PRESERVICE LITERATURE TEACHERS' INSIGHTS GAINED FROM ONLINE CLINICAL SIMULATION WITHIN DISCIPLINARY TRAINING

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Abstract

Clinical simulations are an effective tool for coping with complex professional situations. With the integration of clinical simulations into teacher education for pedagogical training and following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the human-based clinical simulations were adapted for online use. This case study concerns preservice literature teachers who participated in an online clinical simulation as part of their discipline-specific training. The goal was to understand how literature preservice teachers (PSTs) perceived the use of simulation-based learning (SBL) within their discipline-specific training, and specifically to examine the insights gained from the (SBL) experience pertaining to the process of learning and teaching literature. Three data collection tools, namely, reflections, observations, and focus groups, were used to examine the perceptions of 98 literature PSTs. The data analysis yielded three types of perceived gains: (1) The strengthening of PSTs' discipline-specific involvement (2) The formulation of a professional understanding of learning and teaching processes related to future discipline-specific teaching (3) Ways to promote meaningful in-class literary discussions. The study expands the field of clinical simulation use in teacher education to include discipline-specific gains, by demonstrating the interplay between the world of simulation and the world of literature.

Keywords: Simulation-based learning, clinical simulations, online simulations, teacher education, literature studies, learning-teaching processes

1.   INTRODUCTION

Clinical simulation, a particular model of simulation-based learning (SBL), involves the video recording of a simulated professional scenario enacted by a professional actor and a learner. In recent decades, the *clinical* simulation model has proved to be particularly effective in the field of teacher education (TE). The integration of this model corresponds to the current trend in curriculum design (Zhu et al., 2021), which emphasizes social, cognitive, and emotional engagement (Kasperski & Crispel, 2021).

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the human-based clinical simulations had to be adapted to an online platform; to this end, the online clinical simulation model was developed (Frei-Landau & Levin, 2022). To date, however, clinical simulations in TE have been applied solely in pedagogy courses. In contrast, the current study aimed to examine the use of online clinical simulations in discipline-specific courses in TE. To this end, clinical simulations were introduced into the training of preservice teachers (PSTs) of literature. The objective of the current study was to examine literature PSTs' insights regarding their present discipline-specific learning and future teaching, revealed as a result of their participation in SBL. Thus, the research question that guided the study was: How do literature PSTs perceive the use of SBL within their discipline-specific training? This information, in turn, may help experts tailor the design of scenarios intended for this population of PSTs.

1.1 Theoretical framework

1.1.1   *Reading as a dialogue: conceptualization of the encounter with self and other*

The literary text is part of a communicative interaction that takes the form of a dialogue with the reader (Halliday, 1985). Langer (1990, 1995) considered the process of comprehending literary texts and claimed that in the course of the reading process, the reader constructs a personal version of the textual world, which then becomes part of the reader's comprehensive textual world, constructed through previous reading experiences. According to Langer's studies, the reading of a literary text is a dynamic process, in which the reader's attitudes towards the text change throughout the reading experience. Moreover, it is through this shifting relationship that the reader is able to construct the meaning and significance of the literary text (Langer, 1990).

Studies in Scandinavian literature have extended the hermeneutic perspective of Bildung, linking the encounter with "the other" to the development of empathy (Höglund & Rørbech, 2021). The encounter with the other takes place through the interpretive endeavor involving the "textual other" (i.e., -the fictional character) and the "extratextual other" (i.e., an actual human person) (Ben-Pazi, 2012). The very possibility of a dialogue based on awareness of the other creates a polyphony and openness within the literary, sociocultural space (Bakhtin, 1981). A contemporary

study that examined preservice literature teachers' interactions with literary fictional characters and with other humans, revealed a variety of ways to consider the textual other, such as by filling in the textual gaps, interpreting symbols, and explicitly examining emotions (Elkad-Lehman & Poyas, 2020). In this sense, literature teaching is based on "narrative empathy," which is defined as follows: "The sharing of feeling and perspective-taking induced by reading, viewing, hearing, or imagining narratives of another's situation and condition" (Keen, 2013, 1).

1.1.2   *The learner's involvement as a key factor in the learning and teaching processes*

Although the learner's engagement is a multifaceted and dynamic construct, which includes behavioral, social, and cognitive elements (Sinha et al., 2015), it manifests as a key factor in the learning and teaching processes (Bryson & Hand, 2007). Bovill et al. (2011) demonstrated that learner involvement increased motivation, sense of relevance, and responsibility for learning. The international assessment and research project titled Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) measures reading achievements at the fourth-grade level, as well as school and teacher practices related to instruction. The findings of a 2016 PIRLS study conducted among primary school students from 50 different countries revealed that in all of the countries, teaching that encouraged learners' engagement in the lessons was associated with significantly higher learner achievements (PIRLS, 2016). Other studies found that employing teaching methods that challenged the learners' abilities similarly led to higher academic achievements (Echazarra et al., 2016).

Given that teachers serve as the primary agent applying the curriculum, they have the greatest influence not only on the classroom environment but also on the learners' achievements (Madondo, 2021). It should be noted that while studies in TE demonstrated that the relationship between literature teachers' training and their students' achievements is complex and not straight-forward (Goldhaber et al., 2013; Harris & Sass, 2011), literature teachers, nevertheless, like all teachers, play a primary role in shaping the learning process. The research literature has demonstrated the importance of the teacher's image, attitudes, and selected pedagogies used in the classroom, and their effect on the learners' academic and emotional conceptualizations, as well as on their perceptions of academic self-efficacy (Gundogdu & Silman, 2007). The teaching methods used likewise have cognitive and emotional implications that can influence learners' academic achievements, their engagement in the lesson and class participation, their interest in the content studied, their motivation to study, and the academic outcomes (Ulug et al., 2011). Trowler (2010) similarly found that student-focused pedagogical approaches, such as reflective activities through which students actively construct knowledge, were likely to promote learner engagement.

Finally, it was found that creating the conditions that nurture learners' involvement is a core issue not only in schools but also in higher education (Bowden et al.,

2021). In the field of TE, PSTs, first of all, need to understand the effect of learner involvement on academic achievements, and second, to understand how they, as future teachers, are able to encourage learners' involvement in the learning process.

1.1.3   SBL in the field of teaching education

One major type of learning experience that can have a strong impact on PSTs' future teaching is that of SBL. SBL is a learning strategy that supports the efforts of educators to prepare students for practice (Hotchkiss et al., 2002). Specifically, simulations were used to allow trainees in various fields to practice coping with complex scenarios that are typically encountered in their professional field of choice (Chernikova et al., 2020). In recent decades, the field of SBL has gained momentum in various fields of higher education and training, particularly in the field of TE (Levin & Flavian, 2020; Theelen et al., 2019).

The term "simulation" has many uses; however, it is important that researchers employ a shared terminology (McGarr, 2020). Some consider role-playing to be a simulation of a realistic situation; however, some oppose this definition, as they wish to distinguish between simulation and "pretending" (Tufford et al., 2018). Accordingly, a simulation must consist of a conflict-related interaction.

There are currently different types of simulations in use in TE (Frei-Landau & Levin, 2022). The model titled "the clinical simulation model" was originally used in the field of healthcare education (hence the name "clinical"). Dotger (2013), who made adjustments for using it in the field of TE, also coined the term. This model involves an interaction between a volunteer participant (a PST or learner) with a human actor (rather than a digital figure or avatar, as in other models). The participation of a human actor increases both engagement and authenticity during the SBL experience (Chernikova et al., 2020). The professional actor reacts to the learner in "real-time," based on the volunteer's input (Spencer et al., 2019). The advantage of involving professional actors in simulations is their ability to play the role while still maintaining a conscious distance, which enables them to give especially valuable feedback to the learners about the effects of their words and actions (Levin, 2022).

Despite the variety of models used in TE, to date, all SBL-related research in TE has focused on using SBL to advance PSTs' learning of pedagogy. This research has demonstrated that SBL achieves this specifically by improving PSTs' interpersonal communication and socioemotional learning skills (Kasperski & Crispel, 2021) and improving their conflict-management abilities (Yablon et al., 2021), which together serve to enhance their professional efficacy (Levin & Muchnik-Rozanov, 2022). In contrast, the current study examines a novel aspect of the use of clinical simulations, namely, as a tool that facilitates PSTs' acquisition of discipline-specific strategies for learning and teaching, in this case, the teaching of literature.

1.1.4   Reading literature as a simulative experience

Emerging evidence from cognitive psychology indicates that a parallel can be drawn between the way in which simulations help one understand and gain experience in a variety of fields and the way in which narrative texts can help readers understand and empathize with literary characters and real-life human beings: "Just as computer simulations have helped us understand perception, learning, and thinking, stories are simulations of a kind that can help readers understand not just the characters in books but the human character in general" (Oatley, 2011, p. 63). In this sense, fiction is a simulation of selves in interaction, through which one engages in literature, draws inferences, and becomes emotionally involved. The fictional content includes complex characters and circumstances that one might not have encountered in daily life. Likewise, SBL also relies on interaction with fictional characters or human beings. While encounters with fictional characters during SBL are more common in computer-based simulations, human-based simulations emphasize the presence of the actor in terms of a more real-life experience (Levin, 2022). A work of fiction simulates a given reality; it is through the reading of a work of fiction that we come to understand that just as the imagination creates possible worlds, so, we too form a mental model of ourselves and others (Johnson-Laird & Oatley, 2022). Thus, the act of reading improves our understanding of others (Höglund & Rørbech, 2021). The encounter with the other, which is at the heart of the literary endeavor (Elkad-Lehman & Poyas, 2020), is also manifested in the clinical simulation, through the encounter with the actor playing the role of the "standardized other" (Dotger, 2010).

Notwithstanding the similarities between processes of reading and SBL, there is also a prominent difference: essentially reading in the adult world is a solo activity that involves a "dialogue" between the reader and the text. A literary discussion occurs when several readers share their experiences. By contrast, SBL is essentially a group activity that involves a volunteer, a professional actor, and an audience. Hence, whereas in reading, the process of interpretation and reflection are typically personal and occasionally social, the opposite is true of the interpretation and reflection process in SBL, which is essentially social, yet includes a personal dimension.

Hence, given this relationship between SBL and reading, SBL is uniquely suited for use in the context of literature teaching, as its mechanisms are already familiar to this population of PSTs. The scenario and debriefing phases of the SBL experience are analogous to stages in the reading and interpretation of the text. The variables of the scenario serve as plot mechanisms for the development of a conflict. The interaction between the actors develops dynamically, guided by the behaviors of the volunteer actor and the principles that the professional actor was instructed to follow. The debriefing that accompanies the experience provides the opportunity to interpret and analyze the scene, employing group discussions, in an attempt to gain a comprehensive understanding of the way that the story evolved during the simulation. Throughout the stages of the simulation, the observers' emotional involvement, which is manifested in their empathizing with the actor, identifying with the

situation depicted, and voicing nonjudgmental criticism, plays an important role. In this sense, although originally borrowed from the field of medicine and other disciplines, the SBL framework resembles the framework of the literary world. Therefore, the decision to apply the SBL framework to discipline-specific training in the context of literature teaching was fruitful for the current study.

2.   METHODOLOGY

2.1 The research context

In the current research, we used the clinical simulation model as defined by Dotger (2010). The simulations described in the current study were conducted in an online setting, as part of the adjustments that were made during the COVID-19 pandemic, as described in the online clinical simulation model (Frei-Landau & Levin, 2022). In both the face-to-face and the online settings, the simulation learning cycle is the same.

In Stage 1, The instructor reads out loud the scenario description and waits for one of the participants to volunteer to enact this real-life professional scenario. A volunteer participant (one of the PSTs) interacts with a professional actor (a member of the simulation team--not one of the PSTs). While the role of the professional actor is that of a "standardized other" (in the context of TE, this may be a student, parent, colleague, or school principal), the volunteer participant always plays himself in order to maintain authenticity in the learning process. Therefore, the volunteer participant's role will always be according to their professional position (e.g., PST, teacher, principal). The five-minute scenario is enacted in either a physical or an online space via the SimBoost system (https://simboost.com/) and with the assistance of a technical support team. As participants in a previous study indicated that the presence of an audience makes them uncomfortable (Dalinger et al., 2020), the online solution is to have the remaining participants turn off their cameras during the enactment to eliminate any outside stimuli that might distract the volunteer participant (Frei-Landau & Levin, 2022). In the physical space, a two-way mirror is used to create an intimate setting in which the actor and the participant are together without the immediate presence of the observers. In both settings, the group members watch the scenario being acted out in real-time, but in a space separate from the staged setting.

The simulation scenario was developed in advance by an expert scenario writer with an expert in the relevant field of study (Barker et al., 2018), and includes background information about the character's past experiences and a description of the event to be enacted (Levin, 2022). The professional actor receives this information, as well as a set of cues (in the form of "if…then") that guide him or her to react in a specific manner according to the volunteer actor's behavior (Dotger, 2010). As a result, the scenario is both structured and flexible (Kaufman & Ireland, 2019), as the professional actor remains aware of the participant's responses (Dotger et al., 2019) and develops the scenario accordingly. Hence, the scenario is considered a powerful

tool for creating awareness, dialogue, reflection, and shared learning (Cautreels, 2003; OECD, 2006). An example of a general introduction to a scenario, the background information, and the stages in the development of the scene are presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1.

Figure 1. A demonstration of an introduction to the scenario, background information and stages in the development of the scene

Stage 2 of the simulation, which is conducted after the scenario's enactment, consists of a debriefing session moderated by a trained instructor. The instructor selects segments of the video recording to correspond to certain predetermined themes and guides the viewing, analysis, and discussion of said themes. Both the volunteer and the professional actors share their impressions as well. The process of reciprocal feedback between the viewers and the actors takes place in a safe and supportive setting, for the benefit of all of the participants (Levin, 2022). As a result of the SBL experience, the PSTs are able to improve their professional performance in similar future situations (Chernikova et al., 2020). The simulation session ends with a summary of the participants' insights. Figure 2 describes the five stages of each simulation cycle.

Figure 2.

Figure 2. The five stages of the simulation cycle
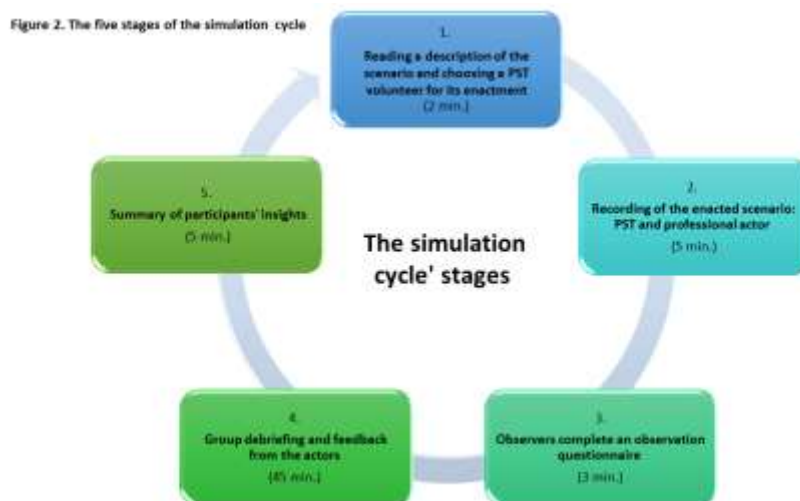
Although the simulation sessions in the current study were conducted online, the venue of the control room where the scenario was video recorded and from which segments were broadcast during the debriefing stage is located in one of the 27 academic colleges with a teacher-education department, in the country where the research was conducted (blinded). This center is part of the national program for the integration of simulations in TE and with the college's School of Education. Its goal is to link theory and practice, a combination that is an integral part of the teacher-education curriculum. The simulations conducted at this center typically address general pedagogical issues encountered across disciplines; however, this was the first simulation geared specifically for literature PSTs and the discipline-specific challenges they face.

It is worth mentioning that in the country where the study was conducted, PSTs undergo three years of studies that address general education and pedagogy, as well as discipline-specific studies. During the second and the third year, they also participate in a practicum module, conducted twice a week at a local school, where they observe classes taught by experienced teachers and also experience hands-on teaching within the specific discipline. During the fourth year, they work as novice teachers while attending a weekly workshop where they share and discuss their teaching-related experiences and dilemmas. Thus, in this framework, the PSTs' training is conducted in two parallel and mostly simultaneous channels, wherein they gain professional experience as teachers while enrolled in the academic program as learners (Levin & Baratz, 2019).

2.2 The research approach

To consider the advantages and overall efficacy of using discipline-focused clinical simulations, a qualitative methodology was employed (Creswell, 2007), using a qualitative case-study design (Stake, 2013). In the qualitative approach, a case-study framework suggests the exploration of "A real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case)… through detailed, in-depth data collection" (Creswell, 2007, p. 97). In the current study, we focused on the case of four SBL sessions, which were identical in terms of the procedure (i.e., the SBL cycle and the use of the online platform). All four simulation sessions were conducted and broadcast from the same center and all dealt with the same two conflictual situations that are typical in the teaching of literature: 1) a conversation with the school principal who has canceled literature lessons and assigned the time slots to other disciplines; 2) a conversation with an experienced literature teacher who asks the PST to direct the discussion of literary texts and avoid debates on social issues, adhering instead to the accepted interpretation, as efforts should be focused on preparing the students for their final exam. Hence, the four sessions are considered iterations of a single case, enabling the examination of PSTs' perceptions of the SBL experience, especially as related to their understanding of the processes of learning and teaching.

2.3 Participants

Ninety-eight literature PSTs from a single teacher-education college participated in the study. This group constitutes a cross-sectional sample of the local multicultural society (75% Jewish PSTs and 25% Bedouin Arab PSTs). The sample's characteristics reflect the population distribution of the students attending this teacher-education college. The majority of the sample was female (86%). The distribution according to participants' year of study in the teacher-education program was as follows: 22% were first-year students, 31% were second-year students, 32% were in the third year of the program, and 15% were in the academic retraining track.

2.4 Data collection

Three tools were employed to gather the data: (A) Reflections written by the PSTs at the end of the simulation workshop: the PSTs were encouraged to share their thoughts and feelings about the simulation they experienced, from any perspective they saw fit. The average length of the reflections was between half a page to a single page; (B) The transcriptions of the videotaped recordings of all four simulation debriefing sessions (i.e., the group discussion guided by the instructor following the enacting of the scenario). (C) The transcription of input from two focus groups, which were held a month after the participants completed the SBL workshops, with a total of 20 PSTs who agreed to partake in a focus group. The focus group format serves to

generate data on the individual, group, and interpersonal levels (Cyr, 2016). During the sessions, participants were asked to discuss their perceived insights. Each session lasted one and a half hours and was audio-taped and then transcribed.

2.5 Data analysis

The thematic-cognitive method was employed to analyze the data collected from the three sources. This analytic approach involves a noninvasive, open content analysis (Shkedi, 2010) Given that the focus of the selected approach is on the participants, their descriptions, and the interpretations they offer (Bruner, 1990), the theoretical concepts emerged inductively from the research context (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Polkinghorne, 1995). The advantage of this approach is that it allows researchers to identify meaningful distinctions as well as generalizations (Weber, 1985).

   The analysis encompasses the following stages. First, the researchers read all of the data, while attempting to identify content relevant to the research questions. Next, the researchers reread the data, this time seeking to identify units of meaning, without referring to the relationships between the different units of meaning (Charmaz, 2005). In the next stage, the researchers identify recurring themes (Shkedi, 2010), based on the conceptual connections between the units of meaning. After having established several thematic categories, significant representative statements are selected from the data and grouped according to the thematic categories. Finally, the researchers "translate" the descriptive categories into a theoretical set of categories (Charmaz, 2005), from which can be gleaned an overall theoretical understanding of the findings.

      The ethics committees of the college approved the current study and all of the participants indicated their informed consent in writing, after the researchers informed them about the study and gained their trust, by assuring them that anonymity and confidentiality would be maintained throughout the study and in its subsequent publication. Hence, all of the participant names indicated in the quotes presented in the Results section are the pseudonyms assigned by the researcher.

3.   FINDINGS

Analysis of the collected data rendered three themes related to the effects of clinical simulation use in the field of literature teaching: (1) Increased involvement in discipline-specific training; (2) Formulating a professional, discipline-specific conceptualization of their role; (3) Acquiring tools for promoting meaningful discussion in literature lessons. The three themes are first explained and described separately, followed by a discussion of the way in which they are linked. The data sources of the presented quotations are coded as follows: reflections (REF); simulation session observation (OBSER); and focus group data (FOGR).

3.1 Theme 1: increased involvement in discipline-specific training

This theme encompasses statements in which participants described their involvement in the SBL processes. It is related to the learning experience that the PSTs were undergoing in the given present moment. This involvement took the form of active learning, whereby the experience and the accompanying debriefing allowed PSTs to form an emotional connection not only to the material learned but also to the way it was presented and taught.

> Once the simulation began and the actor entered, I completely forgot that we were at the college. I was completely connected to what was going on, which reflected the reality in the school. I also got angry at [the character of] the school principal who was arguing with the teacher (the volunteer participant). I felt offended on the teacher's behalf and I was glad that she stood her ground and explained the importance of the literature lesson. In my mind, I was advising her: "You should tell her there is a connection between reading literature and leading a successful life"... (Adele, second-year PST, REF)

Thus, it appears that also as viewers, the PSTs were able to learn from the simulation and experience emotional involvement. As the following example demonstrates, the basis for the learners' involvement is the authenticity of the simulated event.

> The simulation accurately reflected a real-life situation, of the kind encountered in the field. We all know that as a discipline in school, literature is considered less valuable than science-related disciplines. The simulation and the group debriefing strengthened my existing assumption, namely that literature has an important role in human life— it develops one's imagination and humane sensibilities. (Dana, third-year PST, OBSER)

Some of the participants compared the study of literature-teaching with and without the use of simulations, noting that the simulation led to a more profound learning experience. Alex, a student in the academic retraining program, commented:

> I always knew that literature is the key to all the other disciplines, but the simulation honed my understanding and allowed me to accurately describe the significance of the discipline. This is an aspect we do not deal with on a daily basis; we simply teach literature, without giving it further thought (REF).

Finally, one of the PSTs referred to the parallels between the simulation and literature:

> The simulation is [a] powerful [tool], in my opinion, because it functions like a good story: there is an introduction to the plot and a protagonist in conflict, and just like in reading a story, we are sucked into the story and identify with the protagonist who represents us—all of us. The debriefing that accompanies the simulation restores the equilibrium of emotions and offers an analysis that is both personal and collective, from which each of us can select the aspects we find suitable. (Betty, second-year PST, FOGR)

This description highlights the similarities between the world of simulations and the world of literature. Both feature a narrative that develops and seeks to involve the reader/viewer, both emotionally and cognitively. In this manner, it becomes clear that the use of the simulation increased the learners' involvement, anchored the material learned to an authentic experiential context, and advanced the discipline-specific learning process.

3.2 Formulating a professional, discipline-specific conceptualization of their role

Compared to the previous theme, which was related to the PSTs' experience as learners, this second theme demonstrated is related to aspects of teaching that they experienced and will be able to apply in the future as in-service teachers. The participants described the simulation as contributing to a conceptualization of their profession. Ronna, a third-year PST, raised the issue of her motivation for teaching literature: "What I took from the simulation experience was the question of why I teach literature: What motivates me? What is my purpose in the classroom?" (OBSER). Another PST noted that the insights she gained from the simulation helped her formulate her orientation toward future teaching practices:

> The simulation experience helped me [envision] the challenges of the future and become more grounded in my beliefs. I really love teaching [in general] and teaching literature, and I don't intend to give it up… I came to understand the importance of choosing how I will teach literature: How much room will I allocate to the difficulties experienced by the learners? How will I approach this and talk about the related issues? What tools will I use to cope with this type of challenge? Through the simulation, I learned that addressing the difficulty is a major part of coping with it. (Jordan, second-year PST, REF)

At the same time, other PSTs reported sensing a difference between their personal attitude regarding the teaching of literature and the attitude represented in the simulation and the ensuing debriefing session. Although only a minority of the PSTs disagreed with the attitude presented in the scenario and the discussion, it is important to note these voices because they indicate the simulation's contribution to revealing conceptual gaps and discord. Thus, for example, David, a second-year PST, stated the following: "She [the volunteer, PST] was fighting for something that I don't really believe in. I am not an avid reader and am about to become a literature teacher." (OBSER). David's attitude illuminates the gap between the professional conceptualization of a literature teacher as one who reads for pleasure and David's habits and characteristics. Likewise, other PSTs noted that the simulation contributed to a conceptualization of their professional identity:

> You don't become a teacher in one day; it is a long process. There is no doubt that the simulation constitutes an important milestone on my path to professional development. I emerge from this experience with a view of my professional identity, but there is also a lot more to cover until I become the teacher I want to be. (Dana, third-year PST, FOGR)

As these examples demonstrate, the simulation experience helped the literature PSTs formulate a conceptualization of their professional identity as future teachers. Thus, the experience strengthened their motivation to pursue the teaching of literature and revealed any existing lacunas in their professional perceptions and attitudes.

3.3 Theme 3: Acquiring tools for promoting meaningful discussion in literature lessons

This theme relates to PSTs' descriptions of practical tools they garnered through the simulation that could be applied in the literature lesson. They referred to skills that they were able to appreciate as both learners and as future teachers of literature. One of the skills mentioned as useful for encouraging a literary discussion was active listening:

> Listening is one of the most powerful instruments I have as a teacher, and literature lessons are an opportunity not only for students to listen to the teacher but, more importantly, for the teacher to listen to the students. When analyzing a poem [in class], I must be attentive to the way the students experience the poem, the thoughts that arise after reading the poem, and the way they approach and analyze the text. During the simulation, I felt the experience of listening to the other not only through hearing but through all of my senses. (Shira, third-year PST, REF)

This PST considers the communicative skill of active listening to be a practical tool for teaching literature in a way that promotes a literary discussion. Another PST noted that the practice of critical thinking was related to the existence of a safe learning environment. The SBL reminded her that this was a constant characteristic of her experience in the courses at the college. She recognized this as a principle that she wanted to adopt in her future teaching.

> In our degree courses in the program, we learned to formulate an interpretation grounded in the text and its theoretical context. Discussions in the courses have always been very interesting because while the interpretations are criticized, it is evident that everyone's opinion is respected. Also in today's simulation, I found that we could express ourselves freely and the atmosphere was very receptive. Even when criticism was voiced, it was not expressed as a judgment. This is something I will take with me on my professional path—that is precisely how I want to manage the literature lessons I teach. (Mason, second-year PST, OBSER)

This last quote demonstrates that the simulation provided this PST with a model for conducting an interpretive discussion in the classroom, a model that she would like to implement in her teaching at a later stage. In general, it appears that the PSTs found that the tools demonstrated in the simulation served a dual function: these tools not only reflected inherent principles that they were encountering in their learning experience as literature PSTs but they also helped them identify principles that would guide them in their practice as future teachers of literature.
An overview of the findings reveals the internal links among the themes, which are visualized in Figure 3.

The model proposed herein consists of three components that form the conceptual framework for studying discipline-specific pedagogies through SBL. The three components demonstrate the present and future gains accessed by incorporating simulations into discipline-specific training courses, in general, and for literature PSTs, in particular.

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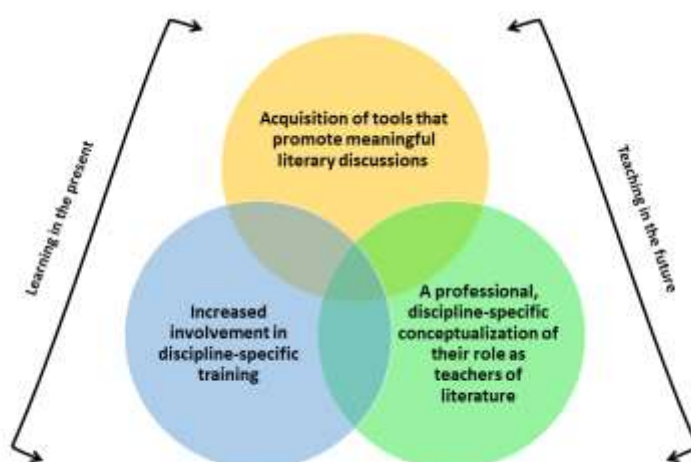
Figure 3.

Figure 3. The conceptual framework for studying discipline-specific pedagogies through SBL

The model proposed herein consists of three components that form the conceptual framework for studying discipline-specific pedagogies through SBL. The three components demonstrate the present and future gains accessed by incorporating simulations into discipline-specific training courses, in general, and for literature PSTs, in particular.

4.   DISCUSSION

The findings of the current study add to the relatively small pool of knowledge regarding the use of clinical simulations with literature PSTs and its contribution to their learning of literature as a discipline and their future teaching of it. The theoretical contribution of the study is by emphasizing the common aspects that characterize both the discipline of literature and the SBL approach.

Accordingly, there is also a conceptual parallelism in the approach that underlies both fields. The SBL experience, much like the study of literature, allows for a variety of opinions, which in turn fosters learners' self-awareness (McTigue et al., 2015; Ben-Pazi, 2012). This similarity is evident in the practices used by both literature teachers

and SBL instructors, whereby their common point of departure is an attitude of curiosity, which leads them to ask questions to which there is no single predefined and correct answer. Through the interpretive discussion that emerges among the learners, which in both cases is focused on the discourse itself (implicitly and explicitly conveyed), the underlying significance is revealed along with the inherent messages, which are meaningful on both the individual and the group level (Elkad-Lehman & Poyas, 2020). In this sense, the findings of the study demonstrated that for literature PSTs, the SBL experience is not only a pedagogical tool but rather an inherent part of their professional discipline, thus creating an essential connection between theory and practice, that is, between the perception of the profession and its learning and teaching. The PSTs' voices heard in this study regarding the SBL learning experience highlight the positive potential inherent in the SBL framework; at the same time, they also suggest the need for additional studies, to examine the challenges and obstacles of the SBL experience in the context of PSTs' discipline-specific studies.

On the practical level, we suggest that the contents of the simulation scenario can be anchored in specific disciplinary frameworks by way of two approaches. The first approach involves simulating a discipline-specific conflictual issue that PSTs encounter in the course of their studies. Taking an example from the discipline of literature teaching, the scenario might involve a conflict concerning reading habits or the paucity thereof, an issue that PSTs find challenging in their own learning experience and which also has implications for their approach to teaching literature in the future (Levin & Baratz, 2019). The second approach involves simulating a pedagogical quandary but embedding it in a discipline-specific context. Thus, to address, for example, the issue of parent-teacher relationship, the scenario to be enacted could be based on a scene excerpted from a literary work studied in class, which depicts an encounter between a parent and a literature teacher. Such scenes can be found in texts that are taught both to literature PSTs and in texts that are taught in schools (e.g., the strategy of Professor Herbert while meeting with Dave's father, Luster Sexton, according to "Split cherry tree" by Jesse Stewart). In both approaches, the simulation is integrated into discipline-specific courses in TE programs and addresses PSTs' professional concerns related to the learning and teaching of their particular discipline.

The findings of the current study shed light on other studies in TE that have considered ways to address the existing gap between PSTs' experience of learning educational theories and the subsequent experience of teaching in a classroom (Choy et al., 2014; Quinlan, 2020) or suggested a specific infrastructure for leveraging solutions that reduce this pedagogical gap (Malcolm & Zukas, 2001). As the current findings demonstrate, implementing simulations and the SBL framework in discipline-specific courses, in this case for teaching literature, can help narrow this gap and enhance PSTs' learning experience in the present and their teaching in the future.

As regards the use of SBL and clinical simulations in courses, the findings help identify the conditions that enhance and promote learners' involvement (Bowden et al., 2021; Zhu et al., 2021) and the necessary accompanying reflective activities (Trowler, 2010). Moreover, an integrative view of the findings of the current study

emphasizes the importance of SBL use in the literature discipline and its ability to strengthen aspects of learning and teaching pertinent to both the present and future. Of note, conducting literary-related discussions is an important aim in literature lessons (Elkad-Lehman & Poyas, 2020) which is in line with SBL participants' notes about the tools acquired for promoting meaningful discussion in literature lessons; however, SBL scenarios are primarily focused on the level of conflict-solving rather than leading a discussion. Thus, further development and research are needed to inform the design of scenarios that support better training in the context of literature discussions; this will facilitate PSTs' acquisition of tools for promoting literary-related discussions through simulation training.

As regards the online environment in which the current SBL study was conducted, it appears that the PSTs experienced profound learning through interpersonal interaction despite the setting of distance learning. The fact that the online dimension was not even mentioned suggests that future studies should compare the use of clinical simulations with literature PSTs in both the online environment and in the classroom.

4.1 Implications and limitations

This was a pioneering study focusing on the incorporation of clinical simulations into discipline-specific teacher-education courses, in this case, dealing with the teaching of literature. The goal was to gain an in-depth understanding of the SBL-related aspects that PSTs identified as contributing to their acquisition of discipline-specific learning and teaching. The findings expand our knowledge in the field of SBL research regarding the advantages of incorporating clinical simulations into the PSTs' discipline-specific studies. In particular, the PSTs' described three major benefits to their learning and teaching experience resulting from the use of clinical simulations, benefits with implications for both the present and the future.

Given that this is a case study, certain limitations should be mentioned. First, the research sample refers only to the perspectives of PSTs; efforts should be made to use a richer sample in future studies that will also include lecturers and policymakers in the higher education system. Nevertheless, through the analysis, we identified components that occurred in each of the cases, a finding that is supported by the triangulation of analytic methods and data sources. Second, given that this is a case study, it should be mentioned that any generalizations or comparisons with the findings of other studies should be pursued with extra caution (Stake, 2013). Hence, additional studies are needed, especially those that can expand the paradigm to a multiple-case study.

5. CONCLUSION

The goal of this study was to consider the advantages—if any—to be gained from incorporating clinical simulations in the disciplinary training of literature PSTs. The

three interrelated themes that emerged from the analysis of the data have implications for PSTs' present learning and future teaching. The practical contribution of the current study is our enhanced understanding of how clinical simulations can be applied to the teaching of discipline-specific aspects, in particular, to literature teaching. The study's theoretical contribution is in revealing common aspects that characterize both the learning of literature and clinical simulations.

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