

Paper Plane

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I am just home from a full day of professional development at my school. We got to start later than usual and finish earlier than usual, and yet I am still feeling like I've been hit by a bus. Sitting in a chair listening to people speak all day can really take it out of you. A quick scan around the room after lunch revealed quite a number of teachers struggling to stay awake, which is a good reminder about the importance of keeping your audience (or class) engaged, especially after lunch.



Usually one of the perks of attending PD days is that you have a day out of school. Quite often, this is also complemented by a great lunch and, if you've hit PD gold, free parking, a later start and earlier finish time. Signing up for such opportunities always feels like a great idea at the time. It's not until the day arrives and you are facing a lengthy commute to a far-flung location that you start to second guess your choice.

Attending PD at school has its pros and cons. On the plus side, you know how long it will take you to get there, you can leave things at your desk and you are surrounded by your colleagues. On the down side, you are sitting in classrooms or the gym listening to presenters all day when you feel like you have a pile of work waiting for you in your office.

Driving in this morning, there was the obligatory number of students who somehow didn't realise that they had the day off. Their excited facial expressions were in direct contrast to those of the teachers charging in to the car park with seconds to spare. If you don't have to be in front of kids, it's a great opportunity to push your commute to the very limits and arrive with no time to spare.

One thing I don't understand about some teachers on these days, is the sudden and dramatic wardrobe change. You see these people day in, day out dressed in professional teaching gear but PD days bring out some outfits that really are best-suited to a sick day at home on the couch watching Netflix kind of arrangement.

I don't think I wanted to see the tracksuit pants that Darren from IT walks his two Rottweilers in strutting down the corridor, nor did I want to see Nora from Science wearing the activewear she wore to Bootcamp this morning.

It gives me a glimpse into peoples' private lives that I wasn't seeking. Probably the only plus of wearing activewear to a PD day is that it may help you to propel yourself at higher speed towards the allocated morning tea and lunch venues.

These are competitive situations and it is every member of staff for themselves. If you haven't downed six sandwiches, three curry puffs and a vanilla slice, did you even attend the PD? I don't think anyone will be able

to sign your certificate.

Christina Adams is a member of the Australian Education Union (Victoria) and a stand-up comedian.