



23–26 May

MELBOURNE

Innovate!

Educate!

Inspire!

**Carol Ann Tomlinson**

Sunday 25 May

**Differentiating Instruction for  
Advanced Learners**

*Session 1*

**CAROL ANN TOMLINSON**

Carol Ann Tomlinson's career as an educator includes 21 years as a public school teacher, 12 years as a program administrator of special services for struggling and advanced learners. She was Virginia's Teacher of the Year in 1974. More recently, she has been a faculty member at the University of Virginia's Curry School of Education, where she is currently William Clay Parrish Jr. Professor and Chair of Educational Leadership, Foundations, and Policy. Also at UVa., she is Co-Director of the University's Institutes on Academic Diversity. She was named Outstanding Professor at Curry School of Education in 2004 and received an All University Teaching Award in 2008. Special interests throughout her career have included curriculum and instruction for struggling and advanced learners, effective instruction in heterogeneous settings, and encouraging creative and critical thinking in the classroom.

Carol is a reviewer for eight journals and is author of over 200 articles, book chapters, books, and other professional development materials. She has authored several books including *How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-ability Classrooms* and *The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of all Learners* and professional inquiry kit on differentiation. Recently, she co-authored a book with Jay McTighe titled *Integrating Differentiated Instruction and Understanding by Design: Connecting Content and Kids* and with Kay Brimijoin and Lane Narvaez co-authored *The Differentiated School: Making Revolutionary Change for Teaching and Learning*. Carol works throughout the U.S. and abroad with teachers whose goal is to develop more responsive heterogeneous classrooms.

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**Differentiating for Advanced Learners:  
What's the Game Plan?**

Hawker Brownlow Conference  
Melbourne, Australia  
May 25, 2014

Carol Ann Tomlinson  
William Clay Parrish, Jr. Professor  
Curry School of Education  
University of Virginia  
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We'll Be Taking a Look at What it Means to Teach Advanced Learners Well

Let's  
begin  
with

2

underlying  
assumptions

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Assumption  
# 1

Bright kids  
are NOT a  
homogeneous  
group!

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## Bright Kids are Varied

- LD/BD/ADHD/etc.
- Different interests
- Different learning profiles
- Extreme talent/ability
- Talent in subjects other than yours
- Students at low end of the school/class talent spectrum
- Different levels of motivation
- Highly creative
- English Language Learners
- From low economic backgrounds
- Bright but not independent
- With issues of race
- From different cultures
- With reading or writing deficits
- Who don't fit the school mold



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The Cirque du Soleil  
& Development  
Of Advanced Talent

**An Important Metaphor for  
Teachers of High-End Learners**

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Differentiation & Cirque du Soleil



An early stage of talent development

**Fun & Fundamentals**



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Differentiation & Cirque du Soleil



An Intermediate Stage of  
Talent Development

**Precision & Polish**



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Differentiation & Cirque du Soleil



A Late Stage of Talent Development

Boundary Breaking  
& Bridging




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Assumption  
# 2

Teaching  
bright kids  
well means  
stretching  
them.

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**Good Stewardship of Advanced Ability**  
**Is NOT About:**

- Rote memorization of more information,
- Earning the "right" to "explore" by demonstrating mastery of the basics,
- Recognition for norm-based "excellence,"
- Finishing first -- or even finishing,
- Being sure or being right,
- Comfort
- Hunger for reward

**Good Stewardship of Advanced Ability**  
**IS About:**

- An on-going quest for understanding/making meaning,
- A quest for depth in areas of ability,
- Satisfaction derived from self-testing and idea testing,
- Persistence,
- Continual push for improvement/search for truth and insight; open mindedness,
- Hard work, disciplined work,
- Hunger to be productive, to be useful, to push the boundaries of own possibilities to guide others in "becoming."

(Carol Tomlinson, 1995)

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**Rigor Implies:**

- Struggle
- Acceptance of error
- Working for the sake of learning (vs. grades)
- Tolerance for ambiguity
- Curiosity
- Delayed gratification
- An ethic of excellence (do what it takes to do it well)

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Creating a classroom in which students regularly experience rigor is a heuristic process.

There is no algorithm developing rigor.

So, let's think together about some of the factors, principles, and strategies that can contribute to rigor.

Find your next step in the mix.

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**Misconception Alert!!**

Rigorous and hard are not synonyms.

"Hard" is draining and a discouragement.

"Rigorous" is energizing and an encouragement.

The brain does not respond well to a steady dose of "hard."

It thrives on "rigor."



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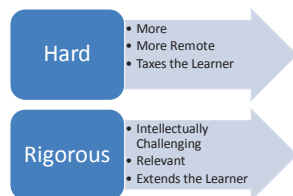
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### “Hard” and “Rigorous” are Not Synonyms



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### So, what is Rigor?

**“Rigor is the goal of helping students develop the capacity to understand content that is complex, ambiguous, provocative, and personally or emotionally challenging.”**

Strong, Silver, & Perini (2001). What Matters Most: Standards & Strategies for Raising Student Achievement. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

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**“What we need are schools organized in ways that put the joy back into teaching and that do not confuse rigor with rigor mortis.”**

**- Phil Schlechty**

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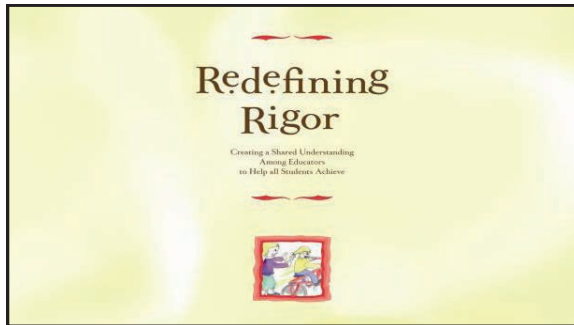
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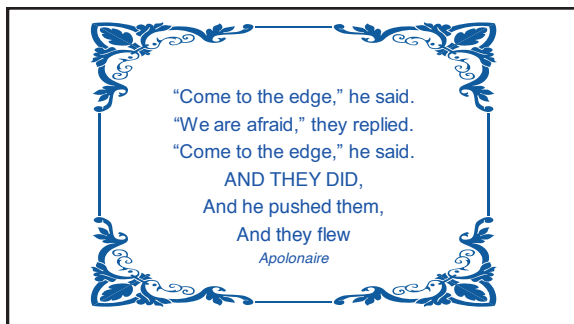
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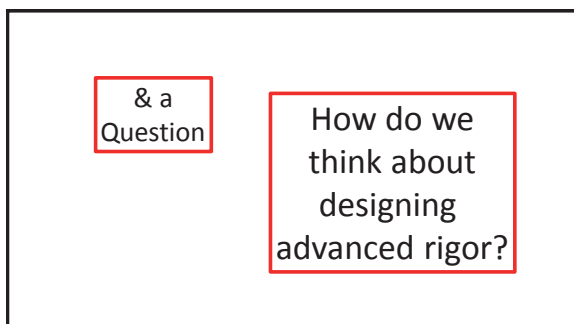
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### One Route to Advanced Challenge:

There are some general strategies to  
"ratchet" challenge level...

In the context of rich curriculum,

In response to student assessment data,

Involving the student in decision-making,

Attending to student interest and learning  
preferences,

With support for success at a new level.




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General  
Strategies  
for  
Providing  
Challenge

#### To Ratchet...

- Use advanced resources
- Move from facts to meaning
- Probe multiple meanings
- Involve multiple concepts
- Use multiple unknowns
- Call on multiple skills
- Cause reflection
- Require study in depth
- Ask for seemingly unrelated connections
- Require study in depth
- Require study in breadth
- Use advanced criteria
- Require looking across
- Vary the pacing
- Have the student look at issues/controversies related to the topic
- Call on the student to make and support contrary arguments/viewpoints
- Have the student work like a professional
- Have the student make more choices about more facets of the task

problem  
method  
solution  
expression

time  
instances  
disciplines

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### A Second Route to Advanced Challenge:

Using "The Equalizer" (as well as general  
strategies for providing challenge),

In the context of rich curriculum,

In response to student assessment data,

Involving the student in decision-making,

Attending to student interest and learning  
preferences,

With support for success at a new level.




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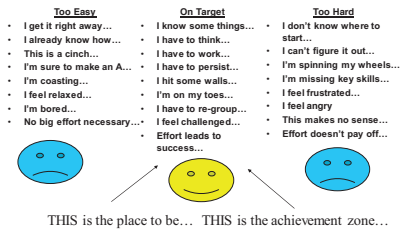
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## What Zone Am I In?



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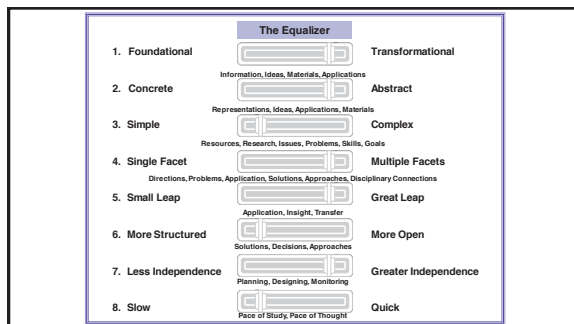
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**Big Idea/Understanding:**  
**Scientists Classify by Patterns**

*Kindergartners use carpenter's aprons to collect "data" through a nature walk.*

**At Science Center:**

Orange Group

Red Group

Yellow Group

Pre-made grid with categories on it

Sample grid – students create own grid

Students decide how to show categories and contents

**Task 1** Classify Leaves

- by size
- by color

**Task 2** Classify Leaves

- by shape
- create a category

**Task 3** Find 3 ways each leaf could be classified – other than color

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### Novel Think Tac-Toe

*advanced version*

Directions: Select and complete one activity from each horizontal row to help you and others think about your novel. Remember to make your work thoughtful, original, insightful, and elegant in expression.

Theme	Character	Write a bio-poem about yourself and another about a main character in the book so your readers see how you and the character are alike and different. Be sure to include the most important traits in each poem.	A character in the book is being written up in the paper 20 years after the novel ends. Write the piece. Where was he taken home? Why? Now, do the same for yourself 20 years from now. Make sure both pieces are interesting feature articles.	You're a "profiler." Write and illustrate a full and useful profile of an interesting character from the book with emphasis on personality traits and mode of operating. While you're at it, profile yourself too.
	Setting	Research a town/place you feel is equivalent to the one in which the novel is set. Use maps, sketches, population and other demographic data to help you make comparisons and contrasts.	Make a model or a map of a key place in your life, and in important one in the novel. Find a way to help viewers understand both what the places are like and why they are important in your life and the characters'.	The time and place in which people find themselves and when events happen shape those people and events in important ways. Find a way to convincingly prove that idea using this book.
		Find out about famous people in history or current events whose experiences and lives reflect the essential themes of this novel. Show us what you've learned.	Create a multi-media presentation that fully explores a key theme from the novel. Use at least 3 media (for example painting, music, poetry, photography, drama, sculpture, calligraphy, etc.) in your exploration.	Find several songs you think reflect an important message from the book. Prepare an audio collage. Write an exhibit card that helps your listener understand how you think these songs express the book's meaning.

**Know:** theme, setting, characterization    **Do:** Relate elements of fiction to their own lives.  
**Understand:** Good fiction is often about the reader too. Good fiction helps readers try on different lives.

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### Novel Think-Tac-Toe

*basic version*

Directions: Select and complete one activity from each horizontal row to help you and others think about your novel. Remember to make your work thoughtful, original, accurate, and detailed.

Theme	Character	Create a pair of collages that compares you and a character from the book. Compare and contrast physical and personality traits. Label your collages so viewers understand your thinking.	Write a bio-poem about yourself and another about a main character in the book so your readers see how you and the characters are alike and different. Be sure to include the most important traits in each poem.	Write a recipe or set of directions for how you would solve a problem and another for how a main character in the book would solve a problem. Your list should help us know you and the character.
	Setting	Draw/paint and write a greeting card that invites us into the scenery and mood of an important part of the book. Be sure the verse helps us understand what is important in the scene and why.	Make a model or map of a key place in your life, and an important one in the novel. Find a way to help viewers understand both what the places are like and why they are important in your life and the characters'.	Make 2 timelines. The first should illustrate and describe at least 6-8 shifts in settings in the book. The second should explain and illustrate how the mood changes with the change in setting.
		Using books of proverbs and/or quotations, find at least 6-8 that you feel reflect what's important about the novel's theme. Find at least 6-8 that do the same for your life. Display them and explain your choices.	Interview a key character from the book to find out what lessons he/she thinks we should learn from events in the book. Use a Parade magazine for material. Be sure the interview is thorough.	Find several songs you think reflect an important message from the book. Prepare an audio collage. Write an exhibit card that helps your listener understand how you think these songs express the book's meaning.

**Know:** theme, setting, characterization    **Do:** Relate elements of fiction to their own lives.  
**Understand:** Good fiction is often about the reader too. Good fiction helps readers try on different lives.

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


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### An Additional Route to Advanced Challenge:



Don't be afraid to follow the lead of advanced learners who bring particular passions to the classroom...



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Lessons from:

- Scott
- Geoff
- Felissa
- Amy

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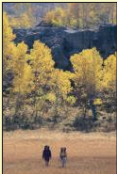
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Kathleen - Age 14

Push me! See how far I go!  
Work me 'till I drop--  
Then pick me up.  
Open a door,  
And make me run to it before it closes.  
Teach me so that I might learn,  
Then show me the Tunnel of Experience,  
And let me walk through it alone.

Then, when, near the end, I look back,  
And see another in the Tunnel,  
with you watching

I shall smile!

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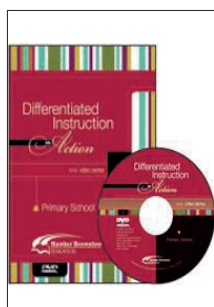


Handwriting practice lines consisting of 20 horizontal lines.

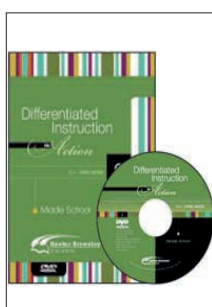


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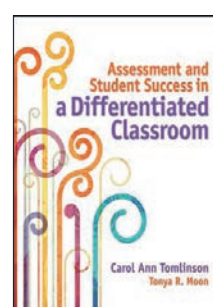
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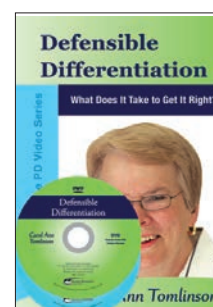
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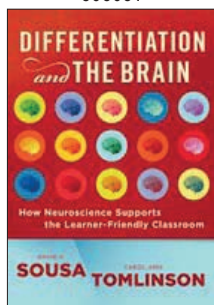
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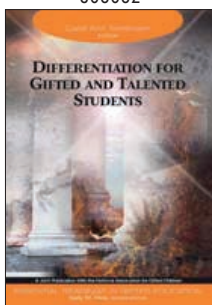
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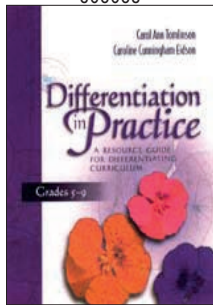
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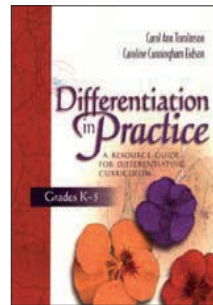
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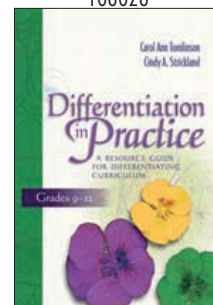
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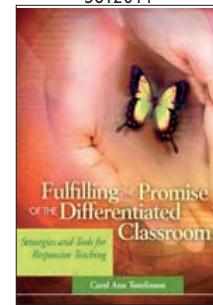
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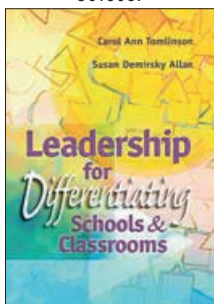
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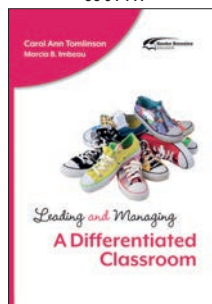
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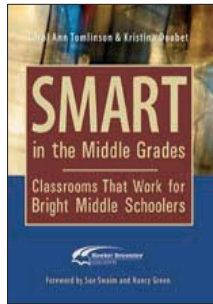
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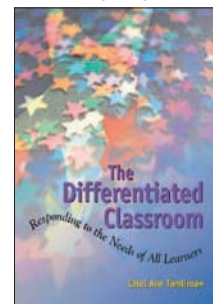
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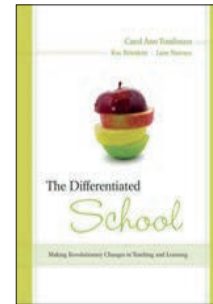
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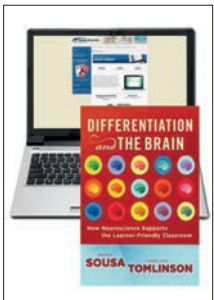
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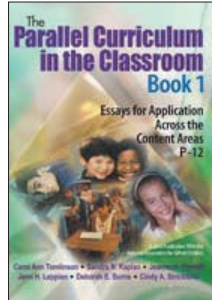
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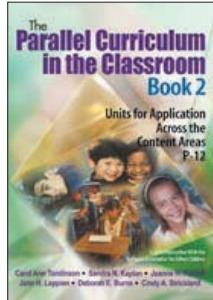
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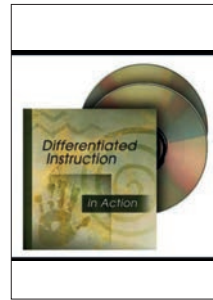
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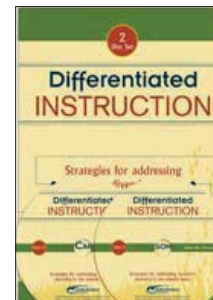
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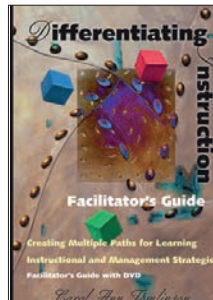
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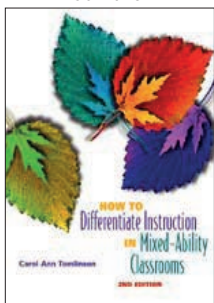
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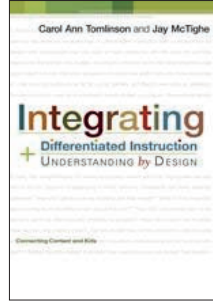
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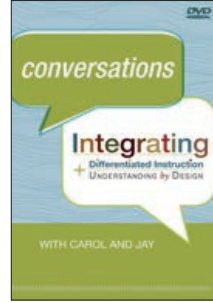
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