Power-Leveling

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Introduction

World of Warcraft is an ever-increasingly popular MMORPG (massively multiplayer online role-playing game) that allows its participants to control a character of their choosing, including facial features, class, and other attributes. The player's character inhabits the fictional fantasy world of Azeroth. In this world, the player's aim is to level up his or her character from one to eighty in three different ways. The first is completing quests. The second way is to simply go out into the field and kill monsters as a way of gaining experience points. The third way is to enter instances, or dungeons, where the player's aim is to kill a boss, or enemy of primary significance, while teaming up with other players. The question then comes in to mind: which of these would gain the player the most amount of experience points in the least amount of time? It is not possible to go through the game without trying all three, but there comes the time when the player wants to find out what is the single fastest and most efficient way to level up, as traveling from place to place in order to do everything can become both tedious and boring to some gamers.

One might ask what exactly constitutes the motivation for leveling up, other than bragging rights. First of all, as a player levels up, he or she can acquire access to better weaponry, stronger armor, more advanced spells, and pets and horses that can make the life of his or her elf, dwarf, or undead easier.

When a player first gets his or her character started, the character does not have anything. Everything must be acquired from scratch. The first couple of things a player must do are small menial tasks, such as killing ten level-one skeletons, or collecting fifteen bear paws and bringing them back to the original quest-giver. Once a quest is

completed, the player's character must return to the person (or creature) that originally assigned him or her with a quest, and talk to the assigner of that quest. The player can then complete the quest by clicking the button that reads, "accept reward." The reward, along with an amount of experience points that varies from quest to quest, will also usually include both some money and some equipment that can help upgrade the character. Obviously, the bigger a quest someone completes, the larger the amount of experience the character gets. The weapon and monetary amount will most definitely be greater as well.

Going out into the open fields and killing various enemies is as simple as it seems: kill the enemy; gain some experience points from doing so. There are times when the player can kill two birds with one stone by working on the completion of a quest that requires him or her to kill a certain amount of monsters. So in doing that, he or she is therefore not only completing a quest, nor are they just killing enemies in the field; as a result, this will yield more experience points than a quest that does not require any killing

Instances, where players gather into a party of five in order to fight, are the final way in which one can gain experience points. When a player is battling in an instance, his or her character can gain experience points with his or her teammates by defeating a main boss after battling through waves of enemies.

When looking through one of the many *World of Warcraft* forums on the Internet, I came across a thread that struck my interest, which was within a World of Warcraft website by the name of Askapadwe.com. Ask Apadwe is a website run by a *World of Warcraft* player who is the creator of a level-70 Tauren Warrior by the name of Apadwe who plays on the Stormreaver realm. Like many of the *World of Warcraft* websites and

forms, Apadwe answers players' questions. In one article, a player asked, "What are some *World of Warcraft* Leveling Tips?" This player, who remains without a name, posted the question, "I am completely new to WoW and MMORPGs to begin with, and have been told it's taking me an extremely long time to level. I have a level 20 undead warlock, and I thought I was doing pretty well. Any tips on cutting down leveling time? I just want to be able to play with my friends, but with 50 levels to go, it seems impossible."

I too found myself pondering that question, as it also took me a considerable amount of time when leveling up; if I can recall correctly, it took me well over several hours of playing just to get my character up to reaching level fifteen. The response to this anonymous poster's inquiry about power leveling (as the people within the *World of Warcraft* playing community call it) proved to be extremely informative. In his response, Apadwe gave a total of seven helpful tips detailing the ways in which a player can effectively boost the level of his or her character in *World of Warcraft*.

Tip number one said to grab as many quests as possible whenever in a town. Do not leave the town until each and every quest is completed. The poster's reasoning for this was that doing so will cut down a considerable amount of time on the player's part because they will not have to travel long distances from one place to the next in order to complete five to nine different quests. Instead, one can get the rewarding experience of turning five quests all at once for a significantly large amount of experience points.

He mentioned in tip number two that it is crucial to "stay focused and have a game plan before logging in." He says that the effective management of time is important when one wants to get to a higher level with optimum speed and efficiency.

When there is no specific plan in mind upon logging on to play the game, there is a higher chance of getting side-tracked by the smaller things that do not matter as much, such as the auction house or player versus player combat.

The third tip that he gave was to stick with a mixture of both grinding and questing. Grinding, as stated in Wowwiki, is "the act of doing something repetitively, such as killing monsters or working up a trade skill." So grinding is simply just another word for going out in the field and killing wild monsters for an extensive period of time. Grinding was one of the methods that I tested in addition to questing and dungeon raiding. Apadwe suggests that doing only one of those without alternation will not suffice for optimal results within any given amount of time.

The fourth tip that Apadwe listed was to not die. Just as Apadwe wrote, this seems as though it is a given. What he really means by this is to not shoot for quests that are too difficult or kill a group of enemies that are too high of a level for the player to handle. He said that dying will repeatedly slow down one's progress; thus dying over and over again would make the quest not worth the struggle for the time being. His advice was to come back to the quest later after reaching a higher level if such a problem were to ever occur.

Tip number five was to not be afraid of asking for help. Should one run into an occasional quest that is too hard to accomplish by themselves, they can always ask their friends, fellow guild members, or whatever players might be in the surrounding area for assistance. However, it was also advised in this tip that one should only ask for help when they *truly* need it. Otherwise, people will cease to help.

Tip number six said "make sure you read your quest log. Find yourself stuck on a quest? It has always helped me out whenever I reread the quest description for the quest I'm doing." Apparently, ninety-nine percent of all quest questions that one might have are guaranteed to have their answers found within the text of the quest's description that can be found by looking at the player's quest log.

Apadwe's seventh and final tip was to pay close heed to the talents chosen with each level advancement. Whenever a player's character in World of Warcraft gains enough experience points to reach the next level, the player is faced with more than just one or two selections of abilities that they can upgrade. For example, someone who chose to play in the game as a warlock would, by the time they reach level fifteen, have abilities such as immolation, soul steal, shadow bolt, and life steal, among others. When the warlock in question within the hypothetical situation that I just provided reaches level sixteen, the first thing he would do if he knew enough about the game would be to hit the "N" key and open up the "Talents" window. In the talents window, those same abilities that were previously mentioned can be seen with a number on the bottom right corner. Say for example that the player wishes to upgrade both immolation and their shadow bolt ability. In order to upgrade those abilities, the player would click on them a certain number of times depending on how much he or she wanted to upgrade them. He or she must also be careful about which ones would serve him or her best, as only a certain amount of abilities are permitted for upgrading for each level.   Apadwe said that many make this mistake when playing the game. Not overlooking the talent bar while choosing wisely the talents that will be upgraded can save loads of time when the goal is to breeze through levels as fast as the game will permit one to do so.

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decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Figure 1: *This is an example of Warlock a talent tree*

Although Apadwe's seven tips seem helpful, there was little evidence that suggested just how important each of the tips really was. In other words, the response seemed to me more anecdotal as opposed to reasoned through scrupulous and systematic study. Thus, I wondered, "What method of leveling are the most efficient? To limit the scope to some extent rather than attempt to replicate Apadwe's seven tips in their entirety, I focused on the three primary means of collecting experience in the game: questing, killing monsters, and running instances.

In this study I recorded how much experience points I could gain by doing three different types of leveling methods: grinding, questing, and raiding. By taking this data and making comparisons, I would be able to develop an answer as to which of the three would be the best for leveling up the fastest.

Method

In order for it to be possible to collect that data, I had no option other than to immerse myself within the game itself and take on the role of doing all three.

I decided that the first thing I would do was to run through an instance as fast as I could. However, before doing anything, I constructed for myself a template that I would use when taking data for this experiment as a whole. So I typed up a page listing the following for each: Method (i.e. dungeon, grind, or quest) amount of time taken, starting amount of experience points, and ending amount of experience points. Each of those would be filled out after I finished completing a dungeon, grind session, or questing session. After I finished that first dungeon, I recorded the amount of time that it took in order to complete it. I took that same amount of time and applied it to the allowed duration for questing and grinding. As doing each of these things just once would not be enough for answering the question, I did each of them a second time. Except the second time around, I gave myself a different duration of time so as to avoid redundancies.

The name of the instance that I did was Ragefire Chasm, an instance dungeon that is located in the region of Orgrimmar.

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Figure 2: *This is a map of ragefire chasm.*

I made my way over to the entrance of the dungeon after taking a zeppelin ride from just outside The Undercity over to Orgrimmar, and then made a quick run over to

the town of Durotar. Once in Durotar, it did not take me too long to find Ragefire chasm.

Simply looking it up on wikihow proved to be extremely helpful in finding something

that I at first had no idea how to get to.

Anyway, by the time I finally got to the entrance, I pressed the "F" key, which

brought up a screen asking me if I wanted to queue for this dungeon. I selected "yes",

and it then began to automatically search for other players within the server who were

also looking for a five person dungeon-raiding group to participate in. I ended up

needing to wait for about a total of ten minutes or so before a small window came up

notifying me that four other players had been found for me. I was then ready to begin

playing.

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Figure 3: *Pictured above is a screenshot of the window that appears when a player is ready to enter a dungeon.*

The very first thing that I did upon entering the dungeon was start the timer on my

computer, which I would stop right after I completed the dungeon. As I have previous

experience playing though this particular dungeon more than once from my group

project, I knew for the most part exactly where to go to and what to do. My character's

position within the instance was a damage-per-second character, which meant that it was

my responsibility to continuously cast spells on the enemies, making it easier for the tank and my other teammates to quickly kill them.

The levels of all of the enemies in Ragefire Chasm are between thirteen and sixteen. I immediately started gaining some experience points upon the killing of the first enemy. No deaths occurred during this instance, which made the flow of the group progress nice and smooth. That reminded me of Apadwe's advice given on tip number four on the website that I looked up prior to the actual experiment. He wrote that letting your character die can be a major setback for gaining experience points quickly and efficiently.

The second instance that I ran through – which is called the Deadmines – was much more lengthy and difficult than Ragefire Chasm; while Ragefire Chasm only took me a mere fifteen minutes and fifty two seconds to complete, the Deadmines required a whopping fifty-nine minutes and twenty-six seconds to finish. Getting to the Deadmines did not take any time at all when compared with the time it took for me when traveling to Ragefire Chasm. This was because I had selected "random" on the game's dungeon finder, which would cause the game to transport me to any dungeon that was available.

I could tell that this dungeon was more difficult as well as much lengthier because unlike my experience in Ragefire Chasm, I had to endure about two minutes or so of my soul waiting in the graveyard before I was resurrected by one of my fellow party members. On top of that, I was not the only one who was sentenced to the graveyard; one other of the players in my group died at about the exact same time. Despite those complications, my group and I were able to pull through and successfully complete everything that needed to be done in order to obtain victory in the Deadmines.

The next thing I did after recording all of the results I got from my trials in both Ragefire Chasm and in the Deadmines was to proceed to doing quests. I took the amount of time that was taken in order to complete dungeon and gave myself that same amount for doing my first questing session. Therefore, I would allow for myself around fifteen minutes to complete as many quests as possible.

I was at about level eighteen at the time, so there were a vast majority of quests that were waiting for me in the Silverpine forest region of Azeroth, an enormous, antiquated forest that runs along Lordaeron's jagged western coast. Someone who has chosen to control a Forsaken (undead) avatar will tend to spend his or her time here mostly when they are between the levels ten and twenty-three.

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Figure 4*: Above is what the map of Silverpine Forest. As one might be able to see from looking at this figure, it is indeed quite a vast and detailed region, just like all the places in World of Warcraft, thus lots of time is needed for walking from one place to another before the player can get to high enough level to obtain more efficient methods of transportation such as horses.*

As I can recall, I was only able to complete a total of two quests before the buzzer on my computer's timer went off. The reason for that was because a considerable portion

of that time spent required the walking of one place to another, as I had expected. I remember taking Apadwe's advice about trying to complete all of the quests that are in close proximity to one another into consideration while doing my experiment; but even then, there was no way around having to walk from place to place for at least a minute and a half at a time.

After a just a little bit more than fifteen minutes on the clock went by, I finished up the final quest that I had set out to do. Due to the good amount of walking time involved while traveling to and from each assigned area, I did not get as many experience points as the amount that I got from being in the dungeon. I will talk about that a lot more when I get to the concluding **Results and Discussion** section of this research paper.

After I finished filling in all the data that I needed for this quest, I set the timer for almost an hour, because that was the amount of time that it took to complete the second dungeon. Yet again, all questing time was spent in the land of Silverpine Forest because there was still much to do in that particular area.

Thankfully, I had my map to aid me when wondering which quest it would be best to do first and how to get to it.

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Figure 5: *Listed above is an example of a questing map. There are icons on the map that shows where each quest is, in addition to a description that tells the player exactly what he or she must do in order to complete the quest.*

I was able to accomplish a lot more questing due to the fact that the time slot was a lot larger than the previous one. After the buzzer sounded in about an hour, I moved on to doing the third and final method of leveling up, which is grinding, or going out in the open fields and killing random monsters for an extended period of time.

While questing, I noticed that when I killed enemies that were level fourteen or lower, I did not get any experience points out of it because their level was too low compared to mine. I would therefore have to find an area full of monsters that *were* at a level close enough to mine so that I could actually gain some experience points after killing them. Being new to the game, I did not immediately know of a place that could provide me with that requirement. So as a way of finding a place that could, I searched online through World of Warcraft grinding guides, and found that my best bet was over in Westfall, where I would kill shore crawlers and murlocs, two different types of enemies that are encountered within the game. I did this for fifty-nine minutes and twenty-six seconds, just as I did for the second dungeon and the second questing session.

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decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Figure 6: *The map of Westfall*

Method	Amount of time spent	Amount of experience points gained

I had already completed the fifteen minute and fifty-two second quest immediately after completing the Deadmines. There was a cluster of enemies within the same range of my character's level right outside the dungeon, so I seized that as my opportunity to complete the first grinding session before teleporting back to the Undercity.

Results

This study revealed a good amount information for what a World of Warcraft player should know when he or she wants to level up his or her character as quickly and efficiently as possible. First of all, the amount of time that a player puts into the game greatly effects the amount of points that are gained, as I could clearly see when I looked at the data charts. For the shorter lasting instance I gained 4,234 experience points, while in the longer lasting instance I gained 12,085 points. That is a difference of 7,851. In the shorter grind I gained 386 points, while in the longer lasting grind I gained a total of 6,207 points. That is a difference of 5,821. In the shorter lasting quest session I gained a total of 252 points, while in the second quest I gained a total of 5,431 points. That is a difference of 5,179.

Instance	15 minutes and 52 seconds	4,234
Grind	15 minutes and 52 seconds	386
Quest	15 minutes and 52 seconds	252
Instance	59 minutes and 26 seconds	12,085
Grind	59 minutes and 26 seconds	6,207
Quest	59 minutes and 26 seconds	5,431

Figure 7: *Listed above is a chart detailing the different trials and the amount of time they took, in addition to how many points were gained from each trial.*

Method	Point Difference between the two Trials
Instance	7,851
Grind	5,821
Quest	5,179

Figure 8: *Above is a chart detailing the point difference between the two trials for each leveling method.*

The differences in points gained between each of the trials is important because it validates which of the three methods earn the most points even further. Even if the amount of points gained in the dungeon were still the highest the second time around, it could have been that they only increased by a little bit with the other two increasing a lot,

but still not enough to be of a greater quantity. This was not the case; not only did the amount of points in the instance remain appreciably higher than the amount of points I had by the end the other two types of trials, but the actual gain remained higher as well.

I averaged the amount of points together from each method and got the following:
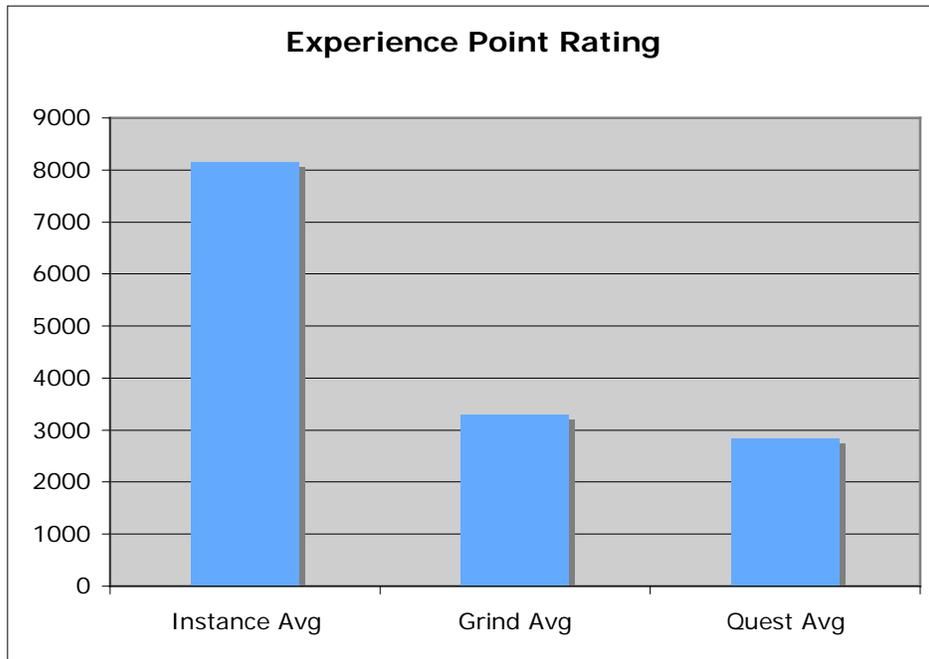

Figure 9: *The averages of the experience points for each method.*

Once again, it is shown that the points gathered from the instance are much higher than points gathered from questing and grinding.

This led me to think that the reason for this was not a matter of how many points were gathered at one time so much as how frequently points were gained within each allotted amount of time. As I had said before, the majority of my time spent while questing involved traveling from place to place, so I spent a lot of my time with a rate of 0xp per minute. In other words, there was no consistency whatsoever in how many points were gained each minute while questing.

I added up the number of minutes from both trials, which equaled 75.29 minutes. I then divided the total average I got from dungeons by 75.29 and ended up with 108xp per minute. The same procedure was done with grinding. I took the average, 3,296, and divided it by 75.29. The result was 43 xp per minute.

Discussion

The most significant finding of this research is that out of the three different methods for leveling up, dungeon raiding proves to be the most successful. As it can be seen in my results section, the level of frequency in xp gain appeared to be the largest causative factor in augmenting the accumulated total of experience points. This means that a player must be conscience of the rate at which he or she is acquiring xp. If a player finds his or her self not gaining any xp at fluid and consistent pace, then it would be best to try out something else if the goal were in fact to power-level.

What this means for both new players and experienced is that the bulk of heavy xp gain comes from instances. Gaining points with a team as opposed to working solo increases the frequency at which points are raked in, which was shown by this study to be a very important factor. Going back to Apadwe's seven tips that were discussed under the introduction section, he was right about tip number, one, which said to be sure to try to complete all of the quests that are in close proximity with one another so that many quests can all be turned in at once. By doing that, large amounts of time can be saved. He was also right about tip number four, which advised to avoid dying as much as possible. His reason for that was that guiding the character's spirit back to its corpse takes up a significantly large amount of time.

The biggest oversight in this research is the fact that I used help when trying to find a grinding area that was appropriate for my level. If looking at this from a research standpoint, I was conducting the experiment as if the purpose were to find the most experience points per minute for an inexperienced player. The act of going online to look up guides is going to both add time and decrease time. It will add time because the player is taking time off from playing the game to search the Internet for answers. It will also decrease time, because the player then finds the most efficient quest route. Regardless of whether or not doing this increases time more than decreases it or vise-versa, the main point is that using outside help will make an impact. If I were to do this experiment a second time around, I would do it a first time with the aid of guides, then a second time without guides so that I could compare and contrast the two.

Another possible limitation was the amount of time that I did each method. As can be seen in the results section, the amount of points gained and time taken varied greatly even though everything was done only twice. Had I done everything four or five times, there would be more data to work with. After all, repetition is key to testing the validity of any theory.

Conclusion

There are various things that a player who is trying to power-level might do that will add extra time to the clock. The first and foremost is not finding a situation that involves a frequent gain experience of points. If there are large increments of time in which no points are being gained at all, then the player should stop what he or she is doing and find another means of gaining experience points. That does not mean that questing should be avoided. The completion quests will yield important items that can

make the power leveling process easier in the long run. Though when it comes right

down to it, dungeon raiding is the most efficient way to gain the largest amount of

experience points within any given amount of time. As dungeons have an abundance of

enemies to kill, there is hardly any amount of time during which xp cannot be gained.

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