

# Teaching Anxiety Among EFL Student Teachers During the Teaching Practicum

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## Abstract

This study investigated the sources of teaching anxiety experienced by EFL student teachers and their strategies to overcome their teaching anxiety. The study used a qualitative research design with close-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews to collect the data. The obtained data were categorized and transcribed to be analyzed qualitatively. The findings revealed seven main factors that caused teaching anxiety including; evaluation, students' behaviors, self-confidence, fear of making mistakes, time management, lesson delivery, and teaching preparation. Student teachers implemented several strategies to overcome EFL student teachers' anxiety including; humor and positive thinking, good planning and preparation, building a good relationship, practicing mindfulness, creating fun English learning activities, and giving a reward. The results provide important implications for further research development in educational practices, specifically in managing teaching anxiety among prospective teachers.

*Keywords:* EFL student teachers, teaching anxiety, English teaching, strategies

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## 1. Introduction

For students in education programs, including students in English language education programs, teaching practicum is compulsory. Teaching practicum plays a crucial part in their learning experience and preparation to become teachers (Saariaho et al., 2019). The purposes of the teaching practicum are to give prospective teachers real experience of a school environment and to understand the process of teaching and learning in the classroom under the supervision of a coordinating teacher, a school teacher who assist the student teachers during the teaching practicum and teacher educator, a supervisor forms the university.

However, in teaching practice, psychological barriers such as anxiety cannot be avoided. This condition greatly affects the performance of the student teachers. Anxiety can be defined as the feeling of student teachers' restlessness, lack of self-belief; and self-confidence when they are in the new teaching-learning situation. Machida, 2016 added that student teachers showed their teaching anxiety by negative feelings and emotions during facing any situation in classroom learning.

Teaching anxiety might give negative effects on EFL student teachers' performance during teaching practicum. Teaching anxiety on student teachers has a detrimental impact on the effectiveness of teaching performance. Such as; student teachers feel uncomfortable or nervous during delivering the material with the right procedures, which can be caused the wrong perception of students to student teachers' explanation. In this condition, anxiety may reduce teaching effectiveness and thereby relieve the enthusiasm and motivation of students in terms of learning and student performance. Thus, the student teachers must take some actions to cope with their anxiety so that they can perform well during their teaching practicum.

In the research above teaching anxiety has been evident to affect student teachers during practicum. Therefore, EFL student teachers need to overcome their anxiety during the teaching practicum. This study conducted to investigate what are the factors that cause anxiety among EFL student teachers during their teaching practicum and how they will cope with it. The research question of this study is: what are the factors that may cause teaching anxiety among EFL student teachers during the teaching practicum and their strategies to cope with it.

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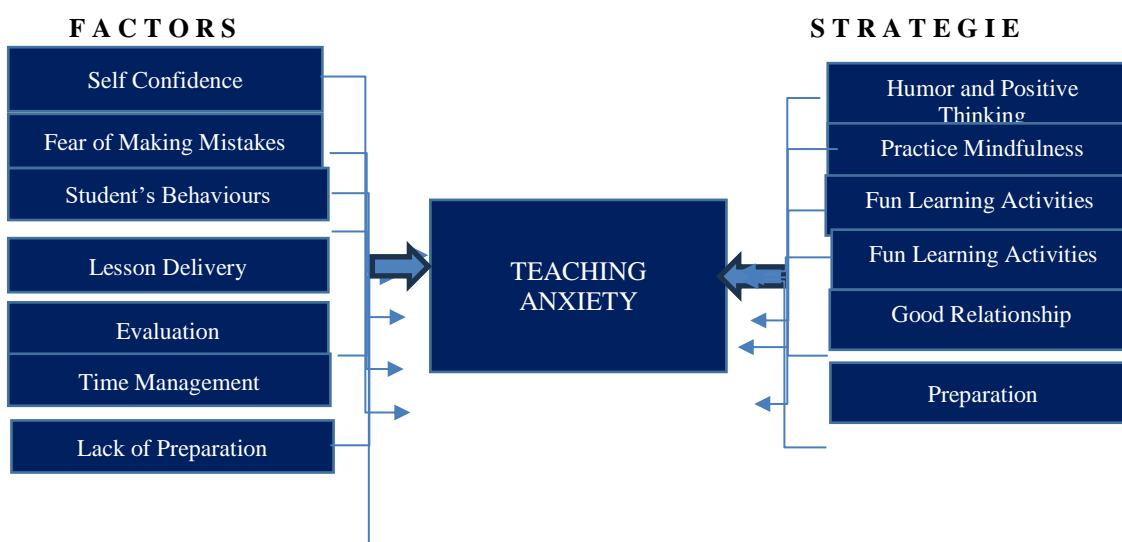
## 2. Previous related Studies

There have been studies investigate the factors that may cause teaching anxiety and ways to overcome teaching anxiety. Alrabai (2014) revealed that anxiety during classroom practice can negatively affect student-teacher performance in the classroom practice process. Therefore, student-teachers need to take some measures to deal with anxiety in order to perform well during teaching practice. In this study, coordinating teacher has an important role to reduce student teachers' anxiety, through motivation, builds student teachers' confidence and self-esteem in their foreign language abilities via encouragement, reassurance, positive reinforcement, and empathy. A study by Djawamara and Listyani (2021) explored some possible sources of anxiety related to teaching practice in senior high school. The result showed that the student teachers became nervous when having to face the new environment, attitudes of school teachers and students, lesson plans and teaching materials, the student teachers' way of presenting materials to school students, time management, the availability of Audio-Visual Aids, and being observed by the supervisor and mentor teachers. To overcome anxiety, student teachers must be convincing their self during teaching practicum, belief their self that they can be adapted with a new environment, build good relationships with teachers and all students and prepare for the best performance when doing teaching practices.

The previous studies involved the student teachers as participants during teaching practicum in a senior high school. Meanwhile, this study involved EFL student teachers who completed teaching practicum in several high schools.

## 3. Conceptual Framework

This present study will use the findings from the previous study about the factors causing teaching anxiety to elaborate on EFL student teachers' strategies for handling their teaching anxiety when teaching practicum. This research aimed to find out EFL student teachers' strategies to overcome teaching anxiety in EFL classrooms during the teaching practicum. There are various factors causing EFL student teachers' teaching anxiety during their teaching practicum in various contexts. There are also updated strategies to reduce their anxiety following the causes.



**Figure 1.** Factors that caused teaching anxiety and the strategies to cope with it.

## 4. Research Methods

This study focused on finding out about the factors that cause EFL student teachers' anxiety during teaching practicum and how they cope with teaching anxiety. The researcher used a qualitative descriptive research design. The qualitative approach is an approach that analyzes real experiences, beliefs and their perceptions with the aim of obtaining a reasonable understanding (Agazu et al., 2022). Using a qualitative approach in data collection can be objective and detailed. It can bring out different experiences, perceptions and viewpoints from the participants. In addition, by employing a qualitative research design, analysis can be more accurate and precise on an issue. That

leaves participants with sufficient freedom to determine what is consistent for them. As a result, complex issues can be understood easily.

The participants of this study consisted of seventeen students of the English Language Education Program from a private university in West Jakarta, Indonesia. The participants were the class of 2019 who were willing to be participants and already finished their teaching practicum.

To obtain the data, the researcher used two research instruments: close-ended questionnaire and semi-structured interview. Student teachers were given close-ended questionnaires before they were interviewed. Close-ended questions about EFL student teachers' experiences focused on the problems they encountered that indicate the factors causing teaching anxiety. After the data collection, the result of the questionnaires collected by the researcher. Then, the researcher analyzed the data to get the answer to the research question. The researcher categorized the questionnaire responses and transcribed the recordings of the interview. The researcher read the data repeatedly and check the category based on the factors. Next, the data were examined and evaluated based on the research question. In the last, the findings were presented in a descriptive qualitative report.

## 5. Results and Discussion

### 5.1. Results

During the teaching practicum, EFL student teachers confirmed that they experienced anxiety when they teach English in a real classroom situation. The biggest effect of anxiety results in restless movement and the inability to speak smoothly.

This questionnaire result revealed that there are five factors that caused EFL student teachers' anxiety during teaching practicum. Those are the evaluation process, students' behaviours, self confidence, fear of making mistakes, teaching management include: time management, lesson delivery and teaching preparation. The percentage of each factor, can be seen in the table 1.

**Table 1.** Factors that Caused Teaching Anxiety during Teaching Practicum

No	Factors	Percentage
1	Coordinating Teacher and Teacher Educator Evaluation	7,5 %
2	Student's Behaviours	5 %
3	Self-Confidence	3,75 %
4	Fear of Making Mistakes	2,5
5	Teaching Management	1,25

From table 1, the most influencing factors that caused teaching anxiety is coordinating teacher and teacher educator evaluation (7,5%), followed by students' behaviours (5%), self-confidence (3,75%), fear of making mistakes (2,5%) and teaching management include time management, lesson delivery and teaching preparation (1,25%). More detailed about the factors, will explain below.

During teaching practicum, EFL student teachers realized that anxiety hindered their best performance. Therefore, they used different strategies to cope with it. Those strategies are humor and positive thinking, good planning and preparation, build a good relationship, practice mindfulness, created fun English learning activities, and give a reward.

### 5.2. Discussion

The findings showed that there are seven factors that caused EFL student teachers' anxiety during their teaching practicum. Those are coordinating and teacher educator evaluation (Ekşi & Yakışık, 2016), students' behaviours (Aydin, 2016), self confidence (Gorospe, 2022), fear of making mistakes (Oparah, Stella et al,2017), time management (Djawamara & Listyani, c2021), lesson delivery Djawamara & Listyani (2021) and teaching preparation (Oparah, Stella et al, c2017). Besides that, the result in the present studies revealed some coping strategies employed by the EFL student teachers to overcome the teaching anxiety problems they encountered in different stages of the

teaching experience during their teaching practicum. While previous research has reported that self-control, accepting and confronting situations (Sammephet & Wanphet, 2013), adaption and relaxation (Djawamara & Listyani, 2021), and comprehending the material (Agustiana, 2014) are the main coping strategies employed by student teachers, this study showed that the EFL student teachers employed a wide range of coping strategies to overcome their anxiety, from humor and positive thinking, good planning and preparation, build a good relationship, practice mindfulness, created fun English learning activities, and give a reward.

## 6. Conclusion

This study explored about the factors that caused teaching anxiety among EFL student teachers during their teaching practicum and their strategies to overcome it. From both the questionnaires and the interview, it can be seen that the causes of EFL student teachers' anxiety were evaluation, students' behaviors, their confidence, fear of making mistakes, time management, lesson delivery, and teaching preparation. The most influencing factor that caused anxiety are evaluation of coordinating teacher and students' behaviors toward EFL student teachers. EFL student teachers fear that students not respected and appreciated because they are not real teachers. Besides that, student teachers feel anxious because they do not feel confident and feel anxious about mastery of English grammar when teaching in a real class. Moreover, EFL student teachers are anxious if coordinating teachers, and teacher educators joined and watched their performance and gave evaluations at the end of student teachers' performance.

In tackling the problems, the EFL student teachers applied some strategies reduce their anxiety during the teaching practicum. From the findings of the study; it was found that there are six strategies that EFL student teachers applied to reduce their teaching anxiety. Those are humor and positive thinking, good planning and preparation, build a good relationship, practice mindfulness, created fun English learning activities, and give a reward to appreciate students' effort.

This study has a limitation regarding the interactive activities that EFL student teachers used during the teaching practicum to overcome their anxiety. For the future researcher, the same research can be conducted but with a broader scope, to investigate the extent to which the strategies to teaching anxiety can be implemented in various English language teaching context.

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