The student with greater alignment among identity components showed more consistent task engagement and persistence in the face of academic struggle, compared to the student with less identity alignment.

**INTRODUCTION TO CASE STUDY**

Student identity systems play a central role in shaping academic motivation. They also imply the intersection and complex contextual interplay of students' personal and social characteristics. Understanding how identity systems interact with curricula to trigger exploration and facilitate adaptive change around task engagement is particularly important in disadvantaged communities because education can act as a lever for change. In this case study we employ the Dynamic Systems Model of Role Identity (DSMRI)\(^1\)—an integrative theoretical model describing contextual and dynamic emergence of identity, motivation, and actions—and the Press for Exploration approach to identity-focused instruction\(^2\) to ask:

*How do honors students from a disadvantaged community explore their identities and engage academically in the context of PRESS activities?*

**THE DYNAMIC SYSTEMS MODEL OF ROLE IDENTITY (DSMRI)**

![DSMRI framework](image)

The PRESS for Exploration Approach:
- Promotes students' perceived self-relevance
- Triggers students' identity exploration
- Facilitates students' sense of safety
- Scaffolds identity exploration strategies

**METHODS**

**Case selection:** Two 12th grade students were purposefully selected for their divergent levels of identity integration and component alignment.

**Data:** Biweekly exploratory journal responses to PRESS prompts; online chat logs; observation field notes; student performance

**Analysis:** Case analysis employed the DSMRI Coding and Analysis manual.

**RESULTS**

**Joaquin:** More integrated identity system facilitated strong sense of agency, aiding his perseverance through an exceptionally challenging virtual school year, while also bringing about the emergence of a writer role identity.

**Coleson:** More fragmented identity system impeded academic growth. However, his common goal across role identities to retain authentic sense of self served to hold him steady through the exceptional challenges of and online learning year.

**DISCUSSION**

Our research helps lay groundwork for further inquiry into the complex identity systems of students in disadvantaged communities. Specifically, further research should examine students' different baseline levels of role integration to identify and understand formative elements of such states earlier in students' education trajectory (e.g., middle school). Why, for example, were Joaquin's in- and out-of-school identities more integrated than were Coleson's by the start of 12th grade?

**REFERENCES**