



BRAIN GYM

Teacher wellbeing isn't just about workload — it's about purpose

Key Takeways

- Wellbeing efforts often miss the mark.
- True wellbeing is more than comfort.
- Purpose is central to teacher satisfaction.
- Meaningful systems support wellbeing.
- Connection and reflection strengthen culture.

AITSL Standards: 4, 6 and 7

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Running in Place: The Red Queen Effect in Education

Key Takeways

- Many high-performing schools operate in a culture where everyone must “run as fast as they can” just to maintain their position, leading to chronic over-exertion and anxiety for staff and students.
- Applied to schools, it suggests that competition strengthens existing patterns instead of enabling genuine change.
- Systems like NAPLAN and ATAR create a competitive ecosystem where schools adapt to win within fixed rules, not to rethink what success should be.

AITSL Standards: 6 and 7

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Student Spotlight

As we start 2026, please remember that many students carry invisible burdens and diverse identities. Treat every learner with respect, use trauma-aware language, avoid assumptions, and respond calmly. Prioritise emotional safety, privacy, and inclusion, and seek support early if you notice changes in a student's behaviour or wellbeing.

This Week's Mini PD

Progress Over Perfection A Focus for 2026

James Clear, author of *Atomic Habits*, says every action is a vote for the person you want to become. Good habits strengthen you; bad habits weaken you. Your wellbeing — personal and professional — rests on the choices that shape your habits.

You can be confident of your progress in 2026 if you can turn your best choices into your habits.

Commit to growth, positivity, and purpose.

Your growth starts with intention and a willingness to embrace new opportunities. Challenges will arise, but each one offers a chance to learn and improve. Set yourself the goal of finishing the year proud of how far you have grown, not just what you have achieved. You are already more experienced than you were at the start of 2025 so keep building momentum and let this be a rewarding, impactful year.

Be a “turning point” for a student

Lives change when a school staff member chooses to notice, care, and act. This year, commit to making a difference for one young person — your belief or kindness could be the turning point that shapes their future.

Don't just know every student by name; know something of their story, strengths, and pressures. Set a goal for yourself to be able to articulate at least one positive, non-academic attribute for every learner you teach.

Be the author of your own success

Do yourself a favour and list ALL the ways your job benefits you. You'll be amazed at the length of your list. Even on tough days, there's much to be grateful for. Identify and celebrate the 'AHA' moments. Be ever watchful for ways your influence extends far beyond one particular 'bad' day and into the future lives of your students. Build an attitude that tough days are 'strength' training.

Be a shining light for new staff members

There's a lot to take in when you start at a new school — it's no wonder a new colleague might go home after day one with a sore brain! Make a difference by helping with the simple things, like:

- who's who (e.g. the head of teaching and learning)
- where to find stuff (e.g. whiteboard pens and cleaners)
- who to talk to about challenges (e.g. a tricky student)
- how to navigate the unexpected (because something always pops up!).
- It's also worth thinking about what's left unsaid — for example, the student behaviours that are quietly accepted, even if the policy says otherwise.

Remind new staff that wellbeing must be treated as a prerequisite for their effectiveness, not an optional extra. They need to hear - “It is perfectly fine to speak up if you are struggling or out of your depth.” We've all been there!! Don't go it alone! Seek out a colleague to share a laugh or a cup of coffee during a difficult time.

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

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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

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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.

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BRAIN GYM

**Connection counts:
Teacher-student
relationships matter for
teacher wellbeing**

Key Takeways

- Positive teacher-student relationships enhance teacher wellbeing.
- Good relationships foster emotional balance and professional motivation.
- Poor relationships increase stress and risk of burnout.
- Strengthening relationships should be a school-wide priority.
- Teachers can nurture connections through everyday gestures.

AITSL Standards: 1,3,4,7

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**Why Your School's Lead
Indicators Aren't Leading**

Key Takeways

- The goal isn't to make schools more corporate. It's to make them more **conscious** and aware of the actions that are likely to create better outcomes tomorrow.
- Schools confuse evidence with impact.
- Without the right indicators, schools end up tracking what's visible instead of what's valuable.

AITSL Standards: 1, 3, 5 and 6

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This Week's Mini PD

The BEAR Method A Clear Framework for Giving Constructive Negative Feedback

Giving negative feedback to colleagues or students can feel uncomfortable, yet it is essential for growth, performance, and strong relationships in a school. The BEAR method was developed by *P.L. Harms* and *D.B. Roebuck* and offers a structured and compassionate way to deliver feedback that is clear, fair, and actionable.

BEAR stands for **Behaviour**, **Effect**, **Alternative**, and **Result**, with each step supporting productive communication. The method can be adapted to help you work more effectively with either colleagues or students.

Behaviour describes what you saw or heard, not assumptions about personality. State exactly what happened in simple, concrete words. For example, instead of a vague criticism, note that an agreed deadline was missed. Clear wording helps avoid defensiveness and confusion.

Effect shares how the behaviour impacted you or others. This links actions to outcomes and lets you express concerns such as extra stress, delays, or added pressure on colleagues or students.

Alternative moves the discussion toward improvement. Here, you clearly describe what you would like to see done differently and offer practical suggestions. Including expectations, timeframes, or specific actions ensures the feedback is actionable and achievable.

Result highlights the positive outcomes of change. This might include smoother workflow or habits, reduced pressure on self or others or improved trust and performance. It reinforces motivation by showing how change benefits both the individual and the wider group.

Used with either colleagues or students, the BEAR method can turn negative feedback into a constructive, respectful dialogue that supports accountability, clarity, and continuous improvement.

Student Spotlight

If students can imagine catastrophe, they can imagine possibility. Overthinking is energy, not a flaw. We can help redirect it toward curiosity, planning, and hope. Teach students to question fears, rehearse success, and practice compassion. The same mind that spirals can also strategise, create, and grow with guidance and patience.

Health Spotlight

A 24-Year-Old's Death From Dementia Shows It's Not Just A Concern For The Elderly

In healthy aging, the brain changes slowly.....But in aggressive forms of dementia, whole brain networks collapse at once.

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Happy, Silly Thoughts



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BRAIN GYM

The Quiet Slide in School Attendance

Key Takeways

- Daily absence has risen from 7% (2025), creating an urgent national issue.
- Two in five students miss about one day a fortnight.
- Each missed day harms achievement and increases pressure on teachers, classmates, and families.
- Illness and family reasons now drive most absences; suspensions remain low and stable.
- England's system-wide reforms improved attendance; similar coordinated action is needed to restore Australia's rate.

AITSL Standards: 1,3,6

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2026: a Pivotal Year for AI in Schools

Key Takeways

- The main challenge for Australian schools is no longer whether to use AI, but how to use it effectively.
- "AI awareness" — understanding *when, why, and how* to use AI responsibly.
- Need for clear, values-driven and community-informed policies.

AITSL Standards: 2,4,7

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This Week's Mini PD

Feed Your Mind for Success

The Mental Menu That Matters

The Tale of Two Mental Menus

Imagine your school as a restaurant where each of us chooses from two mental menus every day. Which one are we ordering from?

Just as our bodies rely on nutritious food, our professional wellbeing depends on the quality of our thought patterns. When we linger on frustrations, compare ourselves to colleagues, overthink without action, or engage in negative self-talk, we're consuming the mental equivalent of fast food - convenient in the moment but ultimately draining and unproductive. The "superfood" alternative includes practising gratitude, approaching challenges with curiosity, learning from missteps, and maintaining perspective when things get hectic. These habits sustain focus, clarity, and long-term resilience.

Coaching Ourselves and Each Other

As educators, we often model the habits we want to see in our students, including mental nutrition. We can support ourselves and one another by recognising unhelpful thinking patterns, reframing challenges positively, and celebrating incremental progress. Collective reflection - through quick check-ins, team gratitude moments, or sharing lessons learned - will help strengthen our professional mindset and school culture.

The Long Game

Like physical fitness, mental fitness builds through consistent effort and self-awareness. When we choose growth-oriented thoughts, we enhance not only our own wellbeing but also the emotional climate of our classrooms and teams.

If we choose wisely from the menu, we can cultivate a positive, creative and constructive mindset that not only shapes us individually but also as a community.

Our life is shaped by our mind; we become what we think.

Gautama Buddha

Student Spotlight

A key experience for a **student whose home life is chaotic or stressful** is often feeling responsible for managing emotions or problems that are not theirs, such as calming adults, caring for younger siblings, or hiding family issues at school. This can leave them emotionally exhausted and hyper-vigilant, as well as reluctant to ask for help, even when they are struggling.

Staffroom Chat

If your career
were a relationship,
would you still
choose it?

Happy, Silly Thoughts

BRAIN AT 3AM:

I can see you're trying to sleep, so I would like to offer you a selection of every memory, unresolved issue, or things you should have said or done today as well is in the past 40 years!

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BRAIN GYM

Top skills to perfect in advance of a leadership role

Key Takeways

1. Leadership requires continuous learning
2. Agility enables adaptation
3. Emotional intelligence builds trust and cohesion
4. Transparency strengthens school culture
5. Strategic thinking shapes the future

AITSL Standards: 4,5,7.

[Take me to this article](#)

Why some teachers are loved but not respected in schools.

Key Takeways

1. Relationships vs integrity
2. Connection with students must never come at the expense of professional boundaries.
3. The danger lies in confusing popularity with effectiveness.
4. Boundaries are not barriers; they are enablers of healthy relationships.

AITSL Standards: 3 and 4

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A Drop of Wisdom

IN THE
BOOK OF
LIFE,
THE
ANSWERS
AREN'T
IN THE
BACK.



This Week's Mini PD

The Wellbeing Power of Dual Confidence Pedagogical and Social-Emotional

Pedagogical confidence and social-emotional confidence work together but support wellbeing in slightly different ways.

1. Pedagogical confidence drives satisfaction and resilience

2. When teachers feel capable in planning, instruction, assessment, and differentiation, they are more likely to:

- Experience lessons as successful and purposeful.
- Feel a sense of mastery rather than inadequacy.
- Bounce back more quickly from setbacks because they trust they can adjust practice.
- This sense of "I can teach well" feeds job satisfaction and professional resilience.

3. Social-emotional confidence preserves energy and prevents depletion

4. When teachers feel confident managing emotions and relationships, they are better able to:

- Regulate their own emotional responses in tense moments.
- Maintain constructive relationships with students, colleagues, and parents.
- Set and communicate boundaries without guilt or fear.
- This reduces emotional drain and preserves the energy needed to stay engaged, rather than simply surviving the day.

5. Together they create vitality and engagement

6. When both are present, teachers typically:

- Enjoy teaching (satisfaction from pedagogical success).
- Have the emotional bandwidth to stay present, curious, and warm (energy from social-emotional competence).
- This combination underpins a sense of vitality, sustained engagement in the classroom, and openness to professional learning.

7. They support ongoing professional growth

8. Pedagogical confidence encourages teachers to try new strategies because they trust their core skill base; social-emotional confidence helps them tolerate the vulnerability and uncertainty that come with change. Together, they make experimentation and feedback feel safe rather than threatening.

9. If one is low, it strains the other

- High pedagogical confidence without social-emotional confidence can lead to "technically good but exhausted" teachers who deliver strong lessons but feel worn down by conflict, behaviour, or staff dynamics.
- High social-emotional confidence without pedagogical confidence can lead to highly relational teachers who still feel ineffective or anxious about their impact.
- A wellbeing strategy, therefore, needs to deliberately nurture both domains, not just one.

Student Spotlight

As educators, we are challenged to look beyond surface behaviours to the deep well of sympathy, kindness, and generosity within every child. Often masked by frustration or immaturity, these qualities emerge when schools create safe, trusting spaces. Recognising this hidden potential transforms discipline into connection, fostering emotional growth and mutual respect in the classroom and in the wider school community.

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BRAIN GYM

Why teachers need to 'care less' to avoid burnout

Key Takeways

Experts now argue that to survive – and thrive – in the profession, teachers may need to care less. Not about their students, but about the constant performance and bureaucratic box-ticking, so they can reinvest their energy into the meaningful, human connections that drew them to teaching in the first place.

AITSL Standards: 4, 6 & 7

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Tasmania trials new school model; hopes to lift student achievement and ease pressure on teachers

Key Takeways

The trial draws on strong international evidence from England's multi-academy trust system, where more than 70 percent of previously underperforming schools improved to "Good" or "Outstanding" after joining similar shared leadership structures. Research has shown that part of the model's impact comes from freeing principals from back-office administration, enabling a greater focus on teaching quality and teacher development.

AITSL Standards: 1 & 6

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This Week's Mini PD

THE TROUBLE TREE

Author Unknown

The carpenter I hired to help me restore an old farmhouse had just finished a rough first day on the job. A flat tyre made him lose an hour of work, his electric saw quit, and now his ancient ute refused to start. While I drove him home, he sat in stony silence.

On arriving, he invited me in to meet his family. As we walked toward the front door, he paused briefly at a small tree, touching the tips of the branches with both hands. When opening the door he underwent an amazing transformation. His tanned face was wreathed in smiles and he hugged his two small children and gave his wife a kiss. Afterward he walked me to the car. We passed the tree and my curiosity got the better of me. I asked him about what I had seen him do earlier.

"Oh, that's my trouble tree," he replied. "I know I can't help having troubles on the job, but one thing's for sure, troubles don't belong in the house with my wife and the children. So I just hang them on the tree every night when I come home. Then in the morning I pick them up again."

He paused.

"Funny thing is," he smiled, "when I come out in the morning to pick them up, there aren't nearly as many as I remember hanging up the night before."



Wellbeing Spotlight

Many leaders want to do things differently. They care deeply about their staff and are acutely aware of the pressures people are under. At the same time, they operate within systems that prioritise pace, performance, and compliance, often leaving little space to pause, reflect, or recalibrate.

Georgia Hodkinson (@psychbizinc)

Drop of Wisdom

Let your focus
be stronger
than your
distractions

Happy, Silly Thoughts

Advice is what
we ask for when
we know the
answer but wish
we didn't.
Erica Jong

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BRAIN GYM

How New Leaders Emerge and Form Their Identity

Key Takeways

Research into leadership emergence has uncovered several consistent themes:

- Self-Image Transformation
- Contextual Adaptability
- Role Tension
- Moral Orientation
- Environmental Barriers

AITSL Standards: 6 & 7

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Comparison is the Thief of Joy: Lessons from Social Comparison Theory

Key Takeways

- Social comparison theory drives self-evaluation: upward to superiors (motivation or inadequacy), downward to inferiors (esteem boost) —excess harms growth.
- In schools/social media, it fuels development via role models and successes, fostering goals/belonging, but unchecked steals joy.
- Reframe with growth mindset: "Is this working for me?"—compare to past self, value strengths, act on dissatisfaction.
- Adults model by avoiding kid contrasts, monitoring self-talk, supporting passions to build confidence.

AITSL Standards: 1,3,4,6,7

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This Week's Mini PD

A Sense of Belonging as Core Business

"They have accepted me as an individual, as a personality, as an entity. I belong! I am important! I am somebody!" Beatrice Sparks, *Go Ask Alice*.

According to the [Kids Mental Health Foundation](#), schools should focus on a culture of belonging because it is one of the strongest levers for students' learning, wellbeing and behaviour. When students feel they truly belong, they are more willing to show up, try hard and stay connected to the school community.

Why belonging matters

- Higher engagement and achievement: students with a strong sense of belonging put in more effort, have lower absenteeism and achieve better academic outcomes.
- Better wellbeing and mental health: belonging acts as a protective factor, linked with greater happiness, confidence and lower rates of loneliness, anxiety and depression.
- Stronger relationships and behaviour: when students feel accepted and respected, they are more likely to cooperate, follow school expectations and build positive friendships.
- Long-term impact: the benefits of belonging extend beyond a single year, supporting ongoing engagement and success as students move through school.

Voices that illustrate the importance

Educational psychologist DeLeon Gray describes school belonging as "feeling a sense of acceptance, respect, inclusion and support in a learning environment." He notes that "students choose to be in environments that make them feel a sense of fit," mentally and physically.

The respected academic and author, Angela Duckworth, is adamant that a sense of belonging is the single most powerful predictor that a student will thrive in school – not just survive it.

Focusing on belonging is therefore not an "extra" initiative; it is core business for any school that wants students to learn well, behave well and be well.

School Spotlight

The Catholic Diocese of Lismore identifies five domains of its *Fullness of Life Framework*:

1. Mission
2. Pastoral Care
3. Catholic Leadership
4. Learning and Teaching
5. Family, School and Community Partnership

As an educator, can you identify which of these is

- a) your school's greatest strength, and
- b) the one that needs the most work?

TED Talk

How to raise
kids who can
handle hard
things

[Watch it here](#)

Happy, Silly Thoughts

You honestly
still look 59
from a
distance

Seen on a Birthday Card

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BRAIN GYM

How New Leaders Emerge and Form Their Identity

Key Takeaways

1. Leadership identity develops through practical experiences where others recognise and follow one's leadership, rather than relying solely on formal titles or hierarchical positions.
2. Organisational culture significantly influences emerging leaders' styles: control-oriented environments produce transactional leaders, while collaborative ones nurture transformational, communal approaches.
3. Leadership growth involves an ongoing cycle where new leaders test behaviours, incorporate feedback, and embed successful patterns into their core self-identity.
4. Motivation to lead draws from affective (emotional alignment), normative (duty-based), or non-calculative (selfless) sources, amplified by feedback that solidifies identity.
5. To maintain performance, organisations should provide structured feedback, diverse pipelines, and empowering cultures to develop authentic leaders aligned with core values.

AITSL Standards: 4,5 &6

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This Week's Mini PD

The Ups-and-Downs of Micro-management in Schools

Education has become a high-stakes environment, where student wellbeing, academic standards, and school culture intersect. While micromanagement offers clear benefits—such as ensuring classroom consistency, early intervention for struggling staff, and boosted accountability to meet compliance demands—it also carries serious risks, including eroded teacher morale, stifled pedagogical innovation, and higher burnout rates that threaten team stability.

Good understanding of when to micro-manage (and when not to) empowers school communities to foster environments where trust drives resilience, belonging, and authentic professional growth for staff and academic improvement for students.

FOR STUDENTS

Five positives

1. Strong structure and clarity
2. Close monitoring of progress
3. Consistency and compliance
4. Short-term performance gains
5. Scaffolding for very dependent learners

Five negatives

1. Reduced autonomy and motivation
2. Stifled creativity, risk-taking, and problem-solving
3. Learned dependence and helplessness
4. Feeling constantly watched and corrected can increase stress and reduce psychological safety in the learning environment.
5. Poor preparation for real-world demands

FOR STAFF

Five Positives

1. Ensures consistency across classrooms
2. Boosts accountability and performance tracking
3. Increases parental confidence
4. Proactive problem prevention
5. Supports novice or struggling staff

Five Negatives

1. Lowers morale and job satisfaction
2. Stifles innovation and professional growth
3. Increases burnout and turnover
4. Damages collaboration and school climate
5. Wastes time and resources inefficiently

Health Spotlight

Adelaide woman's crippling 'anxiety' was actually something else

[Learn about it here](#)

Should I take vitamin C to ward off colds, lower blood pressure or reduce cancer risk?

[Learn about it here](#)

Drop of Wisdom

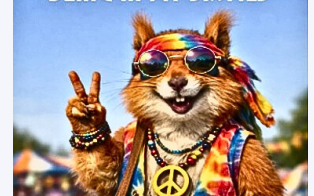
What you do in private

always shows in public. Reading shows in conversations. Your workouts show in your physique. Your diet shows in your energy. Your discipline shows in your confidence. Your focus shows in your results.

You are what you cultivate when no one is watching.

Happy, Silly Thoughts

I FOUND THAT GROWING UP IN THE SIXTIES WAS A LOT MORE FUN THAN BEING IN MY SIXTIES



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BRAIN GYM

Student engagement or learning engagement?

Key Takeways

- Engagement is misframed as compliance; routines don't equal real learning.
- Standardisation improves order, not genuine engagement.
- Tech affects attention, but uninspiring learning also drives disengagement.
- Teacher engagement is critical to student engagement.
- The root cause is systemic: workload, crowded curricula, and reduced autonomy.

AITSL Standards: 1,2,3,4,6,7

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From lost boys to gentlemen of honour

Key Takeways

- Boys feel lost due to strong online and social influences.
- Parents and educators must actively guide values and behaviour.
- Positive environments and leadership prevent negative influence.
- Cultural exposure builds empathy and reduces self-centred thinking.
- Most boys want to do good but need direction and opportunity.
- Character and "honour" must be intentionally taught and modelled.

AITSL Standards: 1,2,3,4,5,6,7

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This Week's Mini PD

Listening to What is Often Unsaid

Thoughtful questions can quietly lift the culture of a school. When we listen carefully and reply with simple, curious questions, we show colleagues and students, "You matter, and your ideas matter."

Phrases like, "That's an interesting angle - how did you arrive at it?" encourage staff and students to explain their thinking rather than defending it. Instead of ending a conversation with a quick opinion, we open it up and model the kind of inquiry we want in a school community. Over time, this helps create a place where ideas are explored, not shut down. As Paul Kelly famously sings, "From little things big things grow"; small questions can spark big cultural shifts in our schools.

Questions such as, "What's one thing we must get absolutely right?" or "What's one thing we can change that would make the biggest impact?" help teams focus on what really matters, especially for our young people. These prompts stop meetings from getting stuck in complaints or concerns and move us toward clear priorities and useful actions.

Other questions draw out what is often left unsaid: "What's something you think isn't being talked about enough?" or "How do you think this will impact things long-term?" These invite quieter voices in, highlight issues like wellbeing, workload or fairness, and help leaders notice pressure points early. It ensures every staff member gets a real chance to contribute.

Finally, comments such as, "I appreciate your honesty - let's explore this further," or "I'm listening - let's break this down together," build a sense of safety. When staff feel safe to speak openly, teamwork grows stronger, new ideas emerge, and students benefit most. We can turn ordinary moments into real connection and purpose.

Applying to Student Work

These same questions also work wonders with students. Ask, "What's one thing you must get right in this task?" to sharpen their focus, or "How did you arrive at that solution?" to build their reasoning skills. Such questions foster belonging and resilience, aligning with the mission to nurture the whole person. These small shifts in language can quietly transform classrooms into communities where every voice matters and every effort is treated as evidence of growth.

Leadership Spotlight

Why Storytelling May Be the Most Important – and Most Underrated – Leadership Skill of 2026

Although aimed at business, there are lots of ways to apply this article to a school setting.

[Learn about it here](#)

Drop of Wisdom

In his famously successful book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen R. Covey writes, "Seek first to understand, then to be understood." This wisdom reminds us that meaningful understanding starts with genuine listening, creating deeper connections with colleagues and students alike.

Happy, Silly Thoughts



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BRAIN GYM

To Be Happier, Start Thinking Like an Old Person

The paradoxes of aging, mental health, and positivity.

Key Takeways

- Older people are happier than middle-aged and younger people.
- Anxiety, depression, and anger decrease with advancing age.
- Old people are a reservoir of wisdom and experience and make a valuable contribution to the workforce.
- As we age, our time horizons grow shorter and our goals change.

AITSL Standards: 1,4 & 7

[Take me to this article](#)

RU OK? RESOURCES FOR EDUCATORS

Key Takeways

- A comprehensive array of resources for early education all the way through to university and TAFE.
- RU OK? Day will be held on Thursday, **10 September 2026**.
- This website offers:
- School event ideas and inspiration
- Activities and Display Templates
- Classroom lesson plans

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This Week's Mini PD

A Carrot, an Egg and a Cup of Coffee

Author Unknown

A young woman went to her mother and told her about her life and how things were so hard for her. She did not know how she was going to make it and wanted to give up. She was tired of fighting and struggling. It seemed that as one problem was solved, a new one arose.

Her mother took her to the kitchen. She filled three pots with water and placed each on a high fire. Soon the pots came to a boil. In the first she placed carrots, in the second she placed eggs, and in the last she placed ground coffee beans. She let them sit and boil, without saying a word.

In about twenty minutes, she turned off the burners. She fished the carrots out and placed them in a bowl. She pulled the eggs out and placed them in a bowl. Then she ladled the coffee out and placed it in a bowl.

Turning to her daughter, she asked, "Tell me, what do you see?" "Carrots, eggs, and coffee," the daughter replied.

Her mother brought her closer and asked her to feel the carrots. She did and noted that they were soft. The mother then asked the daughter to take an egg and break it. After pulling off the shell, she observed the hard-boiled egg. Finally, the mother asked the daughter to sip the coffee. The daughter smiled as she tasted its rich aroma. The daughter then asked, "What does this mean?"

Her mother explained that each of these objects had faced the same adversity – boiling water. Each reacted differently. The carrot went in strong, hard and unrelenting. However, after being subjected to the boiling water, it softened and became weak. The egg had been fragile. Its thin outer shell had protected its liquid interior, but after sitting through the boiling water, its inside became hardened. The ground coffee beans were unique, however. After they were in the boiling water, they had changed the water into a new flavour and fragrance.

In difficult times, we can;

- **weaken like the carrot**
- **harden internally like the egg, or**
- **we can become like the coffee and change the circumstance that causes the concern.**

This parable calls us to cultivate in ourselves—and in our students—the capacity to meet difficulty with wisdom, resilience, and purpose.

Work Spotlight

Begin each work day with a positive attitude. Focus on the aspects of your job that you enjoy or find fulfilling. By acknowledging the positive elements, you can shift your perspective and foster a more enjoyable work environment.

Drop of Wisdom

"Life isn't as serious as the mind makes it out to be."



Eckhart Tolle

Happy, Silly Thoughts

SIGN IN A LAUNDROMAT

Automatic Washing Machines:

Please
remove all
your clothes
when the
light goes
out.



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BRAIN GYM

Why mid-career teachers are most at risk of leaving – and what schools can do about it

Key Takeways

- The real shortage problem is mid-career teachers, not beginners
- Workload is the dominant reason teachers are leaving
- Systemic issues—not just schools—are to blame
- Leadership roles are under pressure and unattractive
- Some initiatives offer cautious optimism

AITSL Standards: 3, 4, 6 & 7

[Take me to this article](#)

Teachers, schools given handbook to combat misogynistic behaviour in classrooms

Key Takeways

Teachers say the impact of the "manosphere" on the classroom has been getting worse.

Female teachers are being subjected to anti-feminist hand gestures, coded messages and intimidating behaviours at school.

AITSL Standards: 4 with links to 1, 6 & 7

[Take me to this article](#)

This Week's Mini PD

Making Easy Happen – The Hard Way

Journalist Sydney J Harris once reflected:
When I hear somebody sigh "Life is hard",
I am always tempted to ask "Compared to what?".

Among the many ideas shaping education in 2026, one message still belongs on every classroom wall:

In this space, we don't do easy.

We make easy happen through hard work, learning, and persistence.

In a world of instant answers, this matters more than ever. Our role as educators is not just to deliver content, but to develop learners who can think, adapt, and take ownership of their future.

Students who achieve mastery share two habits. They embrace challenge and persist through difficulty—this is how they "make easy happen." And they understand that learning is transformative, building their capacity to thrive in a changing world.

This mindset applies to staff as well. Schools in 2026 are constantly evolving, and ongoing learning is essential. Without it, confidence, impact, and relevance decline.

A culture of effort and learning builds:

- **Confidence:** I can contribute and engage with new ideas.
- **Resilience:** Mistakes are part of growth.
- **Capability:** My skills are improving.
- **Trust:** Effort leads to progress.
- **Discipline:** I develop focus and self-control.
- **Respect for the process:** Growth takes time, practice, and persistence.

When a whole school community (students, staff and parents) commits to this process, it creates a dynamic culture with the potential to draw in even the most disengaged.

Wellbeing Spotlight

Dusking: The Dutch twilight ritual helping people slow down

Revived by a Dutch writer, the simple ritual of "dusking" – quietly watching the transition from day to night – is spreading beyond the Netherlands as a way to reconnect with the natural world.

[Learn more here](#)

Drop of Wisdom

Worrying
is using your
imagination to
create things you
don't want.

Happy, Silly Thoughts

PLAGIARISM
GETTING IN
TROUBLE FOR
SOMETHING YOU
DIDN'T DO

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BRAIN GYM

How to Stop Bias from Getting Between You and Your Students

Key Takeways

- Positive teacher-student relationships boost engagement, learning, and wellbeing.
- Students remember how teachers made them feel, not just what they taught.
- Implicit bias can quietly shape teacher responses, especially under stress or fatigue.
- The key is to notice bias, pause, and choose a response that matches your values.
- Reflecting with trusted colleagues helps teachers respond more fairly and build stronger connections.

AITSL Standards: 1 & 4

[Take me to this article](#)

A Four-Pillar Program to Preserve Brain Health

Key Takeways

There are no surprises here. Most of us can name the four pillars without too much thought....but do we know why they are so important for a healthy brain?

[AITSL Standards: 1.1, 4.4, 6.2 and 7.3](#)

[Take me to this article](#)

This Week's Mini PD

Meaning, Not Time, Prevents Burnout

Burnout happens not because we work too much, but because we care too much—about the wrong things. Brené Brown

Have you ever stopped to question the idea of work-life balance? It's widely celebrated as the secret to health, wellbeing, and job satisfaction – but what if there's something even more transformative at play? Research suggests that finding deep meaning and purpose in our daily work may matter more than we think.

The Balance Myth

Imagine clocking off at 4pm sharp, no marking at home, perfect boundaries. It might sound ideal but many teachers and school staff still feel stressed or unfulfilled. Why? **Balance is about time, but wellbeing is about meaning.** This is probably what prompted Viktor Frankl to write: *Burnout is not a lack of time, but a lack of meaning.*

Research shows no direct link between better balance and higher satisfaction – passion, autonomy, and impact matter more. A "balanced" routine can't fix such things as unsupportive cultures or unresolved classroom tensions.

What Really Drives Us?

- Emotional resilience and growth opportunities build true health.
- Strong collegial bonds and a sense of purpose sustain us.
- Passionate educators often invest extra time—and thrive anyway.

Research shows that while educators deal with more after-hours work than other professionals, simply having a flexible schedule isn't enough to stop burnout.

A Path Forward

Balance is a tool, not the goal. We should prioritise:

- Meaningful connections and shared purpose.
- Resilience – building reflection.
- Supportive leadership for sustainable lives.

Student Spotlight

Every child deserves a champion: an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection, and insists that they become the best that they can possibly be.

Rita Pierson

Drop of Wisdom

Life is really simple,
but we insist
on making it
complicated.

Confucius



Happy, Silly Thoughts



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BRAIN GYM

Do we really know what 'good listening' looks like?

Key Takeways

Listening in class is associated with behaviours like sitting still and making eye contact, but these expectations can be difficult for some children to meet, says Rebekah Boylan

AITSL Standards: 1, 3 & 4

[Take me to this article](#)

Teacher's Mindset: The reflection that changed my life

Key Takeways

- The writer's expectations as a new teacher did not match reality.
- He began teaching feeling frustrated, jaded, and unsure how to motivate large classes and a struggling water polo team.
- A work review and holiday reflection pushed him to question his negative mindset and take responsibility for change.
- He shifted to positive self-talk, goal-setting, and imagining better outcomes instead of focusing on complaints.
- This change in mindset led to more effective pep talks, stronger student buy-in, and eventual improvement.

AITSL Standards: 1, 3, 4, 7

[Take me to this article](#)

This Week's Mini PD

Our Quiet Influence on Others

Every day, we influence someone's life — a student, colleague, family member, or friend. When that influence helps another person grow in confidence or purpose, we call it *empowerment*.

Many people who work in schools have had a former student thank them for something they once said or did. Often, it was only a small gesture or passing comment that the teacher barely remembers, yet it meant a great deal to the student. A few words of encouragement can sometimes change the course of a life.

To empower others is to strengthen them through words and actions that bring belief, encouragement, and hope. Empowerment inspires people to grow beyond what they thought possible.

At its core, empowerment begins with kindness. Kindness says: "You matter. I believe in you." Students need to hear and experience that message consistently and it's no different for colleagues. In busy schools, it is easy to overlook one another, yet genuine kindness towards colleagues is affirming and contagious.

Contagion matters in every school community. Negative attitudes spread quickly and can damage morale and culture if left unchecked.

But schools are also filled with generous, encouraging people who lift others simply through their presence. We enjoy being around them because they leave us feeling lighter and more hopeful. They inspire us to do our best. Their support gives us confidence to take risks, grow, and persevere.

Empowerment is more than a single act, it is a habit, a mindset and a culture developed through daily choices. Over time, encouragement and generosity become part of who we are.

Strong people are not those who tear others down, but those who consistently lift others up. In a world increasingly shaped by criticism, division, and negativity, schools have the opportunity to be counter-cultural places that intentionally teach young people how to encourage, support, and strengthen others rather than diminish them.

You can always see who the strong people are. They are the ones you see building one another up instead of tearing each other down.

Philosophical Spotlight

Education is not about delivering content, but about shaping people.

It invites curiosity, builds resilience, and forms character.

When learning is meaningful, students grow beyond achievement to purpose. Great schools do not control outcomes; they create conditions where young people discover who they are and how they contribute.

Drop of Wisdom

Life has no remote. Get up and change it yourself.

Happy, Silly Thoughts



If you didn't get the grade you wanted, it is highly possible I didn't get the work I wanted.

BRAIN GYM

Inside Microsoft's big AI play for Australian classrooms

Key Takeways

- **AI literacy is now core.** Teachers must help students know when to trust, question, and switch off AI — not just use it.
- **Embed AI into existing routines.** Brisbane Catholic Education succeeded by weaving AI into daily practice through micro-sessions, peer coaching and "AI Captains" — not treating it as a one-off event.
- **Lead with workload reduction.** Introduce AI as something that eases what teachers already do. Practical confidence matters more than technical expertise.
- **Principals must set conditions for safe use.** Approve tools, establish expectations, and ensure privacy protections are in place. Institution-approved tools are essential.
- **Supports human judgement — never replaces it.** Students must test AI outputs against trusted human advice. Important decisions must remain human-led

AITSL Standards: 1, 4, 6 & 7

[Take me to this article](#)

This Week's Mini PD

Truth, Goodness and Usefulness

Socrates, the great philosopher of ancient Greece, was approached by an acquaintance who asked, "Do you know what I just heard about your friend?"

"Hold on," Socrates replied. "Before you say anything, I'd like you to pass the Triple Filter Test."

"Before you speak about my friend, take a moment to filter what you're about to say. **The first filter is Truth.** Are you absolutely sure what you're about to tell me is true?"

"No," the man said. "I just heard about it."

"So you don't really know if it's true. Now **the second filter — Goodness.** Is what you're about to tell me something good?"

"No, on the contrary."

"So you want to tell me something bad about him, but you're not certain it's true. **There's one filter left — Usefulness.** Will what you tell me actually be useful to me?"

"No, not really."

"Well then," concluded Socrates, "if what you want to tell me is neither true, nor good, nor useful — why tell it to me at all?"

Our words about others carry real power. Gossip creates two forms of infection:

- It spreads information that is often little more than "Chinese Whispers" about someone with no opportunity to defend, clarify or explain themselves.
- It poisons others' perception of the gossipers themselves.

The communal nature of schools makes them the ideal place to teach and apply the Triple Filter Test — increasingly relevant in a world where "knowing" everyone else's business seems almost to have become a right.....**often at the expense of truth, goodness and usefulness.**

Health Spotlight



Drop of Wisdom

To know what you know and what you do not know, that is true knowledge.

Confucius

Happy, Silly Thoughts

My favourite childhood memory is not having to pay for my own existence

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BRAIN GYM

'We took out all the group work': School's instructional shift lifts literacy outcomes

Key Takeways

- Replace low-impact group rotations with explicit, teacher-led instruction because novice learners need clear modelling and guidance.
- Use whole-class teaching with carefully sequenced scaffolding so students master each skill before progressing.
- Implement a consistent, evidence-based literacy approach (phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and rich texts) across all year levels.
- Drive change through external expertise and early adopters who model success and build staff buy-in.
- Adapt proven practices to your context and commit to long-term implementation, recognising that meaningful improvement takes time.

AITSL Standards: 2.5, 3.2 & 3.6

[Take me to this article](#)

An unbroken night's sleep is a myth. Here's what good sleep looks like

Key Takeways

Sleep disorders are common. Up to 25 per cent of adults have insomnia, a sleep disorder where it may be hard to fall or stay asleep, or you may wake earlier in the morning than you'd like.....

.....Understanding your sleep patterns may help identify and adjust behaviours that negatively impact your sleep, such as your bedtime routine and sleeping environment.

[Take me to this article](#)

This Week's Mini PD

Building Strong Children An Investment That Lasts a Lifetime

Every adult, especially those who work in schools, knows the weight of watching a young person struggle — not just academically, but emotionally, socially, and mentally. Too often, our systems are designed to respond to crisis rather than prevent it. We should be sure we have shifted our focus. Rather than spending our greatest resources repairing broken adults, we must invest in building strong children from the very beginning.

Schools are uniquely positioned to lead this movement. Children and teenagers spend thousands of hours within school walls during their most formative years. That time is not just an opportunity to value the teaching of mathematics, literacy and other subjects — it is a chance to build resilience, emotional intelligence, self-worth, and a sense of belonging.

Research consistently shows that children who develop strong social-emotional foundations are less likely to experience mental health crises in adulthood, more likely to maintain healthy relationships, and better equipped to handle life's inevitable setbacks. Prevention, quite simply, works.

This does not require abandoning academic rigour. It means weaving wellbeing into the fabric of school culture through mentoring programmes, open conversations about feelings, teaching conflict resolution, and ensuring every young person feels seen and valued.

The cost of neglect dwarfs the cost of early investment. Addiction services, mental health wards, and prisons are filled with adults whose suffering began in childhood — pain that, with the right support at the right time, might never have taken root at all.

Schools get it. Strong children grow into capable, compassionate adults — and that's the most powerful lesson an institution can teach. They work tirelessly to build young people up precisely so society doesn't have to piece them back together later. The rest of the world needs to take note.

Wellbeing Spotlight Competence

The world trusts schools to demonstrate and develop competence, individually and communally. The ongoing development of competence is a key wellbeing indicator in education — not only for students but staff as well.

Drop of Wisdom

I am not what
happened to me.
I am what I choose to
become.

Carl Gustav Jung

Happy, Silly Thoughts

God gave us mouths that
close and ears that don't.



That must tell us something.

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This Week's Mini PD

Teaching Should Never Be Separated From Love

“Teaching should never be separated from love. One of the current difficulties in our societies is that we no longer know how to value sufficiently the great contribution that teachers and educators make to the community. But we need to be careful, because damaging the social and cultural role of educators means jeopardising our own future, and a crisis in the transmission of knowledge carries with it a crisis of hope.” Pope Leo XIV

There is a question worth asking in every classroom, at every kitchen table, and in every interaction between those who teach and those who learn: *Am I doing this with love?*

It sounds simple. Perhaps even obvious. Yet in a world increasingly focused on performance metrics, exam results, and academic outcomes, love is quietly becoming the forgotten ingredient in education.

And without it, something essential is lost.

Love in teaching is not softness or sentimentality. It is not the absence of high expectations or the lowering of standards. Quite the opposite. Love is what drives a teacher to stay late preparing a lesson that might finally reach a struggling student. It is what compels a parent to sit patiently at the homework table for the fifth night in a row. It is what makes a student feel known and loved — not just assessed.

When young people feel genuinely cared for by those who teach them, everything changes. Anxiety softens. Curiosity awakens. Resilience grows. A student who knows their teacher believes in them will attempt things they would never risk in a cold or indifferent environment. Love creates psychological safety, and psychological safety is where real learning lives.

For educators, love means knowing your students as human beings first and pupils second. For parents, it means encouraging effort over outcome, and progress over perfection. For students, it means understanding that those guiding you — at their best — are doing so because they genuinely want to see you flourish.

Teaching and love were never meant to be separated.

When they come together, they don't just educate minds.

They shape lives. They shape confidence. They shape aspiration. They shape hope.

Student Spotlight

Bill Page, author of [At Risk Students: Feeling Their Pain, Understanding Their Plight, Accepting Their Defensive](#) [Plays \(2nd Edition\)](#) declares:

Kids don't fail; they are failed. And what they fail is what schools and teachers are responsible for teaching.

Drop of Wisdom

IF YOU HAVE TOLD A CHILD
“A THOUSAND TIMES”
AND THEY STILL DO NOT
UNDERSTAND, THEN THEY
ARE NOT THE SLOW
LEARNER.

Happy, Silly Thoughts

To quote
Hamlet
Act III,
Scene III,
Line 92,
“No.”

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BRAIN GYM

The Powerful Role School Culture Plays in Teacher Professional Development

Key Takeways

Hear “school culture” and some people think of spirit week and free bagels in the staff room on Fridays. What is often missed is the system underneath all of that — the norms, routines, and values that shape how teachers teach and children learn.

AITSL Standards: 1, 3, 4 & 6

[Take me to this article](#)

Seven Forces Reshaping Australian Education in 2026

Key Takeways

Your classroom is about to get more stable, more supported, and more complex all at once. After years of relentless change, Australian education is entering a period of consolidation and reform that will reshape how you teach, what support you receive, and what challenges you'll face. The data tells a story of systemic recognition: your workload concerns are validated, your well-being matters, and meaningful change is coming.

AITSL Standards:

[Take me to this article](#)

This Week's Mini PD

Understanding positive and negative ‘appetite for risk’ in student behaviour

Every school has a risk appetite — a collective willingness to accept uncertainty in pursuit of something worthwhile. But not all risk is the same kind, and one of the most useful things educators can do is learn to tell the difference.

Positive appetite for risk

Behavioural risks taken in the service of growth, connection, or self-advocacy, supported by a safe and consistent environment.

- A student speaking up about something that feels unfair
- Re-engaging with school after a period of disruptive behaviour
- Apologising to a peer or teacher without being forced to
- Asking for help after a history of masking difficulty
- Choosing to stay in a frustrating situation rather than walk away

Negative appetite for risk

Behavioural choices — by students or educators — that escalate harm, avoid accountability, or remove the conditions needed for growth.

- A student testing boundaries in ways that harm others
- An educator avoiding a difficult conversation to sidestep conflict
- Consistently removing a student rather than addressing root causes
- Allowing low-level disruption to persist to preserve surface calm
- Responding to behaviour with consequences alone, no repair

Behaviour is rarely random. Students who push boundaries are often, in their own way, taking a risk — testing whether the adults around them will hold firm, stay present, or disappear. Understanding this reframes the educator's role: not simply to manage what we see, but to shape what the behaviour is reaching for.

A negative risk appetite in behaviour management often looks like caution dressed as control. Removing a student quickly restores order, but it also removes the opportunity for them to practise regulation, repair, and re-engagement. Done repeatedly, it teaches students that when things get hard, exit is the only option. A student who is allowed to try again after failing is learning something far more important than the original lesson.

Positive risk appetite in this context means being willing to sit in difficulty with a student — holding the boundary while keeping the relationship. It means having the repair conversation even when it feels awkward, and letting a student try again even after they've failed to meet expectations. Holding the line and holding the relationship are not opposites. The best educators do both.

The goal is not a school free of behavioural challenge. It is a school where challenge is met with enough consistency and care that students gradually learn to take better risks — the kind that build trust, resilience, and the capacity to belong.

Health Spotlight

Recognize the sudden warning signs of stroke — and BE FAST

The latest sudden stroke advice from the Mayo Clinic

[Learn more](#)

Drop of Wisdom

Your emotions are signals, not commands.

Happy, Silly Thoughts

Have you ever checked your bank balance, only to discover it is in “prayers and thoughts” mode?

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BRAIN GYM

We need to look harder for our 'invisible learners'

Key Takeaways

- Teachers can usually see the early signs of student disengagement — but consistently fail to act before it reaches crisis point.
- A critical window exists between the first signs of drift and formal crisis; the author calls this "pre-absence drift," and it's where intervention is most effective.
- "Invisible learners" aren't hidden — their disengagement is already visible in school data (registers, pastoral notes, behaviour logs), but no system connects the dots early enough.
- The problem isn't a lack of data; it's the absence of shared language and the collective will to act on quiet withdrawal with the same urgency given to visible disruption.
- The author is calling on practitioners to share their experiences to build a practitioner-led evidence base and common language for earlier, more consistent intervention.

AITSL Standards: 1,4, 6 and 7

[Take me to this article](#)

This Week's Mini PD

When the Term Starts to Feel REALLY LONG

There comes a point in every school term when even the most enthusiastic staff member glances at the calendar and thinks, "Surely it's not only Week 8?" The lunches have become a random collection of left overs from the fridge. The photocopier has developed a personal grudge against you. And somehow, despite your best intentions, your "I'll get ahead this weekend" plan has become a distant memory.

If you're feeling like the term has stretched beyond the boundaries of normal time and space, you're almost certainly not alone. This is the time to lift each other up rather than lead each other into the doldrums.

Schools are busy places filled with constant decision-making, relationship-building, problem-solving, and a seemingly endless stream of emails. It's rewarding work, but it can also be exhausting. It's important to acknowledge that. Once you pass the middle of a long term, many staff members are running low on energy while still giving their best to students every day.

So what helps?

Firstly, lower the bar where you can. Not every display board needs to be Pinterest-worthy and not every lesson needs to be your career masterpiece. Good enough is often genuinely good enough.

Secondly, find moments of connection. A quick chat with a colleague, a shared laugh in the staffroom, or celebrating a small student success can provide a surprising boost.

Thirdly, pay attention to the basics. Sleep, hydration, fresh air, and taking your full lunch break are not luxuries - they're fuel.

Most importantly, remember that your presence matters more than your perfection. Students won't remember every worksheet or PowerPoint slide, but they will remember the adults who made them feel seen, supported, and capable.

Be kind to yourself, be kind to each other, celebrate the small wins, juggle chaos, questions, and coffee... and somehow still create magic!

Educator Spotlight

Every lesson taught is an opportunity to change a life. Give value to the lessons you teach whether in or out of the classroom.

Drop of Wisdom

Life can flip in a second. One phone call, one diagnosis, one unexpected moment and everything changes. Nothing is guaranteed. Not time. Not health. Not the people you love.

So love louder. Appreciate deeper. Because what feels normal today could be something you pray for tomorrow.

Happy, Silly Thoughts



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BRAIN GYM

This group of men are drinking at risky levels

Key Takeways

The first national in-depth study to examine alcohol use among Australian middle-aged men has found more than two million are drinking at levels that put their health at risk of harm.

[Take me to this article](#)

Educating the whole person in the age of AI

Key Takeways

As Pope Leo XIV released his first encyclical – Magnifica humanitas “Magnificent Humanity” – technology and its role in education was front and centre for Catholic teachers, leaders, administrators and policy makers. Equipping students for the rapid change and pace of our world while ensuring safe spaces to explore and learn, developing approaches to technology that enhance the human condition, all sit at the heart of Pope Leo’s words.

[AITSL Standards: 2 & 4](#)

[Take me to this article](#)

This Week’s Mini PD

Foundations You're Already Standing On Great things you probably already do.

A well-known framework for outstanding boarding schools identifies five pillars of a thriving community: **Safety**, **Relationships**, **Leadership**, **Development**, and **Community**.

Strip away the residential context, and these remain foundations for any school – because every teacher, coach, and staff member shapes a student's sense of safety, belonging, and growth.

Safety is built through hundreds of small decisions, not one policy – the teacher who connects with a quiet student or the coach who checks in after a poor performance. Safety asks; does every decision start with student welfare?

Relationships are the foundation of influence. Staff must be deliberate about building relationships that go beyond academic performance.

These pillars describe five choices (protect, connect, lead, grow, and include) that are available to every staff member, every day. Schools aren't built on policies and timetables. They're built on these small, **repeated choices**. When we get the foundations right, the impact follows.

Leadership sets culture, not through title, but through consistency. Students notice instantly when an adult's values and behaviour don't match.

Development means growing the whole student – resilience, independence, confidence – not just chasing results. Real growth often happens in the spaces around the curriculum.

Community must be built deliberately. A student can attend five days a week and still feel unseen. Belonging comes from such simple but significant things as noticing who sits alone and choosing to include them.

People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.

Maya Angelou

Health Spotlight

COPD symptoms: How to spot them early
Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease often creeps up gradually. Learn the signs.

[Discover more here](#)

Drop of Wisdom



Be careful
what you
tolerate.

You are teaching people
how to treat you.

Happy, Silly Thoughts

My patience is basically like a gift card. Not sure how much is left on it but we can give it a try.

BRAIN GYM

In a world of conflict, how do we raise informed, not overwhelmed, children?

Key Takeways

- Young people are already exposed to global conflict, and the question is no longer whether they should know, but how adults help them interpret what they see.
- Children need adults who can sit with complexity, not rush to certainty.
- History teaches that the past is contested, shaped by perspective, power, and memory.
- The greatest risk is not knowing too much, but knowing alone.

[AITSL Standards: 1, 2, 3, 6 & 7](#)

[Take me to this article](#)

9 SIGNS

OF INTEGRITY:

1. You help without expecting anything back.
2. You treat everyone with respect
3. You keep promises.
4. You admit when you're wrong.
5. You stay consistent.
6. You do the right thing when no one's looking.
7. You stand up for others.
8. You protect trust.
9. You choose honesty over comfort.

This Week's Mini PD

Factors That Can Quietly Erode Your Joy as an Educator

1. Letting learning environments slip out of control

When a classroom feels chaotic, it drains your energy fast. Constantly "putting out fires" makes it hard to enjoy the work you came here to do. The encouraging part? Strong learning environments are teachable, coachable, and buildable. Investing time in routines, relational practice, and consistent expectations pays back in calm, confidence, and joy.

2. Focusing on negatives

Schools are complex places. There will always be challenges, frustrations, and decisions we don't fully agree with. But when our attention sits only on the negatives, joy disappears quickly. Deliberately noticing what is working; small wins, student growth, supportive colleagues helps rebalance perspective and protect wellbeing.

3. Absorbing constant negativity from others

Staffroom culture matters. Spending too much time with colleagues who default to complaining can make even good days feel heavy. Seek out peers who uplift, are solution focused, and bring constructive energy. Even one positive professional relationship can shift your whole week.

4. Running on empty

Exhaustion is one of the fastest ways to lose joy. When you're overtired, decision-making, patience, creativity, even kindness, feels harder. Protecting sleep, rest, and recovery isn't indulgent; it's essential. A rested educator is a more effective, more present, and more joyful one.

5. Prioritise your values

Know when to say 'no' to extra demands so that you prioritise what aligns with your values and capacity. Saying "no" to some things is saying "yes" to your wellbeing.

6. Letting stress go unmanaged

Stress is unavoidable in schools but how we respond to it is within our control. Identify what genuinely helps you reset: movement, planning time, emotional regulation strategies, collegial support, mindfulness, or stepping outside for two minutes. Small habits can dramatically reduce the emotional load.

Wellbeing Spotlight

Wellbeing is not simply the absence of struggle; it is the presence of purpose, connection, and the capacity to flourish through life's challenges.

Drop of Wisdom

Teach your students that disrespect will close doors that no amount of apologies will ever open again.

Happy, Silly Thoughts

Don't worry about getting older. You're still going to do dumb stuff, only slower.

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