

Listening, Dialogue, and Change: The Role of Dialogic Feedback in Shaping Future Teachers in Bedouin Society

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates how dialogic feedback shapes professional identity, agency, and reflective practice among Arab-Bedouin female pre-service teachers in southern Israel. Using a qualitative interpretive design, 12 participants engaged in semi-structured interviews to explore their experiences with culturally mediated mentoring during practical teacher training. Thematic analysis revealed that mentors acted as cultural mediators, facilitating dialogue that balanced respect for traditional norms with opportunities for critical reflection. Dialogic feedback emerged as a space for professional identity development, enabling participants to integrate inherited cultural values with contemporary pedagogical practices. Moreover, it fostered agency, empowering student teachers to take ownership of their learning, contribute ideas, and exercise leadership in classroom decision-making. A reciprocal dimension was also identified, wherein mentors experienced professional growth and reflective renewal through the feedback process. Cultural challenges, including hierarchical social norms and concerns about respect, highlighted the necessity of culturally responsive strategies to ensure meaningful participation. Overall, the findings demonstrate that dialogic feedback operates as a relational, contextually sensitive mechanism that simultaneously supports professional development, reflective learning, and the co-construction of a learning community.

Keywords: Arab-Bedouin education, dialogic feedback, professional identity, pre-service teachers, agency, culturally responsive pedagogy

INTRODUCTION

Self-regulated learning and reflective practice are widely recognized as essential competencies in teacher education, supporting the development of professional autonomy, critical thinking, and pedagogical effectiveness (Zimmerman, 2002; Panadero, 2017). For pre-service teachers, the ability to engage in self-directed reflection is crucial for navigating complex classroom realities, adapting to diverse learner needs, and shaping their professional identity (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). In particular, reflective engagement facilitates the integration of theory and practice, enabling student teachers to critically examine their teaching experiences and make informed pedagogical decisions (Loughran, 2002).

Practical teacher training plays a pivotal role in shaping professional identity, especially for Arab-Bedouin female pre-service teachers operating within conservative and culturally complex contexts. These students face dual challenges: societal expectations that impose strict behavioral and social boundaries, and institutional demands that require the development of professional autonomy, pedagogical expertise, and critical engagement (Abu-Gweder, 2023). Recent studies have further demonstrated that Arab-Bedouin female students in higher education frequently experience tensions between traditional community norms and academic expectations, often leading to emotional stress, limited classroom participation, and reduced confidence in professional decision-making (Abu-Rabia-Queder & Arar, 2022; Arar & Oplatka, 2022). In many cases, these students must negotiate issues related to language, gender roles, mobility restrictions, and social visibility while simultaneously adapting to institutional cultures that are predominantly Western-oriented and academically demanding.

Moreover, research on minority female teacher trainees in collectivist societies suggests that mentoring relationships and emotionally supportive pedagogical environments are especially critical for fostering agency, resilience, and reflective engagement (Rachamim & Orland-Barak, 2024; Abu-Gweder, 2026; Abu-Saad & Abu-Gweder, 2026). Despite these documented challenges, empirical investigations focusing specifically on reflective learning processes among Arab-Bedouin female pre-service teachers remain scarce. Within this context, pedagogical guidance and dialogic feedback provided by mentors during practicum experiences constitute central mechanisms for supporting reflective learning and professional growth.

Research on reflective practice and dialogic feedback has highlighted their effectiveness in fostering self-regulation, professional responsibility, and critical

engagement among student teachers (Yang & Carless, 2013; Bozalek et al., 2016). Dialogic feedback—characterized by open, attentive, and reciprocal discussion—differs from traditional evaluative feedback by actively engaging students in processing pedagogical challenges, constructing knowledge collaboratively, and developing reflective thinking (Alexander, 2020). However, most studies in this field have been conducted in Western contexts or in culturally open educational systems, with limited attention to pre-service teachers from minority or conservative cultural backgrounds.

Despite the growing body of research on reflective learning and mentoring, significant gaps remain regarding the experiences of Arab-Bedouin female student teachers, who navigate both marginalized social positions and traditional cultural norms. Current literature rarely examines how culturally responsive mentoring practices operate within Bedouin educational contexts, particularly during teaching practicum experiences where students are expected to balance institutional expectations with culturally prescribed norms of communication, authority, and gendered behavior. There is little empirical evidence on how culturally responsive pedagogical guidance operates in such settings, how it contributes to self-regulated learning, and how it shapes professional identity among students from minority communities in the Arab-Bedouin sector.

This study addresses a critical gap in the literature by examining how pedagogical guidance and reflective mentoring support the development of self-regulated learning (SRL) among Arab-Bedouin female pre-service teachers during their practicum experiences. While SRL is often framed as a universal cognitive process, this research highlights its relational and culturally mediated dimensions. It specifically focuses on the pivotal role of mentors as cultural mediators, the strategic use of dialogic feedback as a tool for reflection, and the ways in which these processes collectively contribute to the formation of professional identity, agency, and confidence within the teaching practice.

By situating these experiences within the unique sociocultural context of the Arab-Bedouin community in Israel, the study explores how structured guidance facilitates the transition from external support to internalized professional autonomy. It examines the interplay between institutional academic expectations and traditional cultural norms, illustrating how trust-based mentorship can lower emotional barriers to reflection. Ultimately, the research aims to provide a context-sensitive understanding of how pedagogical support can be leveraged to empower minority educators in navigating complex, hierarchical, and linguistically diverse educational environments.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Reflective learning is widely recognized as a cornerstone of teacher professional development, enabling pre-service teachers to critically examine their beliefs, experiences, and pedagogical decisions (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Freire, 2005; Vinjamuri, Warde, & Kolb, 2017). Reflective practices encourage educators to integrate theory and practice, fostering professional growth, self-efficacy, and the capacity for ongoing self-regulation (Miller, 2022; Chinpakdee, 2026). In higher education, reflective tools such as journals, peer feedback, and structured discussions have been shown to enhance the depth of student learning, particularly when reflection is guided and scaffolded by experienced mentors (Simpson, 2016; Vinjamuri et al., 2017; Liu, Xu, & Wang, 2023).

Recent literature, however, suggests that reflective learning should not be understood solely as an individual cognitive process but rather as a socially mediated and dialogic practice shaped by institutional, emotional, and cultural contexts (Mufid, 2025; Bozkurt, 2022). While earlier studies primarily emphasized introspection and self-analysis, newer approaches conceptualize reflection as collaborative meaning-making that develops through interaction, uncertainty, and reciprocal dialogue. This shift demonstrates an emerging trend in teacher education research from individual reflection toward relational and context-sensitive reflective pedagogy.

Research emphasizes that reflective learning is not solely a cognitive process; it is also affective and relational, requiring safe spaces for students to express uncertainties and confront dilemmas (Flick, 2017; Tam, 2020). Mentored reflection in teacher education has been linked to the development of professional identity, pedagogical agency, and adaptive decision-making (Cohen, Hoz, & Kaplan, 2013; Akiri & Dori, 2022). However, the literature also highlights that reflective practices are socially and culturally mediated, and their implementation may encounter challenges when pre-service teachers navigate complex cultural norms and traditional expectations (Abu-Gweder, 2023; Kaplan, 2021; Abu-Rabia-Queder & Arar, 2022).

Importantly, recent post-pandemic studies emphasize that reflective learning has become increasingly associated with resilience, adaptability, and coping with uncertainty in higher education environments (Bozkurt, 2022; Hermelin Fine & Wizman-Man, 2026). Bozkurt (2022) argues that reflective and adaptive pedagogies became essential during the transition to digital and hybrid learning environments following COVID-19, while Hermelin Fine and Wizman-Man (2026) highlight uncertainty itself as a central component of quality teacher education. Together, these studies extend earlier perspectives by framing reflective learning not only as professional growth but also as a mechanism for navigating instability, ambiguity, and rapid educational change.

Dialogic Feedback and Pedagogical Guidance

Dialogic feedback has emerged as a key mechanism for supporting reflective learning and professional development (Alexander, 2020; Wegerif, 2020; Barak, 2024). Unlike unidirectional feedback models, dialogic approaches prioritize mutual interaction, reciprocity, and co-construction of knowledge between mentors and mentees (Bozalek, Mitchell, Dison, & Alperstein, 2016; Er, Dimitriadis, & Gašević, 2021; Sanchez & Athanases, 2023). This form of feedback not only conveys pedagogical guidance but also validates learners' experiences, encourages questioning, and promotes the integration of personal and cultural perspectives into professional decision-making (Cui & Teo, 2021; Willis et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2023).

Recent scholarship further deepens this discussion by emphasizing feedback literacy and the dialogic negotiation of meaning between mentors and students (Chinpakdee, 2026). Unlike traditional feedback approaches centered on correction and evaluation, dialogic feedback frameworks conceptualize feedback as an ongoing conversational process in which learners actively interpret, negotiate, and apply pedagogical guidance. Chinpakdee (2026) argues that dialogic feedback enhances student agency and reflective capacity because learners become active participants rather than passive recipients. This perspective aligns with Alexander's (2020) view of dialogue as collaborative meaning-making, yet it extends prior work by focusing specifically on students' capacity to critically engage with feedback processes themselves.

In teacher education programs, effective dialogic feedback has been linked to the development of professional identity, agency, and autonomy (Mena, Hennissen, & Loughran, 2017; Tam, 2020). Mentor teachers, when exercising cultural sensitivity and awareness of power dynamics, can create spaces in which student teachers feel safe to reflect on dilemmas and experiment with new instructional strategies (Zach & Strommer, 2018; Strong & Baron, 2004). The reciprocal nature of dialogue further fosters co-learning, as mentors themselves engage in reflection, cultural negotiation, and professional renewal (Assadi, 2017; Alexander, 2020; Bozalek et al., 2016).

At the same time, recent studies caution that dialogic mentoring is not inherently egalitarian and may reproduce institutional power hierarchies if mentors dominate the interaction process (Manderstedt, Viklund, Palo, & Lillsebbas, 2023). Their analysis of triadic mentoring relationships in teacher education demonstrates that dialogue may simultaneously empower and constrain pre-service teachers, depending on how authority and participation are negotiated. This critical perspective adds complexity to earlier literature that tended to portray dialogic feedback primarily as supportive and collaborative.

Teacher Education in Minority and Culturally Traditional Contexts

Teacher education in marginalized communities, such as the Arab-Bedouin population in Israel, presents unique challenges and opportunities. Pre-

service teachers must navigate tensions between traditional social norms, gender expectations, and the demands of contemporary educational practices (Abu-Saad, 2013; Abu-Rabia-Queder & Arar, 2022; Halabi, 2024). Language barriers, particularly Hebrew as a second language, can exacerbate these challenges, influencing academic engagement, confidence, and professional identity formation (Abu-Gweder, 2022; Manor & Binhas, 2023).

Recent studies increasingly interpret these challenges through the lens of uncertainty, adaptability, and culturally responsive mentoring. While earlier literature often emphasized structural barriers faced by minority pre-service teachers, newer scholarship highlights the importance of relational support systems that help students negotiate between communal expectations and professional identities (Hermelin Fine & Wizman-Man, 2026; Manderstedt et al., 2023). This emerging perspective reflects a broader shift from deficit-oriented frameworks toward approaches emphasizing resilience, negotiation, and culturally grounded agency.

The Classroom-Academy-Community (CAC) model has been implemented in Israeli teacher education programs to address these challenges by creating a triadic learning space involving pre-service teachers, mentor teachers, and academic supervisors (Assadi & Murad, 2017; Shani, Tal, & Margolin, 2015). Within this model, dialogic feedback operates as a culturally sensitive mediating mechanism, helping students reconcile communal and familial expectations with professional norms (Abu-Gweder, 2024; Zach & Strommer, 2018). Studies indicate that reciprocal dialogue in this context enhances agency, encourages reflective experimentation, and supports the development of culturally grounded professional identities (Abu-Gweder, 2023; Yaffe, 2010; Alexander, 2020; Wegerif, 2020). Mentor teachers contribute not only pedagogical guidance but also relational and emotional support, providing safe spaces for negotiation of gender, authority, and identity (Strong & Baron, 2004; Bozalek et al., 2016; Abu-Gweder, 2025).

Nevertheless, despite increasing attention to reflective pedagogy and dialogic mentoring, the literature still lacks sufficient exploration of how these processes operate simultaneously within culturally conservative minority communities. Existing studies often examine reflective learning, dialogic feedback, or culturally responsive mentoring separately rather than investigating their intersection within a single pedagogical framework. Furthermore, few studies have specifically focused on Arab-Bedouin female pre-service teachers and the ways pedagogical guidance supports self-regulated learning, agency, and identity formation amid linguistic, gendered, and cultural tensions (Abu-Gweder, 2024; Kaplan et al., 2022; Abu-Rabia-Queder & Arar, 2022).

This study addresses this gap by examining reciprocal dialogue and pedagogical guidance within the CAC model, exploring how mentor-student interactions contribute to reflective practice, self-regulated learning, and the

development of professional identity in a context where cultural, linguistic, and gendered norms intersect.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative interpretive research design aimed at gaining an in-depth understanding of how Arab-Bedouin female pre-service teachers experience pedagogical guidance and dialogic feedback during practical teacher training. The qualitative interpretive approach is particularly suitable for examining socially and culturally situated experiences because it allows researchers to explore participants' subjective meanings, emotions, and professional interpretations within their natural educational contexts (Tisdell et al., 2025; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

In addition, the study was informed by a constructivist epistemological perspective, which assumes that knowledge and meaning are co-constructed through social interaction and reflective dialogue. This perspective aligns closely with dialogic pedagogy and supports the exploration of participants' evolving professional identities within culturally mediated educational environments (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Participants

The participants were 12 Arab-Bedouin female pre-service teachers enrolled in a teacher education program in southern Israel. Participants were in their second or third year of study and were specializing in general education or special education. They were selected because of their active engagement in practical training placements under the supervision of experienced mentor teachers, making them well-positioned to reflect on dialogic feedback processes within authentic classroom contexts.

Recruitment of Participants

Participants were recruited through purposive sampling to ensure relevance to the study aims. Purposive sampling is widely used in qualitative inquiry because it enables the selection of participants who possess direct experience with the phenomenon under investigation (Patton, 2015). The selection criteria included:

1. Arab-Bedouin female pre-service teachers currently enrolled in a recognized teacher education program.
2. Active participation in practical teaching placements supervised by mentors using dialogic guidance.
3. Willingness to provide informed consent and participate in semi-structured interviews.

The purposive approach ensured that participants could provide insightful and contextually rich accounts of dialogic feedback practices within culturally sensitive educational settings.

Development of the Research Instrument

To enhance methodological transparency, the semi-structured interview protocol was developed through a multi-stage process informed by qualitative interviewing literature (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). First, the researchers conducted an extensive review of literature on dialogic pedagogy, reflective practice, mentoring relationships, and teacher identity development (Alexander, 2020; Wegerif, 2020). Based on this review, an initial pool of interview questions was generated.

Second, the preliminary interview guide was reviewed by two experts in teacher education and qualitative research to assess clarity, cultural appropriateness, and alignment with the research objectives. Their feedback resulted in revisions to question wording and sequencing.

Third, a pilot interview was conducted with one Arab-Bedouin pre-service teacher who was not included in the final sample. The pilot helped evaluate the comprehensibility and flow of the questions and led to minor refinements designed to encourage deeper reflective responses.

The final interview protocol included open-ended questions focusing on participants' experiences with mentor feedback, emotional responses to dialogic interaction, reflective learning processes, professional identity formation, and culturally situated challenges during teacher training.

Data Collection

Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted individually with each participant. Semi-structured interviewing allows flexibility while maintaining consistency across interviews and is considered especially appropriate for exploring participants' lived experiences and reflective interpretations (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The interviews were designed to elicit detailed narratives about participants' experiences of dialogic feedback, reflective practice, and professional development.

Key details of the data collection process include:

- Length: Each interview lasted between 45 and 60 minutes.
- Language: Interviews were conducted in Arabic, the participants' first language, to allow for nuanced and authentic responses.
- Location: Interviews were held in private, comfortable spaces within the teacher education college to ensure confidentiality and participant comfort.
- Recording and Transcription: All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and transcribed verbatim. Transcripts were then

translated into English for analysis, maintaining careful attention to meaning and cultural context.

Data Analysis

The study employed thematic analysis following the six-phase approach outlined by Braun and Clarke (2021). Thematic analysis was selected because of its flexibility and suitability for identifying patterns of meaning across qualitative data while allowing sensitivity to participants' cultural and contextual experiences.

The analysis involved the following steps:

1. Familiarization: Repeated reading of transcripts to gain a comprehensive understanding of participants' perspectives.
2. Initial Coding: Systematic identification of meaningful data segments related to dialogic feedback, professional identity, agency, and culturally mediated learning.
3. Theme Development: Grouping related codes into preliminary themes representing core patterns in participants' experiences.
4. Theme Refinement: Iterative review of themes to ensure internal coherence and distinction between themes. Themes were also cross-checked against the research question to maintain analytic focus.
5. Defining and Naming Themes: Refining conceptual boundaries and generating clear thematic definitions.
6. Interpretation and Reporting: Connecting emergent themes to existing literature on dialogic education, reflective practice, and culturally responsive pedagogy.

To strengthen analytic rigor, coding was reviewed independently by an additional qualitative researcher familiar with teacher education research. Discrepancies in coding interpretation were discussed collaboratively until agreement was reached. This process contributed to researcher triangulation and enhanced the credibility of the thematic structure.

Trustworthiness and Reflexivity

To ensure credibility and trustworthiness, the study employed multiple strategies consistent with qualitative research standards (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Tracy, 2010):

Extended Member Reflection

Rather than relying solely on transcript verification, six participants were invited to review summaries of preliminary themes and interpretations. Their feedback confirmed that the themes accurately represented their experiences and perspectives. This expanded member-reflection process strengthened the study's credibility and interpretive validity.

Reflexivity

The researcher maintained reflective memos throughout data collection and analysis to acknowledge and monitor potential biases, assumptions, and positionality.

Transparency and Audit Trail

Coding decisions, theme development processes, analytic memos, and representative quotations were systematically documented to provide a transparent audit trail.

Researcher Triangulation

An additional qualitative researcher independently reviewed portions of the coding process and thematic categorization. This collaborative review enhanced analytical consistency and minimized individual interpretive bias.

Theoretical Triangulation

Emergent findings were interpreted through multiple theoretical lenses, including dialogic pedagogy, reflective practice, and culturally responsive education, enabling a broader and more nuanced interpretation of participants' experiences.

Because the study relied on a single primary data source (interviews), the researchers do not claim full methodological triangulation. Instead, the study employed researcher triangulation, theoretical triangulation, and reflexive validation strategies to strengthen credibility and interpretive depth.

Ethics and Anonymisation

Ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Ethics Committee of the teacher education college (**Approval No. 958745158**). All participants provided informed consent prior to participation, and their confidentiality was strictly protected. Pseudonyms were used in all findings and quotes (e.g., Participant 4) to ensure anonymity and compliance with ethical standards.

RESULTS

The practical training of Arab-Bedouin female student teachers presents a complex interplay of cultural norms, societal expectations, and evolving pedagogical practices. Within this context, dialogic feedback emerged as a transformative mechanism that supports reflective learning, professional identity formation, and agency development. Thematic analysis of interviews and written reflections identified four interrelated themes: (1) mentors as cultural mediators, (2) dialogic feedback as a space for professional identity development, (3) fostering agency and ownership of learning, and (4) reciprocal growth and pedagogical development. At the same time, the findings also reveal tensions, limitations, and

emotional complexities associated with implementing dialogic feedback within conservative sociocultural settings. Rather than functioning as an entirely emancipatory practice, dialogic feedback was experienced as a negotiated and sometimes fragile process shaped by power relations, cultural expectations, and institutional hierarchies.

Theme 1: Mentors as Cultural Mediators

Participants described mentors as essential mediators between academic expectations and cultural realities. Mentors helped student teachers navigate tensions between traditional norms of deference and the demands of reflective, interactive learning. Through guidance and culturally sensitive explanations, mentors created a safe space for critical dialogue.

Quotes:

Participant 2: "The mentor explained why asking questions is not disrespectful. I began to feel safe to share my thoughts."

Participant 5: "Sometimes I wanted to challenge a tradition, but I didn't know how. The mentor showed me it could be done respectfully."

Participant 7: "She connected the theory with what we know from our community. It felt like learning that respects us."

Participant 9: "Without her mediation, I would have been afraid to reflect honestly."

These accounts indicate that cultural mediation is critical for enabling engagement in reflective learning. Mentors do more than provide feedback—they actively shape conditions under which student teachers can participate meaningfully without cultural dissonance. Importantly, this mediation process also reflects an underlying asymmetry of power. Student teachers often depended on mentors to “authorize” participation in dialogue, suggesting that reflective engagement was not fully internalized as a natural pedagogical right but remained contingent upon mentor approval. This indicates that dialogic feedback may simultaneously empower student teachers while reproducing hierarchical dependence on culturally legitimized authority figures.

In several reflections, participants implied that they selectively expressed opinions that would remain socially acceptable rather than fully authentic. Thus, the dialogic space was not entirely free of constraint; rather, it functioned as a carefully negotiated environment where openness was continuously balanced against concerns about respectability, modesty, and communal expectations.

Theme 2: Dialogic Feedback as a Space for Professional Identity Development

Dialogic feedback provided structured opportunities for participants to reconsider their professional roles. Through interactive dialogue, student teachers began integrating traditional values with contemporary pedagogical approaches, fostering a more complex understanding of teaching.

Quotes:

Participant 1: "Hearing different perspectives helped me see that teaching is broader than what I learned at home."

Participant 3: "When we talk openly about challenges, I feel like I am becoming the teacher I want to be, not just repeating what I saw before."

Participant 6: "The feedback helped me find my own voice as a teacher, one that respects our culture but is also innovative."

Participant 8: "I used to follow instructions without thinking, but now I ask, reflect, and contribute my ideas."

Dialogic feedback functions as a reflective space where professional identity is actively constructed. Student teachers negotiate between inherited cultural norms and professional expectations, gradually forming an identity that is both culturally grounded and pedagogically informed. However, identity development was not always experienced as smooth or empowering. Several participants implicitly described feelings of uncertainty, internal conflict, and emotional strain while attempting to reconcile collective cultural expectations with emerging professional identities associated with autonomy and critical reflection.

This suggests that professional identity formation involved an ongoing process of negotiation rather than linear transformation. In some cases, dialogic feedback destabilized previously unquestioned assumptions about authority, gender roles, and teaching practices, creating moments of discomfort alongside growth. Therefore, the findings indicate that reflective dialogue may function simultaneously as a source of empowerment and as a trigger for identity tension and vulnerability.

Theme 3: Fostering Agency and Ownership of Learning

Participants emphasized that dialogic feedback empowered them to take responsibility for their learning and professional development. By positioning student teachers as partners rather than subordinates, mentors encouraged autonomy, confidence, and proactive engagement.

Quotes:

Participant 4: "I started suggesting activities in class. I felt trusted to contribute, not just follow orders."

Participant 2: "When the mentor asked for our ideas, I realized I can lead some parts of the lesson myself."

Participant 7: "Being asked for input made me feel I am capable, that my opinion matters in shaping how we teach."

Participant 12: "I stopped waiting for approval for every step; now I plan and act with confidence."

These narratives highlight the connection between dialogic feedback and the development of agency. Student teachers move from passive roles to active, decision-making professionals capable of initiating pedagogical change. Nevertheless, the emergence of agency appeared uneven and context-dependent. While some participants embraced greater independence, others continued to demonstrate hesitation, particularly in situations involving senior staff members or culturally sensitive issues. This suggests that agency was not fully achieved but rather developed incrementally within socially permitted boundaries.

Moreover, some participants appeared to equate agency primarily with increased classroom participation rather than with deeper structural empowerment. As a result, the findings raise questions about whether dialogic feedback alone is sufficient to transform entrenched institutional and cultural hierarchies, or whether broader systemic support is necessary to sustain meaningful professional autonomy.

Theme 4 – Reciprocal Growth and Pedagogical Development

Mentors also reported that dialogic feedback prompted their own professional reflection and renewal. The process was mutually beneficial, creating a community of shared learning where both student teachers and mentors refined their pedagogical practices.

Quotes:

Mentor 1: "I'm not just giving feedback—they challenge me to think differently about teaching."

Mentor 3: "Their perspectives make me reconsider how I structure lessons and interact with students."

Participant 5: "Sometimes the mentor admits she doesn't have all the answers, and it inspires us to reflect together."

Mentor 2: "The dialogue helps me grow as a teacher educator while helping them grow as future teachers."

Dialogic feedback is not unidirectional; it fosters a learning community where reflective practice is co-constructed. This reciprocal dynamic strengthens both pedagogical thinking and professional development for all participants. At the same time, reciprocity was not always fully symmetrical. Although mentors described learning from student teachers, the institutional structure continued to position mentors as evaluators and gatekeepers. Consequently, some participants may have moderated their responses in ways intended to maintain positive professional relationships and secure favorable evaluations.

This finding points to an important tension within dialogic pedagogy: while dialogue aspires to equality and mutuality, educational contexts characterized by assessment and supervision inevitably preserve elements of hierarchy and surveillance. Thus, the reciprocity described by participants should be understood as partial and negotiated rather than entirely egalitarian.

Theme 5 – Cultural Challenges in Implementing Dialogic Feedback

Despite its benefits, cultural norms posed challenges. Student teachers initially hesitated to speak freely due to social hierarchies emphasizing respect for elders and authority.

Quotes:

Participant 6: "I worried that asking questions would be seen as disrespectful."

Participant 8: "Sometimes I stayed silent to avoid offending anyone."

Mentor 2: "I had to explain that questioning is part of learning, not disrespect."

Participant 10: "It was hard to balance my ideas with tradition, but dialogue made it possible."

Cultural sensitivity is essential to ensure dialogic feedback is effective. Mentors must navigate these norms carefully to create an environment where reflective learning is culturally appropriate yet empowering. However, the findings also suggest that cultural barriers were not merely temporary obstacles overcome through mentoring support. In some cases, deeply embedded social expectations continued to limit open dialogue even after trust had been established. Participants occasionally described self-censorship, emotional discomfort, and fear of social judgment, indicating that reflective participation remained constrained by broader communal norms beyond the immediate educational setting.

Furthermore, the implementation of dialogic feedback occasionally created contradictions for participants who valued both critical reflection and

cultural cohesion. Some student teachers appeared concerned that adopting highly dialogic practices could be interpreted as distancing themselves from traditional forms of respect and social conduct. Consequently, dialogic feedback functioned not only as a pedagogical strategy but also as a site of cultural negotiation in which competing identities and loyalties had to be continuously managed.

Overall, these findings illustrate that dialogic feedback serves as a vital, multidimensional mechanism within teacher education. It functions as a cultural mediator that bridges academic expectations with traditional norms, while facilitating professional identity formation through the reflective construction of a teacher persona. Furthermore, it fosters agency development by promoting autonomy, leadership, and learner ownership. The evidence also highlights a process of mutual pedagogical growth, creating a learning community that benefits both mentors and student teachers as they navigate complex cultural tensions.

At the same time, the findings reveal that dialogic feedback is neither universally liberating nor free from contradiction. Its implementation is shaped by persistent hierarchies, emotional vulnerabilities, and sociocultural constraints that both enable and restrict reflective participation. Rather than representing a complete shift from traditional authority structures, dialogic feedback appears to operate as a hybrid pedagogical practice in which empowerment and constraint coexist simultaneously.

Ultimately, dialogic feedback emerges not merely as an instructional tool, but as a relational and culturally attuned process that sustains the professional development of Arab-Bedouin female student teachers and their mentors alike. Its significance lies precisely in this complexity: the findings demonstrate that meaningful professional growth occurs not through the elimination of cultural tensions, but through the ongoing negotiation of those tensions within reflective educational relationships.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study suggest that dialogic feedback plays a critical role in shaping the professional development of Arab-Bedouin female student teachers, particularly in fostering professional identity, agency, and reflective practice. Participants described dialogic feedback as a mechanism that enables them to move from passive recipients of instruction to active participants in their own learning processes. Through structured, interactive discussions with mentors, they were able to engage critically with pedagogical challenges and reflect on their emerging roles as teachers, supporting Alexander's (2020) assertion that dialogic teaching fosters collaborative and self-regulated learning, as well as Wegerif's (2020) emphasis on the dialogic construction of knowledge. Consistent with Willis et al. (2021), these findings highlight the potential of mediated feedback to strengthen self-efficacy and promote critical thinking skills, particularly in contexts where students face cultural and linguistic barriers.

The study demonstrates that professional identity formation among Arab-Bedouin female student teachers is inseparable from culturally responsive mentoring practices. Participants emphasized that feedback sessions provided a safe space to negotiate the tensions between traditional cultural expectations and the demands of contemporary pedagogical practice (Abu-Gweder, 2023; Abu-Gweder, 2024). Such reflective engagement allowed them to reinterpret their professional roles not as conflicting with cultural norms but as a pathway to meaningful agency within their communities, aligning with Bozalek et al. (2016), who argued that dialogical engagement can reconcile personal, professional, and communal values. By situating reflective practice within a culturally sensitive framework, mentors facilitated both the cognitive and affective dimensions of teacher development, enabling students to internalize pedagogical principles while preserving cultural continuity.

In addition, dialogic feedback appeared to strengthen participants' sense of agency, as they reported increased confidence in leading classroom activities and initiating learning projects (Kaplan, 2021; Kaplan et al., 2022). These observations resonate with Assadi and Murad's (2017) findings that structured teacher training models can enhance professional initiative and responsibility. The iterative nature of dialogic feedback also allowed mentors to scaffold learning gradually, signaling trust and supporting the transfer of responsibility—an approach aligned with Creswell and Poth's (2018) recommendations for reflective qualitative analysis in educational research. Importantly, the benefits of dialogic feedback extended to mentor teachers themselves, who reported that engaging with student reflections enhanced their own pedagogical awareness and prompted refinement of teaching strategies (Mena, Hennissen, & Loughran, 2017; Yaffe, 2010). This reciprocal growth highlights the potential for dialogic processes to strengthen professional learning communities within culturally complex educational settings.

The study further underscores that dialogic feedback must navigate inherent cultural tensions. In contexts where hierarchical norms discourage questioning authority, open reflection can be perceived as challenging traditional structures (Abu-Saad & Abu-Gweder, 2026; Tam, 2020). Mentor teachers therefore had to balance encouragement of critical thinking with respect for cultural expectations, illustrating the importance of culturally adapted feedback models for sustaining professional development. Ultimately, these findings link dialogic feedback to tangible educational outcomes, including enhanced readiness for practicum experiences, improved reflective teaching practices, and the cultivation of self-regulated learning competencies. They suggest that dialogic feedback, when carefully mediated, can support the dual objectives of professional skill acquisition and culturally responsive teacher identity formation in marginalized minority contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study indicates that dialogic feedback constitutes a foundational element in the practicum experiences of Arab-Bedouin female student teachers. The findings demonstrate how open, inclusive, and reflective pedagogical dialogue can support the development of professional identity, enhance agency, and foster reflective teaching practices (Alexander, 2020; Wegerif, 2020). Participants described dialogic feedback as transformative, influencing not only their own professional trajectories but also shaping mentor teachers' pedagogical approaches through ongoing reflection and professional growth (Mena, Hennissen, & Loughran, 2017; Yaffe, 2010).

Nevertheless, the culturally specific context of Arab-Bedouin society, characterized by traditional norms that may limit open or critical discourse, presents unique challenges in teacher education (Abu-Gweder, 2023; Abu-Gweder, 2026; Abu-Saad & Abu-Gweder, 2026). Balancing the encouragement of critical thinking with respect for cultural values remains a central and complex consideration in the design of teacher training interventions (Tam, 2020).

Contribution of the Study

This study makes significant contributions at both theoretical and practical levels. Theoretically, it advances understanding of self-regulated and reflective learning in culturally specific teacher education contexts. By examining how dialogic feedback and mentorship function within Arab-Bedouin female pre-service teachers' experiences, the research highlights how culturally responsive guidance mediates the development of professional identity, reflective agency, and critical pedagogical thinking. It challenges universalist models of reflective learning by demonstrating that culturally grounded relational practices are essential for fostering autonomy and engagement in marginalized communities.

Empirically, the study provides rich, contextually grounded insights into the experiences of an underrepresented population in educational research. The voices of Arab-Bedouin female student teachers illuminate how mentorship, modeling, and structured reflective guidance intersect with cultural norms to support self-regulation and professional growth, offering nuanced evidence of the relational and emotional dimensions of teacher learning.

Practically, the findings inform teacher education programs about effective strategies for culturally responsive mentoring and the design of reflective learning experiences. By emphasizing dialogic feedback as a relational and culturally mediated practice, the study offers actionable guidance for fostering professional agency, supporting identity development, and enhancing the capacity of student teachers to navigate the challenges of teaching in culturally complex and socially marginalized contexts.

Practical Implications

The study underscores the necessity of implementing culturally responsive models of dialogic feedback tailored to the social and cultural realities of Arab-Bedouin female student teachers. Teacher education programs should cultivate environments where reflective dialogue empowers students to develop an independent professional voice while maintaining alignment with their cultural identity. Mentors require targeted professional development to enhance their capacity for reflective dialogic practice, support critical thinking, and create flexible, supportive learning environments.

Additionally, programs should integrate structured opportunities for student teachers to participate actively in pedagogical decision-making and school-based initiatives, fostering agency, confidence, and professional ownership. Embedding reflective journals, peer dialogue, and trust-based mentoring relationships can reinforce these outcomes. By emphasizing relational and culturally attuned practices, teacher education programs can enhance both the personal and professional development of student teachers while respecting cultural norms and mitigating potential tensions between critical reflection and traditional expectations.

Limitations

Several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the study was conducted with a small, purposive sample of 12 participants, which restricts the generalizability of the findings to other teacher education settings or populations. Second, the data relied primarily on self-reported experiences, including interviews and written reflections, which may be influenced by social desirability and limit objective assessment of professional learning outcomes. Third, the study did not incorporate observational or performance-based data from classroom or practicum contexts, constraining the ability to directly link dialogic feedback practices to demonstrable teaching competencies.

Furthermore, the research was situated in a single institution and focused exclusively on Arab-Bedouin female student teachers, which may limit the applicability of findings to other minority groups or culturally diverse educational settings. These limitations suggest that while the study provides valuable insights into culturally responsive mentorship and reflective practice, its conclusions should be interpreted with caution, and further research is necessary to validate and expand these findings across broader contexts.

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