Background
Simulation based learning (SBL) is pedagogical method poised to innovate nursing educational approaches. Yet, despite a growing body of research into SBL, limited investigation exists regarding beliefs that underpin SBL pedagogy. Even though key simulation design characteristics exist, the particular methods nurse educators use to operationalize design characteristics and how nursing students view these choices are unknown. Educators readily share their points-of-view on simulation design both formally (in literature) and informally (ordinary conversations). These conversations portray the subjectivity surrounding simulation design and become a vehicle for exploration.

Purpose of Study
The purpose of this study was to describe and compare nurse educators’ and nursing students’ perspectives about operationalizing design characteristics within educational simulations.

Theoretical Framework
The National League for Nursing-Jeffries Simulation Framework guided this study by identifying the interaction of teacher, student, and educational practices upon five design characteristics (objectives, student support, problem solving, fidelity, and debriefing). It was from this interaction perspectives were investigated.

Method
A Q-methodological approach was employed to investigate the subjectivity inherent in perspectives. Derived from a population of 392 opinions on simulation design gathered from interviews of nurse educators across the United States and Canada, a 60-statement Q-sample was rank-ordered into a quasi-normal (-5 to +5) distribution grid by 44 nurse educators and 45 nursing students purposely selected and recruited from two national organizations. Factor analysis and participants’ narrative accounts for statement placement contributed to factor interpretation.

Results
Factor analysis revealed educators share an overriding Facilitate the Discovery perspective. Two secondary bipolar factors revealed that even though educators share a common perspective, there exist aspects of simulation design held in opposition regarding student role assignment and how far to let students struggle including when and if to stop a simulation. Factor analysis revealed students hold five distinct and uniquely personal perspectives labeled Let Me Show You, Stand By Me, The Agony of Defeat, Let Me Think it Through, and I’m Engaging and So Should You. Second-order factor analysis revealed nurse educators share similar thinking with four of the five student perspectives.

Conclusions
Results suggest ongoing and sustained educational development along with time for educators to reflect on and clarify their perspective about simulation design is essential. Educators need to emotionally prepare and support students prior to and during simulation activities. Further educational research is necessary to explore how operationalizing simulation design characteristics differs based on formative or summative purpose.