



Study Guide

The Power of Student Teams

*Achieving Social, Emotional, and Cognitive Learning in Every Classroom
through Academic Teaming*

Michael D. Toth, David A. Sousa

This study guide is arranged by chapter, enabling readers to work their way through the entire book or to focus on the specific topics addressed in a particular section. This guide is designed to help you reflect on and apply the ideas presented in the book by providing thoughtful questions and prompts for individuals, small groups, or an entire faculty.

If you are interested in booking the authors for a keynote presentation, virtual training, or professional development day, or to provide feedback on the book, please contact pub@learningsciences.com.

Learning Sciences International thanks you for your interest in this book, and we hope that this guide proves a valuable addition and support to your professional development practices.



Introduction: The Power of Student-Led Academic Teaming

“I think the Introduction makes a compelling case for SECL. Most teachers can attest to the changes in-the-hand technology has wrought in their classrooms.”

– Elizabeth Boyle, eighth-grade 21st Century Literacy teacher, Walnut Middle School, Grand Island, NE

1. Refer to the questions listed on page 9 that this book will explore. Which questions are you most curious to learn about?

2. What experience do you have with social and emotional learning (SEL)? What is SECL and how is it different from SEL?

3. In what ways does student-led academic teaming seem different from other reforms and initiatives you may have experienced in the past?

4. Are any Key Terms in the glossary new to you? Identify 3 terms that you want to learn more about as you read this book.

Term	Definition

5. What is a personal goal or change you would like to achieve through student-led academic teaming? What would you like to achieve at a classroom-wide level? School-wide? District-wide?

Chapter 1. Introduction to Student-Led Academic Teaming

“Chapter 1 is a great introduction to student teaming. There’s so much to cover, and it’s easy to get overwhelmed, but this is a great chapter to get a feel for ‘why’ and ‘what’ teaming really means. I used to think teaming was having partners, and who cares who did the work as long as they were sitting quietly and not fighting...Big sigh...I’ve learned so much since then!”

– Erica Eganhouse, Instructional Coach, Howe Elementary, Des Moines, IA

1. Using the chart below, summarize some of the key differences which stood out to you between the three types of core instruction.
 - a. What are the student’s roles and responsibilities in each type of core instruction?
 - b. What are the teacher’s roles and responsibilities?
 - c. What are the instructional routines, including the amount of direct instruction, the level of academic rigor, and how students interact?
 - d. Other key differences you noticed.

	Teacher-Centered Direct Instruction	Teacher-Led Student Groups	Student-Led Academic Teaming
a. Differences in student roles/responsibilities			
b. Differences in teacher roles/responsibilities			
c. Differences in instructional routines			
d. Other differences			

2. Student-led academic teaming has far-reaching impacts on both student engagement and classroom culture. What are some of the key changes you can expect to see as you transition to teaming?

3. Refer to Table 1.2 from the book. What is the dominant model of core instruction students experience on a daily basis in your classroom, school, or district? Also respond to the “Questions for Reflection” at the end of Chapter 1. Use what you learned from these two exercises to set goals for yourself in the chart below.

Where I Am Now	Where I Want to Be
	At the End of This Book Study...
	At the End of This Semester...
	At the End of This Year...

Chapter 2. Implementing High-Functioning Academic Teams

“This book creates a solid rationale and a call to action for educators to design opportunities for all students to work in academic teams on a daily basis. Over time, students in high-functioning teams will develop social, emotional, and cognitive skills that are emphasized as key factors for success in school and in life. Teachers at any grade level could be inspired to design rigorous instructional tasks using student-led academic teams.”

– Martha Kaufeldt, former classroom teacher; author and educational consultant on brain-compatible teaching and learning strategies

1. Using the chart below, list the four enabling conditions for academic teaming. What is one specific strategy you can use to make sure each condition is present in your classroom, school, or district?

Enabling Conditions:	How I will put each condition in place:
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

2. What differentiates academic teaming from other grouping strategies or group projects which you may have used in the past?

Chapter 3: Neuroscience and Other Research Support for Academic Teaming

“The authors provide neuroscience research and a plethora of evidence regarding the need for educators to shift their pedagogy to student-led academic teaming as a way to develop social, emotional, and cognitive skills. Academic teaming can even counteract the negative impact that technology and screen time have had on our students’ social skills development.”

– Martha Kaufeldt, former classroom teacher; author and educational consultant on brain-compatible teaching and learning strategies

1. In what ways do you currently encourage social-emotional development? How can academic teaming empower that development in your classroom, school, or district?
2. How does academic teaming support cognitive development? Why is this an essential component for student success?

3. What are some concerns you have about the impact of technology on students? How might academic teaming help address these concerns? Use the chart below to organize your ideas.

Concerns about the impact of technology on students:	How academic teaming can address these concerns:

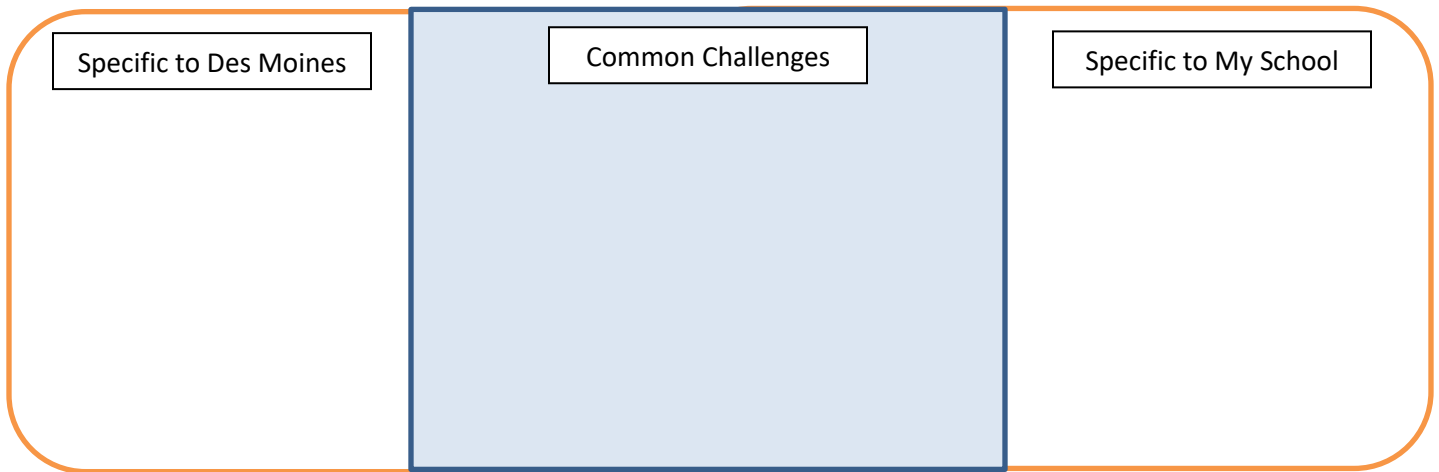
4. Which neuroscience research findings did you find most compelling? What are the implications for your students? Share a few of your takeaways from Chapter 3.

Chapter 4: Student-Led Academic Teaming Results

“My teachers struggle helping our EL learners and non-English speaking students (90% of our students come from non-English speaking households) become comfortable speaking in class and verbalizing what they know. Academic teaming helps bridge this gap as students spend more time talking to one another around lesson content.”

– Susan Jordan, Principal, Pinecrest Elementary School, Immokalee, FL

1. Use the Venn diagram below to list the challenges students and educators face in Des Moines Public Schools, the challenges that you and your students face in your own school, and challenges faced by both.



2. For each challenge specific to your school, how can Academic Teaming address it?

My School's Needs	Academic Teaming Solutions

3. How do you currently promote equity and access for all students in your classroom, school, or district? How can academic teaming enhance equity and access and empower all students to achieve higher learning gains? Include a few examples from the chapter.

4. Share a few quotes from the chapter that resonated with you and explain why you found them important.

Chapter 5: Leading Classroom Change to Academic Teaming

“There were takeaways from this chapter for principal supervisors, principals, and teachers alike.”

– Darline Karbowski, Principal, Acreage Pines Elementary School, Palm Beach, FL

1. What is the difference between first-order change and second-order change?

2. See Table 5.1 on page 110. How can academic teaming help you shift from an Old Economy Classroom Environment to a New Economy Classroom Environment?

2. Each classroom, school, or district engages in academic teaming for different reasons; these reasons may include deepening the positive effects of existing initiatives—see the appendices to learn how academic teaming connects to SEL, equity and access, 21st century skills, growth mindset, and new economy skills. Other educators emphasize the moral imperative of helping students build the skills they’ll need to lift themselves out of the cycle of poverty and/or to complete college and thrive in the new economy. Explain your rationale or moral imperative for adopting academic teaming. Then write your vision statement in the box below.

My Vision Statement for Academic Teaming
I will commit to academic teaming because...

3. What kind of support do you need to make your academic teaming journey a success?
Who are the key stakeholders you need to get on board with your vision?

4. Communication is key in second-order change; it's important to have a plan for explaining your goals and conveying your vision clearly. Use the chart below to list methods you can use to communicate your moral imperative for and vision of academic teaming to your colleagues, students, and the community.

	How I plan to communicate about academic teaming to each audience:
Colleagues	
Students	
Community	

5. As a leader in your classroom, school, or district, how can you help support others through the transition to academic teaming?

Conclusion: Academic Teaming—Model Instruction for the 21st Century

“I believe teachers can follow the roadmap provided within this text and begin implementing with success...by the end of the Conclusion I could envision how a school can transform into a social, emotional, and cognitive learning environment through the use of student-led academic teams.”

– Susan Jordan, Principal, Pinecrest Elementary School, Immokalee, FL

What are the differences between a traditional master teacher and an academic teaming master teacher? List your ideas in the chart below.

Traditional master teacher qualities	Academic teaming master teacher qualities

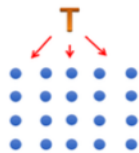
3. Consider some of the students you work with. What specific skills do your students struggle with that teaming can improve? How can academic teaming help them become master students?

4. How will your school(s) and community benefit from academic teaming?

5. How will academic teaming benefit you personally?

6. After reviewing the appendices, which core instruction phase do you think is more likely to develop old or new economy skills and fixed or growth mindset? Which is more likely to develop SECL skills and master students? Why and why not? Organize your ideas about student outcomes in the chart below.

Teacher-Centered Instruction



Team-Centered Instruction

