Podcast: Supporting Teacher Wellbeing

Keith Young, a co-author of, "**The Teaching Strategy Handbook: 200+ Solutions for Common Classroom Challenges,**" explores the strategies from the book's Chapter 8, "Teacher Burnout and Stress." Keith shares the practices individual teachers can implement as well as the roles that teacher leaders, instructional coaches and administrators can play in support of teachers. The impact that effective PLCs can play is highlighted. Coaches can support teachers in exploring "circles of influence" as a way of focusing energy investment. Having options addressed throughout "**The Teaching Strategy Handbook**" support teacher wellbeing.

Listen to Keith's earlier podcast, "**Observing and Coaching Classroom Management**" here.

Visit Keith's website and get in touch here.

Subscribe to the Steve Barkley Ponders Out Loud podcast on iTunes or visit BarkleyPD.com to find new episodes!

Podcast Transcript:

[00:00:00.100] – 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.

[00:00:29.040] – Steve
Supporting teacher well-being. I'm pleased to have a returning guest to our podcast today. Keith Young is an education coach, leadership trainer, and author focused on transforming instructional leadership and classroom culture. After varied teaching and leadership work internationally and across the US, Keith founded AKY Consulting based on the South Carolina coast. Keith is the author of, "The Instructional Coaching Handbook" and "The Confident Classroom Management Moves Deck Card," which provides teacher-tested scripted strategies for relationally centered discipline. On the earlier podcast, Keith shared classroom management strategies built on deliberate care, practiced calmness, and keeping both teachers and students safe and thriving. I'll post the link to that podcast in this podcast lead-in. Keith is now the co-author of a just-released book, "The Teaching Strategy Handbook: 200+ Solutions for Common Classroom Challenges." As I look through the 10 chapters of his book, I selected Chapter 8, "Teacher Burnout and Stress," for our podcast conversation today.

[00:01:58.490] – Steve
Since many educators are awaiting the start of a new school year, I thought this would be a good topic so that teacher leaders, instructional coaches, and administrators could be planning for prevention rather than waiting for stressors to build. Welcome, Keith.

[00:02:20.360] – Keith
Thanks, Steve. I appreciate the introduction and I'm glad to be here again.

[00:02:24.080] – Steve
Super to have you back. So for starters, what led to Chapter 8 being part of the material you selected for the book?

[00:02:32.200] – Keith
Well, the entire book is based on what are the current highest needs of teachers. We consulted the RAND study and some other things that we list in the introduction. And they identified about 6 or 8 things that teachers nationally are saying are problems that they're encountering on a regular basis. This is post-pandemic. This is current research. So teacher burnout and stress came up as one of those highest needs. And it's also something that the co-authors and I, we work in schools regularly across the nation. We're in just over 1,000 classrooms each year. And it's also one of the topics that we see that teachers regularly report as something that is stressful to them right now. Burnout, stress, just being overwhelmed in general with work, whether it's the pressure to produce specific test scores or to manage the students that they have or the demands that they have as public school educators. That's one of the topics that came up quite frequently in our work. And in the current research on what's stressing teachers.

[00:03:44.970] – Steve
So am I on the right track when I suggest that we need to be looking at prevention planning rather than – or I guess in addition to, "treatment?" And I'm wondering if that prevention planning is both leaders' roles in it as well as teachers' individual roles.

[00:04:10.460] – Keith
Agreed. I do think it's a systemic issue. It's also an individual teacher issue. It's something that I believe

teachers have to look at and focus on what they can control, what they can't control. And I, working across the nation, a variety of districts and a variety of states, I do see some systemic issues that are there. This book was written particularly for teachers individually, so strategies that they can do. So it focuses on what the individual teacher can do. So when we look at that chapter on Teacher Burnout and Stress, we have a lot of strategies in there for the teacher to focus on to make sure they're taking care of their mental health, to make sure that they're, you know, organizing themselves, that they have effective communication skills. But there are also some strategies to help them either influence and/or change the systems that they're caught up in. So I want to say we align on that, that it is both a systemic and leadership issue. At the school level, at the district level, at the state level. It's also an individual teacher issue. I think you have to look at all of them in tandem.

[00:05:19.810] – Steve
We'll get in later to the other areas of the book that you addressed. But based on what you just said there about strategies for teachers, it sounds like your book is a resource that instructional coaches, would make sense to look at? I'm almost hearing it as, what's some strategies I can turn to when a teacher has such and such an issue?

[00:05:49.930] – Keith
Definitely. I think it's a valuable book for individual teachers. I think it helps give instructional coaches a repertoire of strategies they can use when they're coaching teachers, even around burnout and stress. And educational leaders as well, administrators, principals, assistant principals. We're getting early feedback. The book just came out in May, but we're getting early feedback that all of those groups, educational leaders, instructional coaches, and teachers, are finding it valuable. Mainly because is that a lot of times I find coaches and administrators, they're

looking for more strategies than what they used in order to coach or supervise a teacher. So this sort of broadens their bag of tricks. It broadens their repertoire. And every chapter focuses on a different set of problems that teachers often face. And it gives, you know, well, literally the subtitle of the book is “200 Strategies for Problem Solving.” So it literally gives a list of strategies. And they’re organized around low-prep strategies, medium-prep time, and high-prep, high-intensity prep time. So you can look quickly at something that might be a strategy that takes more long-term intervention, And you can also look at some things that you could do tomorrow in the classroom.

[00:07:08.400] – Steve
On an earlier podcast that I recorded with Dr. Chris Jensen, who is an experienced emergency room physician and an experienced high school science teacher, so made an interesting background. And he wrote a book called “Triage Your School: A Physician’s Guide to Preventing Burnout.” And he shared a concern that self-care was kind of putting a bandage on your day and not erasing the driving forces of what was causing the stress or a burnout. He suggested we need to establish a better climate, a sense of satisfaction both as individual educators and those leading educators. I’m wondering how that aligns with some of the findings that you had.

[00:08:04.850] – Keith
I think it aligns really, really well. I think putting all the onus on the teachers to be the only source of solving some of the problems for which they have little or no control over is an error. One of the strategies from our chapter on teacher burnout and stress has to do with appropriate use of professional learning communities. We encounter professional learning communities all over the place. Everybody is doing something titled a professional learning community. One of the things that as a team, there are 4 of us working on this, and

it was vetted by teachers as well. One of the things that we notice is there are lots of definitions and lots of use of that time for PLCs. And I think one of the strategies that would align with the emergency room physician, former emergency room physician who's now a science teacher, will be looking at how those are being used. We find that when we're observing and coaching for those PLCs, the teachers that are taking their time and have a really tight focus on the data that they're looking at and on their schedule, because they have to, there's only so many minutes to do this. When they focus on specific data with specific students' names and student work, and they look at what they did to get students successful with this standard or this whatever it is that they measured, if they pause there and look at those things, they head off in the right direction for when they look at some of the errors for what happened to the students who didn't make it.

[00:09:42.730] – Keith
And so whenever we're modeling PLCs, we're helping coach coaches, or we're having a coach teacher leaders, we often start there, helping them with narrowing down how much data they're looking at and looking at it very carefully so that they can celebrate some of those successes. Many, many times we find that when they slow down and they look at the successes, the strategies that they were doing over there with things that work are actually strategies they need for the remedies on the other end of the spectrum where the students were struggling with the standard. So this careful look at PLCs, it addresses a couple of things. There's a couple of things that cause teachers to be stressed. One is isolation and one is efficacy. So if the PLC is done properly, it hits both of those drivers. It hits that affective driver so that the teacher doesn't feel so isolated. I can share what I did well and I can get some help for some things that maybe didn't go so well. But then it also helps with that other driver, that's the efficacy driver. That's the one that has the

research backing behind it that shows it to be a powerful strategy, the PLC, when done well.

[00:10:57.120] – Keith
Because that helps the teacher feel less powerless. So if you can have a strategy that's like a well-run PLC that helps eliminate isolation and helps increase powerfulness or efficacy as a teacher, then you've got the potential built, often built into the system to actually work on the systems that often produce stress for teachers. So I think PLCs merit a careful diagnosis in terms of how they're used and how they can actually help decrease teacher burnout and stress.

[00:11:38.530] – Steve
There's two things that hit me there as I was listening to you. The term satisfaction – in other words, a teacher sensing satisfaction, is a buildup. And when you described looking at what did we do that caused the kids who were successful to be successful, there's a part of reinforcing satisfaction there that now prepares me to say, okay, where do we need to do something else? And I think connected to that, as I was hearing you, I am real big on students – the real student needs to be part of that PLC conversation versus scores. And that's why I'm big for student work being on the table when teachers are in a PLC conversation because there's a realness to the student's work that I find tends to be missing when we're just looking at the scores that came back in from some assessment we gave.

[00:12:52.820] – Keith
Exactly, exactly. So many times I'll see this – the teacher might say, well, they can't write and they're not looking at the student writing. So maybe they had to do a short prompt, maybe they had I have to do a long piece of writing. But what did they actually write? Because often they wrote something. And so I have to know what they actually can produce or at least attempting to produce before I can say, "Okay, so what's the next step?" They're not producing complete sentences,

they’re not using the mathematical terms. What is it they’re doing? And I don’t know that if I’m not looking at the writing. I have been in PLCs about writing where the teachers had no written work.

[00:13:32.380] – Steve
I’m sorry to laugh. It’s a shocker, but I know how real it is.

[00:13:37.770] – Keith
Well, I was a little startled myself. This was a school in Tennessee, and they had great data graphics, and they had an assessment data warehouse, and there was literally no student-written work. And they had invested time, and I felt more sorry for them because I thought, well, where are the student products? I can’t I can look at these scores and they are going to say one thing, but I cannot give you much diagnosis without seeing what the students wrote, or at least a sample. Give me a couple of the high-performing, mid-performing, and low-performing. Let’s look for some trends that’ll better inform our decisions.

[00:14:16.450] – Steve
It’s interesting because I’ve made the same connection with math. Looking at the scores kids had on math results, you got to be looking at what did the student do.

[00:14:27.330] – Keith
Yeah, I was just in a classroom last week and, you know, the students were like, well, do I have to show my work? Yeah, I said, because that’s going to show me your thinking. And they kept pressing back. But when teachers regularly expect that, then they regularly show that. Now you can go in and diagnose. Okay, yeah, you’re going the right direction, but your calculations were off. You can see so many things that you can’t see just from the one, you know, correct or not correct answer. And also, another tip for helping with stress: in a PLC, often you don’t have time, but you also don’t have to look at every student example. If you can get, as a coach or a

department chair, if you can get some, 5 or 6, highest scoring students, and then 5 or 6 in the middle, then 5 or 6 at the bottom, you can you know, ahead of time, you can, you know, stream down what the analysis needs to look like.

[00:15:28.660] – Keith
I want to go back to that one thing I mentioned early on about looking at what worked well for the students, because often – I have two stories. I saw a 4th grade math team do this when they were looking at their math scores, and then I saw a kindergarten group that was analyzing their reading scores do the same thing. So the kindergarten classroom, very experienced teachers, very high-performing team, very well organized. But when they were looking at reading comprehension early in the year, like in December, one of the teachers' scores were pretty much off the charts on a couple of elements. And the other teachers said, "Oh, she just always does that. Her kids do really well. We kind of have to catch up to her." And then they just blew off of it. And went on to what the kids are struggling with. And so I paused because it was, I was coaching the grade level chair and the coach to work on their PLCs. And I said, "Can we go back to that other teacher? What exactly were you doing?" And so I started asking her a couple of questions and she started talking about some things that she did from day one of school.

[00:16:42.630] – Keith
Some, just some little things that she did while the students were putting their coats away or while they were walking to lunch. The rest of her team, their jaws were on the floor. They said, "You never told us that." She goes, "Well, I started a few years ago. I just didn't think it was that big a deal." Of course they had more questions than I did. They know that better than I do. And so we got through that conversation, then I made them pause and say, okay, that's when we have to stop and talk about what worked well. You all now have all of these strategies that she's been doing for

months, and they're not little strategies like she said. Their powerhouse strategies, their powerful moments. It was an eye-opening experience for them, but it was an example of them skipping over what worked well. And they missed all that information, a wealth of information that frankly would have gone with that lady into her retirement had she not shared it in the PLC.

[00:17:37.030] – Steve
Exactly. I had a similar one, but even the teacher couldn't figure it out. And we ended up that other people had to go into her classroom and observe so they could figure out what it was that she was doing. And it's very interesting because it was a writing one, it seemed too simplistic. In the other classrooms, kids would be writing and then they'd be standing in line waiting for the teacher to look over their writing and give them feedback. And she had one thing, as soon as she had one thing that the student could work on, the kid was gone from her and back to their desk working. So when you looked at a chunk of writing time, her kids actually wrote for longer periods of time during the same time because they weren't standing in line. And they discovered that teachers were giving kids 3 and 4 pieces of feedback, which by the time they got back to their seat, they were lucky if they remembered one of the 4 that they got.

[00:18:34.440] – Keith
Right.

[00:18:36.160] – Steve
But she didn't know what she was doing that was cause inner success.

[00:18:41.230] – Keith
Right. A lot of times they don't. That's why it helps to have some peer observation in there. It can be valuable. Little bits of microteaching are very valuable. And that's just where we're working on little tiny slices. And maybe we videotape or

we go up to observe each other for, you know, how are you conducting the writing lesson? How are you conducting the writing feedback? It can be super, super narrow, but that's exactly what microteaching is – looking at those teeny tiny slices of instruction in a safe environment with each other. It's also one of the things I recommend for helping with teacher burnout and stress is look at those, look at those stress points of instruction, you know, who's doing it well, who's struggling, and then have an honest conversation, give some honest feedback, have a safe environment for doing that. And you're also going to help, you know, mitigate some of the burnout and stress that some of the teachers struggle with in the classroom.

[00:19:37.530] – Steve
So I've been working with a group of coaches that recently passed two questions on to me that they wanted me to respond to related to this. So I'm going to pass them on and let you talk about how you might respond. So the first one was, they asked me this, they said, what tools or coaching moves can you recommend for supporting teachers' emotional resilience during periods of stress, change, or burnout?

[00:20:08.130] – Keith
That's a valuable question because I think a lot of times in coaching and in education in general, we don't talk a lot about emotional intelligence. This is certainly a question that merits addressing emotional intelligence of the staff. I don't remember receiving any instruction on this when I was in university. And I don't remember receiving a lot of training on this as a teacher when I was in the classroom. One of the strategies we have in that chapter on teacher burnout and stress is tactics for managing challenging adult behavior. Many times I see teachers that we might label or they might label themselves with low emotional intelligence skills is they just don't lack basic communication skills for dealing with other challenging adults. And this tactic, this set of

strategies, tactics for managing challenging adults, is there in that chapter on teacher burnout stress for that very reason. Because unresolved adult conflict is one of the most reliable drivers for teacher burnout, and sometimes even more so than teacher behavior or workload. Sometimes it's just dealing with some of the other adults that I could – everybody considers different people difficult, so it's who I consider difficult to manage with.

[00:21:25.650] – Keith
And some of these strategies are super simple, you know, just, clarifying intent, using positive intent, agreeing to some norms in a meeting setting. Some of these are some of the strategies that can give a lot of power to teachers to help them with their communication skills, to help them with their emotional management. There was a new department chair we were working with a number of years ago who was totally stressed out. She followed a veteran department chair who was much beloved. She had retired and this lady came in to take her place and she had been in the department for a long time. But we were talking with her about 6 weeks into the school year and she was ready to quit because her high school English department chair was driving her crazy. And she said, "I can't take this. She goes, these are people, these people are my friends. I've known them forever." And so just a little quick conversation with her about what their questions were was a huge tool that helped her turn it around. Because when we wrote down what all the questions were, it turns out all the questions were about the new standards and the new initiatives they were doing in the curriculum.

[00:22:39.450] – Keith
None of the questions that they were shooting at her with these sharp arrows had anything to do with her personality, her leadership style, anything like that. They were all very logistical questions about how to implement this new program. And the lady, the department chair, was very smart. She saw

the pattern in the questions. She said, they're not attacking you, they're angry about this new implementation. And so we talked about some strategies for managing those kinds of questions. And once she had that, she was able to turn it around. Now granted, her department was very sarcastic and they were sharp-witted, so they still asked questions with that tone. But she would just kind of ignore the tone and then answer the questions or find a solution to whatever the problems were that they were presenting, which they had not faced before as a department. And within a couple of months, you know, she wasn't complaining about dealing with him anymore. But it was some basic – she was emotionally upset at first because she couldn't take all of that being fired at her. But carefully stepping back and analyzing the data, she was able to wrap her head around it and get over that bumpy road at the beginning of an implementation, which many of us know that you face in the beginning.

[00:23:51.180] – Keith
And she's still the department chair to this day and quite successful at it.

[00:23:55.860] – Steve
Yeah, I just did some work with another author who writes about resistance in coaching, that resistance with teachers that coaches run into, similar to what you were describing this first time with. And she described that if you see resistance as an unmet need. There's something those people who are resisting need. And so if rather than seeing it as an attack on me, I work on figuring out what that need is, that's a big stress release.

[00:24:31.420] – Keith
And sometimes it's just a different – it's something as simple as a difference in philosophy. You and I could be working on the same science team, but you can have a different approach to students. You can have a different belief about assessments, you have different belief about science in

general, and still be just as effective as I am. So if I can just acknowledge some of those differences and still work with you, I don't have to be just like you in order to be successful or for us to work well together. So sometimes it's just acknowledging that, articulating that, maybe over time turning it into inside jokes. You know, "Hey, that's the way Steve thinks about kids." And nothing wrong with that, just different from me.

[00:25:14.380] – Steve
You know, the other place I see that stress come up more often than it should is with a paraprofessional working with a teacher. So now we've got the two people in that classroom or a co-teaching situation where people are actually getting more stress from the adults dealing with each other than they are from what they're looking to accomplish with kids.

[00:25:41.620] – Keith
Agreed. That's probably one of the number one stressors that special ed teachers bring up to me is how to work with, manage, communicate with their co-teacher in their classroom, or vice versa, the regular teacher with the special ed teacher. And what I often get asked by coaches or by those teachers that, "Well, what do I do with this person?" And so I'm going to go back to that list of tactics for managing challenging adult behaviors. And that's why it's in there. I'm going to say, okay, well, let's look at these 8 ideas. And let's talk about your personality versus her personality and which ones might help you to get some clarity in the relationship, to get some peace in the relationship, to get some harmony going in the relationship. And many times, it's one thing. Sometimes, it's a set of 3 or 4 things. Sometimes, it's an experiment. Okay, I'm just going to try this for a couple weeks, and that was worth it. I want to try this. And I always say, well, that's better than the hell you've been living with, for the past, you know, 3 or 4 years.

[00:26:42.560] – Steve

Just giving them something to try. Experiment. I believe experiment is stress reduction. Stress is when you're driving to school knowing what that kid's going to do and having no idea what you're going to do. If you have something to try today that you haven't tried before, it's a total different way that you're walking in the door.

[00:27:09.220] – Keith
And sometimes exciting. I mean, I've done model lessons where I know there are challenging kids in the room and I think, okay, well, what am I going to do today? Because the teacher's already told me, you know, he does X, Y, and Z. So I'm going to have 3 strategies, my 3 tried and true strategies ready. I'm going to have these other 3 that might work. And that gives me a little bit of hope. It gives me a little bit of excitement as I go into the lesson.

[00:27:32.730] – Steve
So let me toss the other question that those coaches gave me. How can coaches support teacher wellbeing in ways that go beyond surface-level wellness and actually impact day-to-day professional practice? And I'm thinking that that question kind of aligns with your comment earlier about, you know, what can we do within the system the way it is without changing the system? And then are there things we could do that encourage a bigger systemic change within a school?

[00:28:06.460] – Keith
Well, I think two things. First, coaches in many instances are gatekeepers. They're actually one of those avenues to power. They're one of those avenues to the system, and they have some influence. Sometimes they have some direct influence. Sometimes they just have more partial influence, but they also have a responsibility for making sure that when they have influence, when they have control, when they have a voice, that they use it on behalf of teachers as well. They can often see things that an individual teacher can't see. They can see some things systemically within the grade level or the

department or the school or the district, and they need to make sure that they're doing their job to be advocates for the teachers as well. The other tactic that comes up that I found some coaches and administrators can use– many people have seenthat strategy – it's often done in circles. We call it Circles of Influence, where you put – you group the things that you can control in one circle, in a larger circle things that you can influence, then a larger circle of things that you can't change or influence. And so, when you do that strategy in isolation as a teacher, it is just a Band-Aid.

[00:29:18.980] – Keith
It's just helping you sort of organize your thoughts and your energy. But coaches and administrators have the power to do that with groups. So when you do that with groups, it becomes much less about just whining and more about, okay, so what are some things that are out of our control that we need help with? And so it gives you sort of analysis of the systems that are surrounding the teacher. That's a strategy or tactic that we have there in that chapter that I would encourage coaches to consider. You know, what are some things that you could do to help with some of the systems? Sometimes addressing the assessment is not the thing that is stressing them out the most. It is the student behavior. So it helps the coach focus where to determine their focus. Do I need to focus on giving them, you know, strategies or tactics or setting up a system for student behavior? You know, they're fine with the assessment. I can work on this other avenue over here to help them. So those are a couple of the tips that I would give to coaches who are looking to see how they could influence and help reduce some of that stress and burnout.

[00:30:31.550] – Steve
I looked at that piece that you had written on circles of influence, and that struck me that that could be a very good starting point for an instructional coach to do, both with an individual teacher, to have the teacher shed light on their

own thinking, but then also with a PLC or larger groups of teachers.

[00:30:59.910] – Keith
The other thing I think coaches can do is make sure that their bag of tricks, their repertoire of strategies is broad. And this, in terms of this book, this is what it's made for. So if a lot of times I find coaches, even administrators, they were often, often, pretty successful teachers. They didn't have a lot of classroom management issues. They didn't have a lot of struggle with students who are high needs. Sometimes they were doing, they were managing those things innately, sometimes they were managing those things intentionally. But if I didn't have, if I had figured out how to manage student misbehavior really easily, I need to slow down and go back and look at some of the basics for classroom management. And that's one of the things I was gonna suggest to you today in this chat was, another thing to help teachers with stress and burnout is as a coach or just administrator, go in and look or even a teacher – go in and look at that Chapter 2 on classroom management, affective learning gaps. That chapter in particular was vetted by about 16 teachers across the nation. And so they're giving strategies and tactics that they use every single day.

[00:32:17.800] – Keith
So the most powerful strategies that they like, and we included some of their stories in there. So as a coach, I'd make sure I was fluent in that, if that's the area where my teachers were struggling. When I first became a coach, that's exactly what I did. I didn't have a lot of classroom management issues when I was first in the classroom. I learned later that I was doing a lot of the things that were research-based just sort of innately. But as soon as I became a coach, an administrator, it was like the number one issue that teachers were struggling with when I went to coach them. So I just decided it was my job to become a master of this topic. And I did. Every book I could read, every training I could go

to, every – if I went to one conference for a day and I got two strategies that were powerful, I would take them back with me and I would commit them to memory and not just commit them to memory, I'd write them down and talk about, because I knew I had teachers who needed those. So I would say, check your bag of tricks.

[00:33:19.100] – Keith
Make sure it's broad, make sure it's deep, and do a little analysis. Make sure that you're seeing what are the gaps amongst the teachers that you need to help them with. And then fill that in. Consult with other coaches, stay current on your reading. And I think that's what makes a powerful coach. And a powerful educational leader.

[00:33:49.290] – Steve
I'm laughing because a phrase that I used for years with teachers in PLCs is that as a PLC, you sit down, you look at student work, and the question you ask yourself is, what do the kids need us to learn? So now I'm flipping that because as a coach, it's really, what do my teachers need me to learn?

[00:34:17.190] – Keith
Exactly, exactly.

[00:34:19.110] – Steve
So why don't you jump from there into a little bit more about the other areas of your book outside this single chapter that I pulled. And now you talked about the one on classroom management. What are the other issues that you address?

[00:34:35.130] – Keith
Well, the Teaching Strategy Handbook addresses student engagement. There are a lot of strategies in there. This chapter in particular, there are strategies in there about what the current research says about student talk. You know, it's important not to just have them turn and talk to each other, but exactly how are they talking to each other? Are

they arguing with each other? Are they defending with each other? So it gives you some frames and some structures for that, how to really elevate turn and talk so they're actually producing higher-level thinking skills when they're doing that talk. And then a variety of other strategies that we've run across throughout the nation or we've used ourselves. And then as I mentioned earlier, the second chapter is on classroom management. And each one of the strategies is about a paragraph or two or three long. So they're short reads. And we also chunked each chapter, like I remember, like I mentioned earlier, into, you know, which ones are – you can you do super fast, which ones take a little bit more planning, and which of them take some more long-term planning.

[00:35:44.030] – Keith
So that chapter, of course, is one of my favorites because it's also, you know, co-developed by a bunch of current classroom teachers. Academic Learning Gaps is a powerhouse because it gives specific strategies for when you're struggling with academic gaps. What are some of the most common ones And what are the lists and lists of strategies that we see teachers using to fill up those gaps? The special needs in the general education classroom, that's one of the stress points for teachers. And so we give the most common and some unique strategies for dealing with special ed students who are in the general ed classroom. Chapter 5 is about technology integration. And it was really exciting because this chapter lines up with a lot of the movement that we're seeing in technology integration today, where it's more of a parsed-out strategy instead of a holistic, we're going to do the whole curriculum based on technology. It's like how to manage some technology-free days, how to manage an overwhelming of technology. It was very cool to see this chapter come out at the same time that people are pushing back against technology. Because we are very much for technology integration, but where it's appropriate, not as a wholesale use of student reading and student usage throughout the

curriculum.

[00:37:12.040] – Steve
It’s an interesting place to be at, that how much of a focus is on getting the technology implemented and then how much of our focus is seeing that it’s not taking over as it’s been implemented.

[00:37:27.210] – Keith
Right. And for the most part, we wrapped up this chapter a year ago, but it was just what we were seeing and we were encountering. And then all of a sudden, now you see in the news and all you’re reading is exploding that people are pulling back on technology. And we were like, my goodness, we were like right on spot with this one. But it was just what we were encountering. We were trying to offer solutions to problems that we were seeing or that teachers were bringing up. In the classroom. So it is fun to be a part of that conversation, to see that chapter aligned with that. Chapter 6 is about family engagement. I love this chapter because it gives some innovative and different ways for families to be involved. There’s a big trend now for family group conferences and to go along with a few individual conferences, but to do more family group training on the very specific things inside your curriculum that teachers – I mean, that families can do at home. It’s sort of, you know, taking the veil off of some of the instructional strategies and curriculum strategies and saying, okay, parents, here’s how you can support, and here’s where we need you the most.

[00:38:33.150] – Keith
So to me, that’s an exciting chapter. Chapter 7 is on assessment and grading, some ways to make some things efficient and make some things aligned with higher levels of thinking, make some assessments and gradings aligned with some of the harder standards. And then we talked about Chapter 8, Teacher Burnout and Stress. And then Chapter 9, Cultural Competency, Inclusivity, and Equity, there’s a lot of

strategies in there. Again, lots of teacher influence in there, lots of strategies for what people have learned over the past 6 or 8 years around equity. And then Chapter 10 is sort of a wrap-up. It's like, okay, if I'm a teacher reading this, how do I take this and use this information? How do I use it to – you know, it's great to read a book or read a chapter and say, I got some good ideas, but then how do I make these habits? So it's more about how to establish a habit, how do I establish a routine with some of these things that I want to establish, how to make them a part of my instructional repertoire as a teacher. And that's it.

[00:39:39.430] – Keith
Those are the 10 chapters. The one thing I will say about the book from people who are reviewing it, we're getting lots of positive feedback about the structure. They're saying it's easy to read. I can just jump to a chapter where I have high needs. And then again, it's segmented into low prep, medium prep, high prep, so I can move within that chapter. And then, often the strategies are short read. They're just a few paragraphs, so I can get grasp of what I need, maybe a story about how it was implemented in a real classroom, and then go from there. So the format or the structure of the book is getting a lot of positive feedback as well.

[00:40:17.470] – Steve
Yeah, that's why the format jumped out to me as a helpful resource guide for instructional coaches to have off to the side. Knowing issues that a teacher has raised and you're looking for some quick possibilities to come back to the conversation with the teacher. Sounds like a great resource there.

[00:40:44.300] – Keith
If I were an administrator or a coach, let's say I'm working with a teacher on implementing some rules, routines, and procedures around technology integration. So I might give them my ideas, we might come up with, they might give me some of

their ideas, we might come up with a plan. And then I might, after the conversation, is give them a copy of that chapter 5. Hey, so when you have some time later, here's some other strategies you might read on that same topic. Instead of just handing them the whole book, hand them a chapter out of it.

[00:41:12.760] – Steve
Yeah. Great extension. Great extension. Well, I'm super glad that you contacted me to let you know you had a new book out.

[00:41:20.660] – Keith
Alright. Thank you, Steve. I appreciate you having me on again.

[00:41:21.820] – Steve
Yeah, what's the best way for listeners to follow up with you with a question or kind of follow your continuing work?

[00:41:35.900] – Keith
I have a website, akyconsulting.com. On that website, you can see sometimes I'll put conferences on that I'm going to. I have podcasts, I have all the publications where you can link to purchase those and you can sign up. I have a newsletter comes out about every 8 weeks or so. Easy to opt out, but you can sign up, give me your email and you sign up there for that newsletter. You can also email me directly from that website, but I would point people to akyconsulting.com.

[00:42:11.640] – Steve
Well, we'll stick that in the, in the lead-in to the podcast, make it easy for folks to find. Thanks so much.

[00:42:18.650] – Keith
Perfect. Thank you, Steve. I appreciate it.

[00:42:22.730] – 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.