A word on Quests in ES:

Today I wanted to take some time to define the purpose of the Quests, based on the Acton Toolshed, and feedback from Acton founder, Jeff Sandefer.

**Why do we call it a Quest?**

A Quest is a search for a valuable object or goal, usually taken by an individual in community. It is an adventure where what is most important is not whether the Grail is won or lost, but how the hero is changed in the process – generally judged by fulfilling a promise to others in an exhibition of sorts.

**Important Things to Notice:**

1. There is an end goal – to deliver to an audience, who will decide how well you have fulfilled your promises. *As Steve Jobs famously put it – “real artists ship.”* This could be selling T-Shirts for Entrepreneurship, following a map to the ice skating rink in Cartography, building a gagaball pit in Architecture, powering rubber band cars in Electricity.
2. There is a real world skill that matters.
3. To Provide a WHY– or the quest doesn’t matter – plus provide recipes, examples and rubrics so real creativity can take place. Then you get out of the way, even if messy.
4. There is some sort of competition, with a way to keep score, because competitive juices, fairly constrained, help us learn to work well with others, which means skills can be pooled.

We believe that the best learning happens experientially as they learn how to collaborate, manage time, research, present and recover from failure! We are not looking for the exhibition to be a polished science fair, rather an opportunity to witness the process of deep learning- which is messy, and includes failure. In our quests we are not trying to convey information or “teach a lesson”. ***We are inviting young people on an adventure to find a solution to a puzzle.***

As the learners move into the upper studios, and begin to do Middle School and Launch Pad Quests, they will be faced with real dilemmas that require the rapid learning of advanced skills under pressure, and that are arranged so that they meet any academic requirements for college admissions. *Even more importantly, at each step the learners will be given opportunities to consider apprenticeships and jobs that might just turn out to be his or her calling.*