

SHADOW A STUDENT CHALLENGE

shadowastudent.org
#shadowastudent

Toolkit

We're excited that you're here. Whether this is your first Shadow a Student Challenge or you took part last year, this toolkit is designed to support you on your Shadow journey.

If you don't want to print everything, the pages with activities for you to write on and complete are listed below.



pg. 2

PREP

Prep activities on
pg. 3–6



pg. 9

SHADOW

Shadow Journal and
Thank You card on **pg. 8, 11, 13**



pg. 12

REFLECT

Worksheet on **pg. 16**



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ACT

Act inspiration
and worksheets
on **pg. 19–26**

STEP ONE

PREP



OBJECTIVE

The purpose of the prep phase is to help you set up for a meaningful shadow experience. Whether this is your first Shadow a Student Challenge or you took part last year, this toolkit is designed to support you on your Shadow journey.

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, especially if you've taken this challenge before!

ACTIVITIES

1. Create learning goals for your Shadow Day.
2. Choose a student and confirm they're interested.
3. Coordinate with your student, parents, and staff (if necessary).



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

"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 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

WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO LEARN?

SET A LEARNING GOAL

Creating a learning goal for your Shadow Day will help you get the most out of your experience.

EXAMPLES OF PAST LEARNING GOALS

Student engagement: “I want to shadow a quiet student who may go under the radar and get lost in the shuffle.”

College and career readiness: “I want to see what we are doing to prepare our young men for graduation and their futures compared to other students.”

English Learners: “I want to see if English Learners are getting opportunities they want, not just what we think they need.”

What are some questions or challenges you're curious to explore by shadowing a student?

QUESTION YOUR ASSUMPTIONS

Even if you've shadowed before, each experience is unique. You'll learn the most from shadowing by observing without assumptions. Writing down what you expect to see ahead of time can help you notice when you are keeping an open mind or looking for ways to confirm what you already think.

- *Students will think it's nerdy to show intelligence*
- *English learners will feel isolated*



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 in school:

Gender:

Socioeconomic status:

Academic performance:

Passions:

Personality:

Other attributes:

.....

.....



AN ACTIVITY TO IDENTIFY STUDENTS

Here is a way for teachers and staff to help you identify students with different types of needs:

1. At your next teacher meeting, print the names (or better yet, photos!) of a subset of the student body in your school and post them around the conference room.
2. Give teachers 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.
5. Returning Showers: Choose a student with a different profile than last year...



ADVICE AND INSIGHTS

These teachers and staff members are helpful for identifying students:

- ELL
- Special education
- Counselors
- Athletic coaches

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.

PREP COORDINATION CHECKLIST

- Ask parents or guardians for permission
- Choose a student and confirm they're interested
- Clear your schedule for the entire day
- Notify your staff of your absence
- Find a peer to share the journey with (optional)
- Let other school leaders know you've joined the challenge! Tweet a message like "I'm excited to #shadowastudent because..."*

STUDENT'S NAME: _____

GRADE: _____



RESOURCES

You can find the following resources for your Shadow a Student Challenge on our Google Drive:

- *Email templates*
- *Permission slips*
- *Local press kit*

View them here: <http://bit.ly/2gao4wt>



Tweet a message like:
"I'm excited to #shadowastudent because _____"

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

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.

FEBRUARY 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29	30	31	1	2 Shadow a Student Challenge begins!	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17 Shadow Challenge concludes	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	1	2	3	4

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 the entire day - from bus stop to final bell - getting to know your student. For returning Shadowers, what differences do you notice between your experiences?

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

33

FROM PREVIOUS 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.
- Ditch your walkie-talkie.
- 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: _____

GRADE: _____



FROM PREVIOUS 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 #shadowastudent

Take a picture with your student and share it with
the #shadowastudent 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 their lockers, hallways, or other spaces they hang out?*

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 SHADOWS

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

Trent Bowers, Worthington Schools

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

Shadow a Student

JOURNAL

Your name _____

Student name _____

SOME QUESTIONS TO GUIDE YOUR OBSERVATIONS...

How does it feel to be a student for a day?

What 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?

OBSERVE

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

5 MINUTE REFLECTION

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

1.

2.

3.



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



Share your 5 Minute Reflections with other principals. Take a picture and #shadowstudent

Thank you!

Thanks for letting me
be a part of your day!

By shadowing you, I learned...

I was so excited to see you...

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 (teachers, staff, mentors, etc).



EXPECTED TIME

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



FROM PREVIOUS 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 a "hack" to rapidly test ideas for immediate feedback.

ACTIVITIES

1. Quick win hacks
2. Hacking 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 hack, the more progress you can make.



FROM PREVIOUS SHADOWERS

"My mission this year has been to connect with students and teachers. This helped. Teachers felt valued."

Joan Valentine, John Adams Middle School

WHAT IS A HACK?

A hack is a way to redesign your school culture using small, scrappy experiments called “hacks.” It’s about having a big idea, but tackling it in an incremental and informative way.



ONE PRINCIPAL’S HACK:

During his Shadow day, Adrian Advincula of Irving Elementary realized:

Kids are doing so much work and we don’t see that. All the things they do in class, that process isn’t shared.

He wanted to help families and communities see student learning, not just the end product. So he chose a small hack to **make student learning visible**.

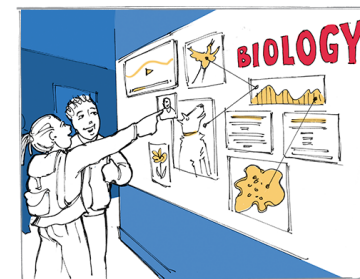


If your insight is about students needing to reflect more on the learning process you can try...

HOST A STUDENT POP-UP

WHAT

Help your community see the power of showcasing student work. And that it doesn’t have to be a big production.



HOW

1. Identify a class with something inspiring to share—a well designed class project, strong student passion, a collaborative result—that demonstrates meaningful learning.
2. Talk to the teacher and students about doing a share. What would they be excited to pin on the wall or perform?
3. Plan the “pop up:” pick a time when many people would stop by (such as lunch), and a place with high foot traffic.
4. Let the class focus preparing the content, while you take care of (or delegate) logistics.
5. Spread the word!

MORE HACKS



ONE PRINCIPAL'S HACK:

During her Shadow Day, Jofee' Tremain of O.A. Peterson Elementary realized that:

I was moved to see life more from the lens of those that I advocate for on a daily basis.

She wanted to be more accessible to her students, and hear their opinions first-hand. So she chose a small hack and **moved her desk for a day.**

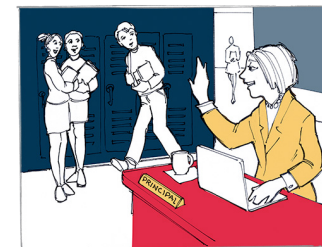


If your insight is about the need for increased student voice at your school, you can try...

MOVE YOUR DESK FOR A DAY

WHAT

See your school from a different point of view. Gain empathy and insights through observation.



HOW

1. Set aside a day to work on projects, without too many meetings.
2. Choose a public space where students spend time during the day. (Cafeteria, library, gym, main hallway)
3. Grab your paperwork, phone, and a notebook and set up shop.
4. Observe everything that happens in the space throughout the day.
5. Reflect on what you noticed and learned.

YOUR NOTES



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 struggling 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 school matters, you can try...

BRING A STUDENT TO A STAFF MEETING

WHAT

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



HOW

1. Choose an upcoming staff meeting. Communicate with staff 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 them to participate.
3. Make sure nothing truly confidential is on the meeting agenda.
4. Debrief with the student and staff afterwards—What was it like to have a student at the staff meeting? What did you learn?

YOUR NOTES



If your insight is about students' need for meaningful relationships with adults, you can try...

ADVISORY FOR ONE

WHAT

Develop deep empathy for a student, and understand how their could better be supported.



HOW

1. Choose a student who seems to be struggling at school.
2. Invite them to join you for breakfast or lunch.
3. Talk about their hopes and dreams- within school and outside of school.
4. Take a look at their school schedule and workload. What are they most and least excited about?
5. Together, talk about how they might customize their school experience to better serve their needs.
6. Reflect on what you learned. What behaviors did you see? What was unexpected?

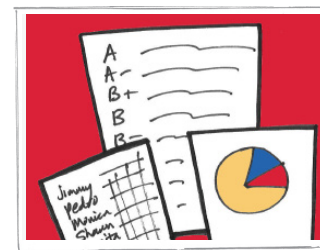


If your insight is about students' need for meaningful relationships with adults, you can try...

EXPLORE THE MEANING OF GRADES

WHAT

Understand the current state of assessment. What are you measuring through grades, why?



HOW

1. Gather a group of 3-5 teachers from different subject areas. Ask them to bring artifacts related to grading—their grade book, a rubric, etc.
2. Together, take a look at the Deeper Learning competencies:
3. Discuss: How are these competencies baked into each grading system, and how are they not?
4. Zoom out: What are the strengths and weaknesses of the grading systems?
5. Together, identify small experiments that each teacher could try within the space of grading and assessment.

YOUR NOTES

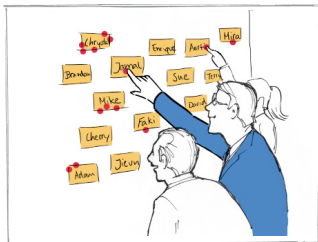


If your insight is about being more current on what's happening at your school, you can try...

CHECK ON THE STUDENT SAFETY NET

WHAT

Surface the students who aren't connecting with any adults.



HOW

1. During a staff, grade or department meeting, hang the names of every student on the walls.
2. Give the adults a set of identical stickers.
3. Have everyone silently walk around the room adding stickers next to the names of students they have a personal connection with. (No judgment!)
4. Notice which students have no or few stickers next to their names.
5. Brainstorm ways to reach the students who don't have a personal connection with an adult.



If your insight is about being more current on what's happening at your school, you can try...

BRING A STUDENT TO A TEACHER INTERVIEW

WHAT

Give students responsibility and pride in the school. Harness student insights to find the right teachers for your school.



HOW

1. Invite students to give input on what they would look for in teachers.
2. Bring a candidate in, and ask them to teach a class to a group of students.
3. Ask students to fill out feedback forms.
4. Bring 1-2 students into the interview with the candidate.
5. Have a two-day discussion about whether the candidate is a good fit for the school and why.

YOUR NOTES



If your insight is about being more current on what's happening at your school, you can try...

CREATE A LIVE POLL

WHAT

Get the pulse of your community on an important topic. And make yourself accessible for feedback.



HOW

1. Choose question that you'd love to learn more about.
2. Write this question on a small signboard, and literally stand in the hallway with the question in your hands.
3. Invite people to answer the question—writing their answer and pinning it on the wall, or telling you directly.
4. Compile the answers and share them back with the community.



Want more hack ideas? View the complete list on our website:

schoolretool.org/big-ideas

YOUR NOTES

DESIGN YOUR OWN HACK



Write down one
insight you have:

How could you hack this?

WHAT

HOW

1.

2.

3.

4.

Draw what this hack 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

Reread your Shadow Journal and use this grid to organize your thoughts and reflections.

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

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



Apply for School Retool

If you want to do even more to redesign your school culture, apply for School Retool. School Retool is a professional development fellowship that helps school leaders like you take research-based steps to fostering Deeper Learning at your school.

For more information, visit:
schoolretool.org



Involve students and staff

Getting teachers, staff, and students involved helps to get buy in and make ideas more successful. Consider highlighting your key insights at a staff meeting. You might also have lunch with the student you shadowed to share what you learned and your plans to take action.



Share your story

No matter how far your action has progressed, you've no doubt learned a lot. Whether your hack is up and running, or you need some assistance, sharing your story can be a powerful way to get feedback and inspire others.

What surprised you most on your day as a student?

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.....

.....

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

.....

.....

.....

What student needs are you motivated to address after shadowing?

.....

.....

.....

Submit your story at: shadowastudent.org/stories

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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