



# Learning Reps News

Edinburgh Local Association

## Time for Reflection

'The New Year is a moment of quiet reflection. Reflect on the year gone by; of the happy gains and missed opportunities. Recount the good and bad of the past year. Introspect on your personal growth, and learn from the experience. New Year is the time to ensure that we bring balance to our life with positive influences overriding the negative ones' (Simran Khurana, educator and writer).

As teachers, critical reflection is something we do all the time. We constantly reflect upon the quality of our teaching and the quality of our interactions as we strive for continuous improvement and seek to uphold the highest standards that as a teaching profession we demand of ourselves. Underpinning this way of being is the idea of professional accountability. This places a significant responsibility upon us to work together and share responsibility for learners and learning. This makes us all very important cogs in a very complex 'machine'. In doing so it highlights the importance of looking after our own wellbeing so that we can continue to play our part.

### Looking after your wellbeing – 'Knowing Your No'

Martyn Cheung wrote recently in our April 22 Learning Rep newsletter about putting your own health and wellbeing at the forefront of your own professional learning this year. To support us all in this our colleague Claire Young has kindly put together a programme of professional learning workshops. These will help us explore and strengthen skills relating to professional priorities and boundaries as we move towards PRD and PU later in the year.

Unfortunately Claire's first workshop entitled 'Knowing Your No' coincided with the first day of our industrial action so it has now been rescheduled to 4pm Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2023. Claire has this to say about this what will be discussed and delivered: *'Identifying, communicating and maintaining our boundaries is an important skill for educators in the system we're teaching in. Doing this with as much flexibility, compassion and humour as we can matters too. At the same time, it's a skill that is often left for individuals or teams to work on ad hoc, rather than being a core part of our professional development and reflection'*.

Claire adds that *'being able to learn about this in community and build our collective confidence in how we establish the boundaries that we need is important to making this work stick, as well as helping us find what's right for us and step away from what's not'*. With this in mind, I think there is a great opportunity for us to get together and develop our learning community in our own settings. We will be meeting on Teams but in my own school I am intending to invite colleagues to participate as a group. Perhaps this is something you could also consider in your own schools? All are welcome, whatever your role, background or experience so please email [edinburghla@eis.org.uk](mailto:edinburghla@eis.org.uk) to get the link (if you decide to participate as a group can we ask that all colleagues email for the invite as this will help determine levels of participation).

We are looking forward to seeing as many of you at the workshop but if this is a theme you'd like to explore right now, here are a few ways in:

- [Boundaries, Rest and Letting Go - Webinar - YouTube](#) – This hour long webinar offers lots of practical ideas and strategies as well as addressing common questions or challenges around boundaries within teaching. It was organised by Education Support, who exist to support the health and wellbeing of everyone who works in the UK education sector.
- [Setting boundaries: a guide for teachers and education staff in schools \(educationsupport.org.uk\)](#) – This takes you to a quick read article and downloadable pdf exploring strategies for setting boundaries.
- [Prioritising your wellbeing – what it means and why we could all be doing it \(teachappy.co.uk\)](#) – This blog offers a reminder of one of the positive reasons we need to establish boundaries, so that we can have time for ourselves and our needs each day.
- [How to Maintain Perspective This Christmas \(teachappy.co.uk\)](#) – As we move towards the holidays this blog offers a couple of ways to look at the transition from the end of term into the holidays. I liked the reminders of the choices I can make about how I see myself, my teaching and my time.

If you have resources, questions, or ideas you'd like to share as we develop this work, please get in touch with Claire at [claire.young@drummond.edin.sch.uk](mailto:claire.young@drummond.edin.sch.uk). Our aim is for this work to grow and be responsive to the needs and experiences of EIS members in Edinburgh.

## Professional Review and Development

In Edinburgh our employer is seeking to support the development of teacher professionalism through the PRD process. The Authority's 'Teacher Professionalism framework and PRD Policy' was put together with the Teacher Professionalism Board, with two members of the Teacher Panel sitting on the board (Phill Pearce and Lynn Myles). In all probability you might not have seen this document but it contains important advice for our PRD process; Indeed it was only brought to my attention as I sought to wrangle with the bewildering expectations of our varied establishments. In truth we all want the PRD process to work effectively for everyone (back to that idea of professional accountability) so I was very reassured in my conversations with CEC that we seem to be on the same page. To this end I will redraft (again) my PRD presentation and Martyn and I will look to engage you with it in the New Year.

*You should be able to find a copy of the CEC PRD policy on Edinburgh Learns, but we have also uploaded a copy to the LA website, in the learning reps section, for ease of reference.*

## Learning for Sustainability in the SQIP

Previously I wrote about the importance of Learning for Sustainability (Lfs) and sought to raise awareness of the newly launched GTCS Lfs Hub that seeks to catalyse our engagement with the relaunched GTCS Lfs Standards. In the Hub you will find a variety of resources and professional learning opportunities including 3 self-study professional learning modules which are designed to support you in embedding Lfs into your own practice and that of your schools (see the link to the GTCS website below).



Recently I was also delighted to present at an Lfs event hosted by Lorna French for our elected members. It was uplifting to hear about all the Lfs work being undertaken across the Authority, especially from some younger presenters. However, rather apologetically I also sought to inject a little pragmatism into the proceedings by asserting that for Lfs to land successfully in every single classroom in the Authority it needs to be explicitly expressed as a key priority in the SQIP. I made the point that rather than seeking to add an additional priority and increase workload Lfs was a social justice issue that was inherently about equality, inclusion, health and wellbeing, and of course learning and teaching where it is an entitlement for every pupil. I am pretty firm in my belief that this is probably the only way that we will achieve a more

comprehensive approach to embedding LfS in our learning, as opposed to what we currently have which is our keen and passionate schools and individuals carrying the mantle. Feedback from the Councillors present was very positive, whilst Lorna French agreed that it was good to be challenged in this way. It now remains to be seen whether LfS finds its way onto the SQIP as a key priority for 2023, as opposed to being tucked in at the back, where for many it quietly resides shrouded in mystique! Please let me know your thoughts!

[Learning for Sustainability - The General Teaching Council for Scotland \(gtcs.org.uk\)](https://www.gtcs.org.uk)

## Our Pay Campaign

Professional Learning is something that we engage in to stimulate our thinking and develop our knowledge, skills and capacities. The focus for this is not only on us as individuals, but also as part of a larger learning community. Our current pay campaign is a clear example of this principle and the need to act individually and collectively to maintain the integrity of our profession.

In this context professional learning undoubtably means keeping ourselves informed and engaged. Support our Reps and look out for ways to support actions arising from our National and Local Offices. Remember... we are all in this together!



## Retirement Planning

Life after teaching may seem daunting, or perhaps viewed with a sense of opportunity? Martyn has been exploring with Business Gateway the kinds of support that may be suitable for members interested in setting up their own businesses after leaving the profession or retiring. This advice/training would be tailored specifically for teachers but at this point we need to gauge levels of interest so please let us know.



We are always happy to support members and offer advice where we can. Please do not hesitate to get in touch we will always try to get back to you as soon as possible. Hopefully we get the chance to meet and engage with some of you soon. For the moment we wish you a peaceful and restful Christmas break. Happy New Year when it comes.

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