

ACR 170 transcript

📅 Sat, Jun 17, 2023 2:03PM 🕒 11:49

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

classroom, core, checklists, episode, burnout, lesson plans, routine, talked, zoning, playlist, academy, schedule, educator, week, thought, month, decision fatigue, task, instruction, focus

SPEAKERS

Chris

Welcome to the Autism Classroom Resources Podcast, the podcast for special educators who are looking for personal and professional development. I'm your host Dr. Christine Reeve. For more than 20 years, I've worn lots of hats in special education. But my real love is helping special educators like you. This podcast will give you tips and ways to implement research based practices in a practical way in your classroom, to make your job easier and more effective.

Welcome back to the Autism Classroom Resources podcast. I am Chris Reeve. And today, I want to talk about how the CORE model can prevent special education teacher burnout.

The whole concept behind the CORE framework is that you're developing a highly organized classroom with systems in place so that your classroom almost runs itself. Believe it or not, yes, that can happen. The focus is to keep adults focused on the students and keeping the students engaged. Which I talked about in an earlier episode. When those two things happen, random craziness is a little less likely and you can actually focus on teaching, assuming that you're the teacher.

So how can CORE help prevent teacher burnout? Well, I'm going to put together a playlist for you of different episodes that I'm going to talk about in today's episode so that you can go straight to them and listen to any more that you want. So you don't need to worry about going and finding them now. I'll make sure that there's a link to a playlist for you that will just give you those episodes.

So teacher burnout has been a topic I've talked about with a lot of other professionals recently. You can hear Sasha Long from the Autism Helper and I talked about how the burnout rate for teachers has affected our approach to supporting teachers. That's in Episode 167. And this is super important to me, because you, as a special educator of any kind, are too valuable to burn out.

Taking care of yourself is critical to preventing this from happening. And I talked about that recently

Taking care of yourself is critical to preventing this from happening. And I talked about that recently with Kelsey Swardson, which I'll put in the playlist as well. And there are definitely elements of the CORE framework that can help you avoid burnout, and continue loving your job. And we are just at the right time of year to just maybe start thinking of things in the back of our mind without actually doing anything about it.

Because during the summer, you don't have as much decision fatigue, and you have more bandwidth to make clear headed decision about next year and what you want to do. Don't let this be an indication that I'm telling you to start working on your room now. I am not. I'm just saying as you ease forward into it, maybe next month or in August, depending on when you go back, this episode might be helpful. So let's get started.

The key behind the CORE framework being useful in warding off burnout is in creating systems that work for you. One of the biggest benefits, once you've set up a CORE classroom, is that the decision fatigue is lessened because things just happen when they're supposed to. Now I'm not saying it goes away, you still have all your kids to keep track of and trying to do instruction has its own level of decision fatigue. But it is helped when you take away that every day routine kinds of things.

So for instance, you no longer have to think where to send your paras in the room, because it's already on their zoning plan. You thought about it yesterday when your brain maybe wasn't quite so overwhelmed. And they follow the zoning plan. Definitely the first time is the test. It takes some getting used to. But it's pretty amazing how fast a lot of the strategies can work.

You spend the first weeks of the year just getting a routine going. You focus on building that strong CORE, you're not doing nothing. You're focusing on the CORE of your classroom, which is going to free you up for the rest of the year to do what you want to do.

You're testing your schedule to see how it works. You're working out the kinks with the zoning plan. You're fixing your physical space as you realize that there might be an issue with it. And you're dealing with the fact that the specialists and lunchtimes all changed three times in the first few weeks of school and that's probably a low estimate. And that's okay.

You'll also hear Sasha and I talk about this in the episode where I interviewed her because the fact that you don't have the other elements in place, data is going to be the last thing you add. And that's okay, go get there. But first you got to get the instructional pieces in place and in order to do that you have to have the classroom running.

Another way to keep you from burning out is that if you have a one person down zone Plan and Schedule, then you're prepared when someone is absent, including that your class is prepared for you to be absent. Because when you weren't exhausted and sick and thinking, "do I, should I just go to

work because it'll be easier," you've already thought through how this problem should be solved. And you've left clear instructions to help with that.

I think, I hope that we all learn the importance of not coming to work when you're sick during the pandemic. It's not healthy for you, it's not healthy for those around you. But so often, it does seem so much easier to just go to work than to try to get them to do what you want them to do.

But if you've already done that one person down zoning plan, you've adjusted your schedule, and you've practiced it and maybe used it as a training tool early in the year. So you've tested out your one man down zoning plan to make sure that it works well. You've tested that schedule to make sure it works well. You've gone through that process, it's going to be really much easier for you to take the break you need to feel better knowing that your classroom is going to run on that same routine. And I talked about that in episode 152. And I'll put that in the playlist.

And I walk you through how to do it. Now if you're an Academy member, we have two quick wins on how to create it one person down zoning plan, that also one of those is about what kind of activities do you do, because you're probably going to change the difficulty of some of the work that the kids are doing on a day like that. It's not ideal, but we do what we do. And so if you're in the Academy, you can definitely check those out. If you're not kind of give us a try.

A third way that you can prevent burnout is that you start to have routines to get the needed things done. Routines take some getting used to when you start them. But once you have them in place, you don't have to think about when you're going to analyze the data, for instance. You do it every Thursday afternoon. Similarly, you don't have as much work when you're analyzing the data, because you've done it every week. So you can add a little bit to it each week and look it over and it doesn't have to be a giant looming ordeal.

Using checklists and making notes on the board are another way of reducing the load on your brain. The more things that you can get out of your brain, and down where you can see it, but also where other people can see it. So if you have a list of things that you pull out, when you have some sudden downtime for that keep the kids engaged, put that list on the board. And then model for staff and say, "Hey, I'm going to pull this thing off the board," so that they see when you're not around, that's where that idea came from. It wasn't a magical thought that you had in your head and didn't share with anybody.

Checklists for resetting the schedules, resetting independent work. I've got a free one for you that will be linked in the show notes for this episode. For resetting independent work to make sure that they're doing it correctly. And that it's easy to hand to a less familiar person because they'll know what needs to be done.

Ways to access and complete your lesson plans making sure you have time that you're writing your

ways to access and complete your lesson plans, making sure you have time that you're writing your lesson plan, you've got a template for it, and we have an episode on that as well. And other routine activities mean that you don't have to think about the steps, you can just do them. And it makes it much easier to pass these tasks off to others in the classroom to complete, which makes it something that's no longer on your plate to do.

In the Academy, we have a whole CORE checklist that encompasses all of the elements of the CORE triangle, the schedule, the zoning plan, the instruction, the data analysis, etc. We have batching checklists for batching your lesson plans and doing a month of lesson plans all at one time. And keeping your brain focused on one task at a time, that frees you up for the rest of the month from having to do that.

So no more thinking about a math task and then shifting to how I'm going to teach reading for this skill, then shifting to what the art activity is going to be then back to another math task. You do all the math for the month, then you do all the reading lessons for a month. So no more shifting of your attention. It also allows you to do your lesson plans in short bursts if you have a really hard time finding enough time to really get them done.

I have some other time management tools like using a timer in an episode that I will definitely put on the playlist for you. But these are some ways that using the CORE systems can help prevent burnout. I can't solve the entire burnout problem. There are a lot of systemic issues that none of us if you're not administrator really have anything to do with, that we really can't fix.

But if you're struggling with burnout or frustrated with the way this past year went, check out the playlist that I will put out there. I'll put the checklist down there as well as an example, in the shownotes. But you can also come join us in the Academy and let us help. We have tons of tools and strategies to help you start off your year strong.

And we are doing a setting up classrooms one week boot camp in July. At the time I'm recording this, I'm not sure of the exact dates, but once I know I will make sure that it's put in the shownotes. And that's going to give us just one week to focus on getting the classroom up with a different task every single day. So rather than stretching it out over a month, we're going to put it all together so the rest of the weeks you can have time on your own.

So you can find out more information about the Special Educator Academy at specialeducatoracademy.com. I hope that you will join me again next week. If you liked this episode, make sure you download the playlist from the show notes. And I would love it if you would leave a review on Apple podcasts and I'll put that link there as well. I read everyone it means a lot to know whether or not the topics that I'm talking about are things that connect with you. So I hope you will come back again next week. And until then, I'll talk to you later.

Thanks so much for listening to today's episode of the Autism Classroom Resources podcast. For even more support, you can access free materials, webinars and Video Tips inside my free resource library. Sign up at autismclassroomresources.com/free. That's F-R-E-E or click the link in the show notes to join the free library today. I'll catch you again next week.