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## Reflection: Shadowing a Student for a Day

Today I shadowed one of my freshman Honors Biology students, M. I was asking the girl next to her if I could shadow her and she seemed very uncomfortable about it. Luckily, M spoke up and volunteered. I learned a lot about M throughout the day. She isn’t very shy and was happy to share her thoughts with me.

The first hour of the day began with quiz in World History. The quiz was interrupted for an announcement from one of the principals. The day before, a student had passed away. The teacher’s had already been told, but most of the students did not know yet. The teacher paused the quiz and asked if any of his students wanted to talk about the girl. Although the student was a special education student, many students knew her from her participation in choir. Many had also gone to middle school with her. The feeling during first hour was very somber, and I think that many of the students were shocked. The teacher ended the class by saying that everyone is going to deal with the death differently and he told them about the resources available if they need someone to talk to. Overall, I think the teacher handled the difficult situation well.

There were presentations during first hour and I was able to see that one of my students is a *very* good presenter. The next day I complemented him on his speaking skills in class. There was also one student who was so nervous that she had to face away from the class while speaking.

On the way to Latin class, M and her friends made it clear that they do not like the teacher. When I asked them why, they said that it was because he has high expectations, and thinks that they are smarter than they are. These didn’t seem like good reasons to me, and I hope that the students will learn to appreciate that teacher in time. The only problem I observed in the class was some issues with too much talking by the students. The teacher would then yell at them to stop talking, which only further increased the noise level in the room.

Lunch in the cafeteria was an interesting experience. I had forgotten how much drama there is in high school. Right now students are all buzzing about who asked who to homecoming. Students were very comfortable talking about anything in front of me, even though they know I am a teacher. I wonder if they may feel more comfortable around me because I look closer to their age. This may be the only benefit of looking young as a new teacher. According to M and her friends, the hot lunch line is “uncool.” The Corner Café (a la carte) is where they eat. This could definitely exclude students that are on free and reduced lunch.

The day felt much longer as a student, I think this is because I spent so much time sitting. In every class beside Honors Biology, students spent 90 percent of the time sitting at their desks being “talked at.” This made it very hard to stay focused by the end of the day. The day would be even longer for student, like M, who has sports or other activities after all.

During the last hour of the day, a student sitting near me seemed very distracted. The teacher noticed and, instead of scolding her for being off task, she asked (discreetly) if it was about school. The student said no, it was a personal problem and had tears in her eyes. The teacher later dropped a note on the student’s desk saying that she could come and talk to her whenever. I think this teacher handled the situation perfectly.