Despite their everyday use, defining the terms simulation and game is a difficult task. Many activities and events are casually called either simulations or games (or both), resulting in a muddled set of characteristics. Lloyd Reiber and David Noah, 2008, p. 79

Within the broad fields of educational theory and research, there exist numerous definitions and understandings about what games and simulations are. This often results in miscommunication regarding such fundamental concepts such as a.) what they are, b.) what they can do, and
c.) how to employ them in an effective manner. While authors have begun to offer both evidence and conjecture as to the learning affordances of these constructs (Aldrich, 2007; Ang & Rao, 2008; Dickey, 2007; Gee, 2003; 1977; Squire, 2006; Walker & Shelton, 2008), several begin with different definitions for each term. For example, in our own work with the Anytown game environment which was designed as part of Quest Atlantis (Barab et al., 2009) to support elementary school student literacy, we provided different definitions for the term “game,” depending on which audience we were writing for at the time and the feedback received from reviewers (Warren, Barab, & Dondlinger, 2008; Warren, Dondlinger, Stein, & Barab, 2009).

This is not unusual as, for decades, authors have appealed to historical definitions of either game or simulation in the area of educational technology and training as did Horn (1977) and Ang and Rao (2008). Some, such as Gibson and Baek (2009) and Becker and Parker (2009) put forward the idea that games are a subset of simulations, and therefore do not discriminate the two. Alternatively, such as Mitchell and Cavill-Smith (2004) tend to rely on non-academic definitions from theorists such as Prensky (2001). Further, as with Warren (2008), other author’s definitions spring from those of commercial game designers like Crawford (2003) and Salen and Zimmerman (2004). Some do not define their terms at all in early works in the area of games for learning (Barab, Thomas, Dodge, Carteaux, & Tuzun, 2005; Squire, 2004).

An area of contention arises when academics discuss the value of games and simulations to education, training, and instruction. For example, Becker and Parker state that:

(Dis)agreements about the definitions of these terms come up regularly on online forums ...and from these it is clear that there is no common understanding or agreement on how to define ‘game’ or ‘simulation,’ with differences typically being drawn along disciplinary lines. (Becker & Parker, 2009, p. 17)

This leads to confusion over what researchers and developers mean practically and philosophically when discussing the body of research and perceived values of a particular set of media. In a chapter in Digital Simulations for Improving Education, Baek (2009) provides nine different definitions of the term simulation with additional definition subsets for specific types (i.e. educational, experiential) as well as two different definitions for the term game. If one author, within a single chapter cannot provide a single, coherent definition of either term, it is bound to create a challenge for the field of education as a whole to do so. A review of the 24 chapters of Gibson and Baek’s (2009) edited book on simulations for teaching, shows 43 different suggested definitions for the term simulation, 17 different definitions for game, and 9 different definitions for virtual worlds written either by the authors of the chapters themselves, or by other cited theorists and researchers. Similar differences can be found in other books concerning educational games and simulations. Such a wide array of definitions is bound to create confusion and challenges to developing productive discourse among theorists and researchers in the field.

In order to engage in constructive conversation regarding the needs of those working in education and training versus those in the software industry, it is important that we not only examine how the terms game and simulation are currently used in the fields of educational research, design and theory, but must also turn our attention to how they have been and are currently used in related fields ranging from philosophy to business. In addition, it is necessary to come to common meanings for frequently used terms that are unambiguous and develop new terms for constructs that do not fit neatly into existing terminology. This allows education professionals to engage in meaningful dialogue with the industry professionals who create many of the products intended for educational, instructional, and training purposes. In order to begin this process, we examine and critique existing definitions or the terms game and simulation as provided by numerous
Modular Game Engine Design
[www.igi-global.com/chapter/modular-game-engine-design/66327?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/chapter/modular-game-engine-design/66327?camid=4v1a)

Cartoons Cast an Eternal Impact on Personalities: Effects of Cartoons on Children
[www.igi-global.com/chapter/cartoons-cast-an-eternal-impact-on-personalities/207879?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/chapter/cartoons-cast-an-eternal-impact-on-personalities/207879?camid=4v1a)