

I've been pondering the magic schools of D&D 3.5 for some time now, as it rubs me the wrong way that a wizard can do literally anything he/she wants. I sat down and started to revision the schools in the way I see their purpose and role in the system. I've written my thoughts on their role and flavor down for all to see, and I would like to show you all how I envision the schools and their use. Assume when you read the descriptions, that I have entirely stripped the schools of any spells and that I am about to fill spells in as I see them fit into the schools flavor and role. Assume also that english isn't my main language, and that I might misspell words occasionally. Assume also that I would love to rework the spell lists (and to a certain degree the spells themselves) from scratch, just to make them fit my vision of them =). Last assumption: This is my personal view and it might be totally wrong in your eyes and in the reality. Assume therefore that I am willing to change the descriptions and my own assumptions based on reasonable arguments. I am willing to change my personal point of view if sufficient logic is applied =)

So many assumptions, so much to read, here you go:

Abjuration

Abjurations are protective spells. They create physical or magical barriers, negate magical or physical abilities, harm trespassers, or even banish the subject of the spell to another plane of existence.

Move all protection spells like Mage Armor and its ilk to this school.

Abjuration still feels like a subpar school, unless it gets a broader portfolio of influence. Should be the primary defensive school of choice. Some debuffing seems appropriate.

Conjuration

Conjuration is the school that generally works with the transportation of matter. It can summon creatures from distant planes or conjure gases, smokes and fumes from deadly bogs or mists and fogs from frozen wastes. It doesn't summon energy, and thus can't summon fire nor lightning, although water and earth is still within conjurations limitations. Remember, conjuration only summons the elements, it doesn't have the power to control them like transmutation does.

Remove all spells that heals (goes to necromancy) and most spells that deal damage (these goes to evocation). Minor exceptions can be made, as Incendiary Cloud still feels like a conjuration spell ("I

summon the volatile air of the outer plane of Brixos" sounds plausible).

Conjuration will be greatly limited, but still seems among the best of schools. It is primarily a battlefield control school, and is thus very useful. A limitation on spells that summons creatures could be implemented to reduce the diversity and flexibility of Summon Monster.

Divination

Divination spells enable you to learn secrets long forgotten, to predict the future, to find hidden things, and to foil deceptive spells.

Divination seems fine. Not overtly powerful, but certainly useful. Divination is primarily a utility school. Nothing much changes, unless it too gets a broader portfolio of powers. But I don't feel that it needs it. If you disagree, shout it out loud =)

Enchantment

Enchantment spells affect the minds of others, influencing or controlling their behavior. All enchantments are mind-affecting spells.

Maybe move some Illusion (pattern) and Illusion (phantasm) here. They are both mind-affecting and does something that sounds like what enchantment should be able to do.

Enchantment is a control school, and could benefit greatly if it could also buff its allies. Then it becomes that hybrid of control and buff that could carve a new niche for the school. In the past it was an "all of nothing" school, as most of its spells were "save-or-suck/loose" and thus might need a few new tricks. Admittedly, the charm and compulsion that it controls now are certainly powerful, but I would like to reduce the amount of "all or nothing" effects to give it something else to do.

Evocation

Evocation spells manipulate energy or tap an unseen source of power to produce a desired end. In effect, they create something out of nothing. Many of these spells produce spectacular effects, and evocation spells can deal large amounts of damage.

Move most damaging spells here. Melf's Acid Arrow and other spells like it. Also, they should have a line of spells that doesn't allow spell resistance.

Evocation is the primary offensive magic school and should stay that way. It is paramount that the

ability to deal damage stays here. Also, evokers need a few different ways to circumvent special defenses. Some of their spells could allow saves, spell resistance or another defense to partially or totally negate the evocation effect. The more powerful spells could allow 2 or more ways to reduce the damage, and some of the weaker (or more "bread and butter") spells could only allow one way to reduce its effect. For example, a fireball allow a reflex save, but not spell resistance, whereas other spells could allow spell resistance, but no save. All in all, they just need variety in the way they deal damage, not just in the shapes and types of damage they deal.

Illusion

Illusion spells deceive the senses or minds of others. They cause people to see things that are not there, not see things that are there, hear phantom noises, or remember things that never happened.

Illusion seems fine, although some spells that can do anything should be removed, like Shadow Conjunction and Shadow Evocation. Still, it seems fair to let them keep the ability to summon shadows (the creatures) to their aid.

Illusion is primarily a control school, wherein their main way of control is through deception and trickery, not just pure force. Illusion gets a nerf in that some of its major versatility spells get removed. This is in order for the school to focus on the deception and trickery aspect. Still a powerful school in the right hands, it has some incredible tricks it can pull off, and it doesn't seem to lack versatile answers. It can survive the hit.

Necromancy

Necromancy spells manipulate the power of death, unlife, and the life force. Spells involving [undead](#) creatures make up a large part of this school.

Necromancy keeps most of its stuff, although it could be argued that some of the sensory manipulating spells could be moved to illusion. Move healing spells here, as necromancy manipulate the forces life AND death.

Necromancy is also a control school, with a bit of offense mixed in. Their control relies on fear and debilitating effects. Their offense lies in their power to take the life force of others and form it to their whim. Still an interesting school with lots of options and answers, the school doesn't need additional tricks now that it gets healing.

Transmutation

Transmutation spells change the properties of some creature, thing, or condition. This often correlates to the changing of shape, size, direction and force. The powers of the elements are theirs to control, by changing weather conditions and moving earth and water falls within the realm of transmutation.

Transmutation stays pretty much the same. They can manipulate matter that is at hand in different ways, even the flesh. So shapechanging and matter manipulation is their focus. I'd still like to rework the polymorph line in a way that makes it useful, without being crazily overpowered.

Transmutation is a mixed school of buffs and battlefield control. By changing the area or the participants in slightly new ways, they alter the odds in any conflict. This stays among the more powerful school, as battlefield control and buffing are quite potent weapons in combat. Outside of combat, they also have a large number of tricks they can pull off.

A new school?

As I write this revisioning, it occurs to me that there might be room for a school which focus mainly on the buffing of others and self. There are loads of control schools in D&D 3.5, and although I can understand how they differ, it still rubs me the wrong way that there is no school that focus mostly on buffing. I know that there are schools that got the abilities, but remember that I want to peel some of the versatile schools for options and move them around a bit.

I'm not sure how to word it flavorwise, but I know that I would put spells like Magic Weapon/Vestment, Cures, Restoration and the like in that new school. It could be a powerful school if only for the fact that it focus squarly on the improvement of yourself and your team. Buffing has never been a "bad" tactic in D&D 3.5.

There might be arguments for the inclusion of Magic Vestment into abjuration, and that is certainly reasonable.

I'd love to hear some comments on the idea, and also some inspiration on how to do it.