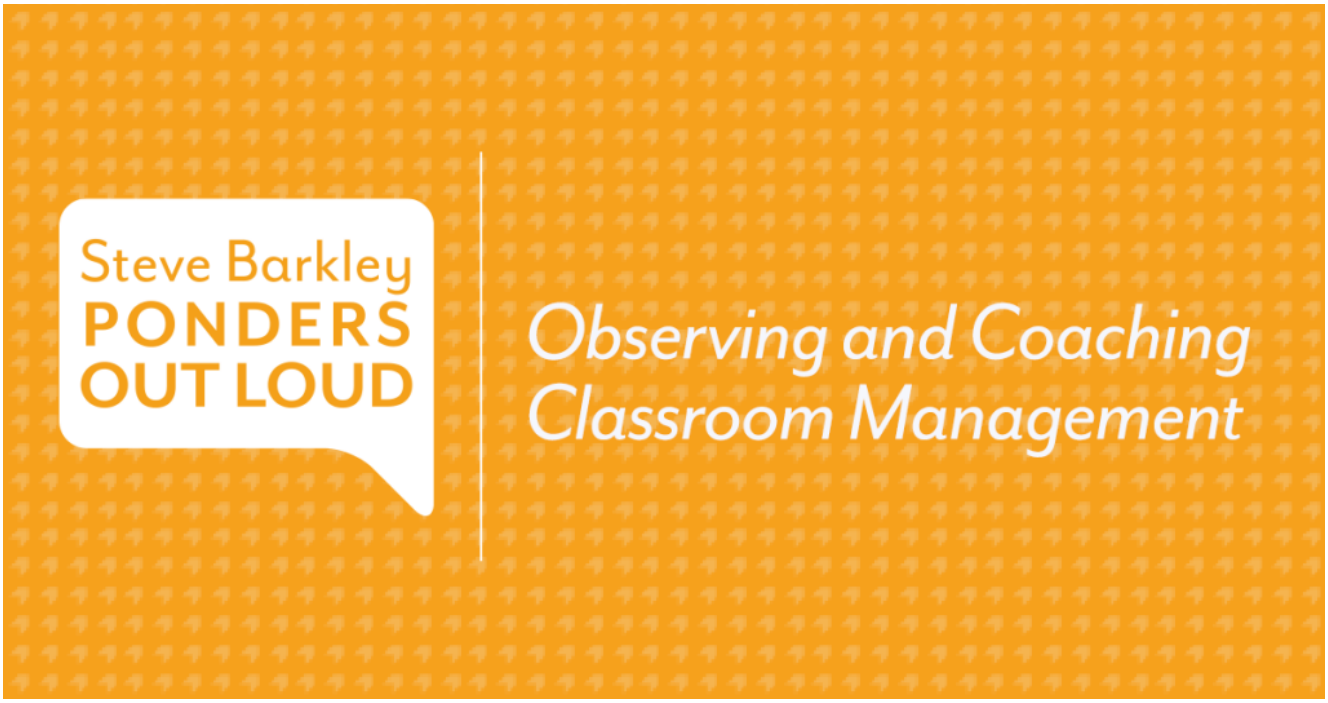
Podcast: Observing and Coaching Classroom Management



Some instructional coaches are starting the year with teachers who are new to the profession—and some with teachers who are entering the classroom without any teacher education background. What do these teachers believe defines classroom management, and where should a coach begin?

Many instructional coaches are also hearing highly experienced teachers say, *"I've never had a student like this before."* How does a coach respond?

A. Keith Young, author of *The Instructional Coaching Handbook* and *Confident Classroom Management Moves Card Deck*, shares insights and strategies for both teachers and coaches. Consider the skills and strategies that require intentional practice and constructive coaching feedback.

Visit the Confident Classroom Management Blog here.

Email Keith: keith@akyconsulting.com

Visit Keith's Website.

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Podcast Transcript:

[00:00:00.000] – Steve [Intro]
Welcome to the Steve Barkley Ponders Out Loud podcast. As instructional coaches and school leaders, you are tasked with guiding continuous teacher growth to create student success. This podcast looks to support you with strategies from experienced guests, as well as my own insights that I've gathered over the years. I'm thrilled to have you with us. Thanks for tuning in.

[00:00:30.000] – Steve
Observing and Coaching Classroom Management. Our guest today is A. Keith Young, an education coach, leadership trainer, and author focused on transforming instructional leadership and classroom culture. Having taught secondary students in Germany and having worked in leadership roles across Arizona, Colorado, Puerto Rico, and Virginia, Keith then founded AKY Consulting, which is based on the South Carolina Coast. Keith is the author of, "The Instructional Coaching Handbook" and "The Confident Classroom Management Moves Card Deck," which provides teacher-tested, scripted strategies for a relationally-centered discipline and immediate behavioral impact. Keith partners annually with thousands of educators, coaching in classrooms worldwide, with measurable gains in both academic and emotional student outcomes. I read a blog that Keith had written for ASCD titled, "Confident Classroom Management," and I appreciated his straightforward suggestions for strategies that can build teachers' confidence and success around classroom management.

[00:01:50.500] – Steve
As I dug deeper into his background, I realized that he'd be a

great guest to look at coaches approaches to supporting teachers with classroom management. Welcome, Keith. Thanks for joining us.

[00:02:04.840] – Keith
Thank you, Steve. I appreciate it.

[00:02:07.140] – Steve
I'm wondering, for a starter, if you'd just jump in with that term classroom management. How How do you define that term?

[00:02:17.340] – Keith
Sure. I'd be glad to. For me, classroom management is a little bit less about just controlling students, and it's more about trying to find out what's triggering their behavior and connecting to them. It's also about a skillset for the teacher. I'm not one of those people who's going to say, it's all just about relationships, but I believe the majority of it is just about relationships. It's about my skills as a teacher or an educator in using language, using my presence, and trying to create a stable environment for a group of learners and individual students.

[00:03:01.780] – Steve
You triggered something there with the time of us recording this. It's common for instructional coaches in that first month of school to hear that teachers aren't anxious to have them in their classrooms. I've had instructional coaches looking for something to do during that time. It surprises me because if I play back to the piece that you just said about relationships, it seems to me there's so much that a teacher should be looking to accomplish in those opening weeks of school that's going to set the stage, that it would actually be a coachable time, an opportunity to find out what might be happening in my classroom that I'm unconscious of.

[00:03:48.780] – Keith
I think it's important for a coach to be aware of that for two

reasons. For new teachers, because many times they're struggling just to build a relationship. They're saying, well, how do I do that with all of these students I have? I don't know anything about them, or they're not actually appealing students. Students can come in smelly. They can come in with different values from the teacher. And so I'm going to need some strategies, very likely in the beginning of my first few years of my career, and how do I manage those things? And how do I manage that teeny tiny window of opportunity when I have misbehaviors arise in the classroom? Am I going to engage with it? Do I redirect it? Do I ignore it?

[00:04:36.540] – Steve
Lots of options.

[00:04:37.500] – Keith
Yeah. There are actually some situations where I might escalate. I might want it to rise. I see preschool teachers do that all the time. And they set up scenarios that will cause the students to have to solve problems. Maybe there's not enough dinosaurs in the block area. And so they want that. Okay, how can we solve this, boys and girls? So yes, as a new teacher, I would – as a coach of new teachers, I would be in there helping them with those very things. Maybe in the very beginning, I might even soft pedal some of the advice I'm giving around the instruction and ramp up the advice I'm giving around getting to know the students, building relationships with them, how to handle them. I would give them three or four strategies for how to handle some quick common disruptions at that grade level or at that age level. And then from my experience, folks, I would be on high alert. Do I have any teachers who are entering a new subject area? Do I have any new teachers, any experienced teachers who are entering a new grade level? They have some students they're not used to working with.

[00:05:39.750] – Keith
So maybe some of their tried and true strategies aren't going

to be working for them this year. So I might even tell them that. Say, hey, let me come in there and see how it's going with classroom management since you've got a new subject or you've got a new crew. Because they're changing context doesn't mean they don't need some help with their skills as well. Those are the things I would be doing as a to suss out who needs what in those first few weeks of school.

[00:06:06.680] – Steve
In your article, you put some key points out, all of which I thought were important. The first two strike me as key, and so I'm wondering if you could start exploring those. The first one was, let each day start fresh and maintain relationships separate from behavior. I'm guessing those two do link together.

[00:06:34.780] – Keith
Definitely. Starting each day out fresh is a behavioral reset for both the teacher and the student. It neutralized maybe some of the emotions from the day before. You just want to separate those so they don't poison so much what happens today. I was a little bit surprised when I was working on this set of strategies because I have tons of these strategies I've been using for years and collecting from really sharp teachers for years. And I never did have a teacher in my school experience that I felt was holding a grudge against me. But many, many, many, many of the teachers that I had give me input and that some of these strategies said they did. It came up as probably the number one problem they encountered. And so I think for all of us, it's important to remember that we can naturally or easily hold grudges. And we just have to have a mindset where I'm going to start the day a new. It's not fluff. I'm going to say, hey, I'm glad you're here today. What happened yesterday is yesterday. You can do this today. And I've got to have some words to say that.

[00:07:50.140] – Keith
I've got to have a courage to step up and say that. I've got

to have a mindset that I'm not on the lookout for this student to do this again. This is a new day, a new opportunity. It is very likely they may repeat the same thing, but I'm going to give them a vision of themselves they may not even see yet. So that's what "let each day start fresh" means, and to separate their behavior from your relationship. And an easy way to do that is just say, we're going to work on this together. And so even though it is a problem that you and I have, it is something that's separating us. It is something that is annoying me. It's something that is hindering the class. We're going to do this together. We're going to fix this problem together. So that's what that means, maintain a relationship separate from the behavior. It's you and me against the behavior. It's not you and me against each other. That's a little bit more about what those two strategies mean.

[00:08:46.300] – Steve
I think part of what you triggered there for me is the student perception is what counts.

[00:08:54.360] – Keith
Yes.

[00:08:54.970] – Steve
You'll hear a middle school student say that the teacher's always picking picking on me, and the teacher would swear that they aren't. The truth is, what I got to deal with is the student's perception. I got to spend enough time with the student to uncover what actions of mine are striking you as picking on you because I wouldn't want to do that. And together we can work out some plan.

[00:09:21.420] – Keith
I see it come up a couple of different ways. It's the picking on me. This teacher is picking on me. They say that a lot. And that's where you need to get in, dig in a little bit. Okay, what do you see as picking on? What I see as holding you accountable to whatever else is doing is different. So we're

going to come to some agreements, I'm not going to stop holding you accountable, but I want to make sure I respect the fact you think it's picking on you, and let's figure out how we can live together with this.

[00:09:48.320] – Steve
I may need to find a different way to let you know I'm holding you accountable because the one I'm using is triggering you.

[00:09:55.300] – Keith
Exactly. The other place I hear this come up a lot with students is yelling. Why are you always yelling at me? Why are you always yelling at me? And the teacher, in her mind, is not raising her voice at all. She's just firm and direct. So we're going to have to have a conversation. What do we mean by yelling? You show me your definition of yelling. I'll show you my definition of yelling. So me telling you explicitly what to do does not equal yelling in my book. So we've got to come to some agreement on that. I'm a different adult. I'm not like your parents. I'm not like your care providers. I'm not like your other teachers. I may be more firm and more direct, but let's talk about this. You're going to learn a bit about me, and I'm going to learn a bit about you.

[00:10:38.060] – Steve
The third item that you had in your article was, "redirect with calm, neutral phrases." And as I read that, that seemed to me to be a skill that takes practice and probably opens the door for coaching.

[00:10:57.000] – Keith
Oh, absolutely. And it's important that it takes practice so that I stay calm when I'm trying to deliver my redirect, and also so that I avoid sounding sarcastic. So a lot of quick scripts or strategies can come off as sarcasm if I don't mean it with a positive intent or use it with a positive intent behind it. So first off, I think a lot of us need to know. I think Becky Bailey, she writes a lot about classroom

management in Pre-K through 3rd grade. And she says, know what pushes your button. That's the first thing. In other words, Steve, what irritates you is not necessarily what irritates me. Students on the phone, I may think that's nothing. But some teachers, they can just send them through the roof. So first I have to know what is that one, two, or three things that are just non-negotiable to me, are just anathema. And once I know that, then I'm not going to be alarmed so much when I see it. When I see students on the phone, okay, I'm going to have three or four strategies in my head, written on my plan book, posted on my desk that I'm going to use for this.

[00:12:09.900] – Keith
So I can be, just take a breath. This is something that raises my anxiety. Take a breath and go to one of my strategies. The first strategy doesn't work, try the second one. Third strategy doesn't work, try the third one. And I've seen teachers do a lot of different things with this to get better at being calm. There was a high school teacher in Hawaii, and the students cussed a lot throughout the school. So it wasn't something that the school was working on. But in her classroom, it pushed her buttons, and there were certain words that pushed her buttons. And so she had a sign up in her room that said, the F bomb is not allowed. This pushes my buttons. And so she taught the students. She says, not in my classroom, not with me. Can you use this? And we will get along. This is a no go. And And she was very blunt, and she was very direct about it. The sign stayed up all year long. And never once, when I was observing her, did I hear her students swear. She was very clear. She wasn't saying your home values are bad.

[00:13:14.180] – Keith
She wasn't saying the values of the other classroom teacher is hopefully you're bad. She was saying, in my room, in my small universe, this is a no-go. And it may be something they never even thought about. They were so commonly using the word. She

made it clear, not in her room, and they did not in her room. And then I was working with a Special Ed teacher, and she would lose her mind about students tipping their chair back. And for most of us, we think, well, that's not… What big deal is that? You don't have to go crazy with that. Well, for her, early in her career, a student did that, tipped his chair back, get his head and died.

[00:13:52.560] – Steve
Oh, my goodness.

[00:13:54.380] – Keith
So for her, I mean, that's a dramatic example. But for her, there was a very specific reason reason. And she explained that to… I said, well, let's explain that to students so they can get your level of anxiety when you see that. And sure enough, she taught them what it was. She taught them what it wasn't. She taught them behaviors to replace it. And she made it clear this was a non-negotiable in her room because her anxiety went through the roof when she saw kids leaning back in their chair and tipping it off the floor.

[00:14:24.480] – Keith
So it takes practice. It takes knowing what pushes my buttons. It takes some practice. And one of my favorite things I do in training, the teachers seem to love it, is we'll take some common scenarios that teachers face all the time, and then we will practice delivering them with different intentions behind them. Like, we'll put up on the screen, pretend the student is a student who's done this 20 times. They do it every day. You've lost all your patience with them, and then redirect them. So we'll do that. And then we'll start slowly increasing the change in the student. So let's do this from a student, do this from the perspective that a student is on the average day, they're pretty well behaved. They just have a one-off day. Now, deliver your consequence. And then we'll wrap it up a little bit more. We'll say, okay, do this as if the student is someone that you know really well, maybe inside and out of

school. Their mother is battling cancer. They're having a lot of family issues. Now, deliver that same consequence. And what it does, just taking those three different positions and delivering the same consequence, it helps me address my tone.

[00:15:29.400] – Keith
It helps me I address my intent or my heart behind this consequence that I'm giving. And teachers get it. They're like, oh, my gosh, I'm usually at a 10, and I need to be more at a four or three. That will help me be more neutral when I need to deliver this consequence in the future. So there's some ways to get it that calm, know what it is that's pushing my button, and then literally practice some scenarios where I stay calm in all these different kinds of situations.

[00:16:00.000] – Steve
It's interesting because I've worked with teachers already who have said to me, "Are you telling me I'm not allowed to get angry?" I certainly don't want to tell you that. The question I want to ask you is, decide when is getting angry in your best interest and in the student's best interest to blow up at a kid who pushed your button and increase the scene in your classroom that causes you to lose the next 10 minutes of instructional time wasn't in your advantage to get… You didn't gain anything from getting angry. I worked with it. I actually teamed with a woman who, when she would get angry, everything would stop. We'd sit down, and then she would tell the students, "I'm angry." Let me tell you what that anger is about. It was really modeling – it's the same place we need to be with a student. If something I'm doing is making you angry as a student, we need a way that we can discuss it and talk about it, not for you to raise your voice with me any more than me raising my voice with you.

[00:17:13.580] – Keith
Seeing an adult appropriately handle anger, a teacher, it might be the only time that the student gets that opportunity. We don't know – I think it's a gift when the student see a

teacher managing anger and showing them, Here's how we can be I'm angry in my classroom.

[00:17:32.600] – Steve
You can use your words.

[00:17:34.780] – Keith
You can put your hand up and signal me that I can't talk to you right now. I need 10 minutes to calm down. You can ask for a short break to go get some water. Those are things that I do as a teacher when I get angry with you. And these are things you can do in the classroom when you're angry. So I'm actually serving as a model for that. And I saw a kindergarten teacher. She taught them the strategy of count to 10 when you're upset. I was sitting there observing her one day. She's actually a friend of mine. I was observing her, and she got really angry with them. And she got to 10, and then she kept going. She counted to 10. The kids around me were like, "Oh, no!"

[00:18:15.200] – Steve
[laughter] That's great.

[00:18:16.340] – Keith
But she was modeling for them. Here's how you can be angry in the classroom. You can use this strategy with me. I can use this strategy with you.

[00:18:24.320] – Steve
Powerful. The fourth thing that you talked about in the article was conducting a social audit was the term you used. You want to walk us through that?

[00:18:34.340] – Keith
Sure. A lot of teachers – I did this. I know I'm guilty of it. A lot of us default to lecturing a student when they get in trouble. I taught middle in a little bit of high school, and I would just hammer them. Like, this is not the rule, and these are the rules. Don't you understand the rules? Why did you do this? So this strategy is counter to that. It's like, okay,

let’s take a look at what you did. How did that help you? How How did that make the other person feel? What could you have done differently? Whether it’s you, whether they were insulting you or insulting another student, whatever the situation was, help them analyze. How did this help that relationship? How did it hurt it? It’s just walking them through after they’ve calmed down, this is not something you can do in the moment when they’re still angry and upset. You do this later in the day. You do this the next class period. You do this the next day. But it’s just a little audit of, hey, what worked? What didn’t work? And a lot of teachers have had a lot of success for this.

[00:19:31.700] – Keith
The other thing that I would add in there to the social audit is we push kids, we push students to do a lot of things. I see this a lot in the elementary school. After they talk about the conflict or they get their consequence or whatever, then they say, okay, now you got to apologize for it. And then you get this half-felt weak apology, “I’m sorry.” In other words, it’s not coming from any place of meaning because they’re still upset. They’re upset that they’re talking to you. They’re upset they’re talking about the other child. So after Before they’ve calmed down, later the next day, later that day, say, okay, you did these things yesterday. You broke X or you hurt so and so. What are some things we could do to make amends to that relationship? And if they don’t have anything, give them some ideas. One thing you could do is deliver a sincere apology. Deliver a real apology, something you’re really sorry for. Or you could offer them help or give them some options. Those are all components you might use along with that little social audit. What did you gain socially from it?

[00:20:35.140] – Keith
What did you gain? What did you hurt? What did you hinder? How can you fix that? How can you do differently moving forward? That’s the basics of a little social audit. If I were a

teacher who is used to lecturing students, I would try this strategy for sure and see if I didn't get a little bit more traction from them.

[00:20:53.740] – Steve
We talked a little bit at the start about new teachers and classroom management. But I'd like to give you the scenario. I know that we got coaches currently that are meeting teachers who haven't had teacher training. Probably most frequently at the secondary level where the person's hired because they've had a content background, but not teaching. I'm just wondering, what do you think is a starting point for coaches who might find themselves in that scenario?

[00:21:34.560] – Keith
I think I would try to give them four or five strategies, even write them down, make them practice them during a little coaching session. Just get used to greeting the students, learning their names. I've been in classrooms where the teachers didn't know their names. You've got to know their name if you want to have any relationship with them. It doesn't matter if you have over 100 students. You've got to learn their names. You got to learn them really fast. So try to greet them by their name. Try to greet them positively. Let them know this is a place you want to be. This is a place you're glad they're there. They're there, and you have a job. So there's at least one thing you can be grateful about. And then, I'd say, the second strategy is narrate the behavior that you want to see, not the behavior you don't want to see. Meaning, many of us say, "Stop talking, stop running, stop playing with the lab equipment." What do you want to see instead? "Walk, open your book, put the lab equipment in its appropriate place now." So just narrate constantly what it is that you want to see as opposed to what you don't want to see.

[00:22:46.080] – Keith
There's actually a lot of research behind that one. A lot of the students, they just don't hear that "no" when you say it

in there. Got to give them a picture in their mind and verbally from your words, what it you want to see. And then practice some of these things that we talked about earlier, especially the neutral redirects. How can you calmly redirect behavior that you don't want to see right now? Or have a handful, have two or three phrases you can say. It's like, "Oh, try that again. Check the rules on the board. Which one are you not following? Match it now." Just having some of those calm redirects. Also, I think the first thing we talked about is just begin, try to separate the behavior from who they are as a person. Even though they may have a lot of challenging behaviors, they may have a lot of things about them that you don't like, you need to try to separate out their behaviors because they're learning. Even high school students who can be very difficult, they're learning, they're testing what works, what doesn't work. Then we all need to be able to see them as people that are separated from just their behaviors.

[00:24:02.060] – Steve
I'm smiling as I'm listening to you, Keith, because what's going through my mind is, I envision that a lot of people without teacher training and coming into teaching wouldn't consider that list that you just went through, falling under classroom management.

[00:24:22.540] – Keith
Oh, yeah.

[00:24:23.860] – Steve
You know what I mean? Your list is perfectly correct. It's striking me that all the points you made there is the coach has to figure out the way to have a new teacher understand that they're planning for that environment that you just described. They're planning for that community and that relationship that you've described, just the way they're planning the instructional piece.

[00:24:53.020] – Keith
Exactly. I know I was taught, you put up these classroom rules and then you punish the infractions. It's taught, and it worked sometimes. But at the end of the year, I was still managing those same behaviors that students hadn't changed. So the idea of giving them social skills. Itching the behaviors.

[00:25:13.620] – Steve
Yeah.

[00:25:14.040] – Keith
Coaching them, whatever you want to call it, it gives you more long-term effect. It usually takes a little bit longer to work with, but you get stronger results. And also, I think from coaches' perspective, really, what I learned from teachers is we've got to stop saying it's all about relationships and have a good relationship. Instead, we got to say, okay, here's how you have a good relationship. Here's how you apologize when you misbehave or you yell at a student. We're all going to not be our best person as teachers. So how do you manage that with the students? How do you manage the students that are not easy to care about or not easy to love, that bring very different values from what your core values are to the classroom? How do you have a relationship with those students? And so all of those broad concepts about relationship building, about climate, they need to be broken down into skills. Okay, what am I going to say and do? Or what am I going to try to say and do? Because teachers and students are dynamic. The environment is dynamic. Not everything that worked once is going to work again.

[00:26:21.400] – Steve
I met a teacher that just blew my mind. I'm trying to remember what grade it was. It may have been second grade. But she started the year with her rules posted, but they were all individual on a sentence strip she had to bring up around the room. And from the get-go, as she introduced them to the kids, she shared that the goal was to not have those rules later in

the year.

[00:26:50.020] – Keith
I love that.

[00:26:51.160] – Steve
Once we become a community, we wouldn't need this rule. The positive behaviors you're talking about would be there. We don't need the rules popping up.

[00:27:01.100] – Keith
They become the norms. They become this is where class operates. We don't need to emphasize it because we all learned it. We practice it. We just do it now.

[00:27:08.800] – Steve
She would have a celebration day where she said, I've been watching the last couple of days. I think this rule can come down.

[00:27:15.140] – Keith
I love it.

[00:27:16.460] – Steve
Kids would applaud. She'd roll it up, put a band around, stick it on her desk. Something might happen a couple of days later. It looks like we got to put it back up for a while. But it communicates that message. The other one I wanted to toss out to you is you're a coach, and you've got this highly experienced teacher, and the teacher hits you with this line, "I've never had a student like this before." My finding is, I'm hearing coaches share that with me more post-COVID. I don't know if that gave us a reason to spot those behaviors or teachers are shorter with them. But where do you think a coach starts when they get a comment like that from a teacher? "I've never had a student like this before."

[00:28:02.640] – Keith
I would say something like, "That makes perfect sense." This

work is dynamic. It changes over the years and over the decades. And I think as experienced educators, we need to have a little humility. Just because I did something extremely successful and it worked 83 times does not mean it will work with every student in every situation. So after that, I would say, let's zoom in. When is this behavior happening? Is it constant? Is it escalating? Is it getting worse? Is it targeted? Is it targeted toward you? An activity, a group? And then I would say, okay, let's come up with some scripts. Let's come up with some things that we can do or say. Is the student losing it every time you send them off to group work? We know that that's where a lot of classroom management issues happen when students have to move from individual group work. They have a lot of anxiety. That's what we're noticing, especially post-COVID. I would say, is that when it's happening? Because a lot of times, they're trying to get away from that group work. I'd say, okay, let's work on that. Let's work on transitions. Let's work on choices around that time.

[00:29:17.000] – Keith
And then be ready for that behavior when you send them to work in groups. Are you going to have two options? Are you going to give them some notice? There's a lot of things you can do to get an individual class ready move into groups. But that's where I would go. If they got that comment from the experienced teacher, I'd say, that makes sense. Kids change, even over our careers, they change. But let's just focus in a little bit and see if we can determine what's happening around that.

[00:29:49.300] – Steve
The label I put as I listen to you go through that scenario is co-construction. In other words, I didn't hear you suggest that the coach had the answer. What I heard was the coach was engaging the teacher in a problem solving, maybe even problem solving is the wrong word – in an idea generation.

[00:30:14.180] – Keith

Yeah, exactly.

[00:30:15.240] – Steve
What can we find out? What can we try?

[00:30:17.860] – Keith
And as a coach, I would be very cautious to say, okay, this will fix the problem. Sure enough, if it worked for me, and I gave that advice 83 times to a teacher, it's not going to work because there's a lot of dynamics involved. That's why I'm a big believer in having a lot of strategies. Post them on your electronic desktop, post them on your physical desktop, and then just practice and plan times to use them intentionally throughout the day. And especially if you would look at transitions, beginning and ending of class, moving from one activity to another, and that period of moving from individual work to group work, those are opportunities. Those are places where students often going to act out. They're often going to disrupt. So I would just have that in my plan book. I'd have it highlighted in red. I'd say, okay, there's four things I'm going to try. I'm hoping it will go peacefully, but here's what I'm going to try with this student. Here's what I'm going to try with the whole class. I was sitting in an early childhood training one time, and the teacher was talking about this kid and how he was biting other students.

[00:31:25.360] – Keith
And I was like, oh, God, how do they deal with that? And the trainer, she was fantastic. She goes, "Oh, what time is he biting?" And she goes, "I don't know. Every day." She goes, "No, no, no. What time of the day is he biting?"

[00:31:37.160] – Steve
And she goes, "Is it at the beginning of the day?"

[00:31:41.520] – Keith
She goes, "Is it at lunch?" She goes, "Is it in the afternoon?" She goes, "It's usually in the morning." She goes,

“What time in the morning?” Turned out this kid was biting other kids about an hour before lunch. The trainer goes, 80% of bites happen within in the hour before lunch. She goes, “How big is this kid?” She goes, “He’s bigger. He’s bigger than his age group.” She goes, “Try a snack.” They call it open snack. You just put some cups out. Not every kid has to have an extra snack, but have some cups of dry cereal sitting out and look at him about an hour and a half before lunch and say, “Hey, you want a snack?” And sure enough, that was the problem. He was just hungry. He was also upset. But that’s how it came out. And so sometimes, even if we’re very experienced or we’ve never seen it get like this, there’s things to learn.

[00:32:41.220] – Steve
Before we look at closing out, I’m wondering if there’s some conversations you think instructional coaches ought to purposefully have with their principals concerning classroom management as an overall issue for the school.

[00:32:59.520] – Keith
Well, I would say yes. I would say that coaches need to ask their principal, what language do we want to hear teachers using about students? How do we protect students’ reputations? How do we help teachers preserve their planning time and come up with strategies for managing a variety of student misbehaviors that we don’t want to see? What does he want to see across the school? I would also really encourage the coach to be an advocate for… I can’t tell you how many teachers have said, “If I hear the phrase, It’s all about relationships, one more time, I’m going to scream.” I would really advise the coach to tell the principal, please don’t use that phrase unless you’re ready to step up and say, okay, and here’s four ways to have a relationship with a student that you don’t like, or a student who has body odor, or a student who nothing seems to be working with, or a student who…you got to fill it in. We I just can’t give this notion that it’s all about relationships. It is. It is about relationships. But it’s

like, what do I do when me being nice isn’t working?

[00:34:09.560] – Keith
I would say those are some things that a coach be an advocate for with a principal.

[00:34:16.260] – Steve
And maybe coach the principal on his or her relationships with staff. [laughter]

[00:34:20.740] – Steve
Yes. [laughter]

[00:34:22.280] – Steve
I don’t want to be saying it’s all about relationships if you don’t have one.

[00:34:26.480] – Keith
Right.

[00:34:28.380] – Keith
I went to – one of my relatives, I went to a middle school open house, and the principal stood up there, and he must have said 18 times, I’m all about relationships. I’m all about relationships. But he didn’t have us introduce ourselves to each other. There was a lot really missing in that 90-minute lecture, how middle school was going to be for the next year.

[00:34:52.960] – Steve
Well, Keith, thanks so much. I wanted to give you a chance to tell folks a little bit about the work that you do with schools and your classroom management? QuickWins! strategy card sounded interesting to me.

[00:35:09.580] – Keith
Oh, thank you. I do contract work with schools and districts all over the world and internationally. Mostly, I coach school leadership teams. I coach administrators. I coach coaches. I wrote, “The Instructional Coaching Handbook,” which has turned

out to be a pretty popular resource for instructional coaches. And these strategy cards, these Confident Classroom Management strategy cards, it's a deck of about 50 cards, and each one has a strategy on it. One half is about how to build relationships with the students. The other half is like, what are those things I say in the moment, in the heat of the moment, when the behavior – what do I say to try to get the situation to calm down or resolve? And so they're short. They don't take a lot of planning. They're just their scripts. There's a little title of the strategy, the rationale for the strategy, and what you can say they're due to deploy the strategy. And teachers seem to be loving it.

[00:36:05.780] – Steve
What's the best way for folks to find out more about that and connect with you with any questions they might have?

[00:36:12.960] – Keith
The best way is just to reach out on email. My email is keith@akyconsulting.com. Then I have a website that you can also contact me from there and you can see more about the publications I have, akyconsulting.com.

[00:36:29.260] – Steve
Alright. We will post both of those at the lead-in to this podcast, make it easy for folks to find.

[00:36:35.240] – Keith
Alright. Thank you, Steve.

[00:36:36.620] – Steve
Thank you.

[00:36:39.230] – Steve [Outro]
Thanks for listening, folks. I'd love to hear what you're pondering. You can find me on Twitter or LinkedIn at Steve Barkley, or send me your questions and find my videos and blogs at barkleypd.com.