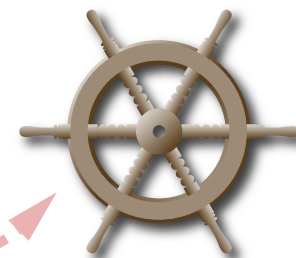


# Charting Your Course FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

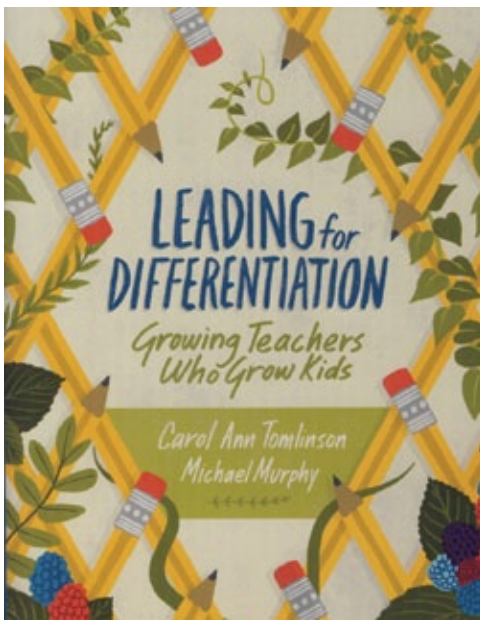


## Effective, Meaningful and Enduring Professional Development

by Adela Njie, NSTU Executive Staff Officer, Professional Development

In my last article I wrote about professional development meeting personal growth. This time, I would also like to share another way in which Carol Ann Tomlinson's book on *The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of all Learners*, interrupted my arrogance in thinking teaching my students was all about ME. Reading the book changed my attitude considerably towards my practice and left me with a desire to learn more about differentiation.

In April, I was able to move my learning further by attending the 71<sup>st</sup> ASCD (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development) conference in Atlanta. One of the sessions I attended by Carol Ann Tomlinson & Michael Murphy on *Leading for Differentiation: Growing Teachers Who Grow Kids* talked about implementing differentiation. Differentiation is not new to school boards in Nova Scotia. Most school boards I believe have provided some form of professional development on differentiation; however, this approach is still not fully implemented in all schools. During an exercise on a school-wide movement towards differentiation, it became apparent that the three guiding definitions: vision, operational vision, and yearly change plans are missing from most professional development sessions and that this might be the stumbling block that stalls implementation and impacts practice. Murphy also reiterated that effective PD is not a quick delivery of information, the vision on the what, the why, and the how is important for implementation.



Carol Ann Tomlinson



Michael Murphy

Murphy and Tomlinson also state in their book; *Leading for Differentiation: Growing Teachers Who Grow Kids* that to bring meaningful change the journey to success involves mind-stretching, risk awkwardness, and inconvenience for all involved.

The authors also talked about a variety of factors that should be considered when implementing differentiation. One set of factors involves social-emotional fear and the technical fear during implementation. These factors I find are also given minimal consideration when professional development is offered to educators.

Another set of factors would be the motivating factors that influence change in a school setting. The roles are autonomy, purpose, and mastery/competence. Murphy and Tomlinson believe these factors play a vital role and will enable leaders to refocus the way they approach the challenge of growing teachers to grow kids.

My participation at the conference made me understand clearly why differentiation is still not imbedded in our practice, and why education leaders should also provide professional development in a collaborative and supportive environment for a more meaningful and enduring change.

According to the ASCD website, it is the "global leader in developing and delivering innovative programs, products, and services that empower educators to support the success of each learner." Since 1943 the association has been providing "expert and innovative solutions in professional development, capacity building, and educational leadership essential to the way educators learn, teach, and lead." It is a global organizations whose community of educators worldwide promote excellence in learning, teaching and leading. Next year's conference will take place in Anaheim, California.

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