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The effect of the professional development phase on the contribution of a teaching simulation during teaching staff's preparation and development

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ABSTRACT

Simulations to improve teachers' professional conduct and development have recently increased globally. However, research on the impact on teachers at different professional stages is limited. The current study examined the effects of the simulations carried out at Tel Hai Academic College in the north of Israel in the Pre-service, Internship, and Professional teacher development phases to find their relative importance in the effect of the simulations on their participants and evaluate this teacher development practice. Four hundred thirty-seven teachers in three professional development phases participated in educational simulations and completed a questionnaire about three assessment levels of the individual (experience, learning, and application). Teachers perceived the most effective simulations in all parameters during their internship stage. Therefore, when simulations are used worldwide to advance professional teachers' development, it is recommended to do so as soon as possible upon entering the internship and first years' phase of teaching.

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Introduction

The high importance related to the integration of simulation in professional preparation processes stems from the need, among other things, for the connection between theory and practice (Kneebone et al. 2004). Like medicine and nursing professions where there is a growing use of simulation, teaching is also a profession in which professional knowledge is a combination of theory and practice, personal and shared knowledge, and analytic skills alongside intuition (Eraut 1994). The nationwide program advanced by Israel's Ministry of Education (MOE) to promote interpersonal communication skills among teaching and education staff (Ministry of Education, n.d.) seeks to prepare teachers in these professional components beyond the teachers' work in the classroom (i.e. communication with other teachers, with the principal, parents, etc.). That in turn, led to the establishment of simulation centers (SC) in universities and colleges in Israel where teachers in their preparation phases, internship, and professional development can practice through a simulation workshop (SW). At the heart of the preparation process is

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the simulation – a workshop in which a conflictual interaction takes place in a protected environment between a professional actor and a practicing teacher (Rooney et al. 2015), while their peers and colleagues observe them in CCTV. The simulations simulate real-life situations and the SC videotape them so that the practicing teachers can watch themselves later. After the simulation, the SC's staff member holds a debriefing, requires peers to give feedback, and conducts a conceptualizing and theoretical discussion to practice and perfect the participants' interpersonal communication skills (Ran and Nahri 2018).

The management of the simulated practice is based on scenarios taken from the participants' daily life events. Before the simulated practice, the SC's staff together with the group leader identifies and characterizes the needs of the arriving practicing group and the scenarios are designed according to these needs (e.g. a need to recruit a student for learning; a problem with a parent; issues between an educator and a parent or between an educator and a colleague, etc.). Each scenario includes a description of the occurrence (the SC's staff member presents this part to the practicing teachers at the beginning of the workshop) and possibilities for its development (i.e. if the practicing teacher says something then the actor responds in a particular way). The SW includes three different scenarios where, in each one, a different individual teacher plays.

To practice various interactions in as real a manner as possible, the SC uses professional actors with a bachelor's degree in Theater, who have undergone training in coaching and providing feedback to practicing teachers in the simulation as part of their recruitment to work in the SC (120 hours of training). The actors represent 'the other side' of an interaction with the participants during the simulation process. This type of work allows the SC to be able to bring reality into the simulation room and connect it to the theoretical world (Davidovitch, Parush, and Shtub 2008; Zhang, Thompson, and Miller 2011).

The professional actor who performs the simulation receives the scenario in advance, including the possible developments, and practices it in front of the SC staff. When the group of practicing teachers arrives, they select one practicing teacher to meet the actor and participate in the planned scenario.

Immediately after the simulated scenario between the practicing teacher and the actor, the two fill out a feedback form and discuss it with each other for five minutes. At the same time, the observing group, from which the practicing teacher came, also fill out feedback on the occurrences in the simulation they watched. At the end of this phase, the practicing teacher returns and joins the general group. Wide screens in the SC display all data online instantaneously, and based on the data the facilitator leads the initial processing of experiences from the simulation session. This phase includes a dimension of debriefing, peer sharing, and theoretical conceptualization. At the end of the workshop, the facilitator asks all the participants to fill out a feedback questionnaire about the entire process and creates a report summarizing the SW with emphasis on possible further work with the group. The facilitator sends the report to the leader of the group.

Few studies focused on the use of a SW in teacher preparation (Ferguson 2017) and even less in the context of communication skills relevant to teachers and those who prepare themselves for teaching. In the few studies available in the literature (Amador 2017; Donehower Paul, Bukaty, and Dieker 2020; Driver, Zimmer, and Murphy 2018; Ely et al. 2018; Weissblueth and Linder 2020) there is evidence that the use of simulations and the current technology that accompanies it, contribute to the increase in self-efficacy of teachers who participate in simulations and to the improvement in their relevant

interpersonal communication skills. When referring to teachers it includes the teachers in their preparation and professional development phases (pre-service, first-year teaching [internship], beginning teaching, experienced teaching, and expert teaching). The MOE in Israel requires its teachers to continue learning along with leading professional life ('life-long learning'). It represents a need to upgrade the profession and prepare teaching staff in a changing environment (Avdor, Reingold, and Kfir 2010). To do so, teachers arrive at the SC for simulations, at distinct phases of their development. In Israel, the MOE divides the phases of professional development into three phases: Basic pre-service, Internship, and Professional Development.

Basic pre-service phase

The teaching preparation system in Israel is divided into 'academic' and 'regular.' It includes all education sectors and, all age groups, in a large variety of teaching subjects, educational specializations, and supportive subjects (Ministry of Education, n.d.). The practice is carried out according to the guidelines of Israel's MOE in colleges of education (dedicated teacher preparation institutions) and teacher preparation schools in universities. The academic curricula are determined according to a model approved by the Council for Higher Education. The curricula include Education and Teaching studies, studies of specialization subjects, and 'student teaching' experience as well as additive and enrichment studies. The duration of studies for a bachelor's degree in teaching and for obtaining a teaching certificate is four years.

In addition, there is a framework for preparing graduate students for teaching. This track exists at dedicated colleges for teacher preparation, and they allow graduates with bachelor's degrees from other academic institutions to study and receive a teaching certificate. The MOE in Israel grants teaching and licensing certificates. The characteristic of learners at this stage today is that they mostly belong to 'Generation Y' (children born between 1980 and 2000) and 'Generation Z' (children born from 2000 onward). Generation Y is the first to grow up in the digital world. They feel very comfortable using the technology and prefer it over writing in a notebook (Ran, Almagor, and Yosefsberg-Ben Yehoshua 2019). They dominate social networks and consume visual media daily also as an expression of creativity by producing videos, editing photos and music clips, and uploading original content (Rosen 2010). They communicate interpersonally digitally, and they are used to being able to connect with friends and family from anywhere at any time (Almog and Almog 2015). This generation was exposed to worldwide crises that changed reality and discourse and learned not to believe and to have doubts which made them cynical. The Internet dictates the rapid pace of events, and spending time in it has trained members of this generation to make decisions quickly, assess risks, and manage dilemmas. The use of social networks, various media tools, and network collaborations have given them the ability to think globally, the ability to work in a team, the ability to consult at any given time, flexibility, and the ability to perform many tasks simultaneously. However, at the same time, their threshold for stimulation rose sharply (Almog and Almog 2015). At the occupational level, Generation Y is characterized as having the ability and willingness to work as a team and in groups, they know how to divide and spread attention and address at least two issues at the same time. Most of them have the technological skills and fast learning ability for new devices. With full

control of computer applications, as well as the Internet and extensive use of social networks, members of the 'Z' generation are connected to smartphones and are constantly connected to the Internet. These two form a central part of their self-identity. They deal with information sharing and interaction that are based on providing and receiving instant feedback. It has been argued that the most important consequence of screen exposure is a decline in social intelligence – these young people communicate differently (Samoha 2014) which creates a challenge for teacher preparation and makes practice complex, and requires adjustment, dynamism, and the use of advanced technological tools. The fact that they are technologists causes difficulty in the skill of creating a deep and patient interpersonal discourse which requires increased practice in the area and the provision of tools for the development of this skill, which is, as mentioned, one of the cornerstones of education and the work of teaching. The SW addresses this need. It is integrated into the learning processes, matching the needs of the lecturers and the theoretical material being studied at this stage. SWs are often used at this stage also to reinforce the theoretical understandings learned.

Internship phase

An inclusive name for the support, guidance, and directing programs of beginning teachers and kindergarten teachers when they enter the first teaching position and are accepted into the educational institution. At the center of the programs, there is the need to facilitate the transition from the status of a student teacher to the status of a teacher in the school/kindergarten. This is a stage that is accompanied by complex challenges and dilemmas (Aviva and Simon 2021). The transition from a student teacher to a full teacher/kindergarten teacher in the school is dramatic and requires the new teachers/kindergarten teachers to constantly think while teaching. As students teach, they experience real educational settings only as students for teaching with the close guidance and support of a coach teacher/kindergarten teacher and pedagogical instructor. This stage is also characterized by a high percentage of dropouts from the profession. In the UK fewer than 50% stay in the profession after five years (McIntyre, Hobson, and Mitchell 2009). In Australia, one-third of teaching training graduates leave between one and three years after graduation (Ewing and Manuel 2005). Similar data are found in the US, where a 30% rate of dropout can be observed after the first year (Hobson, Giannakaki, and Chambers 2009). Unlike senior teachers or senior kindergarten teachers, interns do not have enough tools in their 'toolbox' to maneuver between classroom or kindergarten class managing complexities, they lack the tools to contact peers, contact parents, work with the school principal, plan lessons or activities for several hours a day, manage staff in the case of kindergarten – all of these factors can make the transition a traumatic and a difficult one (Corcoran 1981).

To facilitate the process, this period is accompanied by an 'Internship workshop' to accompany the interns in practice and theory and help them process and conceptualize the events they experience. It improves their teaching skills and strengthens their emotional resilience. As part of this mentoring process, the intern teachers also participate in an SW. Each workshop is attended by fellow interns and is supervised by a teacher from the faculty of the training college (Ministry of Education, n.d.). The SW combined with this training is designed to assist the interns with reflective thinking about their work and to

serve as a reference for joint thinking with the other workshop participants in diagnosing the practical difficulties that arise during the work.

Professional development phase

The professional development of teachers is a complex matter. It requires emotional and cognitive investment, and the organization's culture influences it, mainly if there is encouragement for learning and individual and group development (Avalos 2011). Professional development refers to experienced teachers and expert teachers. The transition from an 'experienced teacher' to an 'expert teacher' is the result of processes of adaptation and development in teaching, the formation of professional identity, and continued development in learning and teaching experience setups. It varies in its time span (Avdor, Reingold, and Kfir 2010).

In the US there is a demand for professional development processes of 'high-quality' teachers, but there are no definitions and requirements for defining preparation as 'high quality' (Borko, Jacobs, and Koellner 2010) and the development processes of inappropriate or ineffective teachers incur a high financial expenditure (Ball and Cohen 1999; Putnam et al. 1997). However, there is evidence that investing in teachers' professional development contributes to the teaching practice and students' learning processes.

Most teachers and kindergarten teachers see professional development as important for expanding their knowledge and skills and for improving their ability to promote students (Guskey 2002). Teachers' expectations of professional preparation processes are for pragmatic, specific, and concrete tools relevant to day-to-day work (Fullan and Miles 1992). Courses that do not provide an answer to this view, fail (Guskey 2002). The 'New Horizon' reform in Israel, linked the promotion of teachers in salary levels to their professional development and gradually shifted the responsibility for this development to school principals while exercising 'pedagogical flexibility.' As part of the 'pedagogical flexibility,' Israel's MOE expects the school principal to accompany, plan, and develop the teachers' professional level.

The principal must 'pave' individual and staff learning pathways and influence their professional curriculum (Sasi, Kadesh, and Vidislavski 2013). In this framework, advanced preparation takes place at 'MOE faculty development centers' and in teachers' lounges. There, teachers continue to train in various and different professional formats: heterogeneous, homogeneous, generic, or organizational, according to the needs defined by Israel's MOE supervisors and school principals. As part of these processes, SCs plan and hold SWs. The content of the simulation is determined by the head of the teachers' staff, following the needs of the learning group.

Given that the use of SW in teacher education is still in its beginning (Levin and Flavian 2022), there are few studies that examine simulation in education in general and with teachers in their initial professional stages in particular. Thus, in light of the high importance given to the results of the simulation in assisting teacher development, we sought to compare the effectiveness of the simulation practice between these professional development groups. The research question was: How is the contribution of simulation in the teaching profession affected by the participants' stage of professional development? The purpose of the research was to examine the association between the professional preparation phases (Pre-service, Internship, and

Professional development) and the degree of effectiveness of the SW on the participants. We hypothesized that there will be differences in the effectiveness of the simulation between the distinct phases and that simulation will be especially effective in teachers' development during the internship phase, where the intern teachers fully face the real classroom throughout the week and a confrontation occurs between the theoretical and real experiences.

Method

Study population

The current study was conducted in accord with the quantitative approach and involved 437 participants in SW in Tel Hai Academic College in the north of Israel. A total of 34 SWs were examined. All participating teachers were sampled in the study. Participants included three sub-populations of K–12 teachers: Pre-service teachers (259), Teaching Interns (63), and In-service teachers (115). All teachers went through the SWs as part of their professional development process and filled out the required questionnaire.

Instrumentation

The effectiveness of the simulation practice was defined by the three dimensions of Kirkpatrick's (1959) model that refers to the individual and were considered as dependent variables: 1) experience, 2) learning, and 3) application. The model is validly used as a basis for evaluation in various programs. The dimensions examined included several components: The experience dimension included an element of general satisfaction and a desire to experience again. The learning dimension included the components of an approach formation and a 'tool for working tomorrow morning.' The application dimension included the components: the ability to handle complexities, expand the repertoire, and master skills. As mediating variables, we examined: background characteristics (gender and age), mode of preparation for the workshop (including passive or active preparation components and the quality of the preparation), and parameters that took place in the workshop itself (parameters related to the participants' activity\passivity). In addition, we collected verbal references related to the content of the simulation practice, the quality of the scenario and the simulation of reality (relevance, clarity, and accuracy), the activity environment (technology, efficiency, and convenience), and emotional components in the workshop (communication, involvement, protection, general feeling). A conceptual and variable map of the research can be seen in Figure 1. The independent variable was set to be the professional development stage of the participants.

Variables were measured with a questionnaire developed specifically for the SWs. The questionnaire was constructed based on Kirkpatrick's instructional assessment concept (Kirkpatrick 1959) and included the three levels of assessment relating to the individual (experience, learning, and application). The questionnaire included 14 questions: three background questions for general variables (sector, gender, and age), nine closed questions (three dichotomous questions, two questions with a 1–4 rating scale, three elective questions for nominal variables, and one question with a 1–5 rating scale), and two open questions. The questionnaire was validated in two phases: 1) 10 pilot SWs after which their

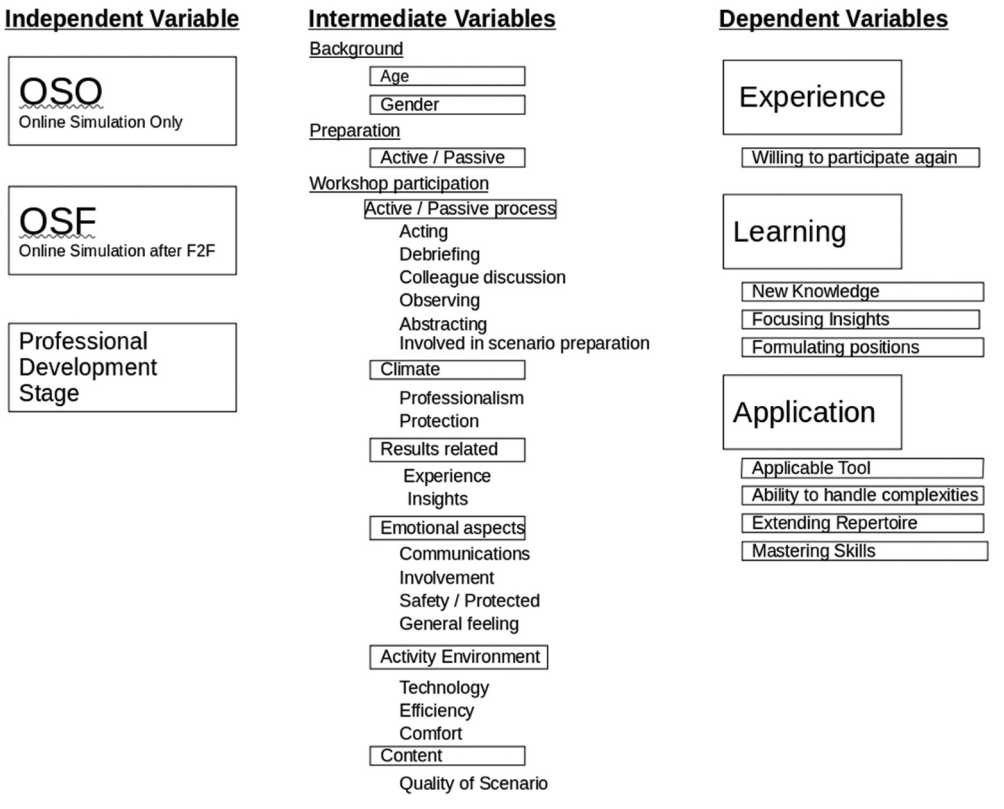


Figure 1. A conceptual and variable map of the research.

workshop moderators corrected the questionnaire and 2) following the corrections, a final questionnaire was constructed according to Kirkpatrick's assessment model.

Process

The workshop included a process to identify needs and was followed by creating relevant scenarios for learning and experience. As part of the simulation programs, professional actors were trained to play different characters and have authentic meetings with teachers and Interns. During the simulation, the actors simulated a case story relevant to the content world of the participants and allowed them to practice and deal with different conflicts (Eizenhammer et al. 2010). After the simulation, a debriefing was conducted that included the role players watching their simulation video, reflective discussion, self-feedback, peer feedback, and feedback from the actor. At the end of the simulation, each participant was asked to answer the questionnaire which was an integral part of the workshop summary process.

The study was conducted in full compliance with the standards of the Helsinki Declaration. Before completing the questionnaire at the end of the workshops, each participant signed an informed consent form to participate in the study. The questionnaires were filled out anonymously. The study received the approval of the Institutional

Ethics Committee (approval 4/2021–11). Data collection was conducted over seven months. During this period the workshops were held online.

Statistics

The data from the questionnaires were first compiled and processed in Excel 365 to debug, cross-referencing data and completing them. The processed data were imported into SPSS version 23 and analyzed. The statistical analysis included: descriptive statistics and analysis of variance for different factors; α level was set to 0.05.

Findings

Simulations and the stage of professional development

A one-way ANOVA was performed to compare the effect of three different stages of development on the scores of various aspects of the simulative practice outcomes. These are summarized in Table 1. Concerning the participants' personal experience from the simulation practice, a one-way ANOVA revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in mean scores of the participants' personal experience from the simulation practice between at least two groups ($F(2,434) = 4.768$, $p = 0.009$, $\eta^2 = 0.0215$). A post-hoc test for multiple comparisons found that the mean value of participants' personal experience score ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 0.42$ for the Interns vs. $M = 3.60$, $SD = 0.58$ for Pre-service teachers and $M = 3.5$, $SD = 0.67$ in Professional development stages) was significantly different between Pre-service and Interns stages ($p = 0.033$) and between Interns and Professional development stages ($p = 0.002$). There was no statistically significant difference in the mean value of participants' personal experience scores between the Pre-service and Professional development stages ($p = 0.103$).

Also, a one-way ANOVA was performed to compare the participants' scores of their receiving the scenarios in advance of the workshop. The comparison revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in mean scores of the participants' responses that they received the scenarios in advance of the workshops between at least two groups ($F(2,434) = 5.369$, $p = 0.005$, $\eta^2 = 0.0242$). A post-hoc test for multiple comparisons found that the mean value of participants' scores of receiving the scenarios in advance ($M = 0.19$, $SD = 0.40$ for the Interns vs. $M = 0.06$, $SD = 0.24$ for Pre-service teachers and $M = 0.09$, $SD = 0.28$ in Professional development stages) was significantly different between Pre-service teachers and Interns stages ($p = 0.001$) and between Interns and Professional development stages ($p = 0.02$). There was no statistically significant difference in the mean value of participants' scores of receiving the scenarios in advance between the Pre-service and Professional development stages ($p = 0.410$).

Further analysis of the simulative practice indicated that the Interns' group 'achieved the set goals' of the workshop at the highest level ($M = 3.37$, $SD = 0.53$ for the Interns vs. $M = 3.24$, $SD = 0.70$ in the Pre-service and $M = 3.01$, $SD = 0.72$ in Professional development, $F(2,434) = 6.809$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.0304$).

Post SW, the Interns 'created new knowledge' at the highest level ($M = 4.16$, $SD = 0.95$ vs. $M = 4.08$, $SD = 0.86$ in Pre-service and $M = 3.84$, $SD = 1.06$ in Professional development, $F(2,434) = 3.329$, $p < 0.037$, $\eta^2 = 0.0151$).

Table 1. Results of a one-way ANOVA for the various outcomes of the simulative practice between levels of teacher development. In post-hoc significance: 1 = Pre-service, 2 = Interns, 3 = Professional development.

		ANOVA			M			Post hoc sig.		
Variable	Scale	F	Sig.	η^2	Pre-service	Interns	Professional development	2/1	3/1	3/2
Participants' personal experience score	1 = no … 4 = excellent	4.768	0.009	0.0215	3.6	3.78	3.5	0.033	0.103	0.002
Receiving the scenarios in advance	1 = no … 4 = most part achieved	5.369	0.005	0.0242	0.06	0.19	0.09	0.001	0.410	0.020
Achieved the set goals	1 = no … 4 = most part achieved	6.809	0.001	0.0304	3.24	3.37	3.01	0.207	0.002	0.001
Created new knowledge	1 = no … 5 = very much	3.329	0.037	0.0151	4.08	4.16	3.84	0.551	0.023	0.031
Produced insights	1 = no … 5 = very much	10.952	0.000	0.0480	4.39	4.54	4.06	0.139	0.000	0.000
Formulated attitudes	1 = no … 5 = very much	4.012	0.019	0.0182	4.02	4.27	3.88	0.044	0.154	0.005
Handle complexities following the SW	1 = no … 5 = very much	4.497	0.012	0.0203	3.77	4.16	3.9	0.003	0.227	0.075
Mastery of skills following the SW	1 = no … 5 = very much	4.050	0.018	0.0183	3.87	4.16	4.06	0.015	0.045	0.454
A higher score for workshop	1 = no … 5 = very much	3.895	0.021	0.0176	4.04	4.23	3.93	0.048	0.157	0.005
Experience as a result of workshop	0 = no 1 = yes	5.280	0.005	0.0238	0.85	0.89	0.73	0.500	0.004	0.007
Insights from the workshop	0 = no 1 = yes	14.490	0.000	0.0626	0.66	0.68	0.38	0.697	0.000	0.000

The Interns participants also 'produced insights' at the highest level ($M = 4.54$, $SD = 0.56$ vs. $M = 4.39$, $SD = 0.68$ in Pre-service and $M = 4.06$, $SD = 0.92$ in Professional development, $F(2,434) = 10.952$, $p < 0.000$, $\eta^2 = 0.0480$) and were highest at 'formulated attitudes' ($M = 4.27$, $SD = 0.79$ vs. $M = 4.02$, $SD = 0.88$ in Pre-service and $M = 3.88$, $SD = 0.93$ in Professional development, $F(2,434) = 4.012$, $p < 0.019$, $\eta^2 = 0.0182$).

This group of participants indicated a high ability to 'handle complexities' following the simulative practice ($M = 4.16$, $SD = 0.75$ vs. $M = 3.77$, $SD = 0.97$ in Pre-service and $M = 3.9$, $SD = 0.95$ in Professional development, $F(2,434) = 4.497$, $p < 0.01$, $\eta^2 = 0.0203$) and argued for best 'mastery of skills' following the simulation ($M = 4.16$, $SD = 0.72$ vs. $M = 4.06$, $SD = 0.78$ and $M = 3.87$, $SD = 0.88$ in Professional development and Pre-service respectively, $F(2,434) = 4.050$, $p < 0.018$, $\eta^2 = 0.0183$).

The group of Interns also gave the workshop a higher score than the Pre-service teachers and the Professional development groups ($M = 4.23$, $SD = 0.53$ vs. $M = 4.04$, $SD = 0.65$ and $M = 3.93$, $SD = 0.82$ respectively, $F(2,434) = 3.895$, $p < 0.021$, $\eta^2 = 0.0176$).

Simulation quality

Concerning the important components for the quality of the SW, significant differences were found between the Professional development and the other groups in the Result component. This component included the Experience parameter, which was lower in the Professional development group (0.73) compared to the Interns (0.89) and Pre-service (0.85) group ($F(2,434) = 5.283$, $p < 0.005$, $\eta^2 = 0.0238$). In the Insight parameter, those new understandings that the participants formed after the simulation, it was found that the Professional development group evaluated this parameter lower (0.38) than that of the Pre-service and Interns group (0.66 and 0.68 respectively, $F(2,434) = 14.488$, $p < 0.000$, $\eta^2 = 0.0626$).

Discussion

A simulation allows its participants to experience situations that resemble reality, practice decision-making processes, reflect on them, and derive meaning from the process as seen in previous studies (Hayak and Avidov-Ungar 2020; Levin and Flavian 2022; McGarr 2021; Landon-Hays, Peterson-Ahmad, and Frazier 2020; Salman and Fattum 2019). However, there is a lack of research literature concerning the contribution of the simulation during the stage of internship and later during Professional development. The current study tried to fill some of the gaps in knowledge about the learning effect that simulation has on learning during the Pre-service, Internship, and Professional development phases. The main finding in this study was that the group that found the simulations most effective was the Interns. It means that simulation was perceived as most effective in the internship stage once the pre-service stage was completed. This determination is more decisive when considering the medium effect sizes that were computed for the Experience and Results parameters of the simulation. This finding corroborates the findings by Yablon and Iluz (2022) and that of Ben-Amram and Davidovitch (2023), who also showed that the contribution of the simulation was very high among Interns in the first teaching years in the education system than among the group of Pre-service teachers. Several possible explanations for that are as follows. The first is that when officials participate in an activity pertinent to their work and receive information and instructions on relevant content at a time coinciding with their needs, they become more attentive to what they learn and perceive it better. It is due to the possibility to use it right away, perhaps even 'tomorrow morning.'

A second explanation might be that the simulation might be more relevant to the group of Interns. It is because an internship is a phase where for the first time in the context of an in-service teacher, they meet the real field and therefore quick analogies are created between what they experience in the simulation and what they experience in the field.

The third explanation is that of the right amount of experience. Interns are on the one hand more experienced than Pre-service teachers during their course of study and

preparation and on the other hand, are still not burned out and cynical like the teachers who come as part of the Professional development phase after several years.

Another explanation might be that the simulations may not be fully compatible with what the teachers in Professional development need. Teachers in the Professional development stage come to the simulations with much more simulative experience than their corresponding colleagues in the internship stage. Many times, the played situations and scenarios do not match the reality that they already know or the interpretations that are given to them. Frequently, simulation participants arrive when it is the school principals who have defined the purpose of the simulation and it does not seem that the school principals always know or correctly identify the needs of their staff.

To conclude, although the current study was conducted in Israel and its results represent what exists in the education system there, the findings are relevant to teachers everywhere in other education systems in the world where the teacher preparation process takes place in similar stages. It provides evidence of the importance of SW in general and during the first years of teaching in particular. When simulations are used to advance the professional development of teaching staff, it is recommended to do so as soon as possible upon entering the internship and first few years phase of teaching. As the use of the simulated practice in teaching is a relatively new methodology in the field of education and teaching, long-term monitoring of its impact is in its early stages. It is necessary and important for researchers and practitioners to be critically aware of the 'window of opportunity' in the first years of teaching for a simulation learning optimum effect when implementing simulation in teacher education. It is, therefore, important to conduct research that assesses, understands, and elucidates the impact of simulation practice on teachers to improve their teaching and professional interactions.

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