

# SHADOW A STUDENT HIGHER ED CHALLENGE

universityinnovationfellows.org  
#shadowacollegestudent

## Toolkit

We're excited that you're here. This toolkit is designed to support you during your Shadow a Student Higher Ed Challenge.

This Challenge is a pilot initiative run by the University Innovation Fellows, a program of the d.school. It is a higher education version of the original K-12 Shadow a Student Challenge run by School Retool, also a d.school program, which asked teachers, principals and administrators to shadow a student at their school for one day.

For ease of printing, the pages with activities for you to write on and complete are listed below.



pg. 2

### PREP

Prep activities on pg. 3-6



pg. 7

### SHADOW

Shadow Journal and Thank You card on pg. 10 and 12



pg. 14

### REFLECT

Worksheet on pg. 15



pg. 16

### ACT

Worksheets on pg. 18-19

STEP ONE

# PREP



## OBJECTIVE

The purpose of the prep phase is to help you set up for a meaningful shadow experience.

## MINDSET

### Question assumptions

You'll learn the most from shadowing by having beginner's eyes instead of coming into the Shadow Day with preconceived ideas of what you expect to see at your school.

## ACTIVITIES

1. Create learning goals for your Shadow Day.
2. Choose a student and confirm they're interested.
3. Coordinate with your students and staff.



## EXPECTED TIME

Plan to spend 1 hour on the self-prep exercises

Plan to dedicate a little time, over approximately 5 days, getting set up for your Shadow a Student Day



## ADVICE AND INSIGHTS FROM THE K-12 CHALLENGE

"Don't tell your teachers [you're coming to their class]. I didn't want them putting on a show."

Sean Gaillard, Education Advisor



## FROM PREVIOUS K-12 SHADOWERS

"I had to peel back the lens that I usually see things through. I played along and followed directions and did not evaluate teaching or students. I evaluated my experience as a student."

Mary Seltzer, Lakeview Elementary School



# CHOOSING YOUR STUDENT

## WHO MIGHT YOU LIKE TO LEARN FROM?

Your learning experience will depend a lot on the student you shadow. Give some thought as to how the student you select can help you meet your learning goals.

## LIST DIFFERENT STUDENT QUALITIES

Year: .....

Gender: .....

Major: .....

Socioeconomic status: .....

Academic performance: .....

Passions: .....

Personality: .....

Other attributes: .....

.....

.....



## AN ACTIVITY TO IDENTIFY STUDENTS

Here is a way to help identify students with different types of needs:

1. At your next faculty or staff meeting, share the challenge with those attending. Print the names (or better yet, photos!) of a subset of the student body at your school and post them around the conference room.
2. Give attendees a green marker and a red marker.  
(Any two colors will do, as long as everyone has the same two.)
3. Ask them to go around the room and,
  - Draw a green dot on students they've had a positive interaction with.
  - Draw a red dot on students they've had a negative interaction with.
4. Look for students who surprise you or stand out because they have lots of marks - or none at all.

# SETTING UP YOUR SHADOW DAY

## COORDINATE AND GET READY!

There are just a few more things to do before your Shadow Day. Here's a to-do list to help you coordinate permissions, scheduling, and other logistics.

STUDENT'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

YEAR: \_\_\_\_\_

MAJOR: \_\_\_\_\_

## PREP COORDINATION CHECKLIST

- Choose a student and confirm their interest
- Clear your schedule for the entire day
- Notify your staff of your absence
- Find other school leaders with whom you'll share the journey (we suggest 4-6)
- Let other school leaders know you've joined the challenge! Tweet a message like "I'm excited to #shadowacollegestudent because..."

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Tweet a message like:  
"I'm excited to #shadowacollegestudent because \_\_\_\_\_"

How are you feeling about going back to school?  
Tag it with: #shadowacollegestudent

# PLANNING YOUR SHADOW EXPERIENCE

## SCHEDULE YOUR TIME

Use this calendar to schedule all logistics related to planning your Shadow Day and reflecting on the experience.

APRIL 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20 Shadow a Student Higher Ed Challenge begins	21	22
23	24	25	26	27 Shadow a Student Higher Ed Challenge ends	28	29
30						

STEP TWO

# SHADOW



## OBJECTIVE

The purpose of your Shadow Day is not to observe classes, but to immerse yourself in a student's experience. Plan to spend as much of the entire day as possible getting to know your student.

## MINDSET

### Be student-centered

Try to do everything your student does without judgment. Be curious, ask open-ended questions to understand his or her needs, and continue to look with beginner's eyes.

## ACTIVITIES

1. Meet your student
2. Shadow your student
3. Capture your learnings
4. Share observations, photos, and fun!



## EXPECTED TIME

Plan to spend at least 1 day completing the Shadow step



## FROM PREVIOUS K-12 SHADOWERS

"We talk a lot about what we think the student experience is. I got a true sense of what a day in the life is like."

Daniel Simon, Colts Neck High School

"It's unnerving for leaders. Putting yourself in someone else's shoes is hard and humbling."

Eric Juli, Design Lab Early College High School

# MEETING YOUR STUDENT

## GETTING OVER THE JITTERS

Shadowing can feel like the first day of school all over again. You might find yourself questioning your outfit, where to sit during lunch, and what to talk about with your student. Don't worry, we've got you covered.

## WHAT TO WEAR & BRING ALONG

To really put yourself in the shoes of your student:

- Wear their shoes! Swap your dress shoes for some sneakers, and dress casually.
- Stuff a backpack full of gym clothes, books, or whatever supplies you'll need to do exactly what your student does.
- Don't forget your camera and note sheet (next page)!

## CREATING CONVERSATION

The more curious you are, the more the conversation will flow naturally. If you get stuck, consider asking about family, weekend plans, hopes for the future, favorite classes, music they like, or recent fun experiences.

STUDENT'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

YEAR: \_\_\_\_\_

MAJOR: \_\_\_\_\_



### FROM PREVIOUS K-12 SHADOWERS

"Our mutual admiration of the Beatles helped me break down barriers for shadowing."

Eric Juli, Design Lab Early College High School



What are you wearing on your Shadow Day?  
Take a selfie and tag it with #shadowacollegestudent

Take a picture with your student and share it with  
the #shadowacollegestudent community!

# SHADOW 101

## SEEING THROUGH YOUR STUDENT'S EYES

Today is an exercise in empathy. It's about feeling what it is like to live as this student does every day.

Try to use all of your senses and pay attention to details that might otherwise get overlooked.

## CAPTURING YOUR OBSERVATIONS



Take notes



Photograph



Doodle

Be sure to take notes, photos, or doodle about any details that spark questions or insights about your student's needs. Try to quickly capture moments in the voice of the student. Write down interesting quotes. Do not worry about interpreting them yet.

Take pages 10 and 12 with you on your Shadow Day. Use it help you capture learnings in real time:



Page 10 is a field guide that folds into fourths. It's a pocket-sized notebook for your day.



Page 12 is a Thank You card that also folds into fourths. Fill in the prompts with what you learned from your student today. Show thanks and give it to them at the end of the day.



Here is a helpful mnemonic of things you can look for to help you notice meaningful details:

Actions that students take are informative because they highlight what they wish to accomplish. What specific actions and processes do they go through?

Environments show how students modify the spaces they occupy to facilitate their activities. What is the character of the study rooms, libraries, cafes, or other spaces where they spend time?

Interactions between students and something or someone else are telling. What is the nature of interactions that are routine versus special?

Objects can show unintended uses (thus changing their function and meaning). What are the objects and devices students have in their environments, and how do they relate to their activities?

Users are the people whose behaviors, preferences, and needs are being observed. Who is there? What are their roles and relationships? What are their values and prejudices?



### FROM PREVIOUS K-12 SHADOWERS

"I looked at the schedule before and thought, this is going to be a tough day."

Trent Bowers, Worthington Schools



# Shadow a Student

JOURNAL

Your name \_\_\_\_\_

Student name \_\_\_\_\_

## 5 MINUTE REFLECTION

Write down three things that have most surprised you today. What does this make you wonder?

1.

2.

3.

## OBSERVE

What do you see and hear?  
What do you notice?

## SOME QUESTIONS TO GUIDE YOUR OBSERVATIONS ...

- How does it feel to be a student for a day?
- Whath is your student's favorite moment of the day, and what makes it special?
- What do you notice makes your student feel uncomfortable, anxious, or bored? Why?
- When is your student engaged in learning?
- When/where/how does your student's learning feel connected to the real world? And when does it not?
- Are learning opportunities the same for all students?
- As you go through your day, what opportunities do you notice for the skills of critical thinking and problem solving, collaboration, and effective communication?



You can start your notes here, but feel free to record more in your own notebook!



"I had to be deliberate, about putting myself in my student's shoes." -Mary Seitzer



# Thank you!

Thanks for letting me  
be a part of your day!

By shadowing you, I learned...

I was so excited to see you...

When you print double-sided, this page will be on the inside of your Thank You card

STEP THREE

# REFLECT



## OBJECTIVE

Now that you've undoubtedly learned some interesting new things, it's time to figure out what all of it means. Taking time to reflect will help you make sense of what you saw, heard, and felt.

## MINDSET

### See challenges as opportunities

Immersing yourself in a student's life can be overwhelming, tiring, and challenging. You may have seen a lot of room for improvement in your student's experience. That's great! It means you've empathized with him or her enough to see unmet needs, so that they can be addressed.

## ACTIVITIES

1. Identify your most interesting thoughts and observations.
2. Turn your observations into opportunities.
3. Share what you find with others (faculty, staff, mentors, etc).



## EXPECTED TIME

Plan to spend at least one hour completing the Reflect step.



## FROM PREVIOUS K-12 SHADOWERS

"I realized how many times a student feels lost in a school day, but doesn't feel comfortable raising their hand [in class], and asking their teacher to slow down."

Bradford Hubbard, Antioch Community High School

# TURNING OBSERVATIONS INTO OPPORTUNITIES

The observations, quotes, and field notes from your Shadow Day can be inspiring catalysts for improving the student experience at your school. Interpreting your observations helps you come up with meaningful opportunities for positive change.

Use the worksheet below to start turning your observations into opportunities. A good place to start is with your three top learnings from the five-minute reflection exercise.

## OBSERVATION

Notice, feel, etc.

## INTERPRET

Why is this happening?

## OPPORTUNITY

What does this make you wonder?



## STEP FOUR

# ACT



### OBJECTIVE

You're ready to put your learnings into action! Using an opportunity you found, the next step is to come up with manageable ways to make change at your school. It may seem daunting, so the next part of this toolkit is here to help.

### MINDSET

**Be experimental.**

While you may be eager to make big changes right away, it's easier - and starts to address problems quicker - to begin with "quick wins." Rather than a full-blown solution, try an experiment to rapidly test ideas for immediate feedback.

### ACTIVITIES

1. Quick win experiment
2. Experiment idea cards
3. Design your own
4. What's next?



### EXPECTED TIME

This activity intentionally begins small, so it takes as little as an hour to start. The longer you continue to iterate on your experiment, the more progress you can make.



We'd love to include your experiments here in the next Shadow a Student Higher Ed Challenge toolkit!



### ONE FELLOW'S EXPERIMENT

When University Innovation Fellow Tanner Wheadon proposed the creation of a makerspace at Utah Valley University, his administration told him that it would be added to the school's long-term plans. Tanner knew that he might not be there to see his idea come to fruition.

Tanner decided to run an experiment and test out his idea by building a low-cost mobile prototyping cart to bring the makerspace to the students.

Find out what happened as a result at [bit.ly/UIF-UtahValley](https://bit.ly/UIF-UtahValley).

# WHY EXPERIMENT?

Work on ways to redesign your school culture using small, scrappy experiments. It's about having a big idea, but tackling it in an incremental and informative way.

## SAMPLE EXPERIMENTS



If your insight is about being more accessible to your school community, you can try...

### "HIRE" A STUDENT CONSULTANT

#### WHAT

Bring students into the discussion to make learning more relevant. Build empathy with your students.

#### HOW

1. Select a project you're already working on this month.
2. Identify a student.
3. Ask the student to "consult" with you on the project.
4. Meet with the student one-on-one.  
(Providing food is a nice bonus!)
5. Ask for the student's advice on the project and issues you're working through.
6. Listen more than you talk.



If your insight is about students wanting a greater voice in college or university matters, you can try...

### BRING A STUDENT TO A FACULTY OR STAFF MEETING

#### WHAT

Show students that their opinions matter. Help students build empathy for faculty, and understand how the institution works.

#### HOW

1. Choose an upcoming faculty or staff meeting. Communicate with attendees that you will be inviting a student to that meeting. Encourage them to include the student in conversation.
2. Invite one student to attend the meeting. Encourage him or her to participate.
3. Make sure nothing truly confidential is on the meeting agenda.
4. Debrief with the student and attendees afterwards. What was it like to have a student at the meeting? What did you learn?

# DESIGN YOUR OWN EXPERIMENT



Write down one insight you have:

How could you experiment with this?

**WHAT**

**HOW**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Draw what this experiment might look like.  
(Don't worry about whether it's a "good" drawing– it's about communicating a concept, not drawing something pretty.)



# REFLECTION CAPTURE GRID

Re-read your Shadow Journal and use this grid to organize your thoughts and reflections.

What's going well at your institution, what could be better, and what questions or ideas does this spark?

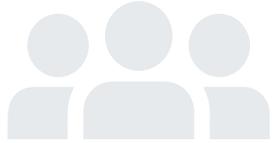
<p>Likes What did you see that you feel good about?</p>	<p>Wishes What would you like to change?</p>
<p>What questions came up for you? Questions</p>	<p>What new ideas did this experience spark? Ideas</p>



# WHAT'S NEXT?

## BRING OTHERS ALONG FOR THE JOURNEY

You've learned a lot by walking in your students' shoes. But you don't have to do all the work alone! Here are some sources of support:



### Involve faculty, students and staff

This will help you get buy in and make ideas more successful. Consider highlighting your key insights at a meeting. You might also have lunch with the student you shadowed to share what you learned and your plans to take action.



### Join the University Innovation Fellows

If you want to continue to work with students to create lasting change at your school, sponsor students in the University Innovation Fellows program. This d.school program trains students to work with faculty and administrators to create new educational opportunities for their peers. For more information, visit [universityinnovationfellows.org](http://universityinnovationfellows.org).



## Your story

No matter how far your action has progressed, you've no doubt learned a lot. Share your story with the Shadow google group. After you've had time to reflect, send your 500-word story and photos of your completed worksheets to [shadowacollegestudent@googlegroups.com](mailto:shadowacollegestudent@googlegroups.com). Here's a template to get started:

What surprised you most on your day as a student?

.....  
.....  
.....

What actions are you taking based on your Shadow Day learnings?

.....  
.....  
.....

What student needs are you motivated to address after shadowing?

.....  
.....  
.....

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Want to learn more about shadowing students? Check out the following resources and please let us know if there are other helpful materials we should amplify. We'd love to hear from you!

Ginsberg, M.B. (February 2012). Stepping into a Student's Shoes. *Educational Leadership*, 69:5. Retrieved from <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/feb12/vol69/num05/Stepping-into-a-Student's-Shoes.aspx>

Pope, D. Brown, M., and Miles, S. (2015). *Overloaded and Underprepared*. Jossey-Bass. San Francisco.

Wiggins, G. (2014) "A veteran teacher turned coach shadows 2 students for 2 days – a sobering lesson learned." Blog post retrieved from: <https://grantwiggins.wordpress.com/2014/10/10/a-veteran-teacher-turned-coach-shadows-2-students-for-2-days-a-sobering-lesson-learned>

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