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Tomlinson, Carol A. "Biography." Carol Tomlinson Ed. D. Curry School of Education, 2008. Web. 07 Nov. 2014.

Tomlinson, Carol A. The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of All Learners. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1999.

Carol Ann Tomlinson was a public school teacher for 21 years and a program administrator for 12 years. Carol was nominated the Teacher of the Year in Virginia in 1974. She currently works at the University of Virginia where she holds high positions of responsibility. Carol has held many outstanding positions and has been recognized by several academic organizations. She has written over 200 professional texts, books, and articles. Some of her more popular educational works are *How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-ability Classrooms* and *The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of all Learners.* Carol's differentiation pieces have been translated into 12 different languages as she travels the United States teaching and mentoring teachers. (Biography)

Carol's book entitled *The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of All Learners* is just one of her many books on differentiation. To Carol this is a book that reminded her and connected her to one-room school house teachers, back to her educational colleagues from thirty years prior, to students who taught her while she taught them, and to colleagues from the University of Virginia. She felt and saw that there was a huge need for differentiation in the classroom. Carol knew that not one student was the same as the student to his left or to his right. One of her colleagues and her learned to differentiate in the classroom so that students stayed engaged in a "multitasking classroom". At the University of Virginia, Carol's colleagues enriched her learning experience with positive enlightenment to "think outside the box", and innovate in the classroom. She definitely admires her colleagues and admits that they are always encouraging her to go a little further. Not only does she admonish her colleagues, but also her students. Carol mentions repeatedly how awesome her students are and how they are constantly teaching her while pushing her to think outside the box. (Biography)

Reading through all of the schools that Carol recognizes in her Forward, I am made aware of how many schools she has taught at or been involved with throughout her career. She has taught at schools all over the United States from North Carolina to Michigan to Texas. Carol gives credit to teachers and colleagues all over, including those who have lent her lesson plans. She also makes sure that she acknowledges ASCD, who was a huge help to her partnering with her to bring her ideas to life.

I love Carol's response to teachers who do not think they have time to differentiate in the classroom. She tells them, "Build a career. Plan to be better tomorrow than today, but don't ever plan to be finished." This is so detrimental for any teacher in any year of teaching to hear, because teachers get stressed often and do not need one more thing to worry about. But, if they focus on building their career, and plan on bettering themselves and the classroom day by day knowing that their work is never done, they will have a successful classroom and career. She also says something that is so enlightening for any teacher, "teaching is about learning, and that learning is about becoming, and that making a history is about making a life." This is basically her encouragement to teachers to write their own history one day at a time - to not worry about all of their future career choices, but to take it step by step. *(Differentiation, vi)*

The first chapter is entitled, "What is a Differentiated Classroom?" This chapter starts off by describing a differentiated classroom, while giving examples of what different differentiated classrooms look like. The chapter tells about sample classrooms in elementary, middle, and high school. Tomlinson brings up the fact that every classroom will look different from the next and every student's road map will also look different.

Teachers in a differentiated classroom must be flexible, always prepared to "switch gears" on a dime. The teacher and the students are partners in the learning environment, walking hand-in-hand to find new ways to intake information and simulate it together. Even though the student is given options in differentiation, there is still structure. The teacher provides that structure, while both student and teacher are encouraged to learn from each other. "Teachers in a differentiated classroom are more in touch with their students and approach teaching more as an art than as a mechanical exercise." This is true because differentiating is not a clean cut and dry practice, but a practice that calls for creativity and flexibility from both the teacher and the student. *(Differentiated, 8)*

Chapter two is called, "Elements of Differentiation". It reviews the basic principles for differentiated classrooms, including the teacher's focus on the essentials, balancing norms, respecting each other and respectful work, teacher-student collaboration, teachers making modifications, teacher attending to student differences, and assessing with instruction. Each of these is described in greater detail, but they are fairly self-explanatory. At the end of the chapter, there are two organizers, one graphic and one bulleted. They both help the visual and logical learner understand how to differentiate in the classroom. The graphic organizer is like a "road map" that guides the teacher to a differentiated classroom. The bulleted organizer compares a traditional classroom with a differentiated classroom. Both of these organizers help me envision my future classroom. They would be a great reference in the future.

The next chapter is "Rethinking How We Do School - and for Whom". Tomlinson starts off by pointing out that education is not a stagnate concept. Just like many other things in this world, education is and will always be changing. There will always be new innovations and new ways of thinking. Newly supported concepts in educated are that intelligence is variable, the brain hungers for meaning, and that humans learn best with moderate challenge.

Carol says that "development of our potential is affected by the match between what we learn and how we learn with our particular intelligences". This means that, on a daily basis, our potential is affected since every day we learn something new. We must make sure that there is a connection with students in how they are learning certain content. Making sure we pay attention to this involves considering equity and excellence in the classroom, and implementing old and new techniques for learning. *(Differentiated, 18)*

As we pay attention to our students and create that sense of equity, we are setting a solid foundation for a "Learning Environment that Supports Differentiated Instruction". Chapter four introduced me to the "learning triangle". At the top of the triangle, there is the teacher. At the bottom left there is the students, and the right is the content. The teacher is at the top because they are the leaders of the class. The students and the content are on both sides to finish the triangle. The teacher must know the content thoroughly and connect with his students well. In turn, the students must connect with the teacher, while the teacher helps them connect to the content. With a disconnect between teacher and student, the triangle is broken and the environment of the classroom changes drastically. *(Differentiated, 27)*

There are several tips in this chapter for creating a healthy classroom environment. The first listed and to me most important tip is that the teacher appreciates the child as an individual. This is crucial, because if the student does not feel appreciated, they will not want to participate and lack motivation to engage. Also, Carol points out at the end that the teacher's role is to teach the student, let them think about the concepts on their own, watch them learn, and once again the teacher is learning along side the student.

"Good Instruction as a Basis for Differentiated Teaching" is the title of chapter five. This chapter goes over essentials for "durable learning", which are engagement and understanding. Then, Tomlinson states the levels of learning: we learn facts, develop concepts, understand principles, and develop attitudes. There is then a chart with the examples of each level of learning in each content area. Carol reminds us in this chapter that in order to have solid curriculum, we have to bind content, process and product together. With all of the levels of learning and elements of curriculum, the teacher is able to relay sound instruction. There is a graphic organizer at the end of the chapter that outlines this idea of combining levels of learning and elements of curriculum. *(Differentiated, 38, 41)*

Chapter six is called "Teachers at Work Building Differentiated Classrooms". At the beginning there is a list of key principles for a differentiated classroom, and an explanation of differentiating what, how, and why. Then, there are several examples from different grade levels of differentiation in classrooms in all subjects. After each example, Carol shares the what, why and how.

The next chapter is about "Instructional Strategies that Support Differentiation". There are several examples of instructional strategies used in the classroom. Plus, there is a sample of a personal agenda. One column is titled "initials", one is "task", and the last is "special instruction". So, the teacher and the student have access to this sheet in order to initial the task upon completion. Lastly, the chapter includes examples of orbital studies. These are studies that focus on a topic of student interest related to some facet of curriculum. These help identify commonalities and differences between middle-level learners. *(Differentiated, 67)*

Chapter eight goes over more instructional strategies. Included in this chapter are learning centers, multi-age classrooms, tiered activities, and entry points. There are two worksheets for a multi-age classroom lesson and one worksheet titled "I want to know". There are several examples of strategies integrated into lessons in a variety of age groups. One page has an outline of how to develop a tiered activity, then there are two different of a poetry contract for students. *(Differentiated, 78-80, 89-90)*

Chapter 9, "How do teachers make it all work?", takes all the pieces from the previous chapters and explains how a teacher puts the pieces together. The teacher should examine their philosophy about individual needs, start small with differentiating, grow the students, envision activities, and lastly, step back and reflect. In order for a teacher to maintain a differentiated classroom, they must attend to the individual student, develop routines, and remain flexible. Carol shares that at least three things must be included in the teacher's routine: talking with students early and often, continually empowering students, and always be analytical. Then, she finishes the chapter with practical considerations or "where to put the pencils in your professional world". Things like giving thoughtful directions, and staying aware and organized are a couple on the list. Tomlinson finally shares ways to develop a support system, which are very important for every teacher to develop no matter what year they are in their career. *(Differentiated, 101)*

To sum up the book, chapter ten "When Educational Leaders Seek Differentiated Classrooms", Tomlinson discusses change in schools. Change is not fun sometimes and can be messy, but is very beneficial if administered in the right manner. She goes through and gives tips on how to implement change in a school and a classroom setting. There is a flow chart that illustrates how teachers are practitioners of differentiation and implementers of change. To finish, Carol shares about novice teachers and has two more charts of teacher responsibilities in differentiation.

This book was very similar to our textbook from class, *How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-Ability Classrooms.* First, it is similar because both books are written by Carol Tomlinson. Second, both books defined differentiation, and how to integrate it in the classroom. But, in the book that I reviewed, Tomlinson covered differentiating for all learners, and our class textbook covered differentiating for mixed-ability classrooms only. I thought it was interesting that there are more chapters in our textbook, which is smaller, than the book I reviewed. There are great charts and illustrations in *How to Differentiate*, but in *The Differentiated Classroom* there are more worksheet and handout samples that could easily be used in the classroom.

Tomlinson achieved her goal well and with ease. Her goal in writing this book was to inform, instruct, and involve the future teacher in a differentiated classroom. She accomplished this goal by starting with the basics of differentiation. By defining differentiation, Tomlinson makes it clear to the audience about the topic that will be discussed throughout the rest of the book. She then explains what differentiation entails step-by-step and little-by-little.

It is good that Tomlinson covered the elements of differentiation in *The Differentiated Classroom*, because she did not over that in *How to Differentiate*. These elements are important building blocks, and are necessary to be included. Once she set those building blocks in place, it was necessary to explain why and how differentiation is necessary. Hence, Tomlinson explained the what, why, and how of differentiation. In this book, Tomlinson is basically instructing on how to instruct using differentiation. In any type of instruction, the instructor should explain fully the what, why, and how of their topic.

Also, it is informative and vital that the environment of the classroom is taking into account when considering differentiation. I was in a classroom today where there were multiple facets of differentiation, but there was chaos. The problem was that the teacher set up the wrong environment, and allowed his students too much freedom with differentiation. He encouraged students to share their opinions while working on research projects, but then when it came to watching a video, they shared their opinion and he didn't allow it because they were being negative. The proper boundaries need to be set before, and a respectful environment needed to be established.

Plus, what this teacher was lacking in was the "learning triangle". For some, there was a disconnect between the teacher and the students; for others, there was a disconnect between content and students. I will definitely refer back to the tips for an "artful teacher" so that I can keep up a healthy learning triangle. *(Differentiated, 27)*

It was interesting to see the different examples of differentiating in the classroom at different grade levels, followed by the what, why, and how. Those will be super helpful resources to refer back to as a future teacher. Also, I have not heard or read much about Multi-age classrooms so that was interesting to read out and to see examples of worksheets that could be used a that specific setting.

Overall, I enjoyed this book. It was very informative and will be a helpful resource in the future for me as a teacher. I will definitely refer back to it to remind myself of how to differentiate in my classroom in every way. I did not find anything in this book that offended me or that I disagreed with. I would highly recommend this to any of my peers for further enlightenment on differentiation in the classroom for all students with various learning styles.