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## **Collaboration Engineering in Distributed Environments**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Collaboration in distributed settings has become a reality in organizational life, yet we still have much to learn. One important area of study is the integration of Collaboration Engineering (CE) in distributed, or virtual, teams. Collaboration Engineering offers promising guidelines for process structure, but its application in distributed environments is just beginning to be studied. We conducted a study in the design science tradition with the goal of examining whether and how the principles and techniques of Collaboration Engineering can be taken into a distributed setting. We report on the design, development, and feasibility test of a prototype environment that implements CE techniques for distributed teams. The study examined leadership and process structure effects on the development of shared understanding in student teams working in a simulated organizational environment. Content analysis of qualitative data was combined with descriptive statistics of quantitative data to gain insight into participants' activities. We discuss the challenges of Collaboration Engineering in distributed environments and offer lessons learned and opportunities for future research.

**Keywords:** Collaboration engineering, distributed teams, virtual teams, shared understanding, process structure, leadership, thinkLets

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