Equity, Access & Student Agency
Michael D. Toth

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About Learning Sciences International (LSI)
LSI Applied Research Center
- Highest performance as a school turnaround provider – ESSA level II and III
- Research and measurement partners with CASEL for the first SEL metric for Schoolwide measures
- Research and development partners with EASEL Lab at Harvard University Graduate School
- Wallace and Gates Foundation project partners
Today’s Learning Objectives

1. Learn what student agency is and why it is important.
2. Understand why learning gaps from the COVID-19 pandemic make equitable instruction even more urgent.
3. Understand the science and evidence behind Academic Teaming and how it develops student agency.
4. Learn how school boards can support Academic Teaming to increase equity and access for all students.

Zoom Chat activity warm-up (1 min)

• Describe behavioral characteristics of your teachers’ idea of dream students?

   Click “Chat” in the bottom tool bar of Zoom
   Type your response in the Chat window

What is student agency?

Student agency is the ability of students to set academic goals, reflect, and act responsibly to achieve the goals.

In most schools…

- The teacher answers students’ questions
- The teacher regulates student behavior
- The teacher gives feedback and academic coaching
- The teacher checks students’ work
- The teacher provides emotional support

But why not the students?

What if all your students increased ownership of their learning?

What if your students increased self-regulation?
What if your students owned the classroom culture?

What if every reluctant learner blossomed into an engaged learner?

What if all your students invested more discretionary effort into learning?
Chat activity (1 min)

• What benefits would a school experience if student agency increased?

Long-term academic effects of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has created the largest disruption of education systems in history, affecting nearly 1.6 billion learners in more than 190 countries and all continents.

– United Nations

Chat activity (1 min)

• How many months behind do you expect your students to be in their academic learning due to COVID-19 school closures?

The COVID-19 gap is severe

McKinsey & Company reports stark and unequal impacts, predicting that a January 2021 mass re-opening of in-person school would mean 10.3 months of lost learning for black students, 12.4 months lost for economically disadvantaged students, and an average of 6.8 months lost for all students (Dorn et al., 2020).

Long-term economic effects of skill loss

Average earnings could be reduced for black students by $2,186 per year (3.3%), for students from low socioeconomic backgrounds by $1,642 per year (4%), and for white students by $1,348 per year (1.6%).

Over a 40-year working life, students could lose $61,000 to $82,000 in lifetime earnings just from learning losses caused by COVID-19 school closures (Dorn et al., 2020).
Acceleration not Remediation

The Science, Research, and Results on Academic Teaming

Teacher-Centered vs. Team-Centered

- Teacher is working harder than students
- "Students" role is one of compliance
- Some students receive more benefits than others
- Student is working harder than teachers
- Highest access and equity in core instruction
- Integrates SEL with rigorous academics
- Develops high levels of student agency

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The brain that does the work is the brain that learns.
You cannot teach students agency. Students must actively develop it.
William D. Moseley Elementary: Schoolwide Results

- Students with Disabilities
- Economically Disadvantaged
- Black
- Hispanic

Des Moines Public Schools: Districtwide results

- 10,000-student research study of a large urban district
- Academic improvements of up to 37% over the gain otherwise expected compared to matched control students
- Narrowed achievement gaps for ELL students, students with disabilities, and black students by 4-7%

Chat activity (1 min)

- What stood out to you about Academic Teaming?
How can school boards support Academic Teaming?

1. Promote the vision
   Communicate the vision of not only raising student achievement but also developing student agency. Align the vision to existing belief statements and goals.

2. Share with the community
   Support the district in explaining the new instructional vision to parents and other stakeholders. Articulate how teaming prepares students for new economy jobs.

3. Set high expectations for all schools
   Recognize that every school is capable of improvement through rigorous instruction and academic teaming – even historically low-performing schools.

4. Remain actively involved in the process
   Demonstrate your commitment to equitable instruction that empowers students with agency. Visit schools, engage with the community at events, and review school data reports.

Go more in-depth on Academic Teaming

• NSBA publication: Increasing Equity and Achievement by Empowering Students (https://nsba.org/publications)
• Free resources: https://academicteaming.com/
• Book: The Power of Student Teams: Achieving Social, Emotional, and Cognitive Learning in Every Classroom Through Academic Teaming

Questions & Answers