Standard III
Element E

LEVEL 2 PRACTICES
THE TEACHER:

2   ***Provides opportunities for students to participate using various roles and modes of communication.***

One attribute of using specific tasks is that they eliminate voluntary participation. In the traditional classroom, the teacher asks students a question, and only those who know the answer, or who are daring enough to respond, raise their hands. The rest of the class can opt out. When students have the option of nonparticipation, many don't participate. This is especially true for shy students, lower achievers, and early language learners. The result: They don't learn as much or as quickly. (Kagan & Kagan, 2009)

For group activities to be successful, both the teacher and the students must be aware of individual and group expectations. Assigning roles is one effective strategy for ensuring that expectations are clear. It is also a way for students to assume leadership and ownership for the group's success. In a collaborative group, every student has a specific task, and everyone must be involved in the learning or contribute to the project, so no one can "piggyback." The success of the group depends on the successful work of each member. When students have specific roles, it can also free up the teacher to support students and assess individual and group discussions and work.

As teachers identify and define roles that group members will assume, they should choose roles that will help students effectively communicate and collaborate for the purpose of mastering the lesson goal. Teachers may want to consider the following questions when assigning roles and responsibilities.
- Who will begin the discussion or task?
- Who will ensure members stay on topic and adhere to the timeline?
- How will students provide feedback on group members' work or responses?
- How will all students be held accountable to participate?
- How will I stay updated on the group's progress?

Refer to this internal resource for additional information:
- Assigning Roles for Group Members
    Document describes examples of roles students may have when working on group projects or in group discussions.

3   ***Adjusts team composition based on learning objectives and student needs.***

Teacher decisions about student grouping are based on a number of considerations. Chief among these is suitability to the instructional goals. The type of instructional group should reflect the learning outcomes of the lesson and meet the needs of all students (Danielson, 2007). Therefore, the ability of a teacher to effectively group students is directly connected to her knowledge of the students, their individual needs, interests, and abilities.

Flexible grouping is when the teacher groups students differently based on the specific lesson's learning goals and on student needs. When teachers flexibly group students, they ensure students are given opportunities to learn in a variety of settings and from a mix of other students. When appropriate, students may have choices of which groups to join.

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Planning/Coaching Questions

- How will all students be included in group activities?
- How will you decide on the instructional grouping of students during a lesson?
- How will you communicate to students their individual and group responsibilities?
- How will you hold individual students and groups accountable?
- How will you assess the learning of groups and individuals?
- How will youpromote teamwork and development of leadership skills?

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