

SHADOWING

I did an article about Foothill HS Biology students shadowing experiences. Each student was given the choice to shadow based on their interests. Some chose surgeons. Some chose genetic professionals. Some chose environmental engineers.

The students were all part of the bioscience academy. This is a three year program that provides students, who are interested in preparing for a career in medicine or biotechnology, access to advanced coursework, lab skills, leadership experience, and career exposure:

10th Grade: Bioscience Survey and Chemistry (CP or Honors)

11th Grade: Medical Technology H and Physiology Honors

12th Grade: Biotechnology H and Physics (AP or CP)

This what my friend, Chat, said about the foothill project:

For students in Foothill High School's Bioscience Academy, learning extends well beyond the classroom and into the professional world.

The Bioscience Academy is a three-year program designed for students interested in preparing for careers in medicine or biotechnology. Through advanced coursework, hands-on laboratory skills, leadership experiences, and exposure to careers in the field, students gain an early understanding of the many possibilities available to them. The shadowing experience brings those possibilities to life. Students have the opportunity to see professionals at work, ask questions, experience real-world environments, and begin imagining where their own interests might eventually take them.

A MOORPARK COLLEGE CAREER SHADOW PROGRAM

Discover. Explore. Connect. Belong.

Start as a relatively small pilot. Pick one academic area—biosciences could be an obvious starting point—and recruit perhaps 20–30 students. Each student identifies a career area they want to explore, and MC matches them with a professional for a **half-day or full-day shadowing experience**.

For example, a biology student might choose among a hospital or clinical setting, biotechnology or biomanufacturing, a research laboratory, environmental science, veterinary medicine, or bioengineering. A student interested in technology could eventually choose cybersecurity, network operations, software, IT, engineering, or another technology environment.

"What do you want to explore?"

We already have pieces that could make this work. We can connect the shadow program to Career Education, faculty relationships, advisory committees, alumni, and existing employer partners.

Faculty could nominate or encourage students, but we should not limit participation to the highest-performing students. One of the purposes of shadowing is helping a student who has a passion but feels they could never "do that job" or thinks "I don't really know what this career looks like."

Shadowing: A career exploration field trip

Explore: Students review possible professions and rank their top three choices.

Prepare: Moorpark provides a short orientation on workplace expectations, confidentiality, questions to ask, and professional communication.

Shadow: Students spend several hours alongside a professional doing the actual work—not simply touring a facility.

Reflect: Students complete a short reflection: "What surprised me? What interested me? What didn't interest me? What education would I need to pursue this career?"

Discovering "this isn't for me" can be every bit as valuable as confirming a career choice.

SHARING: Have students share what they discovered with other students.

Possible student presentations Shadowing share showcase (During career fair, or NSW, or student Panel)

Students could speak about, and or create a poster or slide:

I Shadowed a Biomanufacturing Scientist

Here's what I thought the job was.

Here's what I discovered.

Here's what surprised me.

Here's what I'm considering next.

Potential: 25 individual shadowing experiences become career exposure for hundreds of students.

The model could be used for students interested in any pathway: business, education, communications, criminal justice, the arts, social services, media arts, theater, etc..

Research component: We could track whether students who participate subsequently demonstrate greater career clarity, continue in their major, complete more units, or persist to the following semester. That could turn a relatively straightforward career-exploration pilot into something we can evaluate and improve.

Explore | Prepare | Shadow | Reflect

More than a class.

A career experience.

