**Initial findings from instructional change teams’ project**

Our research team (Alice Olmstead, Diana Sachmpazidi, Andrea Beach, and Charles Henderson) has been exploring how teams of instructors and other stakeholders can work together effectively to improve undergraduate STEM education within their departments or institutions. We have been investigating what key levers tend to influence how instructional change teams collaborate and their productivity. This work has involved interviews with project leaders and team members, as well as a review of literature from business management. We are beginning to generate recommendations for higher education leaders about what they can do to help instructional change teams increase their chances of success. While we have focused on teams that are creating or redesigning courses, several of our findings could also translate to other team-based initiatives in higher education.

We began our work by interviewing 28 leaders of team-based instructional change projects to learn about how their teams are set up and what they are doing together. At the same time, we reviewed business management literature about teams to gain awareness of ideas that might translate to higher education contexts. Based on these data and the literature, we identified five important elements that project leaders should consider when setting up a team: the nature of the task, who participates, process constraints, external engagement, and access to resources. Next, we interviewed team members from four different teams to gain insights about their instructional collaborations. Our goal in analyzing these interviews with team member interview is to identify important aspects of how teams work together and how this may be connected to the team’s inputs and the outcomes. Our initial findings indicate that the degree of shared vision within a team is an important contributor to the team outcomes. Shared vision can help team members to sustain the instructional changes over time, and to develop high-quality instructional changes. In addition, we find that who participates, both the team composition and the clarity of the team boundaries, can influence the amount of shared vision on a team. For example, when a team includes members who have unequal levels of interest in the team task, it is more difficult for the team to develop shared vision. Similarly, if some team members participate inconsistently, it can also be difficult for the team to develop shared vision.

