What is Leverage Leadership?

Leverage Leadership is an instructional leadership approach focused on rapid and sustained school improvement that is replicable across school settings. At the heart of this strategy are the seven key levers of school improvement. Consistent application of the seven key levers ensures that each minute in school is leveraged for optimum school performance.

Seven Levers of Leverage Leadership

**Instructional Levers**

1. **Data-driven instruction:** Define the road map for rigour and adapt teaching to meet students’ needs.
2. **Instructional planning:** Planning backwards to guarantee strong lessons.
3. **Observation and Feedback:** Coach teachers to improve the learning.
4. **Professional development:** Strengthen culture and instruction with hands-on training that sticks.

**Cultural Levers**

1. **Student Culture:** Create a strong culture where learning can thrive.
2. **Staff Culture:** Build and support the right team.
3. **Managing school leadership teams:** Train instructional leaders to expand impact across the school.

See it, Name it, Do it

“The levers tell you what to do, but we need a “light switch” to show you how.”

Paul Bambrick-Santoyo, CSO of Uncommon Schools and the Founder and Dean of the Leverage Leadership Institute.

The Leverage Leadership approach to school improvement is underpinned by the See It, Name It, Do It model, the ‘light switch’ referred to by Paul Bambrick-Santoyo above. Teachers and leaders need to see a model first before stripping it back, unpicking its components and identifying the gap between current practice and the model. Once teachers and leaders can name the key actions to close the gap they are ready to move to the planning and practicing stage. Through thorough planning and repeated practice with precise feedback, leaders and teachers will be ready to implement their action steps in classrooms or across schools.

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Mark Gregory

Mark is the UK’s leading expert in Leverage Leadership following his fellowship with the Relay Graduate School under the instruction of Paul Bambrick-Santoyo.

Mark Gregory has worked in Birmingham’s schools for over 20 years, working with disadvantaged and disenfranchised communities for the duration. For the last 11 of these he has worked for Ark Schools, first as a Senior Leader and then Principal at Ark St Albans’ Academy, and more recently as Ark’s Regional Director for Secondary Education.

As Principal, Mark saw the school ranked #20 in the country for student progress, continuing the delivery of exceptional outcomes for the young people it serves. This success was built on strong student culture and a rigorous focus on teaching quality and response to data.
Leverage Leadership Professional Development

Ark’s Leverage Leadership Professional Development programmes trains middle leaders, senior leaders, principals and executive school leaders.

Professional development for middle and senior leaders focuses on instructional coaching of school staff in each of the 7 levers of school improvement through the See It, Name It, Do It model. Coaching focuses on the routines, teacher actions and student actions needed to maximise student performance.

Leverage Leadership’s professional development approach for principals and executive school leaders has an additional layer. This programme develops principals and executive school leader’s ability to coach their school leaders who coach staff in their schools. This multi layered approach to instructional coaching ensures that each staff member is certain of what they need to do and when to do it to create transformational growth in school performance.

The Leverage Leadership approach is underpinned with 6 core requirements which are entwined into the See It, Name It, Do It model.

1. **Identify and codify best practice**: The Leverage Leadership Institute takes a very large corpus of observations of successful teachers and their leaders and attempts to identify and codify the structures that lie behind best practice. Codification leads to the creation of models of excellent practice which are replicated through intensive instructional coaching and deliberate practise. These very detailed models inform all initial professional development input and the first part of the See It, Name It, Do It coaching cycle that underpins the work.

2. **More emphasis on models**: In the pursuit to reduce variation, the Leverage Leadership approach requires everyone to be familiar with the models of excellent practice across an organisation. Senior leaders are expected to understand school culture and academic rigour models in the same detail as their teachers, teacher educators and middle leaders.

3. **Getting close to the work**: This is the key idea. Essentially it means understanding the models of practice, and getting into books, classrooms and meetings with those models in hand. It means school leaders spending their time differently, seeing the work in schools differently. Rather than questioning why someone down the chain of command isn’t doing what has been asked of them, this approach flips this thought process by asking ‘Where is the breakdown in student understanding? Can the teacher see it? If they can, do they know how to solve the problem? What are leaders doing to help teachers see the issue and solve the problem?’. 

4. **Changing how school leaders spend their time**: Leverage Leadership seeks to redefine the roles of executive leaders, principals and senior leaders. This approach encourages schools’ senior most leaders to look critically at how they spend their time, and to name the tangible difference that they are making for teachers and students in classrooms. 

5. **Scope and sequence**: The Leverage Leadership Institute have used scope and sequence to codify the path to implementing models. The scope and sequence simply names the implementation gaps and the precise action steps (the ‘Name It’ part of the coaching cycle) to close it. Naming the strengths and deficits in teacher practice is one thing, it’s another to systematically replicate or improve upon them.

6. **Primacy of practice**: The ‘Do It’ part of the coaching cycle means standing up to practise and getting feedback on a teacher/leader’s intended delivery (of a lesson, a meeting etc.) before practicing it again. Again, the model is key. Coaches are looking for the gaps in personal delivery to ensure the practice is perfect before the live action occurs. Often the practice part of the See It, Name It, Do It model is the most apprehensive section of a professional development session but through the skill and knowledge of an effective facilitator it’s a powerful co-created performance that stamps the learning.

Interested in Leverage Leadership?

Please contact Matt Dunne, Director of the Ark Teaching School, at matt.dunne@arkonline.org

http://arkteachingschool.org