



INNOVATION, TECHNOLOGIES,
EDUCATION & COMMUNICATION

INNOVATION, TECHNOLOGIES, EDUCATION & COMMUNICATION

N° 12

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES

Issue Coordinator Editor

Isam Mrah

SEPTEMBER 2026



Unité de recherche labellisée CNRS
COMMUNICATION, EDUCATION, DIGITAL USAGE
AND CREATIVITY LABORATORY

URL CNRS 19

ISSN : 2737-8195

Issue 12 of *Revue ITEC*, entitled “*Inclusive Education and Innovative Technologies*,” brings together a collection of scholarly contributions that explore emerging approaches, policies, practices, and innovative technologies that contribute to creating more inclusive, accessible, and learner-centred educational environments. At a time when educational systems are undergoing profound transformations, the intersection between inclusion and technological innovation has become increasingly significant.

Inclusive education extends beyond ensuring access to learning; it encompasses the creation of equitable educational environments that recognise learner diversity, reduce barriers to participation, and respond to different needs, abilities, and backgrounds. At the same time, the rapid development of digital and emerging technologies is creating new possibilities for enhancing teaching and learning, expanding access to educational resources, and responding to diverse learner needs.

The contributions in this issue address a range of topics, including inclusive education, special needs education, innovative pedagogies, teacher education and professional development, as well as the role of emerging technologies in expanding learning opportunities and addressing the diverse needs of learners. Collectively, the articles underscore the importance of combining pedagogical innovation with inclusive practices to promote equity, active participation, learner empowerment, and lifelong learning.

By bringing together perspectives from different disciplines and educational contexts, **Issue 12** seeks to contribute to current discussions on how innovation and technology can be harnessed to address contemporary educational challenges and foster more inclusive and learner-centred educational environments.

Editorial Board

Dr. Isam Mrah || FLSH, Mohammed I University, Oujda ||

Dr. Khalid Chaouch || FLSH, Sultan Moulay Slimane University, Beni Mellal ||

Dr. Hanane Darhour || FLAHS, University Ibn Zohr, Ait Melloul- Agadir ||

Dr. Abdellah Elboubekri || FLSH, Mohammed I University, Oujda ||

Dr. Naoual Derraz || FLSH, Mohammed I University, Oujda ||

Dr. Karim El Hiani || Abdelmalek Essaadi University, Tétouan ||

Dr. Mohammed Guamguami || ESEF, Mohammed I University, Oujda ||

Dr. Mohammed Zerioush || ENS, Moulay Ismail University, Mekness ||

Dr. Youssef EL Kaidi || FLSH, Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah, Fés ||

Dr. Nassira Houat || ENCG, Mohammed I University, Oujda ||

Dr. Mourad Benali || CRMEF, Oujda ||

Dr. Mohamed DIHI || CRMEF, Oujda ||

Dr. Aziz Askitou || FP, Mohammed I University, Nador ||

Dr. Abdelhafid Jabri || FSJES, Mohammed I University, Oujda ||

Mitigating Language Anxiety in Teacher Training: An Approach to Reflective Observation Informed by Nonviolent Communication

Moad Benyahia^a & Fatima Zahra Lamzira^b

^a: Mohamed I University, The Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences, Oujda, Morocco

moad.benyahia@ump.ac.ma

^b: Mohamed I University, The Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences, Oujda, Morocco

fatimazahra.lamzira@ump.ac.ma

Abstract

Language anxiety remains a primary barrier to student language acquisition and the professional development of pre-service English Language Teaching (ELT) trainees. Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis identifies the psychological necessity of a low-anxiety environment, and Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Cycle provides a process for teacher growth through reflective observation. However, traditional supervisory models lack defined linguistic mechanisms to prevent evaluative language from triggering affective blockages. To address this gap, this conceptual paper adopts an integrative literature review design to synthesize the frameworks of Krashen and Kolb with Rosenberg's (2015) Nonviolent Communication (NVC). The review indicates that subjective critiques from supervisors, peers, or internal self-talk heighten foreign language teaching anxiety. Consequently, this anxiety paralyzes the stages of abstract conceptualization and active experimentation. In response, the paper proposes a pedagogical design anchored in the NVC discipline of observation without evaluation. Using diagnostic contrast matrices, the paper illustrates how replacing subjective judgment with descriptive feedback mitigates cognitive load and sustains the experiential learning cycle. The resulting framework outlines strategies for training teachers, redesigning assessment rubrics, and restructuring peer observation protocols. A shift from an evaluative approach to an observational one provides the structural adjustment necessary to maintain a low-anxiety educational context.

Keywords: Affective Filter, Experiential Learning, Nonviolent Communication (NVC), Teacher Training, Inclusive Education, Objective Observation.

1. Introduction

The professional development of pre-service English Language Teaching (ELT) trainees relies heavily on experiential learning and supervisory feedback. However, the practicum environment frequently induces acute language anxiety, which acts as a barrier to both language consolidation and pedagogical growth. According to Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis, a high-anxiety environment prevents learners from effectively processing linguistic input. In the context of teacher training, this affective block can easily disrupt the reflective observation and abstract conceptualization stages of Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Cycle. When trainees receive evaluative critiques from supervisors, peers, or their own internal monitoring, their cognitive resources are diverted from learning to managing emotional distress. Despite the recognized negative impact of evaluative stress, traditional supervisory models in ELT programs rarely equip mentors with specific linguistic mechanisms to deliver feedback

without triggering defensive responses. Observation protocols often default to more subjective judgments of trainee performance in a non-deliberate manner. As a result, the supervisory process unintentionally stalls the active experimentation it intends to encourage. An adjustment in how feedback is formulated is necessary to establish a low-anxiety educational context.

To address this methodological gap, this conceptual paper investigates the intersection of second language acquisition theories, experiential learning, and Rosenberg's (2015) Nonviolent Communication (NVC). It proposes a pedagogical design anchored in the NVC principle of observation without evaluation. By replacing subjective judgment with descriptive feedback, educators can lower the affective filter and sustain the learning cycle. This article first synthesizes the theoretical foundations of language anxiety and experiential learning in teacher education. It then introduces the NVC framework and illustrates, through diagnostic contrast matrices, how observational feedback functions in practice. Finally, the paper outlines strategies for integrating this approach into teacher training programs, assessment rubrics, and peer observation protocols.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Anxiety in English Language Teaching and Learning

2.1.1. Anxiety in Language Learning

Within the educational landscape, anxiety may be conceptualized not merely as a fixed trait, but as a dynamic state of arousal that is triggered when an individual encounters a stimulus that necessitates significant internal adjustment. This manifests as a complex interplay of physical, emotional, and cognitive shifts (Cüceloğlu, 2005), which suggests that anxiety serves as an internal barometer for how an individual interprets and responds to environmental pressures.

The existing literature confirms that foreign language learning anxiety (FLLA) functions as one of the main affective variables that hinder second language acquisition and academic performance (Dikmen, 2021; Kabigting & Nanud, 2020; Liu & Xiangming, 2019). As language learning demands substantial cognitive and emotional regulation, individual differences leave certain learners highly vulnerable to these psychological barriers (Kiruthiga & Christopher, 2022).

Experiencing high levels of anxiety frequently compromises learner self-efficacy, as it correlates negatively with actual speaking performance and overall linguistic development (Hermagustiana et al., 2021). Accordingly, reducing anxiety is essential for establishing classroom environments where students can participate and build competence without the constant fear of evaluation (Sotomayor Cantos et al., 2024; Drakulić (2020).

2.1.2. Anxiety in Language Teaching

Research shows that this emotional burden extends beyond the student population to affect non-native pre-service and in-service English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers as well (Kobul & Saraçoğlu, 2020). Pre-service teachers, in particular, frequently report high levels of foreign language teaching anxiety (FLTA) during evaluative milestones such as their teaching practicums (Cheng, 2023; Li et al., 2023; Yetkin and Alagözlü, 2022). This specific anxiety combines general performance apprehension with deeper linguistic insecurity. As these affective factors compound, they undermine trainees' academic progress, teaching performance, and emerging self-efficacy.

Variables such as perceived linguistic deficits, the evaluative weight of practicum observations, and limited pedagogical experience act as the primary triggers for this anxiety (Alrashidi, 2022; Sanjaya et al., 2024). When left unchecked, these pressures can severely impede professional growth. Therefore, addressing FLTA during teacher training becomes a fundamental necessity, for teachers' self-efficacy, including the ability to regulate their own emotions, affects their capacity to maintain the low-anxiety setting needed for fruitful learning (Gorospe, 2022).

2.2. Krashen's Hypothesis and Kolb's Cycle

2.2.1. Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis

The argument for maintaining a low-anxiety environment in language education is heavily grounded in Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis. This framework conceptualizes how affective variables like anxiety, self-confidence, and motivation interact with the cognitive mechanics of second language acquisition (Kiruthiga & Christopher, 2022). Because evaluative classroom situations and public performance expectations often induce performance anxiety and self-consciousness, they can construct a restrictive affective filter (Warsi, 2025).

When the affective filter is elevated, it prevents comprehensible input from reaching the learner's language acquisition device. In these instances, language development is impeded even if the student cognitively understands the semantic message (Kiruthiga & Christopher, 2022). By contrast, minimizing these negative variables in low-anxiety settings facilitates the conversion of input into intake, thereby enabling successful acquisition (Kiruthiga & Christopher, 2022).

2.2.2. Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle

To understand how pre-service and in-service teachers process similar emotional challenges in their own development, researchers frequently apply Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Cycle. The latter highlights the stages teachers go through in their training, with teaching practicums being a critical aspect for testing theory against classroom realities. However, going through this cycle involves cognitive and emotional vulnerabilities.

The reflective observation stage, in particular, is highly susceptible to disruption from evaluative or subjective language. If a teacher's internal dialogue or the external feedback they receive becomes overly critical, it can produce affective blockages mirroring those seen in language learners. These emotional barriers then interfere with the trainee's ability to progress into the subsequent stages of abstract conceptualization and active experimentation. Protecting this experiential learning process from excessive evaluative anxiety is therefore a critical consideration for sustaining pedagogical development.

2.3. The Evaluative Trap in Kolb's Cycle

2.3.1. Subjective Critique and Kolb's "Reflective Observation" Stage

During their practicums, pre-service teachers rely heavily on reflective observation to evaluate their instructional experiences. However, this phase inherently exposes trainees to subjective judgments and external critiques that can provoke significant anxiety. The literature indicates that trainees frequently fear negative evaluations from supervisors, cooperating teachers, and observing peers (Sanjaya et al., 2024; Alrashidi, 2022; Aydin & Ustuk, 2020; Fernández-Batanero et al., 2021; Li et al., 2023). Because these evaluative observations often instill a fear

of making mistakes, pre-service teachers tend to focus on their perceived deficiencies rather than taking more time to engage in objective, constructive reflection.

As pre-service teachers go through these evaluative stages, they may instinctively filter their current practices through their own histories as language learners. This retrospective lens can sometimes cultivate a highly critical inner dialogue, manifesting as severe evaluative self-talk (Kader & Şimşek, 2025). Should this internal narrative deviate toward the pessimistic or self-limiting, it appears to profoundly shadow the teacher's emotional landscape, behavioral responses, and foundational self-concept (Chohan, 2010). Ultimately, when the inner voice functions less as a supportive guide and more as an unrelenting critic, it threatens to paralyze the very reflective capacities necessary for meaningful professional growth.

2.3.2. Protecting Kolb's Cycle from Triggering Krashen's Filter

While Kolb's framework positions reflection as central to professional development, Krashen's hypothesis maintains that a low-stress environment is a prerequisite for effective cognitive processing. Placing these two paradigms in conversation highlights a specific pedagogical gap: current supervisory models lack a defined linguistic mechanism to prevent the language used during reflective observation from triggering the teacher's affective filter. While constructive feedback can alleviate anxiety and support emerging self-efficacy, overly critical feedback reinforces a fear of judgment (Ignacio et al., 2025), and that raises the affective filter and blocks cognitive engagement.

Traditional supervisory models rarely incorporate explicit linguistic protocols to keep critiques strictly observational and descriptive. Without such protocols, the evaluative language embedded in teacher training might intensify anxiety, which in turn impedes the trainee's ability to move into the next stages of abstract conceptualization and active experimentation. In light of this, advancing teacher training practices requires a systematic linguistic approach to feedback to protect the reflective cycle and maintain a low-anxiety environment for both teachers and learners.

2.4. Nonviolent Communication: The Missing Pedagogical Link

2.4.1. Observation without Evaluation

To address the evaluative pressures inherent in both language learning and teacher training, Rosenberg's (2015) framework of Nonviolent Communication (NVC) offers a practical linguistic mechanism. At the core of this approach is the practice of "observation without evaluation" (Rosenberg, 2015), which emphasizes articulating specific visual and auditory information without attaching personal judgments or subjective criticisms.

Within the context of English Language Teaching (ELT), this principle effectively bridges Kolb's requirement for constructive reflection and Krashen's demand for low-anxiety environments. By training teachers to separate evaluative phrasing from their instructional language, peer feedback, and assessment rubrics, communication shifts toward objective clarity. Accordingly, this linguistic separation allows Kolb's reflective observation stage to remain an analytical space, rather than devolving into a psychological trigger for defensive responses.

2.4.2. Descriptive Feedback and Kolb's Cycle

The existing literature supports the notion that an observational approach to feedback facilitates better cognitive and emotional regulation. When feedback is descriptive and grounded in specific and observable actions, it can lower the cognitive load for learners and pre-service teachers alike, thereby mitigating the affective blockages that typically impede language acquisition and professional development (Warsi, 2025). Because trainees and students tend to perceive objective and non-judgmental feedback as supportive, this approach has been shown to reduce performance anxiety and increase self-efficacy (Ignacio et al., 2025). Specific and actionable feedback also promotes student engagement and motivation (Hattie & Timperley, 2007)

When evaluative triggers are introduced, they may inadvertently elevate Krashen's affective filter (Kiruthiga & Christopher, 2022), potentially draining the cognitive reserves required for meaningful learning (Dikmen, 2021). Conversely, softening anxiety and minimizing cognitive load appears to cultivate the low-filter environment essential for effective mental processing (Warsi, 2025). Within this paper's framework, adopting an observational stance toward feedback is proposed to achieve precisely this balance.

By buffering these vital cognitive resources, it creates a secure psychological space for pre-service teachers to digest their instructional experiences, thus facilitating a smoother transition into Kolb's stage of abstract conceptualization. Moreover, given that supportive, low-anxiety atmospheres tend to foster active participation (Sotomayor Cantos et al., 2024), moving away from a strictly evaluative paradigm may function as a practical intervention; one that prepares teachers to confidently engage in the subsequent phases of active experimentation.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

To explore the complex interplay between psychological states and pedagogical growth, this paper adopts an integrative literature review design. This methodology facilitates the synthesis of three foundational frameworks: Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis, Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle, and Rosenberg's Nonviolent Communication (NVC). Such an approach was deliberately chosen for its analytical flexibility, as it provides the necessary scaffolding to bridge what have historically been isolated disciplines (Torraco, 2016). Specifically, it seeks to connect the internal, psychological prerequisites of language learning with the more structural stages of experiential teacher development.

Because the evaluative triggers and affective blockages inherent in teaching practicums entangle both cognitive and emotional domains, relying on a strictly empirical review might prove inadequate for capturing the full scope of the research problem. Instead, an integrative design allows for the fluid weaving of diverse theoretical and empirical voices (Whittemore & Knafl, 2005). This broader lens enables a closer examination of non-judgmental communication mechanisms and their potential to address pedagogical gaps currently identified within ELT literature. Through this synthesis, the paper aims to translate these distinct theoretical paradigms into cohesive, practical interventions designed to soften the landscape of classroom anxiety.

3.2. Literature Retrieval

The literature retrieval process focused on identifying studies that address language anxiety, affective barriers, and the challenges of teacher development practicums. An initial search using Elicit mapped the contemporary literature regarding the linguistic and affective variables that

impact second-language learners and teachers. This was followed by manual searches in the ERIC database and Google Scholar to locate foundational, peer-reviewed theoretical and empirical papers. To isolate the specific intersection of affective barriers, experiential learning, and pedagogical communication, the search strategy used the following keyword strings and Boolean combinations: "foreign language teaching anxiety," "pre-service teachers," "teaching practicum," "affective filter," "reflective observation," "evaluative feedback," and "nonviolent communication.", among other synonyms and relevant keywords.

3.3. Source Selection

The retrieved literature was screened for direct relevance to the identified pedagogical gap. Empirical studies were restricted to those published from 2020 to the present, while foundational theoretical texts such as that of Krashen and of Kolb were retained regardless of publication date. Within this contemporary timeframe, inclusion criteria prioritized research examining evaluative pressures in teacher training, the dual experience of performance and language anxiety among pre-service teachers, and pedagogical applications of descriptive communication. To supplement the primary database retrieval, an additional search of the reference lists of the initially selected sources was conducted to locate supplementary relevant literature. Ultimately, this screening process yielded a corpus of 36 peer-reviewed papers and foundational texts.

3.4. Thematic Categorization

The selected corpus was analyzed and categorized into four primary themes: the scope of language anxiety in ELT environments, theoretical frameworks governing affective barriers and experiential teacher development, the disruption of reflective observation caused by evaluative critique, and the mitigation of these blockages through descriptive feedback mechanisms.

3.5. Framework Construction

In the final methodological phase, the categorized literature was synthesized to map exactly where evaluative language disrupts Kolb's reflective observation stage and triggers Krashen's affective filter. To anchor this synthesis, a contrast matrix was developed to compare traditional evaluative supervisory language with descriptive, non-judgmental alternatives. Based on this structural intersection, theoretical strategies from Nonviolent Communication were adapted to construct a training approach. This integration offers a clear method for replacing subjective critique with descriptive feedback, thus actively preserving teachers' experiential learning cycle.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Introduction to the Integrated Framework

The preceding literature synthesis indicates that the evaluative pressures common in traditional ELT practicums can disrupt the trajectory of teacher development. When pre-service teachers encounter subjective and judgment-heavy feedback, be it from an external source like peers and supervisors or from their own inner-speech, during Kolb's (1984) reflective observation stage, the resulting anxiety frequently triggers Krashen's (1982) affective filter (Sanjaya et al., 2024). To address this structural conflict, the findings of this integrative review are organized into a proposed pedagogical proposal. This integrated framework applies Rosenberg's (2015) Nonviolent Communication (NVC), specifically the foundational practice of "observation

without evaluation," as a practical mechanism to connect affective safety with experiential growth.

A central premise of the framework suggests that moving away from a paradigm of evaluation to one of observation may help dissolve specific psychological barriers. By consciously filtering evaluative phrasing out of supervisory assessments, peer reviews, and even internal dialogues, educators can potentially deconstruct the high-stakes evaluative situations which ignite both performance and language anxiety. As the shadow of judgment begins to recede, teachers become better positioned to lighten the cognitive burden tied to teaching, thereby freeing up the necessary mental bandwidth to process their instructional experiences more fluidly (Warsi, 2025). This helps keep the reflective space emotionally secure and grounded in observable data. Bypassing these affective triggers allows pre-service teachers to process their instructional experiences more effectively, which can support their transition from reflective observation into the subsequent stages of abstract conceptualization and active experimentation.

4.2. Evaluative vs. Observational Feedback

To apply the synthesis of Krashen, Kolb, and Rosenberg practically, the integrated framework is organized into a series of diagnostic contrast matrices presented in the subsequent tables (Tables 1–5). These matrices contrast the traditional, subjective language frequently used in ELT training, both by external observers and within the pre-service teacher's own internal dialogue, with descriptive, non-judgmental alternatives. By examining five distinct feedback paradigms, this section illustrates how specific linguistic choices can either elevate the affective filter or safeguard the reflective observation stage.

Table 1

Vague Critique vs. Specific Data

Feedback Paradigm			Vague Critique vs. Specific Data
Traditional Evaluative Feedback			"Your instructions were very confusing for the students."
Affective & Experiential Impact			It triggers defensiveness and performance anxiety and paralyzes objective analysis. Reflection becomes self-critical.
Alternative Feedback	NVC	Observational	"Three distinct instructions were delivered simultaneously before comprehension was checked."

The reliance on subjective adjectives, such as "confusing" or "unclear," can be a common feature of traditional supervisory feedback. Supervisors, peer-teachers, and even teachers while having an internal dialogue may use such vocabulary to draw attention to a particular teaching practice that can be improved. When pre-service teachers receive this type of critique, the absence of actionable data often prompts a defensive psychological response. Because trainees are left to infer the exact nature of their pedagogical misstep, this ambiguity creates a highly evaluative situation. As these evaluative pressures elevate Krashen's affective filter, they eventually fuel performance anxiety and increase the cognitive load placed on the trainee (Warsi, 2025).

On the other hand, applying Rosenberg's (2015) principle of "observation without evaluation" reframes the critique as an objective data point. By specifying, for example, that "three instructions were delivered simultaneously," the supervisor, peer-teacher, or the underlying teacher removes personal judgment from the interaction. This descriptive precision helps lower the affective barrier, which allows the trainee to engage more securely in Kolb's reflective observation stage. Rather than expending cognitive effort defending their teaching competence, the trainee is better positioned to objectively analyze the mechanics of his or her instructional delivery.

Table 2*Character Judgment vs. Behavioral Observation*

Feedback Paradigm	Character Judgment vs. Behavioral Observation
Traditional Evaluative Feedback	"You seemed unprepared and nervous during the transition."
Affective & Experiential Impact	It induces feelings of inadequacy, lowers teacher self-efficacy, and shifts focus from pedagogical mechanics to personal flaws.
Alternative Feedback NVC Observational	"There was a four-minute pause while the worksheet was located and distributed."

As pre-service teachers go through the practicum environment, the looming shadow of negative evaluation often emerges as a primary source of foreign language teaching anxiety (Alrashidi, 2022; Li et al., 2023). Viewed through the lens of Nonviolent Communication, this anxiety may be inadvertently amplified when supervisory feedback slips into the realm of character judgment. When mentors label a novice teacher as “unprepared” or “nervous”, rather than focusing on the mechanics of the lesson itself, they risk conflating the instructional act with the individual’s worth. Interpreting such evaluative language as a direct indictment of their professional identity, trainee teachers can experience an erosion of their emerging self-efficacy, which in turn can easily and sharply elevate their affective filter.

On the other end of the spectrum, adjusting the language of supervision toward neutral behavioral observation may serve as a key buffer against this affective threat. Noting, for instance, that “there was a four-minute pause during the transition” helps to gently untangle the instructional moment from the teacher's personal character. Within the broader cycle of experiential learning, this careful distinction channels the critical phase of abstract conceptualization away from self-doubt and toward the generation of tangible, practical solutions. Given that a pre-service teacher’s self-efficacy is intimately tied to their developing mastery of classroom management (Gorospa, 2022), anchoring feedback in objective observation grants them the psychological safety to focus on modifiable actions, like streamlining material distribution. This approach preserves their cognitive reserves for pedagogical growth, rather than draining their mental bandwidth in an attempt to repair perceived personality flaws.

Table 3*Subjective Praise vs. Descriptive Reinforcement*

Feedback Paradigm	Subjective Praise vs. Descriptive Reinforcement
Traditional Evaluative Feedback	"You did a really great job with the reading activity today."
Affective & Experiential Impact	Although it connects specific actions to positive outcomes, it creates dependency on external validation and supervisor approval.
Alternative Feedback NVC Observational	"When you modeled the pronunciation first, the majority of the class participated immediately."

While negative evaluation is widely recognized as a primary disruptor of the learning environment, subjective praise may harbor its own subtle risks to teacher development. Anchoring this dynamic in Hattie and Timperley’s (2007) framework, positive evaluations such as "great job" operate almost exclusively at the level of the "self." Although this type of praise may offer a temporary boost to a trainee's confidence, it typically lacks the precise, task-oriented data necessary to close the learning gap and drive experiential growth. Consequently, an overreliance on subjective validation can inadvertently tether pre-service teachers to external approval, keeping them focused on pleasing the supervisor rather than fostering the autonomy needed to critically analyze their own instructional practice.

By contrast, descriptive reinforcement connects a specific pedagogical action directly to an observable, positive outcome. For example, highlighting that "modeling the pronunciation first" led to "immediate participation" provides the trainee with actionable data. This precise approach

supports Kolb's cycle by facilitating effective abstract conceptualization. As the pre-service teacher understands exactly why an activity was successful, he or she becomes better equipped to intentionally replicate that specific strategy in future lessons.

Table 4

Prescriptive Diagnosis vs. Objective Inquiry

Feedback Paradigm	Prescriptive Diagnosis vs. Objective Inquiry
Traditional Evaluative Feedback	"You need to manage your classroom time much better."
Affective & Experiential Impact	It fosters a hierarchical dynamic that heightens teaching anxiety.
Alternative NVC Observational Feedback	"The speaking task ran ten minutes over the allotted time. What did you observe happening?"

Traditional post-observation debriefs frequently rely on prescriptive, top-down directives from the supervisor. For example, telling a trainee they "need to manage time better" can reinforce a rigid, evaluative hierarchy that heightens anxiety and diminishes the trainee's sense of professional agency. This prescriptive approach essentially performs the reflective work on behalf of the trainee. Consequently, it bypasses the trainee's own experiential learning process.

By replacing prescriptive commands with descriptive data and objective inquiry, supervisors can shift the feedback session toward collaborative analysis. Presenting an observable fact (e.g., "the speaking task ran ten minutes over") followed by an open question (e.g., "What did you observe happening?") prompts the trainee to lead the reflective observation stage. This non-evaluative inquiry helps establish a secure environment where pre-service teachers can identify their own pedagogical gaps and transition more autonomously into active experimentation.

Table 5

Subjective vs. Objective Internal Self-Talk

Feedback Paradigm	Internal Self-Talk: Subjective vs. Objective
Traditional Evaluative Feedback	"I am a terrible teacher; they were completely lost because of my incompetence."
Affective & Experiential Impact	"I explained the grammar rule without providing a concrete example first. Three students asked for clarification."
Alternative NVC Observational Feedback	It induces shame and paralyzes self-concept, reinforcing negative narratives. It also prevents abstract conceptualization by framing challenges as fixed personal traits.

The evaluative pressures of the practicum often extend beyond external supervision, frequently becoming internalized within the pre-service teacher's own inner speech (Kader & Şimşek, 2025). Research suggests that when external critique is adopted as a harsh, subjective internal voice, it can significantly damage a teacher's self-concept (Chohan, 2010). Within the framework of this paper, it is argued that such negative self-talk (e.g., "I am a terrible teacher") functions as a self-imposed affective blockage, one that disrupts the trainee's reflective cycle and intensifies underlying foreign language insecurities.

Against this background, training teachers to apply nonviolent communication principles to their internal dialogue represents a central component of the proposed pedagogical design. As established in the literature, a teacher's internal narrative significantly influences their professional self-concept and emotional well-being (Chohan, 2010). By restructuring this internal dialogue to focus purely on observable classroom data (e.g., 'I explained the grammar rule without providing a concrete example'), teachers can actively mitigate feelings of self-directed shame. Just as constructive, specific feedback is known to reduce anxiety and build self-efficacy in language learners (Ignacio et al., 2025), applying an objective approach to internal reflection helps teachers bypass their own affective filters. This allows the trainee to

reframe pedagogical missteps as modifiable actions rather than inherent evidence of incompetence.

The evaluative traps present in supervisory and peer feedback do not operate exclusively in interpersonal domains. Pre-service teachers frequently internalize evaluative anxieties into their own inner speech (Kader & Şimşek, 2025). As established by Chohan (2010), when an individual's internal dialogue becomes negative and self-limiting, it damages their self-concept and closely mirrors the psychological effects of external reprimands. Within the theoretical framework of this paper, it is argued that when teachers direct vague critiques, character judgments, or prescriptive diagnoses inward, this self-imposed subjective critique functions exactly like an external evaluator. Consequently, this internal judgment elevates heightens performance anxiety and increases the cognitive load associated with teaching. By disrupting Kolb's reflective observation stage from within, this internalized evaluation demonstrates that the practice of "observation without evaluation" must function as an essential cognitive framework for autonomous self-reflection, rather than acting strictly as a supervisory protocol.

4.3. Safeguarding Kolb's Reflective Observation Stage

4.3.1. The psychological shift to objective analysis.

The contrast matrices presented in the preceding section illustrate a distinct psychological shift facilitated by nonviolent communication. When supervisory feedback and internal dialogue are stripped of evaluative judgment, pre-service teachers are less likely to adopt a defensive psychological posture. Traditional subjective critiques often prompt an ego defense, a process that consumes extensive cognitive resources and can rapidly elevate Krashen's affective filter. By replacing these affective triggers with descriptive, data-driven observations, the cognitive load placed on the trainee is significantly reduced. This decrease in emotional and cognitive strain allows the pre-service teacher to remain intellectually engaged. As a result, Kolb's reflective observation stage can function as structurally intended: as a secure, analytical space where teachers process empirical classroom data, including specific student behaviors and exact instructional timings, to inform their abstract conceptualization, rather than a hostile environment that restricts professional growth.

4.3.2. Mitigating Performance and Language Teaching Anxiety

The shift toward descriptive feedback also helps mitigate the dual challenges of performance anxiety and foreign language teaching anxiety (FLTA) during the practicum. Pre-service EFL teachers frequently contend with perceived linguistic deficiencies alongside general teaching insecurities. Consequently, traditional evaluative feedback tends to amplify their fear of negative evaluation. Within the framework of this paper, it is argued that when feedback protocols focus on observable pedagogical mechanics rather than language proficiency or character traits, trainees are more likely to perceive the communication as supportive and objective, much like language learners who benefit from constructive, non-damaging feedback (Ignacio et al., 2025).

Furthermore, this non-judgmental approach supports the trainee's emerging self-efficacy. As established in the literature, self-efficacy is a critical factor that correlates negatively with high levels of speaking anxiety (Hermagustiana et al., 2021). By protecting the reflective observation stage with observational data, supervisors can help trainees develop their linguistic and pedagogical competence without an intense fear of subjective failure. This approach, in turn, actively sustains the experiential learning cycle.

4.4. Strategies for ELT Training

4.4.1. Redesigning Rubrics and Debriefs

To effectively apply nonviolent communication principles within English Language Teaching (ELT) practicums, training programs should establish clear, actionable protocols for supervisory staff. A primary intervention involves reducing the reliance on subjective phrasing in both assessment rubrics and post-observation debriefings. Traditional rubrics frequently require supervisors to evaluate ambiguous criteria, such as a trainee's "enthusiasm," "classroom presence," or "instructional clarity." Because these metrics are highly subjective, they tend to provoke affective blockages and heighten performance anxiety.

To address this, redesigned rubrics should prioritize quantifiable, observable data. Examples of such metrics include the average wait time provided after asking a question, the ratio of teacher-talking-time to student-talking-time, or the frequency of comprehension checks. During post-observation debriefs, supervisors can further support trainees by adhering to Rosenberg's (2015) principle of "observation without evaluation". By presenting empirical data instead of prescriptive diagnoses, supervisors can help cultivate a low-anxiety environment that supports teachers in engaging independently and safely with Kolb's abstract conceptualization phase.

4.4.2. Shifting from Evaluator to Data Collector

Peer observation serves as a foundational component of teacher training. However, without explicit linguistic boundaries, peer feedback can easily default to subjective praise or internalized critique. To address this, training programs can redefine the role of the peer observer by shifting their function from an evaluator to a data collector.

Peer observation protocols should direct observing trainees to focus on specific tasks, such as recording literal transcriptions of teacher instructions, mapping physical movement around the classroom, or tracking on-task student behaviors. Providing pre-service teachers with this objective, non-judgmental data helps reduce the speaking and performance anxiety frequently associated with being monitored by colleagues. By removing the evaluative pressure, this descriptive approach reframes peer feedback as a collaborative analysis that supports the experiential growth of both the observer and the observed.

4.4.3. Supporting Autonomous Reflection

A final component of the proposed pedagogical design involves addressing the intrapersonal dimension of teacher development: inner speech. Pre-service EFL teachers frequently experience critical and anxious internal dialogue driven by the evaluative pressures of their training environment (Kader & Şimşek, 2025). When this inner speech functions as a source of subjective critique, it acts as an internalized evaluator that ultimately undermines emerging teacher self-efficacy and elevates the affective filter from within.

Training programs should therefore provide prospective educators with strategies to apply NVC principles to their own cognitive reflective practices. For example, guided reflective journals can prompt teachers to deliberately separate "what happened" (the behavioral observation) from the internal "story" they construct about the event (the evaluation). This specific practice actively targets the root of self-directed shame. Furthermore, as established by Chohan (2010), when teachers successfully identify and restructure such negative internal narratives, they significantly mitigate their underlying anxiety. Rather than acting as a simple coping mechanism, restructuring this internal dialogue serves as a pedagogical step toward developing a resilient teaching identity capable of sustained active experimentation.

5. Conclusion

Language anxiety presents a significant challenge in English Language Teaching (ELT). It hinders second language acquisition and, simultaneously, disrupts the professional development of pre-service teachers. This conceptual paper addressed a pedagogical gap in traditional teacher training by synthesizing Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis and Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Cycle with Rosenberg's (2015) framework of Nonviolent Communication (NVC). The integrated literature suggests that the evaluative pressures common in ELT practicums, which stem from supervisors, peers, and teachers' internal dialogue, can actively disrupt the reflective observation stage of experiential learning. By elevating the affective filter, this evaluative paradigm tends to heighten foreign language teaching anxiety, prompt a defensive psychological response, and deplete the cognitive resources necessary for professional growth.

To address this affective barrier, this paper proposed a pedagogical design grounded in the NVC practice of "observation without evaluation." Shifting the communicative framework from subjective judgment to descriptive, data-driven feedback provides a practical mechanism for protecting the reflective learning space. Whether implemented through quantifiable supervisory rubrics, structured peer observation protocols, or reframed inner speech, non-evaluative communication helps lower cognitive load and mitigate performance anxiety. This intentional linguistic shift supports teachers in processing their instructional choices securely, which, in turn, facilitates their transition into abstract conceptualization and active experimentation.

This paper establishes a theoretical foundation for redesigning feedback in ELT practicums. However, its primary limitation lies in the lack of empirical validation. Future research should prioritize implementing this observational design within authentic pre-service teacher training programs. Empirical and longitudinal studies are necessary to measure the direct impact of these descriptive communication protocols on reducing teaching anxiety and supporting emerging teacher self-efficacy. Transitioning from an evaluative paradigm to an observational approach represents a structural pedagogical adjustment, one designed to help language teachers and their learners engage in sustained development without the interference of subjective evaluation.

References

- Alrashidi, O. (2022). Sources of foreign language teaching anxiety among Saudi preservice English teachers: A qualitative inquiry. *SAGE Open*, 12(3).
- Aydin, S., & Ustuk, O. (2020). The foreign language teaching anxiety scale: Preliminary tests of validity and reliability. *Journal of Language and Education*, 6(2), 44–55. <https://doi.org/10.17323/jle.2020.10083>
- Cheng, Y. (2023). A review of research on pre-service EFL teachers' anxiety. *International Journal of Education and Humanities*, 7(2).
- Chohan, S. K. (2010). Whispering selves and reflective transformations in the internal dialogue of teachers and students. *Journal of Invitational Theory and Practice*, 16, 10-16.
- Cüceloğlu, D. (2005). İnsan ve davranışı (Psikolojinin Temel Kavramları)[Man and his behavior (Basic Concepts of Psychology)].. Istanbul, Remzi Bookstore.
- Dikmen, M. (2021). EFL learners' foreign language learning anxiety and language performance: A meta-analysis study. *International Journal of Contemporary Educational Research*, 8(3), 206-222.
- Drakulić, M. (2020). The 'unforgettable' experience of foreign language anxiety. *Journal of Education Culture and Society*, 6, 120-128. <https://doi.org/10.15503/jecs20151.120.128>
- Fernández-Batanero, J.-M., Román-Graván, P., Reyes-Rebollo, M.-M., & Montenegro-Rueda, M. (2021). Impact of educational technology on teacher stress and anxiety: A literature review. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(2), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18020548>
- Gorospe, J. D. (2022). Pre-service teachers' teaching anxiety, teaching self-efficacy, and problems encountered during the practice teaching course. *Journal of Education and Learning*, 11(4).
- Hattie, J. and Timperley, H. (2007). The Power of Feedback. *Review of Educational Research*, 77(1), 81–112.
- Hattie, J., & Timperley, H. (2007). The Power of Feedback. *Review of Educational Research*, 77(1), 81-112. <https://doi.org/10.3102/003465430298487>
- Hermagustiana, I., Astuti, A. D., & Sucahyo, D. (2021). Do I speak anxiously? A correlation of self-efficacy, foreign language learning anxiety and speaking performance. *Script Journal: Journal of Linguistic and English Teaching*, 6(1). <https://doi.org/10.1155/2019/7213925>
- Ignacio, Z. J. P., Pudalan, A. L., Vasquez, J., Dingal, V., & Montebon, M. (2025). Students' perceptions of feedback in reducing speaking anxiety. *Cognizance Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, 5(1), 228-246.

- Kabigting, R., & Nanud, J. A. (2020). English language classroom anxiety and performance of senior high school learners. *International Journal of Linguistics and Translation Studies*, 1(2), 58-69. <https://doi.org/10.36892/ijlts.v1i2.69>
- Kader, S., & Şimşek, E. (2025). Inner speech experiences of pre-service EFL teachers during courses and teaching practicum. *Innovational Research in ELT*, 6(1), 18-21.
- Kiruthiga, E., & Christopher, G. (2022). The impact of affective factors in English speaking skills. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 12(12), 2478-2485.
- Kobul, M. K., & Saraçoğlu, İ. N. (2020). Foreign language teaching anxiety of non-native pre-service and in-service EFL teachers. *Journal of History Culture and Art Research*, 9(3), 350-365.
- Li, Q., Xie, Z., & Zeng, G. (2023). The influence of teaching practicum on foreign language teaching anxiety among pre-service EFL teachers. *SAGE Open*, 13(1).
- Liu, M., & Xiangming, L. (2019). Changes in and effects of anxiety on English test performance in Chinese postgraduate EFL Classrooms. *Education Research International*, 2019 ID 7213925.
- Rosenberg, M. B. (2015). *Nonviolent communication: A language of life* (3rd ed.). PuddleDancer Press.
- Sanjaya, M. M., Nurkamto, J., & Sumardi. (2024). Navigating foreign language teaching anxiety: Insights from pre-service teachers during teacher professional education practicum. *Indonesian Journal of EFL and Linguistics*, 9(1).
- Sotomayor Cantos, K. F., Baños Coello, M. B., Córdova Pintado, J. A., & Camacho Castillo, L. A. (2024). Strategies for reducing anxiety in EFL classroom: An academic review.
- Torraco, R. J. (2016). Writing integrative literature reviews: Using the past and present to explore the future. *Human Resource Development Review*, 15(4), 404-428. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1534484316671606>
- Warsi, S. (2025). The cognitive foundation of affective language classrooms: A secondary data analysis of instructional impact on second language acquisition environments. *International Journal of Emerging Voices in Education*, 1(3).
- Whittemore, R., & Knafl, K. (2005). The integrative review: updated methodology. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 52(5), 546-553. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2648.2005.03621.x>
- Yetkin, R., & Alagözlü, N. (2022). Exploring EFL Student Teachers' Anxieties in Distance Education. *International Online Journal of Education and Teaching*, 9(3), 1343-1355.