Intentionally designed opportunities within environments, such as online participatory spaces afford new types of learning and participation structures, around reflexive practices, emerging from interactions in these spaces. Existing research has demonstrated the importance of reflexive practices within community learning spaces. Designing around particular elements that intentionally afford certain types of participation is crucial for reflexive participation within a learning environment.

The purpose of this study was to investigate what it means to intentionally organize an online gaming community to function reflexively, by utilizing particular design elements, borrowed from the literature on learning organizations and to propose a framework for critical and reflexive participation within such communities. These elements are: Complex System, Common Vision, Feedback, Reflections, Planning/Strategies, and Teamwork. Leadership was a seventh element that emerged from the data analysis and has proven to be vital for guiding groups and keeping them organized towards achieving goals. A total of 400 players within the gaming environment of Quest Atlantis volunteered to participate in the designed gaming trajectory of this study. Data was collected through online observations, chat logs, discussion boards, in-game reports, and interviews. The results highlighted ways that the particular elements can be incorporated in the design of participatory learning, gaming trajectories within online social spaces to foster reflexive practices through interpersonal work that is geared towards common visions.

Further, this dissertation informs new ways of understanding and fostering learning practices; it guides design decisions for online gaming trajectories to facilitate members in becoming more critical with their own practices, as well as supports the community in becoming learning body as a whole. This study has also produced a framework for affording opportunities and enhancing reflexive practices within a community.