

Research article

Ongoing training and peer feedback in simulation-based learning for local faculty development: A participation action research study

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ABSTRACT

Background: Simulation-based learning (SBL) is often used in healthcare education. Professional development has been identified as crucial to the success of SBL.

Effective, high-quality SBL requires facilitators who are multiskilled and have a range of SBL-related knowledge, skills and attitudes, which require time and practice to acquire. However, investment in facilitators' competence is often limited, particularly at smaller institutions without an associated simulation centre.

Objectives: The purpose of this study is to describe how a smaller university college with limited resources and limited facilitation experience has initiated continuing professional development and how this continuing professional development has contributed to maintaining and developing SBL facilitators' competence.

Method: Participatory action research has been used to improve the practice of SBL facilitators at a university college in Norway. The evaluations and reflections of 10 facilitators engaged in professional development and 44 national simulation conference participants have been analysed by way of Vaismoradi's qualitative content analysis.

Results: A culture of participation and engagement and a clear professional development structure are both of crucial importance in the implementation and maintenance of continuing professional development in SBL.

When these are present, not only does facilitation become more transparent, but facilitators become more aware of their own strengths and weaknesses, manage to address these and perceive an improvement in their confidence and competence.

Conclusions: Facilitators at smaller institutions without an associated simulation centre can improve their competence and confidence in SBL beyond the initial course, despite the absence of experienced mentors. The results indicate the importance of engaging in ongoing training and self-reflection based on peer feedback, the facilitators' own experience and up-to-date literature. Implementing and maintaining professional development at smaller institutions requires a clear structure, clear expectations and a culture of participation and development.

1. Introduction and background

Simulation-based learning (SBL) is a pedagogical learning method that has been widely used in healthcare education. Several studies describe and demonstrate how SBL improves learning in a great variety of subject areas (Cant and Cooper, 2017; Hung et al., 2021). Less attention has been devoted to the resources needed to deliver effective, high-quality SBL (Topping et al., 2015). Expensive investments have been made in order to incorporate SBL into nursing programmes, but

adequate resources in terms of technology and knowledgeable, skilled facilitators are often either limited or of variable quality (Cheng et al., 2017; Levett-Jones et al., 2011). There can be little doubt, however, of the need to adequately educate multiskilled facilitators in order to deliver effective, high-quality SBL (Topping et al., 2015). The limited consideration devoted to SBL pedagogy and educational theories reduces the potential of SBL (Bøje et al., 2017). Facilitators should be skilled in designing and delivering SBL, which includes clearly defining learning objectives, selecting the most effective level of fidelity,

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delivering a good pre-briefing, using multiple learning strategies, providing feedback, stimulating student reflection, contextualising student learning and applying links to patient care and future practice during debriefing (Astbury et al., 2021).

High-quality, systematic, and structured debriefing in SBL is crucial for enhancing positive learning outcomes because it increases the level of reflective learning, develops clinical decision-making skills and, ultimately, improves patient safety (Bae et al., 2019; Levett-Jones and Lapkin, 2014). Effective debriefing requires facilitators who are trained in debriefing (Cheng et al., 2015). A lack of debriefing competence often results in unstructured debriefings that focus on the instructor rather than debriefings that focus on learner-centred reflection and learning outcomes (Cockerham, 2015).

Several studies address the implementation and effectiveness of introductory courses for facilitators (Bøje et al., 2017; Dale-Tam et al., 2021). However, investment in continuing training beyond the introductory course is key to developing and improving SBL competence (Anderson et al., 2012; Peterson et al., 2017; Simes et al., 2018). It is also important to support and evaluate facilitators (Nordquist and Sundberg, 2015). This can be accomplished by implementing a strategy for ongoing SBL professional development (Peterson et al., 2017). Professional development can be defined as a range of activities that assist professionals in their roles and help them improve their teaching performance and their knowledge, skills and attitudes (Cheng et al., 2015; Steinert et al., 2006). Continuing professional development, including peer coaching, can help maintain and expand facilitators' competence (Cheng et al., 2017).

When engaging in professional development, it is advised to follow standards for best practice in professional development, but activities should be adjusted for the given institutions' and facilitators' educational needs (Hallmark et al., 2021). A combination of learning strategies, such as workshops, conferences, observation, hands-on training, self-evaluation and feedback from peers and SBL specialists, can, depending on the developmental stage of the facilitator, contribute to facilitators' development (Al-Ghareeb and Cooper, 2016; Cheng et al., 2020; Thomas and Kellgren, 2017). Facilitators themselves prefer practice with feedback from someone who is skilled in SBL when obtaining and maintaining facilitation competence (Anderson et al., 2012). The use of debriefing assessment tools that provide organised objective feedback can assist facilitators in identifying areas for improvement and enhance debriefing quality (Alhaj Ali and Musallam, 2018).

Terpstra and King (2021) confirm that mentorship is a feasible option for ongoing professional development in SBL and that it should be considered over a formal faculty development programme. The model in their study has its roots in a traditional apprenticeship model where learners acquire a range of skills from an expert, i.e. in this case a mentor who has well-developed simulation and debriefing skills. A key factor is having enough time for a mentorship, and the model also has several domains to apply to learning environments (Terpstra and King, 2021). However, not all institutions employ SBL specialists who can mentor or have resources for professional development beyond the scope of their initial courses (Cheng et al., 2016). Given such limitations, we suggest a mentorship variant that emphasises peer feedback between faculty members who have either the same or different levels of SBL training, both in simulation sessions designed only for faculty and in the ordinary simulation sessions within the curriculum.

1.1. Objectives

The purpose of this study is to describe how a smaller university college with limited resources and limited facilitation experience has initiated continuing professional development and how this continuing professional development has contributed to maintaining and developing SBL facilitators' competence.

2. Methods

2.1. Design

The participatory action research (PAR) method applied in this study emphasises the study of practice in organisational settings as a source of new understanding and improved practice, bringing together people from different practices and settings and allowing them to converse and learn from one another's experience (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2008) (Fig. 1).

2.2. Participants and setting

Ten facilitators at the university college were actively involved in a local professional development process. After completing a three-day introductory course in SBL, they acknowledged needing to maintain and develop their facilitation competence and jointly took the initiative to start continuing professional development in the absence of an institutional focus on professional development in SBL. The five authors established a project group that was responsible for organising and implementing this initiative. The first part of the development initiative involved the organisation of four to six simulation sessions per semester over the period 2015–2018. Two of the group's ten facilitators assumed responsibility for preparing and facilitating each simulation session. During these sessions, the other facilitators provided the two responsible facilitators with unstructured oral peer feedback on their preparation and completion of the simulation session. After the simulation session, the two responsible facilitators prepared a written evaluation and reflection (Table 1). The project group was responsible for searching for and sharing new and updated literature on SBL along with the other facilitators involved. On the basis of the research literature, the need for greater structure when giving feedback was identified and the next initiative was implemented, which consisted of applying a structured feedback form – the Peer Coaching Feedback Form – to debriefing (Cheng et al., 2017) in order to ensure quality and consistency in the provision of feedback.

To gain a wider perspective on how continuing faculty development in a smaller professional environment can be conducted and improved and contribute to maintaining and improving facilitators' competence, forty-four co-participants, all of them experienced SBL facilitators from academia and clinical practice, were invited to give their input. They participated in one-hour workshops at the national Simulation User Conference (SUN) in Bergen, Norway in 2018. The project group gave a presentation on how they completed their professional development and used the Peer Coaching Feedback Form (Cheng et al., 2017). Two data collection methods were used: a dialogue addressing their experience and perspectives and an evaluation form (Table 1).

One of the main themes in the co-participants' feedback after the workshops related to undertaking a new action: having a co-facilitator observe the execution of a simulation session with nursing students present and provide structured feedback afterwards. A co-facilitator participated in five debriefing sessions with nursing students in the autumn of 2019. The co-facilitator used the Peer Coaching Feedback Form to provide oral and written feedback. The facilitator wrote a reflection note based on the feedback received (Table 1).

2.3. Data material

The empirical data material was collected over the period 2015–2019 and contains written evaluations and reflections (5) from facilitators involved in professional development, as well as transcriptions of four dialogues from four workshop sessions with a total of 44 participants from the workshops in 2018. Forty evaluation forms filled out by workshop participants and process notes (5) written by the project group upon completion of the workshops also comprise part of the data material. Six written feedback notes, using the Peer Coaching

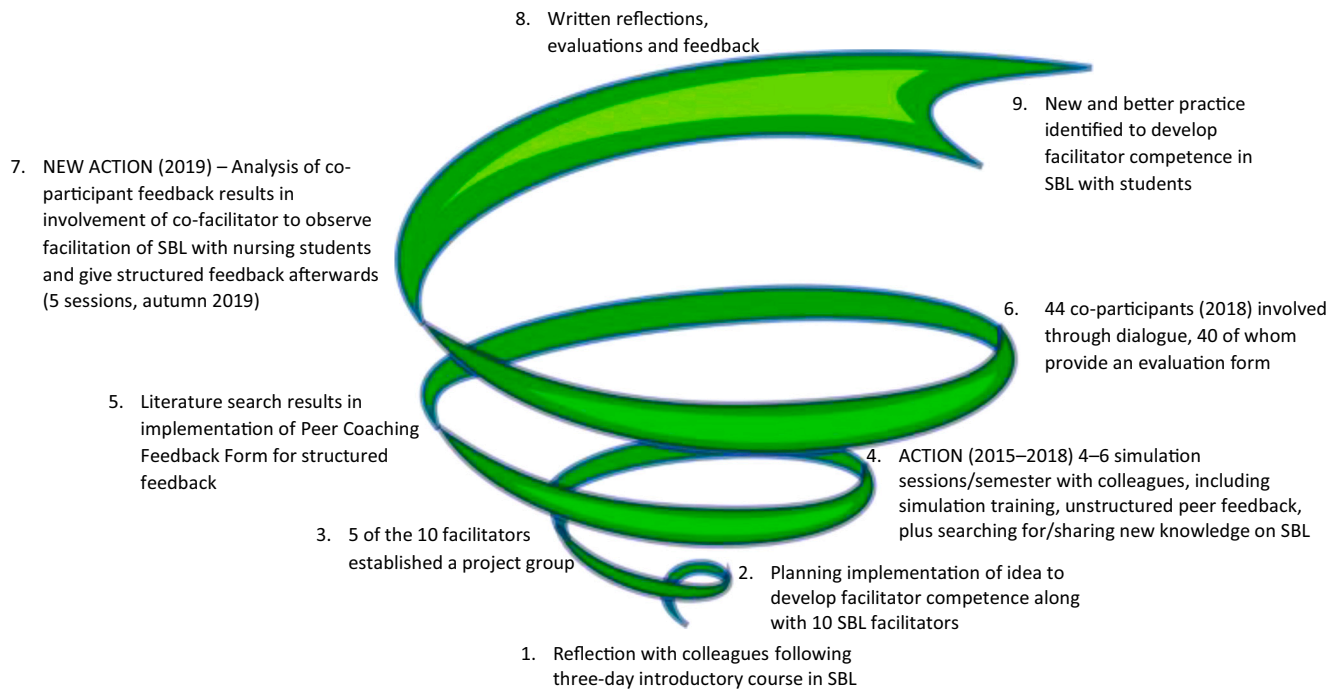


Fig. 1. Action research spiral, Reflection, planning, acting, evaluating (Inspired by McNiff, 2016).

Feedback Form, and reflections are also included (Table 1).

2.4. Analysis

The analysis was an ongoing creative process of sharing learning, discussing ideas and writing notes and followed the four phases of theme development according to the qualitative content analysis of Vaismoradi et al. (2016). All authors were involved in reflection and discussion which eventually resulted in consensus in all four phases. In the initialisation phase, all of the data was pooled and reviewed to enable an overview and overall understanding of the data while keeping close to the data through immersion. Meaning units were highlighted. The data was organised through a search for abstractions describing trends in the participants' perspectives. Then codes were assigned to identify key elements. Members of the project group wrote a process note to reflect upon the analytical process up to that point, become aware of their own perspectives and obtain a deeper understanding.

The construction phase featured collaboration between the authors in order to organise and assign codes with similar meanings to code clusters in relation to the research question. Clusters and codes were revised, compared and labelled to capture important content that had been presented by the participants.

In the rectification phase, the project group both immersed themselves in and distanced themselves from the data, ensuring a sense of self-criticism and relative certainty about the theme development (Vaismoradi et al., 2016). Processes of moving back and forth through the data material, discussing, rewriting, reflecting and using picture cards ensured congruence between the focus of the study, the data and the analysis. Prior to deciding upon themes and subthemes, a literature search was performed to relate the findings to established knowledge.

In the finalisation phase, the themes were connected to answer the study question and ensure a coherent understanding. Two themes were formulated: culture and structure for professional development in SBL and the development of competence and confidence in facilitation.

2.5. Ethical considerations

The study was reported to and approved by the Norwegian Social

Science Data Service (NSD) (reference number: 286198). Approval was also gained from the university college. In accordance with NSD guidelines, the raw data materials were kept secured and names were coded to prevent identification. All participants involved provided their written consent and were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time.

3. Results

3.1. Culture and structure for professional development in SBL

Workshop participants (WP) and facilitators involved in local professional development (FPD) pointed out that a culture of participation and a clear structure are important to the success of professional development in a smaller professional environment.

The first crucial factor in the implementation and maintenance of ongoing professional development in SBL is having a culture where facilitators are engaged and have a common interest in exchanging feedback:

It's super important to have a culture where we ... give feedback to each other. This improves the quality inside the group of facilitators.

(WP)

Giving or receiving honest and constructive feedback can be a challenge. It is therefore necessary to have a sense of safety and trust among the facilitators, as well as a mutual intention of learning and developing and of helping each other to become as good as possible at facilitation. Awareness that activities are not discussed with others not involved in the process serves to increase the sense of safety and trust:

It's easier to give feedback when you have confidence in each other.

(FPD)

The facilitators acknowledged that having a colleague who observes and gives feedback is valuable rather than disturbing:

I think I became more aware of how I carried out the debriefing when a colleague was present.

(FPD feedback form)

Table 1
Empirical data.

Data material	Who	When/quantity	Content
Written evaluations and reflections after simulation sessions with other facilitators/colleagues	10 facilitators Trained nurse-educators who had completed a three-day introductory facilitation course. All had limited experience in facilitation when engaging in continuing faculty development. During the study period, they conducted SBL with students at a frequency of once a week to several times a year	2015–2018 5 evaluations/reflections	Written overview of planning and completion of and reflection on the simulation session with other facilitators. The overview consisted of the theme for the simulation session, planned learning outcomes and the facilitation process, including briefing and debriefing. Also included are peer feedback from other participating facilitators and facilitators' own reflections received after completion of the professional development simulation session. The responsible facilitators reflected on their preparation and performance, the peer feedback received and what they wished to focus on further to develop as SBL facilitators
Transcribed dialogues from workshops	Workshop participants Norwegian SUN conference — facilitators with varied experience in SBL from Norwegian academia and clinical practice	2018 4 dialogues, total of 44 participants	Dialogue on their continuing SBL professional development experiences, how to complete it and how they think professional development can contribute to the maintenance and improvement of facilitators' competence
Questionnaire completed following completion of workshop	Workshop participants Norwegian SUN conference - facilitators from Norwegian academia and clinical practice	2018 40 completed questionnaires	6 questions addressing participant experience in SBL faculty development, their opinions about the implementation, use and relevance of ongoing SBL professional development and the use and relevance of structured feedback when giving feedback on debriefing
Reflection notes after workshops	5 members of the project group	2019 5 notes	Experience and reflection following completion of workshops, plan for further action and opportunities to improve continuing

Table 1 (continued)

Data material	Who	When/quantity	Content
Written feedback and reflections using Peer Coaching Feedback Form following simulation with nursing students (Cheng et al., 2017) Peer Coaching Feedback form consists of 9 elements and associated questions for feedback: psychological safety, framework, method/strategy, content, learner-centredness, co-facilitation, time management, difficult situations, debriefing adjuncts and individual style	10 facilitators Prepared by reading Cheng et al. (2017) and the presented feedback form. Facilitators discussed and agreed upon the forms' application in the project's professional development	2019 6 feedback notes/reflections	professional development Feedback received on all or some items on Peer Coaching Feedback Form Facilitator reflections on feedback received and future opportunities for own development

The second crucial factor is having a clear structure. Although the participants at the workshop agreed it is essential to deliberately invest time and resources in facilitator competence, this investment usually is not prioritised among the many other assignments. Most of the facilitators had participated in a facilitation course, but few of them received training or structured feedback afterwards. Additionally, there is often a gap between SBL sessions. Training, including the peer feedback process, is often not systematically organised. When peer feedback is given, it often occurs at random, such as during a break or between SBL sessions, rather than as part of a structured plan. Having a plan and assigned tasks contributes to the prioritisation of activities for professional development:

We give each other feedback after the simulation is completed. There isn't more time. (WP)

When you want to become good at something you must practise. (WP)

To be able to grow and develop, we must make time for professional development. (WP)

The use of a structured feedback form, such as the Peer Coaching Feedback Form, can help by ensuring that feedback to colleagues is organised and constructive. However, a structured feedback form can potentially be too rigid if it uses yes or no questions. Open questions can effectuate more reflection:

Being systematic is good, it helps us to give specific feedback. (WP)

I think that the feedback form should have more explorative questions. (WP)

3.2. Development of competence and confidence in facilitation

Participants agreed that joint simulation, the sharing of experiences and the exchange of feedback contribute to the maintenance and development of SBL competence and increase their confidence.

Knowledge about SBL, including SBL preparation, boosts learning outcomes and the level of fidelity and complexity while also providing a reminder of how to use the debriefing method. As a result, facilitators are more likely to understand facilitation in a similar way and become more consistent, thus increasing transparency:

There's a need for operationalisation of learning outcomes, so it becomes totally clear what the focus during SBL is.

(FPD)

We became more aware of the complexity in this case, the situation, and the level of knowledge of colleagues versus students.

(FPD)

Participants in professional development were assigned patient or nursing roles during a simulation session and were facilitated by a colleague. Engagement as a participant, often without being prepared for the task, resulted in a better understanding and awareness of students' experiences, uncertainty and vulnerability during SBL.

It's useful to become more familiar with students' mindset during SBL.

(FPD)

The facilitators' self-awareness and self-reflection grew as a result of peer feedback. They became more aware of their facilitation, which helped them avoid acquiring bad habits, such as controlling too much, teaching too much or not giving students enough opportunity to contribute, and adjust their facilitation accordingly. In addition, a facilitator can get a sense of what they are capable of through confirmation of what they have done well and become more confident as a result:

You become more self-conscious and reflective.

(WP)

It prevents us from maintaining [bad] habits, such as being dominant and trying to teach.

(WP)

Observing and providing feedback to colleagues allows facilitators to learn from their colleagues' facilitation, which can benefit them in their own facilitation.

Debriefing is significant in SBL, but according to the facilitators it is also challenging. They stated that discussions and peer feedback contribute to their becoming more aware of how to handle a debriefing, which actions increase or decrease the quality of the debriefing and what alternative actions they can perform:

As a facilitator, you must depend on getting feedback, you need to be aware of what you are doing.

(WP)

Facilitators gained awareness of adhering too rigidly to the stages of the debriefing process and being inflexible about learning outcomes, with a resultant reduction in student reflection. They became more aware of the importance of asking open-ended questions and asking students to explain and elaborate on their answers. As a result, the facilitators developed their ability to identify and address knowledge gaps and stimulate student reflection:

It's not easy to get students to reflect. It's important to ask open questions that stimulate students' reflection.

(FPD feedback form)

There is an increased focus on students' learning.

(WP)

Addressing themes that are silenced by students, challenging students who are not participating and getting better at asking the difficult questions were also important developments. At the same time, the facilitators became more aware of the importance of creating a safe environment for students to learn in. Finding a balance between challenging the students and making sure that they feel comfortable during debriefing became an important concern:

You dare to communicate the things that don't get said.

(WP)

Being able to pay attention to all students, especially those that don't contribute, and making sure that they get involved.

(FPD feedback form)

Participating in professional development enabled the facilitators to recognise their own strengths and weaknesses, obtain more tools and new ideas and perceive an increase in their competence.

4. Discussion

When implementing a community of practice at a local level, the faculty development and local needs context should be considered (Hallmark et al., 2021; Steinert et al., 2006). The findings of this study confirm that while ongoing professional development is important, it can be challenging for smaller institutions and often is not prioritised by either the organisation or the individual facilitator. To ensure that ongoing professional development is nevertheless implemented and maintained in these organisations, two factors are identified as crucial: a culture for development and a structured process.

A dynamic ongoing process is required to maintain and develop facilitators' competence (Peterson et al., 2017; Waznonis, 2015). A community of practice should be implemented locally, regionally, nationally and internationally (Hallmark et al., 2021). It can be challenging, however, for smaller institutions to implement and maintain activities for professional development locally. It is therefore important to acknowledge the context and ensure that change occurs (Steinert et al., 2006). The findings of this study indicate that the culture and a structured process both contribute to the implementation and maintenance of professional development in SBL in a local professional environment.

This study indicates that a workplace with a motivated group of employees and a culture for participation, involvement and mutual interest in ongoing development and growth are important elements of implementation when institutional organisation is lacking. A sense of trust and safety among participants is imperative to the provision and receipt of constructive feedback and contributes to the maintenance of professional development. Psychological safety allows participants to engage in professional development (Cheng et al., 2017). In order to take risks, face uncertainty, rethink practices and assumptions and enhance their competence, they need support, safety and respect (Bolton and Delderfield, 2018).

The participation in ongoing professional development within this study was voluntary and based upon personal motivation. This, however, may be insufficient. Structural and organisational expectations and requirements may be beneficial (Steinert et al., 2006). The organisational coordination of ongoing professional development has also been shown to be successful (Peterson et al., 2017; Terpstra and King, 2021). The results show that a clear structure for ongoing professional development, including an investment of time and resources, contributed to its implementation and maintenance, despite a lack of organisational coordination. Planning and the assignment of tasks helped participants to take charge of their assignments and prioritise participation. It is important to allocate sufficient time for professional development so that facilitators feel comfortable and can familiarise themselves with the pedagogical framework and scenarios (Cheng et al., 2017; Simes et al., 2018). Organising professional development over time and repeating interventions enable the development of a trusted network of colleagues

and cumulative learning (Steinert et al., 2006).

Feedback and reflection, in addition to training and observation, are cornerstones of maintaining and developing facilitators' competence (Al-Ghareeb and Cooper, 2016; Cheng et al., 2020; Cockerham, 2015). Professional development should focus on self-reflection, the assessment of current knowledge, knowledge gaps and goals for improvement (Hallmark et al., 2021). The quantity and quality of reflection influence the impact of professional development on competence (Thomas and Kellgren, 2017). A combination of four known perspectives – colleague perspectives, personal experience, established research and theories, and student perspectives – can reinforce and enhance the quality of facilitators' reflections (Brookfield, 2017). Three of these established perspectives have been applied to illuminate the findings on the effects of ongoing professional development in this study.

This study indicates that the first perspective, which relates to giving and receiving peer feedback, contributed to increased awareness and ideas about how to improve facilitation. Engaging in a collaborative process with colleagues and considering different perspectives on a practice is valuable and can help one see the different sides of a situation, gain a deeper understanding and take note of what has been overlooked or requires further inspection (Brookfield, 2017). Peer relationships, peer review and mentoring, collaboration with others, the development of mentorship skills and the encouragement of others' development are all important when developing a local community of practice (Hallmark et al., 2021). Feedback from others skilled in SBL is the facilitators' preferred way of acquiring competence (Anderson et al., 2012; Terpstra and King, 2021). This study shows, however, that collaborating with a group of colleagues and exchanging feedback with colleagues who lack extensive facilitation competence can still contribute to greater self-reflection and a perception of improved competence. This can be an effective way of organising ongoing professional development when experienced facilitators are not present in an organisation. Observing others and giving feedback also contribute to self-reflection and the perceived development of facilitation competence (Solheim et al., 2017). This was also found to be the case in this study. A structured feedback tool can be helpful for structuring feedback but it should not be an exclusively 'yes or no' questionnaire, according to this study. Established feedback tools ensure that key content areas are covered and contribute to effective peer feedback (Cheng et al., 2017).

The second perspective, which relates to one's own personal experience, affects self-reflection and interferes with how facilitators react to and handle a situation when facilitating SBL (Brookfield, 2017). When simulating with colleagues, the participants experienced for themselves how students might feel when participating in SBL. They spoke of feeling uncertain when covering tasks or roles and engaging in SBL with colleagues, which increased their reflection and affected their preparation and execution of SBL with students.

Competent facilitators keep abreast of relevant literature on SBL (Thomas and Kellgren, 2017). The exploration and discussion of theories and research represented a significant part of the ongoing professional development implemented in this study and resulted in adjustments in the facilitators' facilitation and the application of a standardised feedback form. Guidelines assist facilitators in planning and performing SBL (White, 2017). Comparing one's own practice to theoretical knowledge helps a facilitator to become more aware of their own knowledge, identify and address their knowledge gaps, confirm what they sense, clarify their misgivings and disturb group thinking (Brookfield, 2017).

The results show that the enhanced self-reflection within smaller institutions' ongoing faculty development contributes to greater transparency in the application of SBL, as well as to an increase in confidence and perceived competence as a facilitator. Facilitators should possess a range of competence in SBL and be able, for instance, to define learning objectives, select the most effective fidelity level, deliver a good pre-briefing, create safe environments, provide feedback, stimulate student reflection, contextualise student learning and apply links to patient care and future practice during debriefing (Astbury et al., 2021; Topping

et al., 2015). The implementation of ongoing professional development, including mentoring by SBL experts, has proved to result in the acquisition of knowledge and skills related to planning and delivering SBL (Peterson et al., 2017; Terpstra and King, 2021). Despite limited resources for ongoing professional development and the lack of SBL experts to perform mentoring, the facilitators in this study became more knowledgeable about and capable of preparing SBL, including determining learning outcomes, fidelity level and case complexity.

Nordquist and Sundberg (2015) have identified the provision of feedback to students as the most important element in effective SBL and the development of this skill as crucial. Professional development can result in more effective student coaching, such as by identifying performance gaps, stimulating reflection rather than controlling, and maintaining a psychologically safe learning environment (Cockerham, 2015; Lemoine et al., 2015). The facilitators in this study similarly perceived an improvement of their competence in relation to debriefings, such as acknowledging the importance of stimulating student reflection. Identifying knowledge gaps, addressing them, giving feedback and assisting participants in their reflection were all identified as challenging by participants. These competencies did, however, develop through participation in the ongoing professional development presented here. The facilitators in this study gained additional tools and strategies with which to address such challenges as finding the balance between challenging students and creating a safe environment for reflection.

5. Methodological considerations and future research

The results of this study have been influenced by the central position of the project group, although this may also have encouraged the facilitators to speak openly. The theme development process was followed step by step to connect developing themes and current knowledge (Vaismoradi et al., 2016).

The small size of the participant group and small number of workshop participants have influenced the results. The study is a qualitative study that focuses on the details and nuances of the facilitation process and follows a dynamic process of development in order to describe and interpret its participants' perspectives rather than to explain them (Vaismoradi et al., 2016). The participants recruited and involved are not a representative sample; they provide a basis for analysis that helps extend the knowledge about the issue rather than produce generalisable knowledge. Ongoing professional development can be accomplished in different ways and should be adjusted for local differences and needs. The process described and analysed in this study is only one such way.

The fourth perspective, the student perspective presented by Brookfield (2017) as a perspective that can increase the quality of facilitators' reflections, was not included in this study. It can, however, contribute to increased self-reflection and broader insight into facilitation (Bolton and Delderfield, 2018). Further research should focus on how student feedback can promote facilitators' reflection abilities and the development of their facilitation competence.

6. Conclusions

SBL is an important pedagogical method in nursing education, and ongoing professional development is essential for the delivery of effective, high-quality SBL. This study shows that facilitators associated with smaller institutions without an associated simulation centre can, despite limited resources and a lack of guidance from SBL experts, increase their confidence and perceived competence when engaging in ongoing professional development. Self-reflection based upon peer feedback, own experience and up-to-date literature should be prioritised.

Having a clear structure and clear expectations helps facilitators to engage in professional development. Organisational support and the allocation of resources for ongoing professional development in SBL can, however, ensure the prioritisation of professional development.

Accomplishing professional development at smaller institutions, with limited resources and organisational support, requires a culture of participation, involvement, and engagement, in addition to a sense of trust and safety among participants.

CRedit authorship contribution statement

Lotte Pannekoek: project administration, conceptualization, data curation, formal analysis, investigation, methodology, validation, overall responsibility for writing and approval of the original draft and editing the revision.

Siv Anita Stakkestad Knudsen: conceptualization, data curation, formal analysis, investigation, methodology, validation and writing and approval of the original draft, approval of the revision.

Marianne Kambe: conceptualization, data curation, formal analysis, investigation, methodology, validation, and writing and approval of the original draft, approval of the revision.

Karen Johanne Ugland Vae: conceptualization, data curation, formal analysis, investigation, methodology, validation and writing and approval of the original draft, editing the revision.

Hellen Dahl: project administration, supervision, conceptualization, data curation, formal analysis, investigation, methodology, validation, writing and approval of the original draft and editing the revision.

Competing interest

The authors have no competing interest statement.

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