

Paper plane

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Last week, I arrived at school, attended my morning briefing, sat down at my desk and had a feeling that I should be somewhere else. Not on a tropical island or at home in my bed, but a real feeling that I wasn't supposed to be at work.

A quick glance at the daily extras sheet revealed that I was, in fact, supposed to be at a two-day Professional Development course ... a course that had started a good half an hour ago.

After frantically making arrangements for my classes and having to explain my brain fade to all in my office, I dashed out the door and took off in my car. Luckily, door to door, the trip was under half an hour and I arrived at the venue relatively unflustered.

"You're very late. It started over an hour ago," stated the unsmiling lady at the administration desk, as her tassel earring danced beneath her ears. Her badge identified her as "Maria" and had a smiling sticker that grinned in direct contrast to Maria's actual facial expression.



"Yes, I know. I got to school and then realised I was supposed to be here."

"Well, you'll have to sign in really quickly and get over there."

Yes, that was the general plan.

I was apparently so late that I required an escort to the building that was clearly visible from the administration area.

"Is there a bathroom I could use?"

"I'd hold on until the break so you don't miss out on any more information than you already have."

Gee, thanks, Maria.

Opening the door, the whole group turned.

"Sorry I'm late."

The presenter smiled welcomingly.

"No problem at all. It's a big two days, missing an hour or so won't hurt."

See, Maria?

As I settled in to my chair, I scanned the room, only to realise there were three other teachers from my school in attendance. I had somehow managed to sit next to them, despite not noticing them on my way in.

They had also collected my package of goodies for me, when they had seen my name on the attendance list. I had only ever spoken to one of them before, as the staff at my new school is so large that I haven't met everyone yet.

"The best thing is, we don't have to take any notes and he hasn't read anything out loud from the PowerPoint presentation so far." Caitlyn, the PE teacher I had briefly spoken to in the staff photo line leant towards me. This news thrilled me, as I've never understood the point of reading information out to a room full of educated people.

I was grateful for the camaraderie that developed between the four of us from the same school over the course of two days. It made the whole experience much easier to cope with, especially when the presenter waivered and started to read out the PowerPoint slides halfway through day two and the coffee had run out.

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