

I often hear people say that school is just a badly designed game. I have to agree. I also hear a lot that part of the problems is people chasing grades rather than mastery and that grades should be dropped. I have to partially disagree.

I totally agree that school should be about master, not grade chasing, but I don't agree we should get rid of grades, just redesign them. For me, grades are the wrong way around. The assumption is that we start at an A* and we either maintain that or the grade can fluctuate wildly assignment to assignment. If we were to follow a more game-like approach, we would consider progress and experience points rather than ever changing grades.

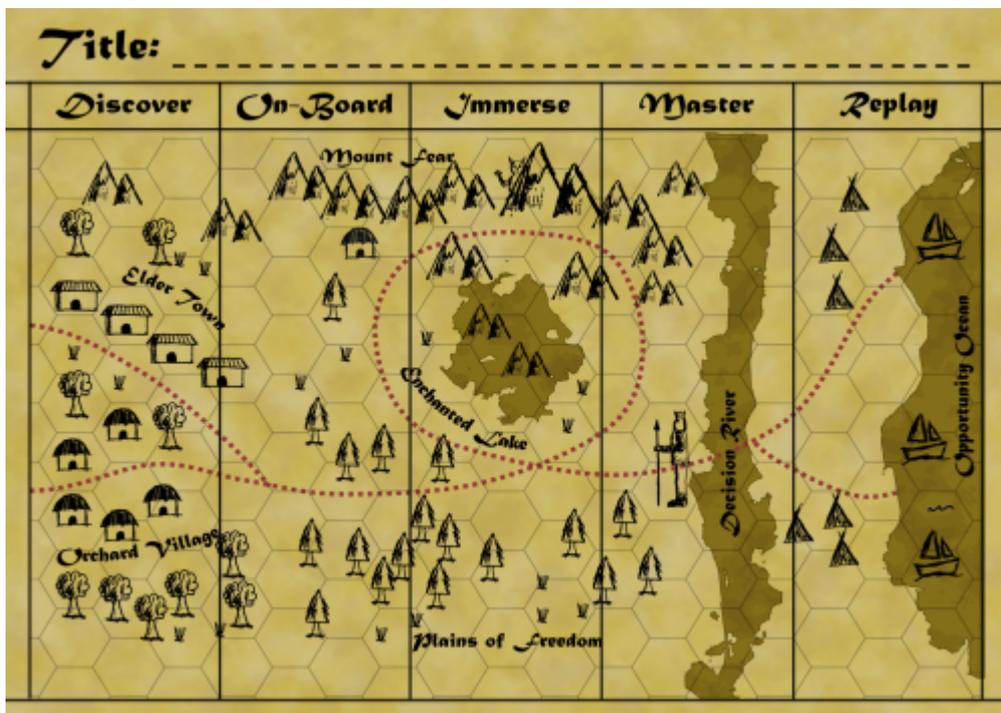
Each challenge that is set for the students would be assigned a maximum number of experience points that can be earned. These points would accumulate over the term, creating the equivalent of a final grade at the end of the year. For example:

XP	Grade
1000 or More	A*
800	A
600	B
500	C
400	D
300	E
200 or Less	F

There are a number of reasons that I would suggest this. The first is that it makes it easier for students to track their progress over time. They know how much each assignment is worth and how many points they need to get to achieve certain grades (assuming you have to convert back to them). This means they can more easily set themselves goals. To make this easier still, at the start of the year you give them a level map or progress chart that shows when each

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will be set and how many points they are worth. This way they can tick them off as they go. They are then able to tell where they are and where they are going. To add to the fun (learning should be fun after all), you can add side quests to earn bonus points or special unlocks (like earn a week off homework if you unlock the secrets etc).



The Epic [User Journey](#)

I am not talking about creating a whole fantasy world, just a different approach to mapping out how you grade the work of students. You don't even need to change the need for a final A,B,C grade, if you create a conversion matrix. Obviously creating [full fantasy](#) experience would be [cool](#) and, as it is beginning to appear, [beneficial](#).

The key is to give them a sense that they are working towards something and are always able to see where they are and where they are going. Transparency also is important. Grades are not very transparent, but seeing you got 80 out of 100 possible points for an assignment is much easier to understand. Knowing that you need 1000 to get an A for the term adds another level of clarity.

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