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Effects of Role-Goal Methods on Student Engagement: A Case Study

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EFFECTS OF ROLE-GOAL METHODS ON STUDENT ENGAGEMENT:
A CASE STUDY
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WHAT’S THE POINT?
This study explores how classroom context influences participation and engagement through the relatively new role-goal method. The overall goal of this study is to perform a case study looking into how the teaching methods educators possess can have a positive effect on student learning. Engaging students in fresh, new ways is a vital portion of today’s education.

BACKGROUND
• Teaching science by using new methods can be transformative, compelling, dramatic, and unifying
• Students need to experience authentic learning
• Teachers strive to foster learners’ abilities by using outside forces to engage students
• The role-goal method empowers students to be in the driver’s seat of their own learning
• Students are expected to “take on” a role in the classroom in order to reach an end goal
• The goal involves solving a problem; the role is a particular way of interacting with such problem
• Pitts and Edelson (2004,2006) hypothesize that role and goal adoption influence the nature of participation and engagement in activities. This past work inspired me to recreate my study with their initial findings in mind.

THE CASE STUDY
Seven students in a selected group of 5th grade students from Hansen Elementary are assigned roles of roller coaster engineers

ROLE
Working in teams of 2-3, students are tasked to build a thrilling roller coaster to be built next to Lost Island Water Park in Waterloo, IA

GOAL
Engineers will use Paper Roller Coaster materials to build their roller coaster after drawing and designing it, just like a real engineer

ACHIEVING THE GOAL

ASSESSING THE ROLE & GOAL
Interviews will be conducted once the design and building process has finished in order to collect data on student engagement and enthusiasm

ANTICIPATED RESULTS
• Based on student reactions after introducing the topic, assigning the roles, and beginning the designing process, I anticipate the role-goal method to be highly effective in this case study.
• Students were smiling, excited to begin, and highly anticipating the actual “building” of the roller coaster. But just like any engineer, design and careful planning must take place first.
• Student engagement was at a high level after the first day. I predict the ensuing class times to be just as exhilarating.

LITERATURE CITED