**Topic:** Managing a Differentiated Classroom

**Dilemma:** As we move toward more heterogeneous classrooms, we are increasingly dealing with multiple needs and abilities in one class session, especially when it comes to reading. Learning how differentiate instruction in a mixed ability classroom might help to alleviate some of your stress and help you reach students more effectively too.

**Background:** Carol Ann Tomlinson, a differentiated instruction guru, offers this quick checklist for managing a differentiated classroom.

**1**. Have a strong rationale for differentiating instruction based on student readiness, interest, and learning profile.

**2.** Begin differentiation at a pace that is comfortable to you.

**3.** Time differentiated activities to support student success.

**4.** Use an “anchor activity’ to free you up to focus your attention on your students.

**5.** Create and deliver instruction carefully.

**6.** Assign students into groups or seating areas smoothly.

**7.** Have a home base for students.

**8.** Be sure students have a plan for getting help when you’re busy with another student group.

**9.** Minimize noise.

**10.** Make a plan for students to turn in work.

**11.** Teach students to rearrange the furniture.

**12.** Minimize “stray” movement.

**13.** Promote on-task behavior.

**14.** Have a plan for “quick finishers.”

**15.** Make a plan for “calling a halt.”

**16.** Give your students as much responsibility for their learning as possible.

**17.** Engage your students in talking about classroom procedures and group processes.

**Suggested Implementation:** Test out one or two of the above strategies to test their effectiveness in your classroom and with your students. For more information, check out Tomlinson's books in our professional library. We also have two of her books in e-book form on our [Net Library](http://www.netlibrary.com) account.

**Source:** “Managing a Differentiated Classroom” from How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-Ability Classrooms, by Carol Ann Tomlinson