereas foreign language teaching anxiety (FLTA) concerns the demands of teaching through a foreign language and may involve concerns about language ability, pedagogical knowledge, classroom performance, and evaluation (Aydin, 2016). The development of the Foreign Language Teaching Anxiety Scale (FLTAS) established FLTA as a distinct construct among pre-service EFL teachers (Aydin & Ustuk, 2020). FLTA has been identified in teaching practicum and classroom practice (Novitasari & Murtafi'ah, 2022; Tüfekçi Can, 2018), and pre-service teachers are especially vulnerable to anxiety because their professional knowledge, identity, and confidence are still developing (Ji et al., 2022; Lindqvist et al., 2023). This study therefore adopts FLTA (Aydin, 2016; Aydin & Ustuk, 2020) and Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional theory of stress and coping, in which stress arises from how individuals appraise situational demands and their coping resources, as its conceptual framework; self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997) is drawn on only in the Discussion to interpret the findings.

Microteaching may intensify these emotional demands because it combines teaching practice with observation and evaluation, which may generate concerns about mistakes, competence, and negative judgment.

This reflects Goffman's (1959) view of performance as impression management before an audience, whereas Vygotsky and Cole's (1978) zone of proximal development highlights the support that peers and instructors can offer through feedback and reflection. The same context can therefore operate both as a scaffold for development and as performance pressure.

Research has identified multiple sources of anxiety among pre-service EFL teachers, including limited experience, fear of mistakes, personality factors, time management, learner motivation, and technical problems (Novitasari & Murtafi'ah, 2022), as well as cognitive, affective, and sociocultural factors (Tüfekçi Can, 2018). Islami and Suryati (2026) reported a negative relationship between teaching anxiety and teaching self-efficacy among Indonesian pre-service EFL teachers during practicum, while Jeon (2025) found particularly strong anxiety before microteaching and suggested that repeated practice, feedback, and experience could support anxiety reduction and professional development. These studies differ in focus: Islami and Suryati (2026) related anxiety to self-efficacy rather than to coping, Novitasari and Murtafi'ah (2022) addressed anxiety and coping in practicum settings, and Jeon (2025), the closest study to the present one, traced phase-specific sources of anxiety and its reduction through microteaching. Coping is therefore considered next.

Coping is therefore central to understanding how pre-service teachers respond to the demands of microteaching. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) distinguish problem-focused coping, which addresses the source of stress, from emotion-focused coping, which addresses emotions, and in teacher education coping is also shaped by social context and the learning environment (Lindqvist, 2019; Zito et al., 2024). In microteaching, problem-focused strategies such as preparation, rehearsal, and reviewing teaching performances may address sources of anxiety, whereas emotion-focused strategies such as self-talk, relaxation, and emotional regulation may help manage emotional pressure (Horgan et al., 2018). Peers and lecturers may simultaneously function as evaluators and sources of support, although evaluation can increase anxiety, peer and lecturer feedback can influence how pre-service EFL teachers understand and reflect on their teaching (Asregid et al., 2023; Erdemir & Yeşilçınar, 2021; Wang et al., 2025).

Despite this research, the specific relationship between sources of anxiety and coping responses during microteaching remains insufficiently examined. Previous studies have primarily concentrated on teaching practicum or general pre-service teaching experiences (Astuti & Drajati, 2022; Çelik & Zehir Topkaya, 2024; Ghufron et al., 2022; H. Li & Peng, 2024), including the challenges pre-service teachers face (Abdillah & Fithriani, 2023; Ghufron, 2024; Maharani & Fithriani, 2023; Pakpahan, 2023). Although previous studies have explored anxiety and coping in microteaching, further investigation is needed into how specific dimensions of anxiety relate to different coping strategies. In particular, a mixed-methods approach may offer a more detailed understanding of how challenges related to language proficiency, evaluation, classroom management, and preparation are associated with the coping strategies used by pre-service teachers. This study therefore aims to explore the relationships between dimensions of teaching anxiety and coping strategies among eighth-semester pre-service English teachers who had completed a Microteaching course, and to explain these relationships through the participants' own accounts. It is novel in that it ties specific anxiety dimensions to specific coping strategies in a transactional framework of FLTA and provides microteaching lecturers with an empirical foundation for designing preparation activities, feedback, and assessment. The study aims to answer the following research questions: (1) What are the levels and sources of teaching anxiety experienced by pre-service English teachers during microteaching? (2) Which coping strategies do they perceive as helpful and report using? (3) How are specific anxiety dimensions related to specific coping strategies, and how do participants' accounts explain these relationships?

METHOD

Research Design

This study used an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design in a bounded case study: a quantitative phase first identified patterns of teaching anxiety and coping among pre-service English teachers, and a qualitative phase then explained these patterns through the participants' own accounts (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The case was one complete class, the 2022 cohort of the students in the English Education Study Program of a teacher education university in Samarinda, Indonesia. The class had taken the Microteaching course in the sixth semester, in which each student taught one 45-minute session that was observed and assessed by lecturers and classmates. Data were collected in the eighth semester, two semesters after the course (April–May 2026), so participants had to think back on their microteaching experience.

The research proceeded in three phases (Figure 1): (1) collecting and analyzing quantitative data, (2) qualitative investigation, and (3) integration of the findings. In the quantitative phase, a questionnaire measured the teaching anxiety and coping strategies of the participants. Its results were used to select the interviewees according to their anxiety levels and to develop the interview questions on anxiety triggers and coping strategies. In the final phase, the quantitative and qualitative findings were integrated in a joint display (Table 4) that set the main quantitative results against the interview themes that helped explain them, and the authors examined whether the interview accounts confirmed, extended, or complicated the quantitative patterns (Fetters et al., 2013; Fetters & Tajima, 2022).

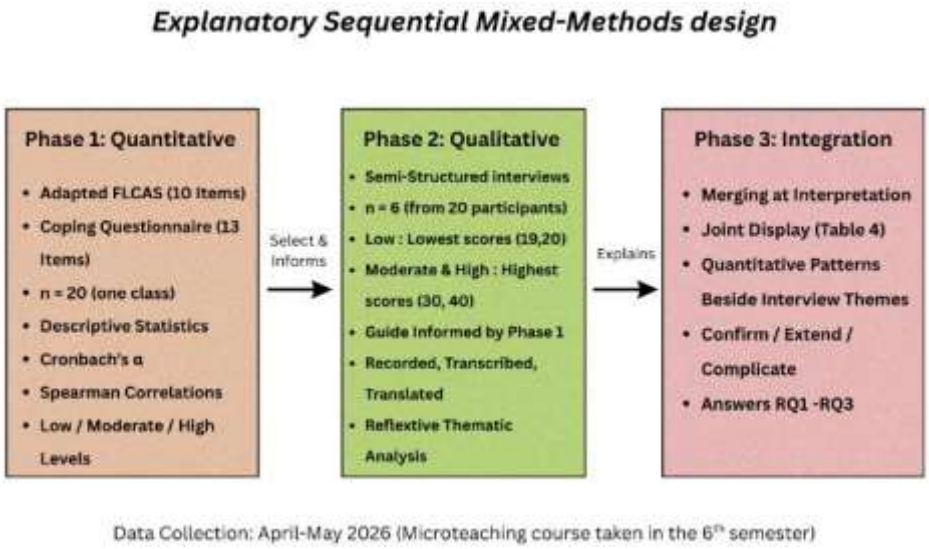


Figure 1. Research flow of the explanatory sequential mixed-methods design.

Research Participants

Participants were 20 pre-service English teachers in their eighth semester (the microteaching course had been taken in the sixth semester) from one class of an English Education Study Program in Samarinda, Indonesia. All 34 students in the class were invited through the class group chat with the permission of the supervisor; 20 (58.8%) completed the questionnaire and 14 did not, and 16 of the 20 respondents agreed to be interviewed. Fifteen respondents were female and five were male, and their ages were approximately 22–24 years. A purposive sampling approach was applied with three inclusion criteria: participants had to be eighth-semester students of the study program, had to have completed the Microteaching course, and had to be willing to complete the questionnaire; participation was voluntary. Because the sample was bounded by one class, the quantitative research stage was designed to describe the characteristics of anxiety and coping of these participants rather than to generalize to a wider population. Individual interviews were held with six respondents (four female, two male) who had agreed to be interviewed, representing three levels of anxiety: the two respondents in the low category who had the lowest total scores in the sample (19 and 20), the two with the highest scores in the moderate category (30), and the two with the highest scores in the high category (40, the maximum possible) (Fetters et al., 2013; Guetterman et al., 2020). Because this selection favors respondents at the extremes within each category, the interview accounts illustrate the range of experiences rather than typical ones.

This study was conducted as a final year thesis project in the English Education Study Program, supervised by the second author, according to the English Education Study Program research procedures. There was no Ethics Committee Approval Number. Participants were informed of the purpose of the study and the confidentiality of their responses at the beginning of the questionnaire and agreed to participate in the study, including being interviewed, before responding. Participation was voluntary, and participants are identified by pseudonyms (P1–P6).

Research Instruments

Two instruments were used: a questionnaire and an interview guide. The questionnaire had two parts, one assessing teaching anxiety and one assessing coping strategies. The anxiety items were based on the FLTA construct and the Foreign Language Teaching Anxiety Scale (FLTAS) formulated by Aydin and Ustuk (2020); they were adapted from the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) (Horwitz et al., 1986) and

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reworded to reflect teaching in microteaching rather than language learning (hereafter the adapted FLCAS). The adapted version consisted of 10 items organized into five dimensions of two items each: anticipatory performance anxiety, communication apprehension, fear of making mistakes, evaluation and observation anxiety, and emotional reactions. Communication apprehension and evaluation and observation anxiety are parallel to dimensions of the FLCAS, and the other three dimensions were organized by the researchers to fit the teaching context.

The 13 coping items were constructed by the researchers from Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) conceptualization of problem-focused and emotion-focused coping and were divided into six dimensions of two or three items each. Preparation and practice and learning through observation were classified as problem-focused because they aim to improve task performance or to obtain task-relevant information from peers. Cognitive reframing and self-motivation, acceptance and avoidance, and social support and self-reward were classified as emotion-focused because they aim to regulate emotional responses. Creating a relaxed classroom atmosphere, which is mostly achieved through a comfortable setting and humor, was also classified as emotion-focused because it reduces tension, although it could also be interpreted as changing the situation. The items asked whether a strategy was helpful when the respondent had teaching anxiety during microteaching, so scores indicate perceived helpfulness, not frequency of use. Both parts used a four-point Likert scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 4 (Strongly agree); a scale without a neutral midpoint was chosen to encourage respondents to commit to a direction. The questionnaire was written in English and checked for content validity by the study supervisor; it was not piloted, and no content validity index was calculated. Internal consistency (Cronbach's α) was high for the anxiety scale (α = .90) and low for the coping scale (α = .52), whose items represent distinct strategies rather than a single construct. At the dimension level, α ranged from .44 to .86 for anxiety and from .15 to .73 for coping, and the correlation between the two items of each two-item dimension is also given (notes to Tables 1 and 2). Because several dimensions were not reliable, dimension-level results are considered exploratory.

Semi-structured interview questions were generated based on the questionnaire findings and the framework of the study (Horwitz et al., 1986; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) in order to probe participants' experiences of anxiety and coping more deeply. The guide included six open-ended questions on anxiety before the performance, why it occurs, the role of observation and evaluation by the lecturer and classmates, factors influencing anxiety, preparation before microteaching, and strategies to maintain calm or confidence during the performance. The guide was not piloted. Interviews were conducted in Indonesian or English according to the participant's preference, were audio-recorded and transcribed, and lasted approximately 20 minutes. The first author translated the excerpts originally in Indonesian into English; the translations were not double-checked.

Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected in two sequential stages. The questionnaire was sent to the students online via Google Form from the beginning of April 2026, with the permission of the supervisor to share the link in the class group chat; it also asked respondents whether they were willing to be interviewed and whether they preferred to be interviewed face-to-face or online. Interviews were conducted at the end of the questionnaire period (late April/early May 2026), face-to-face or via Zoom or Google Meet according to the participant's preference. Data collection began approximately one year after the microteaching sessions had been conducted (February to May 2025). This is a retrospective study and may therefore contain recall bias, which is acknowledged as a limitation.

Data Analysis Procedures

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation) were used to describe the pattern of teaching anxiety and coping. The dimension scores were calculated by averaging the items in each dimension, and the responses to the two questionnaires were matched for each respondent. Participants were classified as low, moderate, or high in anxiety according to pre-determined total score ranges (10–20, 21–30, and 31–40, respectively). Spearman's rank correlation (ρ) was used to examine the association between the five dimensions of teaching anxiety and the six dimensions of coping, which was considered appropriate given the ordinal scale and the small sample. The analysis was exploratory because 30 correlations were tested in a small sample. Unadjusted p-values are reported, and Holm and Benjamini–Hochberg adjusted values were computed as a sensitivity check. The effect size is represented by Spearman's ρ, and 95% confidence intervals are presented for significant coefficients. Because of low

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statistical power (about .25 for ρ = .30 and .62 for ρ = .50 with n = 20), non-significant results should not be interpreted as evidence that no relationship exists.

Interview data were analyzed with reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2019, 2021) in six phases: familiarization with the transcripts, initial coding, theme generation, theme review, theme definition and naming, and writing up. Codes were created inductively from the transcripts, and the coded extracts were organized into sub-themes and three overarching themes, namely experiences of teaching anxiety, factors influencing teaching anxiety, and coping strategies, which followed the topics of the interview guide. Coding took into account both the explicit descriptions provided by the participants and the experiences implied in them, and the analysis also considered the consistency or lack of consistency between the interview and the quantitative data. All transcripts were coded by the first author, and coding decisions were recorded in coding notes. The codes and themes were then discussed with the second author, the study supervisor, to ensure that the themes were grounded in the data. Reflexive thematic analysis was used to include the researchers' own perspectives as part of the analysis, and coding notes and the discussion with the second author were explored to consider how this might have influenced interpretation of the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Teaching Anxiety During Microteaching

The questionnaire results show teaching anxiety in all five dimensions assessed, namely anticipatory performance anxiety, communication apprehension, fear of making mistakes, evaluation and observation anxiety, and emotional reactions. All five dimension means were above the scale midpoint (2.50). Evaluation and Observation Anxiety was rated highest (M = 3.28, SD = 0.80) and Emotional Reactions lowest (M = 2.83, SD = 0.71) (Table 1). Total anxiety scores ranged from 19 to 40 (M = 31.25, SD = 5.74); eleven respondents (55%) were in the high category, seven (35%) in the moderate category, and two (10%) in the low category. The highest-rated item was feeling nervous before starting the performance (M = 3.35, SD = 0.81), followed by three items rated at M = 3.30 (feeling anxious when teaching in front of classmates and the lecturer, worrying about explaining the lesson clearly, and worrying about making mistakes), and the lowest-rated item was difficulty staying calm (M = 2.45, SD = 0.89). These items indicate the level of anxiety, not its causes, so the interviews were used to explain the sources of anxiety.

Table 1. Teaching Anxiety Items by Dimension (Adapted FLCAS, n = 20)

Dimension	Item	1	2	3	4	M	SD	Dimension M (SD)
Anticipatory Performance Anxiety	I feel nervous before starting my microteaching performance	1	1	8	10	3.35	0.81	3.20 (0.78)
	I worry that I may not do my microteaching successfully	1	4	8	7	3.05	0.89	
Communication Apprehension	I worry that I can't explain the lesson clearly	0	2	10	8	3.30	0.66	3.15 (0.61)
	I feel pressured when I have to teach using English	1	2	13	4	3.00	0.73	
Fear of Making Mistakes	I become tense when I have to explain the lesson	1	3	10	6	3.05	0.83	3.18 (0.57)
	I worry about making mistakes while teaching	0	1	12	7	3.30	0.57	
Evaluation & Observation Anxiety	I feel anxious when teaching in front of my classmates and lecturer	1	2	7	10	3.30	0.86	3.28 (0.80)
	I feel anxious when my classmates and lecturer observe my teaching negatively	1	2	8	9	3.25	0.85	
Emotional Reactions	I feel my heart beat faster during microteaching	0	4	8	8	3.20	0.77	2.83 (0.71)
	I find it difficult to stay calm	2	10	5	3	2.45	0.89	

Note. 1=Strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=agree, 4=Strongly agree. Dimension M (SD) is based on each respondent's mean score on the two items of the dimension. Cronbach's α (inter-item Spearman correlation) by dimension: anticipatory performance anxiety .82 (.61), communication apprehension .71 (.63), fear of making mistakes .44 (.39), evaluation and observation anxiety .86 (.69), emotional reactions .64 (.44).

The interviews reveal two types of anxiety, namely evaluation pressure and perceived readiness. Each of the six interviewees mentioned being assessed, and the lecturer was mentioned by all six. P3 (moderate) described the assessment itself as a source of worry.

> *"I remember the evaluation sheet was very detailed, and I think we had three judges. In addition, all the classmates were also evaluating us."*

P6 (high) separated the two kinds of evaluators: *"Actually, evaluations from classmates did not make me too nervous. It was really the lecturer's presence that increased the pressure when I was teaching in front*

of the class." For P4 (moderate), the reason classmates matter is because they had *"confused expressions on their faces,"* which made P4 feel frightened less by their judgment than by their faces. The classroom was, in Goffman's (1959) language, a stage wherein the performance was viewed by two audiences: a grading audience and a peer audience, who each responded to the performance differently. Evaluation is expected to foster learning by providing feedback and reflection, however, the findings showed that it can turn into pressure for pre-service teachers.

Readiness was able to offer a reason for the differences between participants. The two interviewees with lower anxiety levels reported their nervousness as being short-lived and controllable. P1 reported that it was *"only normal nervousness, not something that made me extremely anxious"* and P2 reported that it *"only happened at the beginning"* as previous teaching presentations made the course less pressuring. The two high anxiety interviewees, on the other hand, linked their anxiety to uncertainty about themselves. P5 said that they were *"extremely nervous because I lacked confidence and had a strong sense of fear and self-doubt,"* and P6 explained that it was *"Maybe because I felt that my preparation was lacking."* This is congruent with the questionnaire finding that anticipatory nervousness and worry about failure was rated high while difficulty staying calm was not.

The two sets of data indicate that anxiety was influenced more by anticipation, evaluation, and perceived readiness in this microteaching class than by the act of teaching itself. This is similar to Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional stress model in which the stress is determined by the appraisal of the situation as exceeding the resources of the individual and with Jeon (2025) who reported high anxiety before microteaching. Furthermore, it is consistent with the results of other studies that have found teaching performance, language use, and fear of evaluation as foreign language teaching anxiety sources (Aydin, 2016; Aydin & Ustuk, 2020; Fraschini & Park, 2021). This may be because the evaluation was so strong, as the evaluators were the lecturer and the classmates, whereas Q. Li et al. (2023) and Liu and Wu (2021) studied in a teaching practicum and with in-service teachers, where the audience is real learners. Also, Novitasari and Murtafi'ah (2022) cited limited experience, fear of mistakes, and technical difficulties as sources of anxiety of pre-service EFL teachers, with fear of mistakes mentioned in Table 1, readiness concerns in the accounts of P5 and P6, and P3 also mentioned technical difficulty due to malfunctioning equipment.

Coping Strategies for Teaching Anxiety During Microteaching

The results show that the participants adopted a blend of problem-focused and emotion-focused coping mechanisms in dealing with microteaching anxiety, showing a distinct preference for those mechanisms that made them feel more prepared and in control. All six coping dimensions were rated as helpful (dimension means from 2.88 to 3.63; Table 2). The two problem-focused dimensions were Preparation & Practice (M = 3.63, SD = 0.43) and Learning Through Observation (M = 3.33, SD = 0.49). Among the emotion-focused dimensions, Social Support & Self-Reward (M = 3.25, SD = 0.47), Cognitive Reframing & Self-Motivation (M = 3.23, SD = 0.38), and Acceptance & Avoidance (M = 3.15, SD = 0.61) were rated similarly, whereas Creating a Relaxed Classroom Atmosphere received the lowest mean score (M = 2.88, SD = 0.56). The most highly rated was improvement of understanding of the teaching material (M = 3.75; 15 of 20 respondents rated it strongly agree) and the least was humorous or enjoyable activities (M = 2.75).

Table 2. Participants' Ratings of the Helpfulness of Coping Strategies (n = 20)

Dimension	Item	1	2	3	4	M	Dimension M (SD)
Preparation & Practice (Problem-Focused)	Thoroughly preparing your teaching material	0	0	10	10	3.50	3.63 (0.43)
	Improving your understanding of the teaching material	0	0	5	15	3.75	
Learning Through Observation (Problem-Focused)	Observing classmates' teaching performances	0	1	13	6	3.25	3.33 (0.49)
	Watching how classmates manage their classes	0	1	10	9	3.40	
Cognitive Reframing & Self-Motivation (Emotion-Focused)	Reminding yourself that anxiety is normal	0	1	11	8	3.35	3.23 (0.38)
	Encouraging yourself with positive thoughts	0	1	12	7	3.30	
	Focusing on doing your best rather than worrying about mistakes	0	4	11	5	3.05	
Creating a Relaxed Classroom Atmosphere (Emotion-Focused)	Creating a comfortable classroom atmosphere	0	2	16	2	3.00	2.88 (0.56)
	Using humorous or enjoyable activities	2	5	9	4	2.75	
Acceptance & Avoidance (Emotion-Focused)	Accepting that anxiety is unavoidable	0	2	11	7	3.25	3.15 (0.61)
	Avoiding direct attention to people who make you nervous	0	6	7	7	3.05	

Dimension	Item	1	2	3	4	M	Dimension M (SD)
Social Support & Self-Reward (Emotion-Focused)	Receiving encouragement from friends	0	3	11	6	3.15	3.25 (0.47)
	Reminding yourself of enjoyable activities after microteaching	0	1	11	8	3.35	

Note. 1=Strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=agree, 4=Strongly agree. Scores reflect perceived helpfulness, not frequency of use. Dimension M (SD) is based on each respondent's mean score on the items of the dimension. Cronbach's α (inter-item Spearman correlation) by dimension: preparation and practice .73 (.58), learning through observation .65 (.51), cognitive reframing and self-motivation .15 (three items), creating a relaxed classroom atmosphere .34 (.28), acceptance and avoidance .53 (.35), social support and self-reward .22 (.13).

The interviews demonstrate the importance of preparation, as it was seen as an action that could be taken on what the participants had the control of. P2 (low) said that the most important thing is: "*We need to make sure that we truly understand the material and also prepare the teaching media or tools we need.*" P1 (low) prepared by studying the material and *"simulate the teaching session in my mind,"* and P3 (moderate) prepared by practicing and a different perspective on the performance:

> *"Another thing I did was treating the microteaching session as if it were just another practice session. I had already practiced many times before, so I kept reminding myself that this was basically the same thing, except now there was an audience."*

In Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) terms, preparation is problem-focused because it involves acting on controllable parts of the task. However, P3's record indicates that it also altered the way in which the performance was judged, which meant that the two types of coping overlapped in practice.

Learning Through Observation was also highly rated. P3 explained: *"I learned some of those strategies from classmates who performed before me. By watching how they conducted their classes or interacted with students, I learned what I should do and what I should avoid."* This is similar to Bandura's (1997) concept of vicarious experience, in which one's sense of what is possible is shaped by observing others, and to Vygotsky and Cole's (1978) belief that peers provide support. In the study of microteaching, peer observation and feedback are also regarded as learning resources (Arsal, 2014; Erdemir & Yeşilçınar, 2021). But observation did not only help, P2 (low) remarked, *"what if my classmates also stay silent during my class?"*

Emotion-focused strategies were described individually. In Cognitive Reframing & Self-Motivation, P4 (moderate) recalled, *"I reminded myself that I had to get through this moment because I did not want all the efforts I had made throughout my life to be ruined by one single experience."* On the Social Support & Self-Reward, the same participant also stated that *"Knowing that there were people who believed in me was what kept me going. I also motivated myself with small rewards."* However, P4 stated that they *"did not really have structured coping strategies before the presentation."* Acceptance & Avoidance was seen in P6 (high) who *"just surrendered myself to the situation"* and according to P2 (low): *"it is okay to make mistakes because we are only human."* Two interviewees described how they created a Relaxed Classroom Atmosphere: P3 stated, *"to smile, make jokes occasionally, and create a comfortable atmosphere"*; and P5 (high) also stated, "*Adding entertaining or humorous elements, to my teaching material in order to reduce the tension during the class."*

Classmates could both calm and unsettle. P3 found that *"making eye contact and recognizing them as my classmates actually calmed me down,"* whereas P4 was frightened by seeing confused expressions on their faces. Peers thus were an audience whose responses needed to be controlled (Goffman, 1959), and they were also a source of reassurance, which is in line with the mixed use of emotion-focused strategies reported by Fan and Xie (2025) for EFL student teachers who were given feedback on their microteaching by peers. The high rating for preparation is not necessarily a reflection of the frequency of use, nor of any reduction in anxiety, but may be a reflection of the fact that preparation made the task more familiar, and more controllable.

Relationship Between Teaching Anxiety and Coping Strategies

The relationships between the five anxiety dimensions and the six coping dimensions were examined with Spearman's rank correlations as an exploratory analysis (30 tests, n = 20). Two correlations were statistically significant before correction: Communication Apprehension with Learning Through Observation (ρ = .56, p = .010, 95% CI [.13, .82]) and Anticipatory Performance Anxiety with Acceptance & Avoidance (ρ = .48, p = .033, 95% CI [.02, .77]) (Table 3). Neither remained significant following Holm or Benjamini–Hochberg correction (adjusted p = .29 and p = .96 for Holm, .29 and .50 for Benjamini–Hochberg). With 30 tests, about 1.5 significant results are expected by chance at α = .05, and the wide confidence intervals show

that the estimates are imprecise, so both results are tentative. None of the other 28 correlations were significant, and total anxiety was not correlated with total coping (ρ = .16, p = .50).

Table 3. Spearman Correlation Between Teaching Anxiety and Coping Strategies (n=20)

Coping Strategies Dimension	Anticipatory Performance Anxiety	Communication Apprehension	Fear of Making Mistakes	Evaluation & Observation Anxiety	Emotional Reactions
Preparation & Practice	.09 (.697)	.22 (.357)	-.07 (.768)	.00 (.986)	.03 (.908)
Learning Through Observation	.33 (.152)	.56* (.010)	.12 (.622)	.37 (.111)	.10 (.684)
Cognitive Reframing & Self-Motivation	-.11 (.645)	.10 (.661)	.05 (.849)	-.06 (.814)	-.19 (.432)
Creating a Relaxed Classroom Atmosphere	-.29 (.212)	-.02 (.935)	.17 (.464)	-.11 (.658)	-.35 (.135)
Acceptance & Avoidance	.48* (.033)	.24 (.301)	-.06 (.803)	.01 (.972)	.28 (.225)
Social Support & Self-Reward	.03 (.894)	.09 (.715)	.08 (.736)	.17 (.485)	-.07 (.770)

Note. The cells display Spearman's ρ (two-tailed p). * p <.05, uncorrected. There was no significant connection after Holm or Benjamini-Hochberg correction (30 tests).

Differentiated is the more accurate description of the pattern than systematic. The associations were positive: respondents who had higher communication apprehension rated observing classmates as more helpful, and those who had higher anticipatory anxiety rated acceptance and avoidance as more helpful. These associations can suggest that people who are concerned about explaining the lesson are searching for models from others or that anticipatory concern results in acceptance, but they cannot demonstrate this. On the other hand, the direction can also be reversed, and a third variable like previous teaching experience might play a role, since the data are cross-sectional and self-reported. The interviews are used to assess the extent to which these tentative patterns can be believed (Table 4).

Table 4. Joint Display of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

Quantitative Finding	Qualitative Finding	Integration
The highest-rated anxiety symptoms were nervousness before starting (M = 3.35), followed by evaluation and observation anxiety (M = 3.28)	All six interviewees referenced the lecturer or the evaluation; P3 reported a detailed evaluation sheet; and P5 and P6 (high) associated nervousness with low confidence and poor preparedness.	Confirms, and adds readiness as a source
Preparation & Practice was rated the most helpful (M = 3.63)	P1, P2, and P3 described studying the material, rehearsing, and practicing; P3 viewed the performance as "just another practice session."	Confirms, and extends: the preparation also changed how the performance was appraised
Communication Apprehension x Learning Through Observation: ρ = .56 (not significant after correction).	P3 learned "what I should do and what I should avoid" from classmates; P2 (low) became worried when observing previous classmates; P1 (low) feared unclear speech but did not mention observation.	Not confirmed: the observation helped some and worried the others, so the direction is unclear
Anticipatory Performance Anxiety x Acceptance & Avoidance ρ = .48 (not significant after correction).	P6 (high) "surrendered" to the situation and avoided looking at the lecturer; P5 (high), who expected a poor score, used humor instead; P2 (low) accepted that mistakes are human.	Partly consistent with P6 but not with P5, so tentative
Total anxiety x Total coping: ρ = .16 (p = .50).	P4 (moderate) had no structured strategy but used self-motivation and support; P1 (low) used mental rehearsal and imagined worst cases; P5 (high) used humor.	Extends: coping differed in kind between individuals rather than with anxiety level

Note. Quotations are from the six interviewees (P1–P6); anxiety levels are given in parentheses.

The results of this study are inconsistent with Islami and Suryati (2026) who found that the teaching anxiety of pre-service teachers in practicum and their self-efficacy were negatively correlated, as the teaching anxiety and self-efficacy constructs, setting and sample of the study are different. They are compatible with Fan and Xie (2025) who investigated the use of various emotion-regulation strategies by EFL student teachers in the context of receiving feedback from their peers on microteaching, and with Jeon (2025) who suggested that repeated practice and feedback help pre-service teachers manage anxiety.

The results indicate that microteaching should not be considered merely as a context where anxiety must be removed. There was some level of anxiety involved in the performance of the teacher's role, with the participants responding to it with a range of preparation, peer observation, and emotional strategies. This interpretation aligns with the general perspective of microteaching as a structured learning process that can support the growth of pre-service teachers' teaching competence and self-efficacy (Arsal, 2014). For microteaching lecturers, this means that the criteria for the evaluation should be made clear early in the lesson, as the presence of the lecturer and the detail of the evaluation sheet were mentioned as pressures, and the

incorporation of structured peer observation and rehearsal before the performances are evaluated. Because coping differed between individuals, offering a range of strategies is likely to be more useful than prescribing one.

Several limitations should be considered. The sample size was small (20 of 34 students in one class at one institution), the data were self-reported and cross-sectional, and the questionnaire was filled out approximately one year after the course, which could have led to recall bias. The instruments were pre-tested by one expert without a pilot, and several coping dimensions had low reliability (Cognitive Reframing $\alpha = .15$, Social Support $\alpha = .22$); hence, caution should be exercised when interpreting dimension-level results. The correlation analysis had low power and was exploratory, and the interviewees were selected at the extremes of each anxiety category. Larger samples from multiple institutions, data taken immediately after microteaching, and testing of validated coping measures should be used in future studies.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the levels and sources of teaching anxiety, the coping strategies used, and the links between them among pre-service English teachers who had completed a microteaching course. More than half of the respondents were in the high anxiety category, and the interviews traced this anxiety mainly to evaluation by the lecturer and classmates and to perceptions of readiness, rather than to the act of teaching itself. Preparation and practice, followed by learning through observation, were rated the most helpful coping strategies, and the interviewees also described emotion-focused strategies such as reframing, social support, acceptance, and creating a relaxed atmosphere.

The relationships between anxiety dimensions and coping dimensions were weak and inconsistent: two of the relationships were no longer significant after correction, and overall anxiety was not related to overall coping. The interviews indicate that coping differed in kind between individuals rather than with anxiety level. The findings are preliminary due to the limited sample size of one class. Microteaching lecturers can reduce the pressure of evaluation by specifying the criteria clearly at the beginning of the lesson and giving structured rehearsal and peer observation. The question of whether these associations are true should be tested in future studies using larger samples from several institutions and data collected soon after the microteaching.

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