

# Moving Scholars as Readers and Writers: Goal-Setting and Coaching

You know your scholars' daily scholar work, as well as their data from last year. How would you characterize their challenges as readers and writers?

## **Intellectual Preparation**

As a Literature teacher, you have a myriad of opportunities to get to know, and move, your scholars. But in order to do so, you will need to be incredibly well planned.

First and foremost, you **MUST** be intellectually prepared for every seminar. This means that you deeply understand the text as an adult, and have thought through exemplar responses — and possible misconceptions — for every question. If you are not intellectually prepared for a seminar, you cannot coach your scholars to mastery or hold your scholars accountable.

You must also have weekly systems and routines for studying scholar work. This is one of the most important jobs of a teacher in a progressive classroom. Scholar work informs you of your practice. It is the single best way to know what in your practice needs to change.

If there are misconceptions, you need to be clearer and ask better questions. If you see sloppiness or laziness in the work, you need to be clearer about work product expectations and be more demanding. If you see scholars struggling, your interventions need to change. Scholar work is a reflection of adult practice and a powerful opportunity for you to become a better teacher. All must seize the opportunity.

## **Goal-Setting and Coaching**

In addition to intellectually preparing, you must conference with your scholars to get to know them as readers and writers. These face-to-face interactions will help you better diagnose each scholar and ensure that you are setting the right goal for him or her.

As you check in with scholars, ask them questions about the text or piece of writing to see how well they are applying the Habits of Great Readers and Writers. Are they envisioning? Are they able to articulate the big idea of the text or piece of writing? Can they identify supporting details and explain how they develop the big idea?

Kids generally fall into a few categories: poor effort and precision, comprehension issues, lack of specific skills or strategies, or High Fliers who have mastered the concept. Sort your scholars into these categories and use the Top 5 Key Reading Tactics to come up with a goal for each category. See [here](#) for sample goals.

For instance, your group struggling with comprehension may have a goal such as, “Each time I read a text, I will ask myself, ‘Why did the author write this text?’” Similarly, your poor precision group may have a goal such as, “Whenever I finish a piece of writing, I will reread it to check for clarity and remove any clutter that does not prove my idea.”

Set a reading and writing goal for every scholar based on his or her category. You’re not creating 30 different goals!

The next step is to tell scholars their goals and coach them around these goals. Tell scholars the goals and strategies they can use to make growth. Give scholars a goal card as a reminder of their goal. Make sure that you circle back to the scholar later in the period or week to hold them accountable for using their goal.

Tell each parent what his or her child’s goal is so they can work on the goal at home. Without goals and parental investment, you won’t fix the root cause of a scholar’s struggle.

Notice when a scholar has met his or her goal and give him or her a new goal. Act quickly if a scholar is not making growth. Reevaluate his or her goal and make sure it is matched to the scholar’s greatest need.

### **When to Coach**

You should be coaching scholars whenever they are working independently during class. Once, and only once, you have established a calm and focused working environment across your class, you will want to work with two to three scholars per class, for three to five minutes each.

Each teacher must have his or her own group of scholars that he or she is focused on moving.

In addition to independent work time during class, you have the Wednesday conferencing block as well as intervention, to get to know — and move — your scholars as readers and writers.

Intervention is the time for you to provide comprehensive support to your most struggling scholars. During this time, you will lead guided reading groups focused on providing scholars with the skills that they need to read on grade level.