

A message from the other side

I'm sorry not to join you all today. The invite was kindly extended to me but I had to decline as, to be honest, I feel pretty broken.

My main thought at the moment is thank goodness I will never have to repeat ETC 1 [Early Career Teacher, Year 1]. Everyone I spoke to before it started (experienced teachers, tutors, mentors, anyone who'd taught ever) said 'it's a nightmare, just so overwhelming' and it has been.

I'm not sure it needs to be like this. I'm not sure that it being like this keeps people in the profession or helps maintain their early passion for the work.

Obviously and thankfully, there have been some real highlights to the year. I thought I'd hate teaching *A Christmas Carol*; I loved it. I thought a group of year 8s couldn't handle post-colonial theory applied to Shakespeare; I was totally wrong. And best of all, the students I teach (well, the vast majority) are a real joy.

However, it has been horribly tough too. I work full-time, I get to school every day by 7.15am and rarely leave before 6pm. I do minimum 4 hours marking a week at home (far more in exam periods). I never see other, more experienced teachers teach as there isn't the time between my own lessons and planning my own lessons. I go to centrally organised ECT training and either feel resentful that it's eating into my precious planning time or I'm too tired to get fully involved. None of it feels sustainable. And I'm only in year 1!

Every other job I have had has acknowledged that people new to the organisation or new to the role need real time to bed in and find their way around. Time to build their skills and learn from those around them. Teaching seems to pride itself on the full throttle, overload for ECTs and I don't understand why. It's not conducive to success, it doesn't build confidence and it doesn't build resilient teachers who want to stay in the profession.

I am definitely going to continue teaching. 100%. But I am already working out how I can move to part-time, a luxury I can only afford due to my previous life/work.

Jo, Early Career Teacher, Year 1.