

# Leveling Up: Bringing Structure and Fun to Homework and Learning in After School Programs

What elements of gaming can we harness for educational purposes?

## PROGRESSION – See success visualized incrementally



**Levels:** Ramp up and unlock content.



**Points:** Increase the running numerical value of your work.

Make it incrementally harder to level up; incentivize with privileges at higher levels

Assign point values to tasks (finish work, help someone, remain quiet, clean up, etc.);

## INVESTMENT – Feel pride in your work in the game



**Achievements:** Earn public recognition for completing work.



**Appointments:** Check in to receive new challenges.

Display students' badges; create new badges & criteria to earn periodically

Having time-limited, daily or weekly one-time-only achievements is cool!



**Collaboration:** Work with others to accomplish goals.



**Epic Meaning:** Work to achieve something sublime or transcendent.

Make some XP and badges only earnable by teams

Create Quests that give bonus XP - have some quests expire, add new ones periodically



**Virality:** Be incentivized to involve others.

Give XP or badges for helping others level up

## CASCADING INFORMATION THEORY –

Unlock information continuously



**Bonuses:** Receive unexpected rewards.



**Countdown:** Tackle challenges in a limited amount of time.

Give XP for remarkable behavior; have some badges be a surprise until earned

Keep it fresh with time limits, expiring quests & badges, and new content every week



**Discovery:** Navigate through your learning environment and uncover pockets of knowledge.



**Loss Aversion:** Play to avoid losing what you have gained.

Do physical or web scavenger hunts with XP prizes

Have a clear system in place for lost points (i.e. half of XP so far today is lost if you get a time out)



**Infinite Play:** Learn continuously until you become an expert.



**Synthesis:** Work on challenges that require multiple skills to solve.

Give XP for good behavioral/emotional choices all day

Include multiple layers of skill (helping others; good behavior; academic skills, etc.) in quests

### Key Concepts:

- XP** - Experience Points, earned by making good choices, completing tasks or goals, having new experiences, etc.
- Badges** - Picture representations of big accomplishments; once earned, cannot be lost!
- Levels** - Increasingly large increments of XP earned; at higher levels, you have more privileges, unlock new quests and achievements, and are ready for more independence and responsibility
- Quests** - Special, time-limited, multi-step, challenging tasks that, when accomplished, carry rewards of XP, badges, items, currency, etc.; often include puzzles or dilemmas