

## BRAIN GYM

### The 6 Education Trends That Will Shape Learning And Skills In 2026

#### Key Takeways

- AI as a Transformative Force in Learning
- Growing Importance of AI Literacy
- Continuous Upskilling and Reskilling
- Learning as a Continuous Skill
- Immersive and Gamified Learning
- Human-Centric Skills Remain Essential

AITSL Standards: 1-7

[Take me to this article](#)

### Report: Extra school year cuts child harm

#### Key Takeways

- Raising the school-leaving age improved child safety, significantly reducing harm among teenagers in South Australia.
- Child maltreatment fell sharply.
- Emergency hospital visits decreased by 19%, mainly due to fewer injury-related cases, especially among vulnerable children.
- Keeping more teenagers in school mattered.

AITSL Standards: 1, 4 and 7

[Take me to this article](#)

## This Week's Mini PD

# Trust, Belonging, and Learning

What happens when students genuinely like their teacher? Every positive teacher-student relationship helps establish the emotional and psychological foundations that enable effective learning. While this may seem self-evident, we often overlook the significant impact that poor relationships can have on learning and classroom climate.

When students feel liked, respected, and valued by their teacher(s), they experience a greater sense of safety and security in the classroom. This psychological safety reduces anxiety and fear of failure, empowering students to take risks, ask questions, and engage more deeply in their learning. [Research in neuroscience and educational psychology](#) demonstrates that stress and perceived threat inhibit learning, whereas trust and belonging enhance attention, memory, and motivation.

Strong teacher-student relationships also boost engagement and persistence. Students who feel connected to their teachers are more likely to participate actively, persevere with challenging tasks, and adhere to classroom expectations. They tend to view feedback as supportive rather than critical, enabling them to grow through reflection rather than defensiveness.

From a behavioural perspective, students who feel cared for are better able to self-regulate, demonstrate cooperation, and contribute positively to the learning environment. In turn, this reduces disruptive behaviour, increases time on task, and supports improved academic outcomes.

When teachers demonstrate genuine care - through warmth, fairness, high expectations, and consistent support—students develop a stronger sense of belonging and self-belief. These qualities are key predictors of both wellbeing and academic success. As noted by the [Australian Education Research Organisation](#), “A positive sense of belonging at school has fundamental benefits for children and young people, with flow-on effects for their learning and engagement.”

It is more than reasonable to conclude that when students both like and feel liked by their teachers, the classroom becomes a place of trust, motivation, and emotional safety - the essential conditions for meaningful and lasting learning.

## Staff Spotlight

In his TED talk, [How to Escape Education's Death Valley](#), Sir Ken Robinson shares three principles, which if we accept, require a different classroom experience for students and a different kind of work environment for teachers. His three principles are:

#1 Human beings are naturally different and diverse.

#2 Curiosity is the engine of learning.

#3 Human life is inherently creative.

For those who value Robinson's work, these principles both affirm what great teaching can be and challenge us to redesign schools so diversity, curiosity, and creativity are fully nurtured.

## Drop of Wisdom

Your next move  
matters more than  
your last mistake.

Read that again.

**Disclaimer:** This information is not intended to replace the advice of appropriate relevant qualified practitioners.

DMD Education Resource Services and Vital Staff Newsletter disclaim any liability for the decisions you make based upon this information.