

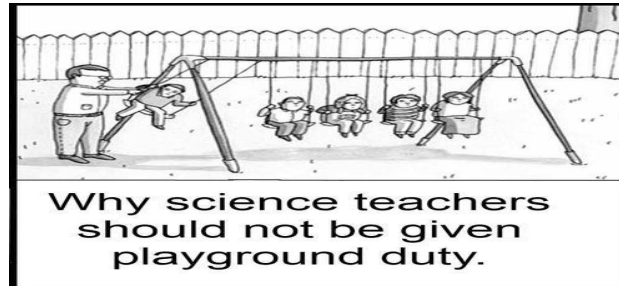


# Being Ambitious Professional Learning

James Gray. Head of Senior Boys Boarding

## BSA Annual Boarding Conference

4<sup>th</sup>- 6<sup>th</sup> January 2016. Cheltenham, England



The Annual BSA Conference proved to be a real success this year. They managed to attract a great variety of speakers, who provided us with a diverse, stimulating and thought provoking series of lectures and workshops, including **“Work/ Life Balance”**, **“LGBT Issues”**, **“Marketing Boarding”** and **“Crisis Management”**. Although nominally a boarding conference the vast majority of the input could be applied to life in the classroom. A couple of the more memorable contributions were:

**“Mind the Gap”**- A fascinating lecture on how the teenage mind really works. It was explained that during the pre- teenage years (11 to 13) the medial frontal cortex undergoes a huge rebuilding job due to the developmental changes dominating the body. As a result, the teenage brain develops from the back (with emphasis on emotions, risk, peer comparison and self-image concerns) to the front (responsible for planning, decision making, organisation and self-control). The more adult traits can clearly be taught- but it suggests that an approach to teenagers based on “what should you have done in that situation?” rather than “why did you do something so daft?” will be a far more effective. So it’s true- these bad tempered, sulky, disorganized teenagers really ARE different to “normal” people- but with appropriate guidance they can eventually emerge unscathed from the “adolescent tunnel”.

**“Slow Education”**- How often do any of us stop for a while to consider the decisions that we make? It is so easy to simply follow our normal routines without thought, whether or not they are really the most effective way forward. The emphasis should be on providing education that stimulates the students, rather than just teaching in order to pass an exam or because you have always done it that way. It was presented on a sliding scale of values:

- “I don’t know, don’t care and don’t see the point of it” [AMOTIVATION]
- “My parents forced me to be here” [EXTRINSIC]
- “My peers will see me in a better light if I get stuck in” [INTROJECTED]
- “I’m interested in this and want to apply it to my life” [IDENTIFIED]
- “I believe that boarding school will allow me to be more rounded as an adult” [INTEGRATED]
- “I want to” [INTRINSIC]

This information has been relayed back to the boarding team with a full presentation at one of our regular INSET sessions, and has already provided a number of topics for discussion.

*Do you have any professional development news you want to share?  
If so contact Mark Loader at [mark.loader@regents-pattaya.co.th](mailto:mark.loader@regents-pattaya.co.th)*