



HERE WE GO Tracy Crow

With gratitude for expert guidance through complex research

In this issue of *The Learning Professional*, we're publishing the final Research Review column by Joellen Killion. Killion established the column three years ago as a way to bring to practitioners' attention recent relevant research studies.

While the clarity she brought to complex and critical studies was always useful to deepen our understanding of the evidence base in our field, even more important were the implications she identified from each study. What a gift to have a sage facilitate our ability to make meaning from new information.

I appreciated particularly reading research insights through the lens of the Standards for Professional Learning, which strengthened readers' understanding not only of the research studies in question but the standards as well.

I am grateful for the many columns Killion created for our publication and its readers. At Learning Forward's recent Annual Conference in Orlando, I heard from a number of readers about how much they value her contributions in this space.

Fear not, the magazine will still highlight new studies. Elizabeth Foster, associate director of standards, research, and strategy, will take over the Research Review column in our next issue. Foster's significant expertise in education research

will ensure that readers continue to have exposure to essential new studies. Foster's perspective will help us all apply new learning and continue to prioritize an evidence-oriented approach to professional learning.

The need to understand what works in professional learning (and what doesn't) continues to grow. As we publish this, the Title IIA funding battle continues, in part because policymakers

and stakeholders don't all understand what professional learning contributes to schools and districts.

The challenge to understand professional learning's impact is one that Killion has addressed not only through her research column. In fact, Corwin Press just released the third

edition of her seminal *Assessing Impact: Evaluating Professional Learning*, a practical guide to evaluating professional learning programs. (Learning Forward members with a Book Club membership or comprehensive membership will receive the new book shortly.)

One of my biggest takeaways from Killion's insights is one that may seem counterintuitive: It doesn't take an expert in research to prioritize and document the impact of professional learning. Killion and others have helped me understand a few impact basics:

1. Professional learning without a clear purpose is unlikely to result

in changes or improvements, or, put more simply, educators who have an outcome in mind are more likely to achieve it.

2. When educators start with an outcome in mind, they can then form a map for how to get there, whether through a hypothesis or theory of action or step-by-step plan, all useful tools.
3. It isn't enough to monitor progress and formally document impact. Educators also have a responsibility to talk about what works and what doesn't work and to do so with a range of audiences, from their peers and leaders to their communities and policymakers.

That last point is particularly important to me — and a driver behind this publication and many of Learning Forward's communication efforts. All educators have a story to tell, and until they become proficient at doing so, they aren't reaching others who might help them overcome challenges, secure resources, collectively create solutions, or advocate on behalf of themselves and their students.

I look forward to new ways that Killion will contribute to this publication, and I invite you to consider how you'll share your impact. What story will you tell?

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Joellen Killion