

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

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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

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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.