

February 2024



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Learning Reps News

Lessons in Happiness!

Edinburgh Local Association

Friday 15th March 2024, 1:30 – 5pm, EIS Moray Place

Happy New Year! Does anyone actually know when saying 'Happy New Year' is too late?! But if we can just stop and think for a moment, in that simple statement to someone we are hoping with sincerity that the year ahead is going to be full of happiness and fulfilment, and therefore perhaps there's a certain illogicality to having an arbitrary cut-off?

I don't know anyone who doesn't want to be happy. Unfortunately, the joy and happiness that all of us feel in teaching has been progressively eroded. Workload stress and unacceptable behaviour patterns from pupils, parents/carers are only some of the difficult challenges facing teachers – potentially causing fatigue, stress, anxiety, and feelings of powerlessness. At the same time, while the personal well-being of every teacher is fundamentally important to each individual, it can also have a major effect on the quality of learning that they provide. The EIS continues to campaign for structural and systematic changes that will address these issues. However, until they are resolved, how best can teachers support themselves and each other?

The '**Lessons in Happiness**' course provides a powerful approach to protecting and enhancing well-being by supporting choices to change the quality of our day. The 'Lessons in Happiness' course is about how the mind works, how our thinking affects the way we perform and most importantly, how we can influence the whole process in a positive, effective way to achieve what we want..... and to be happier at the same time.



John Lamont, the author and presenter of our course, has a wealth of experience from the worlds of research, engineering, corporate management, therapy, coaching, motivation and teaching which all come together in the presentation.

The rationale for our course includes:

- Improving the quality of life and well-being of participants and of those around them;
- Developing and realising potential by empowering members with a simple, practical skill set and provision of a 'toolbox' of mind-tools, supported by evidence-based scientific research.

To avoid disappointment please register using this link before FRIDAY 23rd FEBRUARY:

[Lessons in Happiness \(eis.org.uk\)](https://eis.org.uk)

Looking Forward to PRD / PU (again!)

Friday 26th April 2024, 1 – 3pm, EIS Moray Place

At the risk of repeating ourselves (and for the attentive – you will see that we have!)... here we go again... looking forward to 'PRD Time'. Though this year we are trying to start our thinking a little earlier. You might be aware of the information sessions designed to support your PRD and PU processes that we ran last session? It is our intention to do similar again this year so please consider coming along to the information session on the on the 26th.



You will leave the session having:

- developed your understanding of PRD and PU processes
- a clear understanding of what you need to do to fulfil your own professional responsibilities.

Please note that this session will not teach you how to use the GTCS myPL system as it is not necessary for the bulk of what you need to do for your PRD and PU (if this sounds confusing, please come along!).

Prior to the session and as a wee reminder here are some general points to consider:

- Professional Review and Development (PRD) is an essential part of Professional Update (PU) and professional learning;
- PRD provides teachers with ongoing opportunities to reflect on their practice and personal learning through professional learning conversations supported by an annual review meeting;
- This engagement helps teachers to meet their own learning needs, the needs of their learners and contribute to school improvement;
- Professional Review and Development is Key to Teacher Professionalism;
- Positively engaging with PRD, using Professional Standards to scaffold and support, empowers teachers to be critical of their thinking and practice, and enhances teacher professionalism to ultimately best serve our children and young people across Scotland;
- Explicit connections between PRD, the Professional Standards, the school improvement planning cycle and collegiate activities should be clearly visible and transparent for all.

Professional Learning is your entitlement and to be clear the EIS is very firmly of the belief that members should decide their own PL priorities. These will ultimately be supportively discussed through your professional learning conversations and in your annual PRD meeting. Because this is an ongoing process, we are all able to contribute to whole school (and faculty) improvement planning so ultimately it does make some sense that our own PL needs are to some extent aligned with our establishment improvement priorities. In saying this, as you have seen with the 'Lessons in Happiness' course, we continue to focus on supporting the H&WB of members. This is because the learning environment in our classrooms is to a very large extent shaped by us and where we are in terms of our own well-being, including our mental health, sense of purpose, and ability to manage stress.

Bearing in mind that for PRD purposes we must seek to reflect against GTCS Standards, it is reassuring to note that there is an expectation for *'Promoting health and wellbeing of self, colleagues and the children and young people in my care'* (Standard 1.1 Professional Values, The standard for Career-Long Professional Learning, 2021). This means that focusing on ways to improve your own well-being within your own PL plans is not only a positive way

to utilise some of your own PRD associated time, it is entirely legitimate to do so. This is the message that we are currently asking Lorna French to cascade down to senior managers in our establishments.

In the information session, as well as de-stressing the PRD/PU processes in a straightforward pragmatic way, we will also illustrate how we might all make use of the Professional Learning Cycle Model to conceptualize H&WB ideas as part of our own PRD plans.

To be de-stressed rather than distressed with PRD please register using this link:

[Looking Forward to PRD/PU \(again\)! Tickets, Fri 26 Apr 2024 at 13:00 | Eventbrite](#)

My usual plug... Learning for Sustainability

It's been a year or so since I was involved with the GTCS in helping develop resources for their LfS Hub. Since then many of you may have become more involved in LfS activities in your own settings, particularly so as CEC have over the last session developed the role of LfS leads in schools. In my own school the LfS lead found engaging with the PL on offer really helpful in supporting them in their new role, so I am providing the link to the GTCS Hub again.



As many of you will have read in the April 22 edition of the SEJ, I firmly believe that LfS is the most important idea of our time and that it is simply the right thing to do for people and the planet. In addition to this it is actually a pupil entitlement – and our professional responsibility to deliver this entitlement in every classroom. I still maintain a strong interest in LfS and have in recent times began to ponder how secondary teachers working in discrete subject areas may do that effectively? (I am working on the assumption here that primary colleagues may also find this a little more straightforward?) For example easy to do for Geographers – but less so for mathematicians? With this in mind I am keen to explore how we as a staff group can support the delivery of LfS in a more comprehensive way. Please contact me to discuss, share, ask for advice etc.

[Learning for Sustainability - The General Teaching Council for Scotland \(gtcs.org.uk\)](#)

[Learning for Sustainability – April 2022 \(sej.org.uk\)](#)

Your Professional Learning

Hopefully you received 'Your Professional Learning', an ebulletin covering the range of opportunities offered by the EIS, from member-led workshops to courses developed with partners. This was recently sent out to members by our PL Coordinators Rob Henthorn: rhenthorn@eis.org.uk and Pauline McColgan: pmccolgan@eis.org.uk

They write 'we want to ensure PL is driven by EIS members so we warmly welcome your thoughts on your own professional learning, and what's on offer'.

If you have any queries, concerns, challenges please don't hesitate to contact us.

Best wishes
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