Simulation-assisted Internship Workshops – A Tool for Bridging between Academia and the Field in Teacher Training in Israel

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Abstract

During their residency year and concurrent with their first year of work at a school, teacher residents must participate in an internship workshop to receive support, empowerment, and professional development. The purpose of the current study is to examine the efficacy of an internship workshop combining simulations for teacher residents, and whether combining simulations in the workshop constitutes a teacher training tool that bridges between academia and the field with regard to group cohesion and evaluation of personal functioning in the workshop. Another purpose is to explore the resident's sense of empowerment and mental preparation after participating in the workshop. Participants included 41 teacher residents who participated in 16 simulations throughout their residency year. The study utilized a mixed methodology: a quantitative method comprised of questionnaires on social cohesion in the workshop and social-personal functioning; and a qualitative method, where the participants were interviewed at the conclusion of the workshop. The research findings show a high score for social cohesion in the workshop. Despite the disagreements among the residents, they feel safe and accepted in the group. Regarding the aspect of social-personal functioning, the residents reported that the workshop had a considerable impact on their functioning at the school and that thanks to the workshop they reached a good understanding of their behavior as teachers and of their interpersonal conduct in the group. Regarding the measure of behavior in the workshop, they reported active participation and high sharing of difficulties. In the qualitative part, in the interviews the teachers noted the importance of two processes that took place in the cohesive and supportive group. The first was their mental preparation by dealing with difficulties, challenges, and dilemmas that arose in the workshop via the simulations, as well as receiving reflective feedback and practical tools for their work. The second was the importance of assistance with the bureaucratic process until receiving the teacher's license (such as completing forms, evaluation, teacher associations, and pay). The research findings illuminate the importance of integrating simulations in internship workshops for teacher residents, which strengthens the association between academia and actual work at the school.

Keywords: simulations with actors, social cohesion, social-personal functioning, self-functioning evaluation

1. Introduction

The teaching residency (internship) is a major stage in the transition from academic training in teacher training institutions to the actual induction of novice teachers in the educational system. The aim of the residency is to facilitate the optimal induction of new teachers in the schools, and it includes two main components: (1) Teaching at a school, mentored by an experienced teacher, (2) Support workshops held at the academic institutions (Lederer, 2015). The professional literature written in Israel and elsewhere agrees that the first year of teaching has a great deal of importance for the professional development of teachers (Norman & Feiman-Nemser, 2005; Senom, Zakaria & Ahmad Shah, 2013) and particularly for cultivating teachers' professional identity and shaping their attitudes to teaching. Studies found a strong relationship between successfully undergoing this stage and the teacher's satisfaction and perseverance in teaching (Arviv-Elyashiv & Zimmerman, 2015). Therefore, it is very important that practical training in the school, as well as learning in internship workshops, be efficient and provide the optimal response to the resident's needs.

The study described in the current paper endeavored to examine the perceived contribution of an internship workshop combining simulations with actors both to residents' perception of group cohesion in the workshop and to the social-personal dimension. Moreover, it attempted to examine whether the simulations in the internship workshop improve the residents' induction process in the school and attain the purpose of the residency to provide practical tools for dealing with challenges at the school. The simulations help cope with conflict situations and are

aimed at improving the interpersonal communication skills of the participants. Therefore, they constitute a tool for reducing errors in teaching and learning, as well as for strengthening teachers' emotional resilience for managing dilemmas at the school.

2. Theoretical Background

Life circumstances in the 21st century regarding society, technology, economics, environment, and politics, are complex and rapidly changing. These circumstances are leading to a different and unknown future. Hence, the major challenge of the educational system is to constantly shape and enhance the relevance of education. "To be a teacher" is a decision that involves not only choosing a life career but rather a life style. The processes experienced by residents as independent teachers in the residency year affect their attitude to the profession, the nature of socialization into the system, and the desire to persevere in teaching. Therefore, optimal and effective training has importance as a factor that affects personnel in the educational system upon encountering many difficulties that produce teacher burnout and attrition to such an extent that the educational system is experiencing a lack of teachers. The tendency to leave teaching at an early stage of one's practice is concerning due to the many resources invested in training and also since beginning teachers are leaving a system for which they willingly trained for several years. Therefore, the sequence of support and development provided to teachers beginning from the stage of academic training, when beginning the residency year supported by internship workshops, and until receiving the teacher's license at its conclusion, is important.

Simulation-supported instruction is based on experiential learning that includes experiencing authentic conflictual incidents with actors, followed by a video-assisted reflective debriefing. The purpose of the simulation-based learning is to promote teachers' social-emotional abilities in all stages of their professional development so that they will receive useful tools for handling various conflict situations. The workshops allow participation in a learning experience that simulates reality and helps the participating individuals make meaning and develop critical thinking skills and cultural skills necessary for the work environment in the 21st century. Teacher residents who deal with the scenarios improve their use of interpersonal communication proficiencies and enhance group cohesion in the workshop. The purpose of the study is to examine the bridge between academic theory and the field by providing meaningful tools.

2.1 Ministry of Education Policy for Training Teachers and the Simulation Centers

Studies claim that teacher training is supposed to link theory and practice and particularly to verify that the principles learned by novice teachers are experienced by them in practice during their training. It is also necessary to encourage cohesive teacher communities for the purpose of relevant mutual support in the schools and to form an environment that supports teacher communities and individual teachers (Eisenberg & Zlivansky-Aden, 29019). Similarly, Donitza-Schmidt and Zuzovsky (2015) address the imbalance between the demand and supply of teachers in the educational system and links this to designing teacher training with the purpose of preventing recruitment of teachers who lack the necessary skills, who might leave the educational system.

Novice teachers experience frustration at times because the reality at the school does not match the professional knowledge, vision, and values with which they were equipped in their academic training. They encounter pedagogic, emotional, and social difficulties and find it hard to adapt to the school culture (Kaplan, 2021). Researchers (Ingersoll, Merrill & May, 2014) found that effective training of teachers serves as a means for retaining teachers in the system, together with the essence and content of pedagogic preparations in innovative teaching and pedagogic methods that significantly reduce the risk of leaving teaching after the first year on the job.

For several years, simulation centers have been operating in Israel at teacher training institutions, with the aim of strengthening the interpersonal dimension in teaching. The centers hold simulation workshops for educators and for various extra-academic organizations. Thanks to the significant learning processes in the simulation workshops and the high satisfaction reported by participants, there is a high demand for the workshops, in the understanding that integrating simulations is an inherent component of training processes, the residency, teaching induction, and professional development. Each year the Ministry of Education issues a call for budgeting simulation workshops at academic institutions. As part of the budgeting of the Department of Internship and Teaching Induction at the Ministry of Education, ILS 9 million has been allocated as part of a public call for operating simulation centers, in the understanding that one of the main factors affecting efficient teaching, in addition to content knowledge and pedagogic knowledge, is the interpersonal dimension of teaching. The call appeals to teacher training institutions that operate simulation centers, in order to enhance communication and coping skills in situations of conflict for all teaching staff. Teaching and education at the school in real time is extremely complex. Therefore, the simulation centers allow educators to experience conflict situations in a safe environment. At the simulation center experiential

learning processes take place, allowing reflective processes and processes of inquiry, where teachers learn together with a peer group in an active and meaningful learning process (https://meyda.education.gov.il/files/MinhalOvdeyHoraa/tashpab/simulation-letter.pdf).

2.2 Difficulties, Burnout, Attrition, and the Lack of Teachers

In her study, Maskit (2013) examined the difficulties of residents in their first month of work as actual teachers during their residency year. She found many factors such as navigating between one's personal life and professional life; the transition from the status of a student to the status of a teacher resident; interpersonal relations at school with the school staff and parents; the feeling of loneliness and the many demands of the system that give residents a sense of shock despite their long period of training. Residents encounter many difficulties, and these appear to be universal.

The difficulties of the beginning teacher who is between the training stage and the professional development stage generate strong feelings of helplessness, loneliness, alienation, estrangement, insecurity, lack of clarity, and vagueness. All these agitate the beginner until possibly feeling a sense of paralysis (Lazovsky & Reichenberg, 2006). The encounter with the new reality is portrayed in the literature using grave images and metaphors such as "cultural shock", "a foreigner in a new country", "survival", "practical professional market", and "trial by fire" (Gavish & Friedman, 2005; Gavish, 2009; Kelchetermans & Ballet, 2002). Beginning teachers must often try to conceal their pain and repress their feelings and deliberations in order to meet the organization's demands and become integrated in the systemic norms of experienced teachers who do not experience the same intense feelings, anxieties, and fears. According to the researchers, all these forms an emotional burden (Bullough & Draper, 2004). In addition, the researcher (Bullough & Draper, 2004) added that the ways of coping with difficulties vary by teacher. In addition, they are personality-dependent and associated with the situations experienced by teachers at the school (Maslovaty, 2000). Moreover, residents' professional coping at the school involves complex processes such as investigation, deliberation, searching, and asking questions. These processes allow them to conduct themselves while handling difficulties and conflicts at work and they are a major element involved in structuring the beginning teacher's professional identity (Beijaard, Verloop & Vermunt, 2003).

The researchers (Weißenfels, Klopp & Perels, 2022) usually identify two main factors that cause burnout among teachers: overload related to high demands in the teacher's work, and a lack of relevant resources. In this context, with the appearance of the Covid-19 pandemic teachers were forced to deal with the system's transition to distance learning and particularly to e-learning. They were found to experience confusion and pressure, as they had to use digital learning materials, prepare lesson plans in a new and unknown format, cope with relevant disciplining of the students, and reach the same achievements expected of them in routine times. In addition, teacher burnout was observed to be more severe and significant during the Covid-19 pandemic, in the emotional, physical, and professional aspects (Zadok-Gurman, Jakobovich, Dvash, Zafrani, Rolmin, Ganz & Lev-Ari, 2021).

Burnout causes teachers to leave the educational system. In addition, the attrition rate among young teachers was found to be higher than in other professions in the free market (Arviv-Elyashiv, 2013). The phenomenon of attrition among novice teachers is a source of concern for the leaders of Israel's educational system. Lehman (2015) presented a variety of studies that attest to the difficulties encountered by teachers when beginning work in teaching, including lack of knowledge and inexperience in managing a class, teaching strategies, adapting study material, methods for evaluation and for dealing with students' parents. Moreover, they find it hard to maintain work relations with more experienced teachers and to receive professional and official support from the management. Teachers experience overload on the job, social disrespect for their work, and low pay (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). In addition, the rate of attrition among novice teachers is high and has reached 21-51% after three years of work – and 51-55% after five years.

Due to these data, the Ministry of Education has taken various steps in the last decade, such as the "teaching residency" program that includes support and guidance of teachers in the first year of teaching. In addition, Bastian et al. (2021) found a strong positive association between residents' perceived quality of training programs and the quality of their teaching, as reflected in the evaluation of their teaching at the school. Namely, the higher the quality of the training program as perceived by the residents, the higher the quality of their teaching. Moreover, researchers (Akiba, LeTendre & Scribner, 2007) noted that the quality of teachers is disputable. They found that a consensus is emerging among educators whereby the quality of teachers is based not only on their training, ongoing education, and accumulated knowledge, but depends also on the organizational climate and school culture, support systems, effective learning, and teachers' views and beliefs, side by side with their professional development and attention to their changing demands and expectations (Cochran-Smith, Stringer Keefe & Carney, 2018).

Once teachers experience burnout they leave the educational system, forming a shortage of teachers. This shortage is a well-known phenomenon in educational systems in Israel and elsewhere and the causes of this shortage are related to three main factors: First, demographic factors, including the natural growth in the number of students, migration and changes in learning rates within the educational system. Second, factors related to educational policy such as increasing or reducing the time allocated to a certain subject, the introduction of a long school day and changes in the size of the classroom. Third, factors related to the number of teachers active in the educational system, such as the number of those beginning teaching studies each year and the perseverance rates of teachers (Weinberger & Donice-Schmidt, 2017).

Hence, Bar-Zohar and Josefsberg Ben-Yehoshua (2020) suggest possible ways of coping. On the macro level they suggest developing a model for reliably predicting the supply of teachers relative to the demand and accordingly enhancing methods for recruiting teachers as well as attractive advertising on social networks and strict screening, recruitment, and training of high-quality teachers who will remain in the system over time. On the micro level they suggest changing how novice teachers are integrated and supported, as well as improving their pay and granting financial incentives that will encourage them and ease their coping with the difficulties of the profession.

2.3 The Residency Year

In Israel, a support program for novice teachers began operating in 2000, initiated by the Division for Teacher Training in the Ministry of Education, designated teaching residency or internship. The program is mandatory for students in academic teaching colleges as of 2000 and for students of teaching in universities as of 2003. The rationale underlying the program derives from the perception of teaching as a profession (Director General circular, 2004). At present, when the stage of teaching induction has been expanded to one year of teaching residency and another two years of support for novice teachers, it can be said that the educational system has recognized the significance of this stage in the professional development of teachers and rendered it official. Novice teachers encounter many challenges, both personal and professional. Therefore, in addition to knowledge and teaching proficiencies in their field of expertise, acquired at the training institution, they must learn to independently identify the organizational culture and routine at the institution they have joined and become integrated in this new expanse. Transforming the theoretical knowledge acquired into practical knowledge that can be applied in the complex daily reality of differential teaching, classroom management, time management, and contact with different audiences such as students, parents, colleagues, professionals, and others, becomes a nearly impossible mission.

In the residency year the novice teacher receives the support of a mentor, which increases the chances of successfully contending with the many challenges of "being a teacher". Professionals from the field take part at present in the support, guidance, and evaluation of the teacher resident. Recognition of the induction stage as a distinct stage in one's professional development has created relevant manners of professional development, including personal accompaniment and a peer workshop. The nature of induction affects the future of teaching professionals and the entire system. The literature on this subject indicates that the stage of induction into the profession has a crucial effect on the continued professional life of teaching professionals, their readiness to persevere, their perceived role, and the nature of consolidating their professional identity.

Side by side with processes of support through mentorship and workshops, evaluation tools have been developed for assessing residents' work, while shaping and summarizing evaluation tools. The valuation is performed by school staff, led by inspectors and principals and with the participation of the mentors. Continuous evaluation and support are needed during the period of the teaching residency and subsequently. The results of the evaluation also serve as a screening tool – receiving a negative evaluation at the end of the residency period bars one from becoming part of the educational system – but the main role of the evaluation is to set standards, structure a culture of evaluation, and generate high quality teachers.

The residency processes are characterized by partnerships: One is the partnership between the intaking institutions, schools and kindergartens, and the training institutions, academic teachers' colleges and universities – the former are responsible for employing the residents, absorbing them, mentoring, and evaluation, while the latter are responsible for workshops, training the mentors, and training the supervisors. Another partnership is between the head office of the Ministry of Education, the division for training educational staff, the Department of Internship, and the management of the Ministry of Education's districts, general and subject-specific inspectors, principals, mentors, headed by the district and age-specific inspectors. This partnership generates suitable connections for the benefit of the residents and of the educational system.

The rationale of holding a residency year derives from the conception that the professional structure includes theoretical academic training and practical training. Three components make it possible to realize this rationale: paid

work at the school, participating in group support processes with personal accompaniment, and undergoing evaluation procedures. The resident's integration in the professional world depends not only on the theoretical and practical training but rather also in the conditions of induction into the field and the support provided by the educational system. According to this outlook, the residency is intended to serve as a bridge between the two systems, and at the end of this period the teacher is equipped not only with an academic degree and a teacher's license but rather also with a formal license to practice the profession (Loughran, 2009).

The purposes of the residency year include helping the resident shape professional courses of action, giving the resident the possibility of experiencing teaching in "real time" while receiving professional, social, and emotional support, and giving the system tools through which, the novice teacher will be evaluated in order to award a teacher's license. The residency program is activated by two main entities within the educational system: the teacher training system and the system that employs the teacher. To provide a response for implementing the program and attaining its goals, two systems were constructed for support and evaluation – personal mentorship and the internship workshop. The personal mentorship is provided by a mentoring teacher from the school. This teacher accompanies the resident at the school with the purpose of helping the resident become integrated in a specific organizational culture while providing personal, social, emotional, and professional support. The internship workshop that takes place at the training institution helps the resident with the socialization process from a theoretical and practical aspect.

A study that examined the period of transition from the residency year to the two following years (Fenwick, 2011) presented a topic of much significance as part of the teacher training: a process of change in the academic curriculum that focuses on strengthening the awareness and enhancing the skills of the teaching trainees towards their future functioning as professionals in the educational institutions. In addition, Hofman and Niderland (2012) claim that two of the elements identified as positively or negatively affecting the quality of the first years as teachers are the emotional dimension and that of social relations: the autonomy granted to the teacher, the school, and the mentor.

2.4 The Internship Workshops

Beginning from the 1999/2000 school year, graduates of university teaching programs are required to complete a residency year and to participate in an accompanying workshop throughout their first year as teachers. In Israel, the stage of induction into the teaching profession takes three years: one year of a teaching residency (internship) and the following two first years of work. A structured course of accompaniment and evaluation processes at this stage can allow better entrance to the system.

The workshop takes place in a small group of peers and is defined as a support workshop. As part of the resident's work at the school, he or she are assigned a mentor from the discipline for which they were trained. Throughout the year, the resident will be subjected to two evaluation processes: a shaping evaluation – in the middle of the school year, and a summary evaluation at the end of the school year by a school evaluation committee. In the workshop, a learning community of peers in a supportive environment is expected to emerge, contributing to the development of a professional self-image among the peer group (Rippon & Martin, 2006).

The evaluation system focuses on a shaping evaluation that gives feedback to the beginning teacher in order to help shape his or her teaching techniques. In contrast, the summary evaluation system is the basis for the decision whether to award the novice a teacher's license. This process is supposed to involve various professionals in the school, in addition to the inspector. Representatives of the training institution do not participate in the evaluation activities. The internship workshop includes a process of accompanying beginner teachers and a structured course of professional development that allow better induction into the educational system. This process may reduce attrition among good quality teaching staff, help shape their professional identity, and build commitment to the teaching profession with all its aspects (Zilbershtrom, 2012; Nordvik, Grimsaeth & Bergsvik, 2008).

2.4.1 The Purposes of the Internship Workshop

(1) To link the theoretical knowledge taught in the teacher training program to the daily practice of the teacher resident at the school.

(2) To expand the resident's perspective on various situations involved in the educational work (Director General circulars and ethical dilemmas).

(3) To help beginner teachers examine their experiences in the field through a personal reflective lens before a peer group and accompanied by a professional instructor.

2.5 The Bridge between Theory and Practice

The link between theory and practice is a major foundation of teacher training. This foundation is anchored in the reality of pre-service teachers, who arrive at the training programs with rich academic experience and lengthy observation of teachers at the school. Therefore, it is important to give theory a vital place in their training and to maintain pedagogic innovativeness in the teacher training program. In addition, room should be given for emotions and for consolidating the identity of novice teachers according to the place, time, and circumstances in which they must reach daily practical decisions (Rust, 2017). Hence, the training of future teachers must be adapted to allow them to deal with the huge challenges involved, whether during their studies or in the professional training. This training should include relevant cognitive skills, basic knowledge in ecological systems, understanding global processes, and the ability to apply knowledge to the demands of the developing reality, as well as the ability to change their perspective and enhance special personal and social skills, such as communication and cooperation, the ability to empathize, and others. It has been found that most teachers do not manage to apply their personal social skills in the classroom as they were not trained to do so. Therefore, this is a critical need, as teachers are slated for key roles in implementing future development goals in our current reality (Christoforatou, 2021).

2.6 Simulation as a Guidance Tool

The simulation makes it possible to experience conflictual situations that simulate actual circumstances in order to advance solutions in a safe environment by reconstructing "real situations" and acquiring interpersonal communication skills. Many disciplines utilize simulations as a tool for learning, mainly in the medical sciences, where it has been scientifically proven that the simulation tool helps develop effective professionals, in the understanding that conflictual situations are common in teaching-learning situations and that these situations can be resolved by means of communication skills (Eisenhammer, 2014). In the field of education, various studies indicate that the teacher's capability is the factor that most influences students' learning (Kaufman & Ireland, 2016). In order to contend with different groups of students the teacher should have pedagogic and professional knowledge, teaching capabilities, caring and supportive approaches, professionalism, and management and planning skills. However, reality-based models that assess teachers' effectiveness indicate insufficient training, with an emphasis on practical experiencing. In this context, the simulation is a simple but accurate tool that allows the participant to experience conflictual situations, reach decisions and act, examine the outcomes, and change one's behavior in a safe and protected environment (Darling-Hammond, 2019; Amrein-Beardsley, Haertel & Rothstein, 2012).

The professional literature indicates the contribution of simulations to education throughout the sequence of training and professional development. Beginning from the stage of screening candidates for teaching and ending with improving teaching skills and class management by coaching, through the development of one's professional identity and preparing teachers to deal with the future challenges of teaching. The simulation allows reexamination of different situations via the debriefing and reflection carried out after the experiencing, as well as providing evaluative feedback (Ireland & Kaufman, 2016).

Simulations simulate situations in work environments and interpersonal interactions. These simulations are efficient for training teachers and for evaluation. They include a scenario/role playing facing a trained actor who embodies standard figures and allows the teacher resident to experience situations and to solve problems that reflect reality. The simulation workshops afford experiential and experience-based learning that allow all workshop participants to undergo the experiencing and become familiar with how they demonstrate these skills in moments of conflict. This learning constitutes a bridge between the theoretical learning and the practical learning (Gewurtz, Coman, Dhillon, Jung, & Solomon, 2016). The purposes of the experiencing-based learning are to help learners acquire capabilities that involve combining their acquired knowledge and their skills, as well as improving their performance by solving problems using the guidance, instruction, and supervision of instructors.

According to the researchers (Loewen, Legal, Gamble, Shah, Tkachuk & Zed, 2017) the learning process in the simulations is based on the following principles: independent adult learning, goal-oriented and internally motivated. The interpretation and the reflection help carry out the most effective learning when applied in practice. Interactions between learners and cognitive processes support the learning, as it is active and requires involvement. David Kolb (1984) proposed the experiential learning cycle model, with its four different stages.
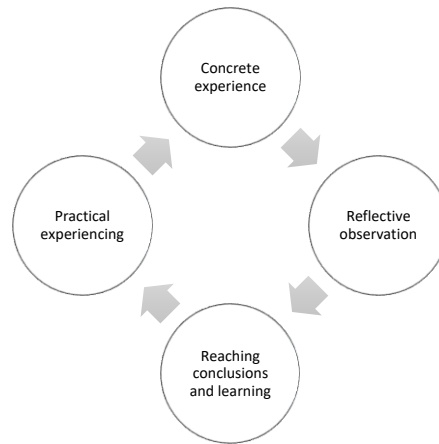
Figure 1. Kolb's experiential learning cycle (McLeod, 2013, p. 1)

According to this model (Figure 1) it is possible to join the experiential learning cycle at any stage, as part of the integrative learning process, where each of the stages is linked to the next.

The purposes of simulations in education are varied, for example: developing interpersonal communication skills and improving them; developing social-emotional learning skills and improving them; coping with routine conflict situations in the school environment; developing respectful and inclusive interpersonal discourse skills; analyzing the association between the hidden inner world of the educator (personal attitudes, beliefs, worldviews, feelings) and automatic behavior in stressful situations as a basis for recognizing the need to solve the purposes of change and improvement; developing personal and professional skills for acting in a heterogeneous and multicultural society; creating an organizational culture and language (Eisenhammer, 2014; Cruz & Patternson, 2005). The simulations allow training teachers for work in a heterogeneous and multicultural society. In addition, the simulations allow decision making in a safe environment, help develop standards of caring, reduce wrong behaviors among colleagues, and help develop an empathetic attitude (Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2013).

The workshops at the simulation centers allow experiencing conflictual situations facing professional actors who play the role of the "other" in the situation. The experiencing is videotaped and combines debriefing guided by an expert facilitator. In addition, the debriefing includes receiving feedback from the other participants and from the actors and allows personal reflection in a supportive and safe environment. The professional actors are trained to fulfill the role of teachers, students, parents, and school principals and they have been trained to play a character in an authentic encounter with the participants based on scenarios that simulate relevant cases from the participants' world of teaching. In addition, the simulation allows participation in a meaningful reality-simulating learning experience, and it helps the participants make meaning, develop critical thinking skills, and form the interpersonal communication and cultural skills necessary for the 21st century work environment (Eisenhammer et al., 2010).

2.7 The Reflective Discourse and the Post-simulation Debriefing

Teacher residents are often scared and frustrated by the complexities and challenges posed by the initial encounter with teaching, so reflective discourse on the teaching practice, characteristic of the discourse in the workshops, mentoring, and accompaniment, are the main tools for development at the induction stage. Eisenhammer, Iluz, and Yavlon (2022) claimed that conversation is the major device for sharing ideas, values, teaching techniques, and for their analysis. Through critical conversations, teacher residents and novice teachers can develop and hone ways of learning how to teach and learn. The type of conversation that promotes learning differs from teachers' regular conversations that are replete with personal anecdotes and opinions, determined by norms of courtesy and consensus. Professional discussion means rich descriptions of actual practice, attention to testimonies, and examining alternate interpretations and various possibilities. When teachers learn to talk about teaching in specific and structured ways and ask themselves and others hard questions, they create new understandings and build a new professional culture. In time, they develop a deeper feeling of themselves as practical intellectuals, members who contribute to the profession, and partners in improving teaching and learning.

The debriefing is a social experience where people talk to each and with those around them purposefully in order to reflect on what they did in the simulation. The testimonies are analyzed and used to determine courses of action in other tasks or exercises. The debriefing has educational and operative goals. Rudolph, Simon, Dufresne, and Raemer

(2006) claim that the role of the debriefing after experiencing the simulation is to generate shaping evaluations of the participants. To create the context of the learning and to transform the debriefing into a positive insight it is necessary to explain the process, to generate a sense of confidence that will allow the participants to expose themselves and take risks, to give the group the explicit feeling that they are experts and knowledgeable in their job and that they can do well. The participant speaks about his or her experience and expresses his feelings and the facilitator receives an initial glance of what most moved or bothered the participant. The facilitator is attentive to the participant's words. Then, the facilitator and the participant analyze the participant's conduct and discuss it to identify the disparity between the ideal and the actual (using the videotaped documentation). The facilitator encourages group discourse on this disparity, a discourse that serves as the basis for optimal learning by the participants.

The purposes of the post-simulation debriefing (Rudolph et al., 2008): To air their feelings after the experiencing, the residents relate their experiences and express their feelings. To perform observation, analysis, and reflection – as part of the scenario the workshop participants watch a section of the experiencing as captured on video, together with the facilitator. They analyze the situation and perform group reflection and personal reflection on identifying personal and interpersonal skills and capabilities manifested in the simulation interaction. Eisenhammer, Iluz and Yavlon (2022) found that the simulation helps considerably improve residents' sense of self-efficacy in their first year of teaching in the educational system, while among pre-service teachers' simulations were indeed found to improve their self-efficacy, but less than among teacher residents.

The simulation also helps outline a pathway for pre-service teachers, novice teachers, and educators throughout their entire professional course, with regard to assimilating values and ethical norms, proper behaviors, and insights that should be cultivated among learners in order to shape their moral character. The simulation allows practicing how to contend with professional dilemmas related to values, such as the value of the student's dignity and the lack of discrimination and bias, coping with ethical issues, and examining the professional behavior of education and teaching practitioners (Davidoff & Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2019; Rana, 2022).

2.8 Use of the Simulation in a Teacher Training Program – a Case Study

The simulation center for interpersonal skills collaborates with the internship workshop for training educators to improve interpersonal communication, develop efficacy and self-confidence, improve professional skills, reduce anxiety in stressful situations, increase motivation, and train residents to reach decisions in real time. The contents of the simulation scenarios within the workshop are varied: beginning from dilemmas involving class management, handling extreme incidents at the school, dealing with a principal/teacher/ mentor/subject coordinator versus teaching staff, students, parents, and ending with dealing with ethical challenges, dilemmas, and various issues.

Continuous practicing of teaching practices helps build teacher resident self-confidence and self-esteem, and the simulation is a facilitating tool. In addition, the facilitator of the simulation workshop has a major role in providing feedback to participants and accompanying the reflective process, while developing the consciousness of a professional educator among teacher residents. Moreover, simulation-based learning also helps develop positive attitudes among residents and creates a positive climate in the classroom, as the residents feel that they have arrived at the teaching situation well prepared. The positive attitude results from a strong sense of self-esteem, a positive experience as teachers while experiencing the simulation, development of professional self-efficacy, and self-confidence. These processes prepare the residents to deal with the challenges of teaching when entering the educational system as novice teachers. Residents noted the need to impart practical teaching experience even before beginning to teach in class (Presnilla-Espada, 2014). Therefore, it is extremely important to integrate simulation-based learning in programs for training teachers and in the internship workshop.

2.9 Group Cohesion in the Workshop

Po and Salant (2010) analyzed accompaniment and induction programs throughout the world (Australia, Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, and the US) and found that the most successful programs impart to novice teachers within the system cooperation, reflective discourse, and "softer" acclimatizing to the profession. Carter (2012) followed induction processes of beginning teachers to their role in Australia, while examining the relationship between the teacher training academic institution, the community, and the school. Her main find is that only a reciprocal relationship based on trust between the partners in the workshop and mutual openness and a desire to learn can ensure success.

3. Research Methods

The current study utilized a mixed methodology: quantitative and qualitative. We explored teachers' views on the contribution of the simulations to the internship workshop and group cohesion in the workshop – namely, the forces

that influence group members to remain. Group cohesion has two dimensions: interpersonal cohesion – cohesion stemming from how much the group members like each other, and task-oriented cohesion – cohesion stemming from how much membership in the group helps attain goals. In addition, the impact of the workshop on social and personal aspects of the participants was explored.

In the qualitative part of the study, interviews were held with teachers in their residency year who were participating in an internship workshop. The purpose of the interviews was to explore the contribution of the simulations in the workshop, the sense of professional development, and their mental and practical preparation in the teaching training.

3.1 The Research Tools

The study included two questionnaires and an interview with teachers in their first year of residency for working in teaching:

3.1.1 Group Cohesion Questionnaire

Group cohesion was explored with the relevant scale in the Therapeutic Factors Inventory (MacNair-Semands & Lese, 2000). The original questionnaire contains 99 items, nine for each of the 11 therapeutic factors proposed by Yalom and Crouch (1990). The Group Cohesion Scale (GCS), used in the current study, relates t one of these therapeutic factors. This scale includes the feelings of the group members regarding belonging, the sense of acceptance, trust between the group members, participant-facilitator trust, and cooperation in the group. Responses to the items are given on a scale of 1 to 6, with 1 noting a perceived lack of group cohesion (not at all) and 6 high perceived group cohesion. The internal reliability of the questionnaire is 94.2. Structure validity was explored compared to Yalom's therapeutic factors (Yalom, 1995). The associations ranged from 40.2 to 61.2 and a rise in cohesion scores was found with the development of the group process, as predicted by the theory (Burlingame, Fuhriman & Johnson, 2001).

3.1.2 Self-functioning Evaluation Questionnaire

This questionnaire examined residents' evaluation of their own functioning in a workshop. Since the study related to the manner and experience of group learning by the residents, unlike a feedback questionnaire administered at the end of a course or workshop, the main focus was on the perception of residents' functioning in the workshop. The assumption underlying the choice of this questionnaire was that there are similarities between the processes in a counseling group and in a support group such as the internship workshop. Hill and O'Brien (1999) developed a tool for measuring experiences of participating in individual therapy. The questionnaire included 11 items that represent the categories: three items explored resistance; two items explored cognitive inquiry; two items explored emotional inquiry; two items explored insights; and two items explored behavior change. The residents ranked the items on a 6-point scale (1 – lowest evaluated contribution, 6 – highest evaluated contribution).

3.1.3 In-depth Interview with Teacher Residents

The residents were asked: To what degree does the workshop help you analyze your difficulties? What is your response to these difficulties within your work at the school? To what degree does the workshop help improve your personal feelings experienced when working at the school? To what degree did your participation in the workshop help change your behavior patterns when working at the school? Did integration of the simulations in the workshop provide you with effective tools?

3.2 Research Procedure

The quantitative questionnaires were sent online to the teachers in the internship workshop. After data collection and analysis by the research team, the compatibility between the interviews and the quantitative findings was examined for the purpose of effective and holistic analysis of the study.

3.3 Research Questions

(1) What are the views of teacher residents regarding the degree of social cohesion in the internship workshop and the impact of the workshop on aspects of the residents' self-functioning on the social-personal dimension?

(2) What are the views of teacher residents on the evaluation of their self-functioning in the workshop?

(3) What are the views of teacher residents on integrating simulations in the workshop?

The research population: Teachers in their first teaching residency year who were participating in the internship workshop held during their first year of work at the school. Some of the workshop sessions are held face-to-face at the simulations center and some are online group sessions. The workshop is held once every two weeks and consists of 60 annual hours (N=41).

3.4 Research Findings

3.4.1 Evaluation of the Internship Workshop

The first research question related to residents' views on the degree of social cohesion in the workshop and the impact of the internship workshop on social and personal aspects pertaining to them. The residents reported high perceived cohesion and belonging among the workshop participants.

Table 1. The degree of social cohesion in the workshop

To what degree do you feel that you currently have enough knowledge in the following areas? Not at all=1 to absolutely=7		
	Mean	SD
Although others may disagree with me at times, I feel accepted	6.10	1.26
We collaborate and work together as a group	5.57	1.53
I feel accepted by the group	5.81	1.47
The group members feel distrust for each other	5.05	2.11
I feel a sense of belonging to the group	5.43	1.72
I feel good about being part of the group	5.86	1.56
The group members do not display caring for each other*	5.90	1.48
We trust each other in the group	5.76	1.09
Despite our disagreements, I feel safe in the group	6.19	1.29
Total	5.741	1.50

In summary, regarding the measure of social cohesion in the workshop, the teacher residents reported despite the disagreements between the residents they feel safe in the internship group and accepted by the group. They feel moderately good about being part of the group and display caring for each other and trust each other. In addition, they feel less cohesion in the group, manifested in less collaborating and working together as a group. Overall, the teachers reported a high level of social cohesion in the internship workshop.

3.4.2 Evaluation of Self-functioning when Participating in the Workshop

Regarding the five measures that explored behaviors in the internship workshop, the measure of collaboration was found to be the highest, followed by personal sharing. Regarding the measure of cognitive inquiry residents were found to analyze the difficulties and respond to them as part of their work at the school to a high degree. Regarding the measure of emotional inquiry, residents assessed their feelings when coping with dilemmas. Regarding the measure of insight, the workshop helps teacher residents understand their behavior as teachers, such that in the measure of behavior change, after participating in the workshop changes were found in their behavior patterns as part of their work at the school (Table 2).

Table 2. Evaluation of self-functioning when participating in the workshop

	To what degree do you feel that you currently have enough knowledge in the following areas? Does not describe me at all=1 to describes me very well=6		
		Mean	SD
Behaviors in the workshop: personal sharing	To what degree did you share with the group your difficulties in your work at the school?	4.60	1.46
Behaviors in the workshop: cooperation	To what degree did the simulation workshops with actors help you with difficulties you had in your work at the school?	4.95	1.46
	Do you define yourself as an active participant in the internship workshop?	5.05	1.02
Behaviors in the workshop: resistance	Do you have reservations about the contribution of the workshop in the training process?	3.33	1.71
Cognitive inquiry	To what degree do you rationally analyze the difficulties and your response to them in your work at the school?	5.24	0.77
	To what degree does the workshop help you analyze the difficulties and your response to them in your work at the school?	4.95	1.16
Emotional inquiry	To what degree do you examine your feelings related to the difficulties and dilemmas on which you must decide in your work at the school?	4.95	0.97
	To what degree does the workshop help you regarding the personal feelings you experience in your work at the school?	4.81	1.25
Insight	To what degree does the workshop help you understand your behaviors as a teacher in your work at the school?	5.00	0.95
	To what degree does the workshop help you understand your conduct in interpersonal relations within the workshop group?	4.71	1.19
Behavior change	To what degree do you feel a change in your behavior patterns in your work at the school?	4.43	1.53
	To what degree did your participation in the workshop contribute to a change in behavior patterns in your work at the school?	4.38	1.46

Of the three measures of behavior in the workshop, active participation was found to be the highest, followed by sharing difficulties, and finally no reservations were found regarding the contribution of the workshop.

Of the three measures of the president's personal functioning in the workshop, the measure of cognitive inquiry was found to be the highest, followed by emotional inquiry, and finally the process of change in the president's behavior following participation in the workshop.

In the measure of insights regarding the contribution of the workshop, the workshop was found to affect the residents' understanding of their behavior at the school, while it affected the understanding of the president's personal conduct in the workshop to a lesser degree.

3.4.3 Qualitative Analysis of the Residents in the Internship Workshop

To examine the residents' views on the contribution of the workshop, interviews were held with them. Qualitative analysis of the interviews showed that most residents reported that the workshop constitutes a "safe and protected place" for them. Integration of the simulations in the workshop allowed them to receive different outlooks on solutions for the dilemmas they experience at the school. The discussion at the conclusion of the simulation gave them practical tools for dealing with challenges and conflictual situations when these occur at the school, with the aim of not "acting on impulse" but rather seeing the full range of possible solutions to the dilemma in the

organizational system and in Director General circulars. The residents also noted that personal sharing by the residents in the workshop strengthens their personal resilience in further work at the school, in the calm and pleasant atmosphere of the workshop. The following are the main points that arose in the interviews conducted with the residents after conclusion of the workshop:

(1) Do you have Reservations Regarding the Contribution of the Workshop to the Training Process?

"There are no reservations… I would appreciate more personal sessions instead of the group sessions, as there I felt that I received a better response… In the workshop we received tools for dealing with various difficulties at work… Most of the time in the workshop is devoted to recurring questions on procedural matters… helped understand the system and cope within it…". "The workshop provides the resident with support. A safe place to ask questions, and it provides a response to the teacher's primary needs…".

(2) To what Degree does the Workshop help you Analyze Difficulties and your Response to them in your Work at the School?

"I deliberated considerably between [joining] the Teachers' Organization and the Teachers' Association. In the workshop we received an explanation about both and then I reached a decision to join the [Teachers'] Organization… At the workshop we received tools to deal with everyday issues [involved in] real experiences [with] the students".

"Events related by the participants were timely. The simulations – we experienced dealing with students' difficulties. For example, deliberations that we all share, challenges and situations raised in the workshop simulations… The instructor helped me analyze situations and difficulties that arose during the year".

(3) To what Degree does the Workshop help you Examine your Personal Feelings in your Work at the School?

"Not to act on impulse but rather rationally in situations with students and parents… I am undergoing a tough and stressful period in my work at the school and the support by the students [peers] and by the facilitator in the workshop gives me the strength to continue my work as a teacher because it's a job with meaning… proportions when coping with students… consultations and direction".

(4) To what Degree did your Participation in the Workshop help Change the Behavior Patterns in your Work at the School?

"I took more initiative in matters versus the management… I learned a lot from examples in the workshop and from the simulations… it helped understand the role of the teacher… The instructor gave an example of entering the classroom, which I implemented".

(5) Points for Improvement in the Internship Workshop

"More simulation sessions… more personal sessions, expanding the response and professional knowledge to non-mainstream settings… more exercises, more peer workshop, more dilemmas, less questions about forms… more tools for classroom management".

(6) Points for Preservation in the Internship Workshop

"Many explanations and room for sharing, a respectful and pleasant attitude, the simulations are excellent and helpful… the simulations, true concern and for each student… an excellent facilitator with attention and caring for the students… lectures by representatives of the Histadrut, dilemmas and their analysis… the atmosphere is pleasant, and the feeling is that the facilitator is truly with us and we are important for her! Facilitation that combines simulations, unrestrained sharing by the group members… sharing is very helpful… the information, the discussions and simulations".

(7) What did you Enjoy the most in the Internship Workshop?

"The simulations, the discourse and the sharing among the group members and the facilitator… real examples from the daily life of the teachers, acquiring knowledge and tools in order to cope and improve… the patience of the instructor and answers to the technical questions, the simulations, the patience and personal attitude of the course facilitator. She always gave the feeling that no matter what we ask, it is okay and legitimate, a pleasant, calm atmosphere, openness to the need to share. Doing the workshop with her is fun, availability and the desire to help!"

4. Conclusion and Discussion

The aim of the internship workshop is to achieve three main goals: 1. To help the residents process their experiences as beginning teachers and generate more general insights, while developing the ability to reflect on their work; 2. To serve as a support group for beginning teachers: Beginning teachers sharing their difficulties with their peers may

discover that they are not outstanding and that their peers have similar problems, and thus reap benefits and learn from the solutions of their colleagues. In this way, the facilitator will no longer be the exclusive source for learning; 3. To impart to beginner teachers' techniques, tools, and skills for processing events in their work after they occur and during their occurrence and to help them choose ways of coping according to their personality, outlook, and personal and professional style. The workshop has a reflective nature and in it teacher residents can raise topics and dilemmas from their work at the school, while interacting with peer residents. The workshop allows systematic treatment of pedagogic-didactic, organizational, and administrative events, while bridging between practice and theory in an empathic and supportive setting oriented towards the professional development of the beginning teacher (Lazovsky & Zeiger, 2004).

The simulations with actors in the workshop allow the residents to achieve these three goals. It is easy for the residents to process their experiences as beginner teachers in a cohesive workshop and to produce from them more general insights on the social-personal dimension as well, while developing the ability to reflect on their work while understanding the school organizational structure and the decision-making process at the school. The workshop serves as a support group, as the group is a safe and cohesive place. When residents share their difficulties with their peers they may discover that they are not outstanding and that their peers have similar problems. This understanding reduces pressure and anxiety. In addition, they can learn from solutions that their peers found for dilemmas. Furthermore, the facilitator and the peers impart different ways of solving the dilemmas and challenges in their work within the ethical rules and Director General circulars published by the Ministry of Education and thus residents increase their pedagogic tools when coping with identical situations at the school. Also, at the end of the simulation all members of the workshop discuss the interpersonal skills with the aim of optimally processing the events. The facilitator, the peers, and the actors hep choose ways of dealing with resolving the dilemma according to their personality, outlook, and personal and professional style.

The first research question related to the views of the teacher residents on the degree of cohesion in the internship workshop and the impact of the workshop on their social and personal aspects. As reported by the teachers, it was found that despite the disagreement between the residents they feel safe and accepted in the internship group. They feel moderately good about being part of the group and they display caring towards each other and trust each other. They feel less cooperation and shared work as a group.

To the second research question on the aspect of personal functioning within the experiencing, which includes cognitive inquiry, emotional inquiry, and the change in the participant's behavior, the residents reported considerable influence on their functioning. Nonetheless, the residents reported high understanding of their behavior as teachers and of their interpersonal conduct in the group following the workshop. Regarding the measure of behavior in the workshop, the residents reported a high degree of active participation and sharing difficulties.

Regarding the third research question, in the qualitative analysis the residents noted the significance of two processes that occurred concurrently in a cohesive and empathic group: The first process is dealing with difficulties, challenges, and dilemmas that arose in the workshop by means of simulations with actors and the importance of the debriefing and discussion following participation in the simulation. In all interviews the residents emphasized the importance of having a facilitator who respects their opinion, is empathic and attentive. The second process is the bureaucratic process: forms, mid-point evaluation and final evaluation, belonging to teacher associations, adequate pay, and so on.

In the first year of teaching, the pedagogic academic instructor serves as an emotional and pedagogic anchor. In addition, during the internship workshop many challenges, difficulties, and dilemmas encountered by the resident at the school arise, sometimes general that are relevant for all residents and sometimes personal. Therefore, the training institution must include in the internship workshops authentic challenges from the school routine. This is done through simulations with actors. In addition, a need arose for more hours of support and accompaniment beyond those of the inclusive workshop. In these additional hours the resident will receive focused help for pedagogic and organizational hardships encountered in the first year at the school. Moreover, it is desirable to construct a digital tool in order to form a sharing and cohesive group where residents share questions/insights in the workshop. This tool will allow availability and a rapid response to the participants; it will constitute a tool for professional development, where job offers, conferences, and professional development will be publicized, as well as serving as an address for coping with the complicated Ministry of Education bureaucracy.

The quality of teaching is an outcome of the teacher's pedagogic, disciplinary, and personal skills, as well as how they are realized in the act of teaching, and it is also the most significant element for the future success of teachers in the educational system (Barber & Mourshed, 2007). To enhance the achievements of the Ministry of Education, high quality candidates with suitable cognitive and behavioral skills must be attracted to the system, providing them with

optimal training and authentically accompanying them in their further course as teachers through simulations experienced at the school.

In this context, the policy of the Ministry of Education regarding investing considerable funds in simulation centers is very important, as it serves as a tool for teacher training throughout all stages of the teacher's professional development. It allows residents to experience situations that simulate the school reality, reach decisions and act, examine the outcomes, and change one's behavior in a safe and controlled environment. The simulation helps deal with conflict situations and improve interpersonal communication skills. Moreover, the simulation in education focuses not only on extreme situations, but rather on routine situations in the school environment (Eisenhammer, Iluz, & Yablon, 2022). Therefore, the purpose of the simulation in education is to reduce errors in teaching and learning and boost teachers' emotional resilience by improving social-emotional learning skills on the personal level, the class level, and the school level. Hence, integrating simulations in internship workshops constitutes a bridge between theory and practice at the school and enhances the resident's personal dimension.

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