

WOMEN IN LEARNING: CHOOSING TO CHALLENGE

Executive Summary

In recognition of International Women's Day 2021, The Learning Guild's director of research Jane Bozarth and Kate Graham, head of content for Fosway and leader in the [#WomenInLearning initiative](#), looked to profile some women working in L&D. The focus of the profiles was around the 2021 International Women's Day theme [#ChoosingToChallenge](#). We wanted to hear the ways in which women who had gained prominence in the field had chosen to challenge, particularly in regard to the way they defined and pursued the idea of 'success'. The 10 women profiled were also invited to share thoughts about the attitudes, skills, and mentors that shored up their success, and their ways of managing obstacles and recovering from missteps.

In choosing women to profile we sought diverse voices from a variety of settings; profiles include women working as freelancers, business owners, and individual contributors ranging in age from 20s into 60s, with most clustered in the 30-to-50-year-old range, and we intentionally chose some newer or lesser-heard voices. We offered several broad questions and expected quick, two to-three-sentence responses. What we received were rich, detailed, thoughtful answers, often full of heartfelt concern and unexpected personal disclosure. The time and care given to answering our questions was truly stunning. What was originally envisioned as something short is now presented as a much longer report, with most of their comments offered intact.



Overall the women offered a view of 'women in learning' as people challenging traditional ideas of success. Many spoke of forging a path to the life you want, finding balance, and treating a career as a journey rather than a fixed place. They spoke of the importance of others who supported them and were eager to give thanks and credit; some discussed the role privilege has played in their lives. In describing obstacles and challenges, some described the ways in which their own fears held them back. We hope you find the profiles of these women insightful, inspiring, and of use as you consider your own career or supporting the careers of others.

We welcome other voices and invite readers to share something they are choosing or have chosen to challenge via Twitter or LinkedIn. Please use the hashtags #ChoosingToChallenge and #WomenInLearning.

To download the full report, [click here](#).