

*“Alone we are smart, together we are brilliant.” Steven W. Anderson*

**Teamwork** collaborates with a broad network of individuals with diverse expertise and viewpoints to generate unique ideas and solutions. Education innovation is rarely conceived or implemented by lone individuals; it is generally a social and collaborative experience. Therefore, it is important to create teams that work collectively and creatively to drive education innovation.

### **Cultivating Teamwork**

Building effective teams that cultivate education innovation should focus on both team composition and collaboration. A team’s composition should include people with key expertise and experience in the field as well as people who are just beginning to explore the field but have strong interest. To support the inevitable creative tensions needed for innovative teams to collaborate and flourish, collaborations should consider these five factors related to teamwork, based on the TeamSTEPPS Model:

1. **Team Structure**—Identify a diverse and inclusive team and balance member contributions by capitalizing on the team’s varied experience, expertise, and interest.
2. **Communication**—Foster frequent, direct, and open exchange of information through feedback loops that engage team members in review and discussion.
3. **Leadership**—Maximize team members’ engagement by ensuring that a common vision is understood, efforts are devoted to the team’s mission and activities, feedback loops are used to discuss and review progress, and team members step up and recognize their peers’ contribution.
4. **Situation Monitoring**—Actively step back from day-to-day work to review and assess systemic and cultural realities and/or assumptions that impact team functioning.
5. **Mutual Support**—Anticipate and support team members in carrying out their responsibilities and managing workload by synchronizing and structuring individuals’ efforts within the team.

### **Assessing your Teamwork Competency**

As you assess your personal development in this education innovation competency, consider the extent to which you have:

- identified a diverse, inclusive team;
- communicated effectively to collaborate with others in a coordinated, cohesive manner;
- worked together and supported others towards shared vision; and/or
- balanced member contributions to assimilate ideas and needs towards outcomes and solutions.

### **References**

1. Pocket Guide: TeamSTEPPS. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Rockville, MD. Available from: <https://www.ahrq.gov/teamstepps/instructor/essentials/pocketguide.html>.
2. Hoegl M, Gemuenden HG. Teamwork Quality and the Success of Innovative Projects: A Theoretical Concept and Empirical Evidence. *Organization Science*. 2001; 12(4):435-449.
3. Davis DD, Marshall DR. Teamwork: An Essential for Leading and Launching Innovation. *Nursing Administration Quarterly*. 2014; 38(3)–229.