

CLASSICS



LOOKING BACK, LEARNING FORWARD

As Learning Forward celebrates its 50th anniversary, we're digging into our archives to bring you articles that have had a major impact on the field along with commentary from current Learning Forward staff and consultants. The esteemed contributors whose work we've selected have built a foundation of knowledge that undergirds all of our work. We encourage you to revisit their insights to stay grounded even as you push forward.

IN THIS ISSUE, Tracy Crow, Learning Forward's director of communications, revisits an article written by Dennis Sparks, executive director emeritus of NSDC (now Learning Forward):

“When I first read ‘The Final 2%’ in 2005, I was transitioning to a new role at NSDC, with greater responsibility for content development and messaging. Two ideas from the article continue to linger in my work.



Tracy Crow

“First, much of what happens related to professional learning — for example, transforming policies and allocating resources — is merely a prelude, as Sparks writes, to meaningful learning. They are necessary but not sufficient for changing classroom practices. This prompted me to wonder how Learning Forward could profoundly influence what teachers experience while also shaping the professional learning continuum in ways that make those adult learners more central to the whole enterprise.

“Second, if leaders don't commit to the difficult work of articulating their point of view, they can't lead change for others or themselves. Sparks embodies this kind of clarity in the article featured here and in every communication and interaction. This idea of clarity is central to change and continues to resonate in every example of positive leadership we publish.”

— *The final 2%* p. **70**