



INTRODUCTION

WHY SHAKESPEARE FOR YOUNG LEARNERS?

If I had to choose one reason why Shakespeare was valuable for my [7-year-old] daughter ... I think I would say ... the *worldliness* she gained by learning Shakespeare. Why learn about Columbus? Why learn about the Black Plague? Why know a Beatles song when you hear it? You should just know these things, because even if you don't care about them directly, they affect the world around you. —PARENT

THIS BOOK PRESENTS A SEQUENCE OF DRAMA-BASED STRATEGIES FOR introducing Shakespeare in the elementary grades (ages 6–12). The teacher-friendly approaches are based on the work of experienced elementary teachers in Vancouver, Canada, who have been exploring Shakespeare with children for over a decade. These interactive strategies complement the work at the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC), where researchers and practitioners introduce Shakespeare to young learners (Winston and Tandy 2012). The RSC group has found that Shakespeare should be taught as early as possible because children four or five years old are more “fearless” and “they are used to trying out new language” (Curtis 2008). Likewise, our experience in Vancouver has been that young children working with Shakespeare become highly engaged with the rich and playful language, stories, and complex characters. This engagement with Shakespeare at an early age

exposes students to a “worldliness,” a cultural literacy to be built upon throughout their education and lives. Shakespeare’s plays offer a bridge to discover and discuss some of the great questions in life.

WHAT DOES THIS BOOK OFFER?

The detailed lessons offered in this book are informed by classroom experiences and research, and explore pedagogical strategies that have been effective for introducing children to Shakespeare, and in particular to *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (referred to as *Dream*).

Over the last few decades a number of educators and scholars have contributed valuable ideas and pedagogical approaches to bringing Shakespeare to young learners. This book is unique in that it provides a series of detailed drama lessons to support your literacy program, along with age-appropriate production and rehearsal strategies to mount a Shakespearean play with your class.

Rather than introducing a number of different Shakespearean plays, this book centres on *Dream* and presents it both in story form and as an adapted script. The benefits of focusing on *one* play are that teachers can:

- » follow a specific sequence of lessons on one piece of literature
- » go deeper inside one particular story
- » see direct and sustained links to their literacy curriculum
- » help their students lift the words and characters off the page for a shared presentation within their school

Most activities in this book could be adapted for another play, or even applied to picture books, short stories, or other literary works. However, each activity has been carefully selected and developed for students and teachers exploring *Dream*.

Suitable for All Teachers

The ideas in this book are suitable for teachers with little or no previous experience with drama or Shakespeare as well as seasoned drama teachers looking for new ideas for their classrooms. Teachers new to drama might only select a few drama activities from the book to support their literacy and learning program. As they gradually build comfort and confidence, they might increase the amount of drama-based strategies to eventually integrate the full sequence of lessons described in this book. The detailed drama activities build one upon the other; however, many of them can be done individually and do not require the entire sequence. Part I



suggests a plan for including a range of activities and integrating the continuum of suggestions in this book.

Suitable for All Students and Diverse Learners

The activities in the book are meant to be inclusive and are conceptualized with the understanding that classrooms are diverse learning environments. To meet various classroom needs, teachers should feel free to adapt and/or modify the lessons to suit their student population. It should be noted that most of the drama activities included in the book have been developed in classrooms where some students were identified as special needs and/or learning English as an additional language. A number of the non-verbal, visual, and kinesthetic activities have been shown to build confidence for different types of learners. As well, the repetition of the script work has proven to develop pronunciation and comprehension for diverse learners.

OVERVIEW: HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book combines the sequence of lesson plans, *Dream* story version, adapted script version of *Dream*, and other support so that teachers have all the resources they need in one book. As well, it offers links to curriculum objectives and assessment strategies, along with student, parent, researcher, and teacher reflections. The combination of practical classroom instruction and theoretical background offers teachers insights into *how* and *why* engaging young learners with Shakespeare can be a rich learning experience.

PART I shares some background literature on drama and literacy. This section highlights current research on Shakespeare and young learners. In addition, it includes a discussion about curriculum links and assessment, along with planning suggestions and a timeline to integrate and build on the ideas from this book.

PART II includes three role dramas to help students enter the world of Shakespeare and *Dream*. The role dramas are specifically designed to:

- » provide context about the author and the play
- » pique the curiosity and ignite the imagination of young learners through a sequence of user-friendly activities
- » lead the children and teacher(s) to explore the world of Shakespeare's *Dream*, initially without an audience



The role dramas are self-contained, so that teachers can choose any one or more to use.

PART III offers eight lessons to use with an abridged story version of *Dream*, which is provided in Appendix E. The story of *Dream* is told in eight parts, which correspond to the eight lessons. Thus, the lessons are sequential. Each lesson includes the following:

- » warm-up activities
- » vocabulary development
- » story-reading and drama-based activities
- » drawing and writing options

These activities allow for exploration and experimentation with the story, characters, and language. The detailed lessons are supplemented by samples of visual and written work from students, along with comments from teachers and researcher/observer insights.

PART IV consists of suggestions and schedules for producing and staging an adapted version of the play, for which a script is given in Part V. This section provides:

- » ways to engage young students with the Shakespearean text through rehearsal strategies
- » practical production suggestions for teachers to consider as they move towards sharing the work with an audience

Note that the aim of this process is not necessarily to share a tightly rehearsed and polished production. Instead, the actual production can be an invitation to an audience to observe a magical world created by the young learners and to celebrate the children's work, regardless of what stage they are at when the production occurs. In other words, the goal is for students to fully engage every day with *Dream* and their class in diverse and challenging ways.

PART V presents an adapted 30-minute play script for teachers to use in their classrooms.

If teachers wish to stage a reading or production with their students, they are encouraged to acquire a class set of student scripts. The font size in the specially designed student script version is larger for easy reading. As well, the pride and ownership of students having their very own bound scripts increases their commitment



to literacy and the dramatic process. A photocopied script typically does not generate this type of excitement for children.

APPENDICES present materials to support the preceding portions of the book, including the following:

- » glossary of drama activities and games, organized alphabetically for easy reference
- » materials for the three role dramas in Part II, including reproducible pages
- » materials to support Part III—the lessons that explore the story version of *Dream*
- » the story version of *Dream*

Within Parts I to IV, references are made to the material in the Appendices. Terms in the glossary appear in **boldface** in Parts I to IV.

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PART II



**DISCOVERING SHAKESPEARE
AND A *MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S*
*DREAM***

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STUDENTS DO NOT NEED TO HAVE ANY EXPERIENCE WITH THE PLAY *Dream* or with Shakespeare to engage in the three role dramas found in Part II. The role dramas are intended to ease students into their exploration of the author and the world of the play. As well, they help to develop confidence with drama.

As students will learn, William Shakespeare was born some time before April 26, 1564 and baptised on that date in Stratford-upon-Avon in England. He died in April 1616. Shakespeare was a poet, playwright, and actor, working in London and most famously at the Globe Theatre. He wrote comedies, tragedies, and history plays, and is known for his inventive use of language; in fact, in Shakespeare's works, hundreds of words appear in written English for the first time ever.

As a romantic comedy, the play *A Midsummer Night's Dream* has people of three worlds collide:

1. the royal court of ancient Athens, including Theseus the Duke and the woman he will soon marry, Hippolyta, as well as four young Athenians who are romantically entangled (Hermia, Helena, Lysander, and Demetrius) and Hermia's father, Egeus
2. a group of workers who wish to present a play to Theseus and Hippolyta for their wedding celebration—including Quince, Snug, Bottom, Flute, Snout, and Starveling
3. the fairy world existing in the wood near Athens—including Oberon (the king), Titania (the queen), Puck (who serves Oberon), and other fairies

ROLE DRAMAS

Role dramas generally consist of a sequence of drama-based activities that build one upon the other to generate belief and commitment to a given topic. The group-oriented activities suggested below are easy to use for those less familiar with drama-based approaches to learning. Prior to beginning the role dramas, you

might engage your class with one or two warm-up activities, such as the games in Appendix A.

Each role drama is divided into scenes to mark a shift in dramatic activity. In each scene, a new tactic is used to build tension; to gather, analyze, and disseminate information; to facilitate problem solving; or to resolve the conflict or crisis. The activity within a scene can be individually focused, but the majority of scenes are designed so that students are engaged in group work. The scenes culminate in an outcome that is not predetermined but rather decided by the whole group working together as the role drama unfolds.

Note that the term “scene” has the additional meaning of a scene in a play. In role drama, a group may be asked to prepare an unscripted scene for presentation. Such scenes might be referred to by students and teachers as “skits,” but this term fails to reflect the serious effort and thoughtful reflection required.

Students in Role

Many students are familiar with “improv games,” in which the activity is designed to show cleverness, humour, or teamwork, or follow a specified formula. Other drama activities might focus on developing students as actors. In contrast, the goals of improvising or being in role are to explore and investigate, observe what is happening, and respond in ways that are congruent with the role assigned. Improvisation or role play is unscripted and allows students to “think on their feet,” as well as to interact in role during group work when problem solving or planning an activity. For students who spend all day *being* students, improvisation in role offers an opportunity to explore the roles and responsibilities of individuals in a variety of situations and contexts. In the three role dramas that follow, students are asked to enter into role at various points within the activities.

Teachers in Role

What tasks does a teacher undertake in role drama? A teacher in role challenges, questions, shapes, and focuses the inquiry from within the role drama by adopting a particular role and point of view. A teacher in role may take on a role of a leader, facilitator, guide, advisor, stranger, or bystander. However, rather than being an authoritative figure dictating the action, whenever possible the teacher in role should guide others (students) to become decision makers or advisors. The teacher in role sets the situation and context, proposes new dilemmas when and if necessary, and helps students interact in role by remaining in role as well. The challenge of being in role is to avoid directing the role drama in the way that you want or anticipate that it should go. Students should feel that they are the ones who are making decisions in role.



USING THE ROLE DRAMAS

In the role dramas that follow, the teacher script is shown in *italics*, with additional instructions indicated in normal (non-italic) text. Terms that are included in the glossary are shown in **boldface**.

- » Each of the three role dramas below is self-contained and stands on its own.
- » The role dramas last anywhere between 60 and 90 minutes each, depending on how much time a class wishes to spend on each activity.
- » Possible extensions and variations to role dramas often emerge from something a particular group has done or questions students ask that deserve further investigation. As you gain more experience and confidence leading role dramas, you can alter the activities to suit the needs and leads of your class.
- » If possible, an open space with room to move around is preferred for all the role dramas.
- » A variety of individual drama strategies are introduced in this part. Appendix A provides more elaborate descriptions for some activities.
- » Low-risk activities, those where students can easily engage, feel confident, be less vulnerable emotionally, physically, and/or vocally, are deliberately used at the beginning of the role dramas to ease students into the work.
- » Some of the activities have sections in italics to indicate the teacher's talk. These represent suggested teacher scripts to provide instructions during the role dramas, and they may be adapted and expanded as needed.
- » For each of the three role dramas, you will find the following:
 - an entry point
 - a description of the imagined situation that underpins the role drama
 - a list of roles and tasks
 - a list of needed materials
 - an overview of the role drama with strategies noted
 - the role drama, with scene-by-scene support
 - suggestions for debriefing and reflections
 - curricular objectives
 - extensions and variations
 - assessment
 - comments from teachers and researchers about the role drama in action

The following references are some useful additional sources that introduce role drama, process drama, or story drama:



PART III



**ENGAGING WITH THE STORY OF
*A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM***

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THE EIGHT DRAMA-BASED LESSONS IN THIS PART ARE DESIGNED TO guide students through *Dream* in the form of an abridged story in eight parts. Each lesson offers a short narrative that recounts a major event in the play along with specific drama activities building on that section of the story. The brief narratives are meant to introduce the story, the characters, and key issues that arise in the play. The eight lessons are intended to be explored in sequence.

The following table provides an overview of the lessons and where the corresponding portion of the play can be found.

LESSONS FOR THE STORY ADAPTATION	PLAY
1. Mighty Law of Athens and Runaway Plan (page 60)	pages 128–133
2. A Play for Theseus' Wedding Day (page 66)	pages 134–138
3. Titania and Oberon Clash (page 71)	pages 139–144
4. Spells Are Everywhere in the Wood (page 76)	pages 144–147
5. Puck Plays in Devilish Ways (page 81)	pages 147–156
6. Lovers' Quarrel (page 87)	pages 157–166
7. Release of Spells and All Is Well (page 92)	pages 166–172
8. Play Within the Play on Wedding Day (page 97)	pages 172–180

USING THE STORY VERSION AND LESSONS

The complete narrative of the play appears in both the lessons that follow in this part and in Appendix E. Note:

- » Each of the eight lessons lasts 45 to 75 minutes, depending on how much time you wish to spend on each activity. Suggested times are included for each activity.
- » An open space with room to move around is preferred for both the warm-up and drama-based activities.

- » A variety of drama strategies are introduced in this section. Some drama strategies (highlighted in boldface because they are glossary terms) are also described in Appendix A.
- » How much writing and illustrating you ask your students to do will depend on their age, the time available, and your curricular goals. The writing students undertake in their journals may be adapted into a class newspaper or theatre program. Samples of student writing and drawing appear throughout this section.
- » You will also find many comments from teachers, students, and researchers/observers in this part, as in earlier sections.
- » To address vocabulary, creating a student word wall is effective. For each lesson and to create a word wall, you will find handy definitions that are adapted to be appropriate for the ages of students. The words are defined in the order in which they appear in the story version and are highlighted in the story excerpt. Based on student needs and interests, you might revise the word lists as you see fit.
- » As with Part II, you will find suggested teacher scripts to provide instructions during the eight lessons. You may adapt and expand these as needed for your purposes.

For each of the eight lessons, you will find the following in this part:

- » notes about materials, focus, and suggested times
- » warm-up activities
- » vocabulary words and their definitions
- » suggestions for reading the portion of the adapted story
- » the story portion itself
- » additional activities
- » debriefing and journal reflections

I have seen reserved students, those who do not read or write well, and of course the most boisterous children engage dynamically when drama activities have been part of their learning. I have seen children engaged, motivated, and enthusiastic, relating to the text in a much more meaningful way than if I was only to do a read aloud or [give] a regular lesson. I have witnessed firsthand—from the shyest to the troublesome to the academically challenged—how all children have had an equal chance to be triumphant in their learning when I use drama in my lessons. —TEACHER



LESSON 1: MIGHTY LAW OF ATHENS AND RUNAWAY PLAN

- » **MATERIALS:** none
- » **FOCUS:** build community and explore movement
- » **SUGGESTED TIME:** 5 minutes for each warm-up activity

1. Warm-up activities

GREETING GAME. Using the entire space of the classroom, ask students to walk freely and try to fill any open area within the classroom with their bodies.

“Keep moving and find the empty spaces. No talking. Just walk and be aware of the open spaces.”

Continue this activity for a minute or so.

“Keep walking in the open space, but when you encounter another student, say ‘hello’ with a wink of your eye.”

Continue for 30 seconds.

“Keep walking and now touch pinkies with other students that you encounter ... then touch elbows.”

You can suggest variations such as toes, hips, and so on

“... and STOP!”

I repeat these activities early in the year. It helps students to control their bodies and to take direction. —TEACHER

GROUPS AND TABLEAUX. Have students walk in the open space once again, finding empty spaces. Continue for 10–15 seconds.

“Now, without talking, form groups of two and stand still.”

If there is an uneven number in the class, having one group of three is fine.



“Release yourself from the group and begin walking in the space again. Now form groups of three and be still. Release and form groups of four. Release and form groups of five. Release. For the final group, form groups of two. Now, in your group of two create a frozen image, a **tableau** of a king and a queen.”

Give students a minute or two to work out their tableaux. Then, count them down to their frozen image:

“5, 4, 3, 2, 1 and freeze in your tableau of a king and queen. Stay frozen for a moment. Release the image. With the same partner, create a tableau of a happy father and daughter.”

Count down again:

“5, 4, 3, 2, 1 and freeze, and stay frozen in your tableau of a happy father and daughter.”

Now ask students to reverse roles.

“The father becomes the daughter and the daughter becomes the father, and you are now an unhappy father and daughter. Create this tableau ... and freeze. Release.”

If time permits, **debrief** students about the warm-up activities by asking them to briefly share their experiences.



2. Introduce vocabulary

- » **MATERIALS:** CUE cards, word wall
- » **FOCUS:** build understanding and vocabulary
- » **SUGGESTED TIME:** 10 minutes

Duke—*noun*—the ruler of a territory, a member of the nobility
irate—*adjective*—angry, enraged, upset
vexation—*noun*—anger, frustration, annoyance
refuse—*verb*—to be unwilling to do something, reject, or say “no”
nun—*noun*—a woman belonging to a religious community and following certain rules, such as a Catholic nun
devise—*verb*—to imagine, organize, or plan

The words are taken from the story portion and defined. Prepare cue cards for the vocabulary and share the words one at a time.

For each word, display the word, read it, and explain its meaning. Have students repeat the word with you a few times. Then, looking closely at the word, discuss its spelling.

“Are there some root words within this word? Do you notice anything about the beginning or ending of the word? Is the word a noun, adjective, verb, or adverb?”

After a brief discussion of each word, ask a student to place the cue card on the word wall.



An example of a word wall.



3. Read the adapted story

Point to words on the word wall as they appear in the story. This will help put the words into context and reinforce their meaning. You may also stop to discuss key issues faced by the characters in the narrative. Alternatively, you might wish to read aloud the entire narrative and then discuss the story.

- » **MATERIALS:** story (Appendix E)
- » **FOCUS:** listen and respond
- » **SUGGESTED TIME:** 15 minutes

Mighty Law of Athens and Runaway Plan

Excitement is growing throughout Athens and its surroundings because, in four days, **Duke** Theseus will marry Queen Hippolyta. Inside the Duke's palace, attendants and servants are busily preparing for the celebration. However, the merriments are abruptly put aside when Egeus barges in to see the Duke. Egeus, an **irate** father, says: "Full of **vexation** come I, against my daughter Hermia." Egeus has promised her to marry Demetrius, the young Athenian, but Hermia is strong-willed and **refuses**. She wishes to marry Lysander instead. In a kind but firm manner, Duke Theseus reminds Hermia of the Athenian law that allows fathers to choose their daughters' husbands; if not, they must die or become **nuns** and so never marry.

Left with little choice, Hermia and Lysander **devise** an escape plan to a nearby village where Athenian law does not rule. First they will meet in a nearby wood at dusk, and then they will make their way together to the village. Prior to leaving Athens, Hermia confides in her best friend, Helena, telling her the plan. However, the problem is that Helena loves Demetrius and she wants desperately to win his love. Helena decides to tell Demetrius about the escape plan. She thinks Demetrius will want to pursue Hermia, and Helena plans to follow also. As night falls, one by one, the four young Athenians leave the safety of the city to enter the spirit-filled wood outside of Athens.

Here are some suggested discussion questions:

- » *What do you think of the Athenian Law that allows fathers to choose who their daughters will marry?*
- » *What have we discovered about the friendship and loyalty between Hermia and Helena?*
- » *Do you think the four young Athenians fear leaving the security of home, family, and friends? Would you?*

Oh, that's why we froze like an angry Dad and his daughter!

—STUDENT



- » **MATERIALS:**
chair or stool
- » **FOCUS:** think in role, question
- » **SUGGESTED TIME:**
15 minutes

4. Seek further information: Hot seating

HOT SEATING. This section of the story has provided information about the characters. Through putting someone in the **hot seat**, you can ask students to make further inferences about the characters. Begin with the irate father, Egeus. Ask for a volunteer to role play Egeus in the hot seat. Don't let gender limit the students; remind them that boys can role play daughters and girls can role play fathers during hot seating. Ask the rest of the class to put on their thinking caps and consider questions they could ask Egeus to help them better understand his motives. Several students may have similar questions, which means these are important questions, but it is not necessary to repeat them.

Here are a few suggested questions for Egeus if students don't come up with any:

- » *Have you spoken to Hermia about her feelings towards Demetrius?*
- » *Did you know about Hermia and Lysander's relationship?*
- » *Would you like your daughter to be happy?*

I was really nervous in the hot seat but then it was fun. I like making up the characters. —STUDENT

Next, hot seat Hermia, asking students:

- » *Are there any volunteers to be Hermia?*
- » *What questions do you have for Hermia?*

Here are a few suggested questions for Hermia:

- » *Are you afraid of leaving Athens?*
- » *What might you miss about home and family?*

For a final hot seat, ask Helena questions.

“Any volunteers to be Helena? What questions do you have for Helena?”

Here are a few suggested questions for Helena:

- » *Should you have told Demetrius about Hermia and Lysander's secret?*
- » *Will you miss Hermia if she runs away?*
- » *Are you afraid of going in the wood?*



5. Debriefing and journal reflections

Begin **debriefing** the lesson by asking students what they discovered in the activities.

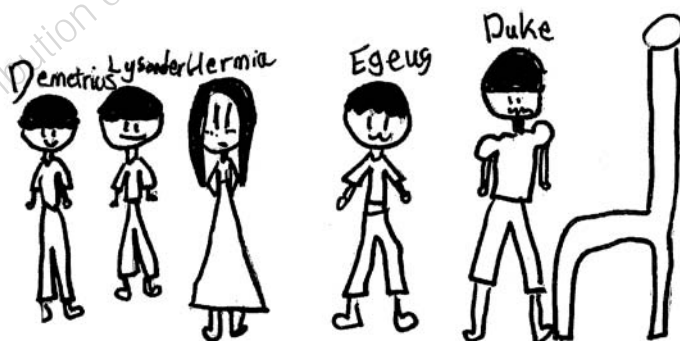
“Were there any surprises? Does anyone want to share their experience?”

Suggest that students retell parts of what they heard in today’s section of the story in their dream journals. Have them begin by drawing a picture of something they remember from the story or one of the activities. Ask students to write a few sentences explaining their picture or something they remember from today’s reading. Suggest that they try to use words from the word wall.

“Try to use at least two or three words from the vocabulary that was added to the word wall today.”

It’s important to spend time debriefing. After the warm-up, I ask students, “Why do you think we did tableaux of kings and queens, fathers and daughters?” I want them to engage in predictions. They usually tell me about other stories they know with kings and queens. —TEACHER

I find I need to prepare my students for hot seating. I sometimes ask them to brainstorm with a partner questions they could ask a character. I also find it helpful to model a few questions to get them started. —TEACHER



Egeus is upset with his daughter Hermia.

- » **MATERIALS:**
dream journal
- » **FOCUS:** write/
draw and
respond
- » **SUGGESTED TIME:**
15 minutes



PART IV



**FROM PAGE TO STAGE:
SHARING THE PLAY
ADAPTATION**

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THIS SECTION PROVIDES INSIGHTS, STRATEGIES, AND SUPPORT FOR preparing, rehearsing, and producing a class presentation of *Dream* using the play adaptation, which is found in Part V. Specifically, this part includes the following:

- » a possible production schedule
- » consideration of production elements, including tips and ideas
- » a suggested schedule for rehearsals
- » strategies to help you and your students rehearse the play

The demands of the classroom often make it difficult to have large blocks of time to rehearse a play. As a result, the suggestions here offer flexibility and opportunities where small groups of students can rehearse scenes while others might work on other aspects of the curriculum.

Less Is More

A common theatre motto is that “less is more”; this pertains to costumes, sets, props, music, visuals, blocking, and all other aspects of your production. Keeping Shakespeare’s language and character development at the centre of the work helps tell the story and keeps the focus on the students and their work. When there are too many distractions and things to see and to remember (for example, moving Titania’s bed or bringing in small trees for the wood), the play becomes more about these production elements than the acting and storytelling of the students. The same is true for costumes and hand props; they should be limited so the play does not become about putting on a hat or belt correctly. While costumes and props can help establish ambience, they can also detract from the pedagogical focus of the work. Most set pieces and props can be imagined by the audience, so *use only what is necessary*. Shakespeare’s text often provides clear descriptions of locations within the dialogue, and his plays were written with minimal sets in mind because

they were originally performed on mostly bare stages. Blocking should also be controlled, so that characters are moving with purpose rather than out of nervousness and uncertainty. For more about these and other staging considerations, see the coming pages.

I have to be honest: it's sometimes totally overwhelming and I often ask myself, why am I doing this? I must be going nuts! The role dramas and drama activities while reading the story are all fine and manageable. But when I get to the production, I begin to get nervous, even after doing this for 6–7 years. I think: "How can these 6 to 8-year-olds memorize these lines? What are we going to use for costumes, backdrop, props?" It feels like this huge mountain. Then I breathe deeply and I think, "OK, one step at a time." I ask the students what theme they would like for our play. From their suggestions, we then get ideas for the costumes. Parents then always offer to help. Our chosen theme often guides the music, where one or two students take leadership with the keyboard, recorder, or other instruments. *I gradually begin to breathe normally again!* A few students come in with their lines memorized, which then motivates others. Their characters begin to develop, and our voice work finally seems to help as the students enunciate more clearly and they are louder. Step by step, the production and rehearsals take us a little closer to *telling the story*. Each year is different and the route to the production changes with the given group of students. Trusting the process and having a schedule keeps us moving forward, and we go as far as we can in the time we have together. I can't deny that it is always the most challenging and nerve-racking part of my year, but I wouldn't want it any other way. The rewards are immeasurable for me and for them. It's the highlight of the year. —TEACHER

PRODUCTION CONSIDERATIONS

Thus far, the emphasis in this book has been on the process of introducing children to Shakespeare. In building towards the production of a 30-minute adaptation of *Dream*, the focus continues to be on the learning along the way. In other words, the focus should not be a final product consisting of a polished performance but rather the learning throughout that process and a sharing of the students' learning and creativity with others. Just as a marathon is the victory lap of months of training, celebrating hundreds of kilometres run in preparation for the race, the same is true with your elementary class' production of Shakespeare.



The schedule below offers suggestions for considering production elements for your class sharing of the play. It elaborates on the schedules introduced in Part I. It runs *concurrently* with the rehearsal schedule found later in this part, on page 115. In other words, the anticipated time on production and rehearsal combined is a total of six weeks, not twelve.

Sample Production Schedule: Six Weeks

WEEK	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
1		Cast students in roles	Hand out copies of script		
2		Decide on space and setting for play	Determine dates for production		
3		Decide theme of play	Create props, costumes, and set lists		
4		Brainstorm music, sound, image, and lighting ideas	Bring in props for rehearsal		
5	Bring in costumes and set pieces	Create invitation list	Create and distribute program and poster	Finalize music, sound, image, and lighting	
6	Dress rehearsal (no audience)	Dress rehearsal (invite another class)	Production (invite other classes)	Production (invite friends and family)	

NOTE: The production considerations that appear on the calendar in boldface are discussed in detail below.

Casting

Casting is typically done once the students are familiar with the story and they have engaged with the characters and the language. At this point they are more ready to take the script and understand where their character fits into the play as a whole.

Asking students which role they would like to play is a helpful exercise. For instance, you can ask each student to list on a piece of paper three roles they would like to play. However, it should be made clear to students that asking to play a particular role does not assure being cast in that role. Challenging your students with certain parts is a great way for them to aim higher in their learning, but you must also be careful not to overwhelm students.

The casting of roles should be done in a manner that offers opportunities for

as many students as possible. Therefore, double-casting and even triple-casting a role might be an option. It is not unusual to have productions with four Pucks, possibly playing the role at the same time, speaking in chorus, and sometimes with solo voices. In certain cases, having two entirely separate casts may work better for your class, particularly in the upper elementary grades, where you have a number of students able to undertake large roles. With the younger grades, it is especially useful to have two or more students play each larger role so that one student plays a major character for the first half, and another student undertakes the role for the second half. To help audiences recognize the switch, the different actors might use similar costumes for the one character. You could also create a moment in which one actor “hands off” the character to the other actor. For example, the two actors playing Puck could meet at centre stage wearing similar costumes, face each other, perform a 360-degree turn together, and the second actor continues while the first leaves the stage, thus signalling to the audience a change in cast.

Depending on your class, you might decide to involve some students in group scenes of people or to represent objects in the scenes. These opportunities might develop during rehearsal.

Teacher Taking on a Role

The default position of many teachers is to be the director, a role not unlike the daily role of a teacher guiding a class through various activities. You will inevitably be part of the directing team for a class production. However, if you are also able to be one of the actors, this allows you to “play” alongside the students within the world of Shakespeare. In *Dream*, you might play a part such as Quince, Snug, or Snout. As you memorize lines, create a costume, and become nervous about performing, you become part of the company of actors with your students, instead of always being in charge and in control. By taking a role within the play, you release some of the power and authority of the teacher. Students can become quite excited by having their teacher in the play, and it can increase their commitment and level of playing. In upper elementary classes, you might assign particular students to direct some scenes, giving them leadership opportunities.

I once cast a very capable grade 2 student as Oberon from my multi-age grade 1-3 classroom. He seemed to be up for the challenge; however, the next year, he asked to play a much smaller part. He did not want to have the responsibility of such a large role again. —TEACHER

One of my more timid grade 5 girls wanted to play Titania, and I was initially hesitant. I wasn't sure she could hold the part. This timid child rose a



few inches taller when she was cast in the role. She then proceeded to play Titania with authority and dignity, lifting her confidence and showing her talent and commitment. —TEACHER

Space and Setting

Each school and classroom is unique and offers different possibilities and challenges in terms of space for the production. In a number of older schools, the gym has a stage area where assemblies, concerts, graduation, and other special events take place. The acoustics of these stage areas often make it challenging for young voices to be heard. Also, creative use of space—such as having the audience seated in different places—is often not possible. Furthermore, time to rehearse and set up in these spaces may be limited as they are often used for numerous school activities.



Two fairies ready to serve their Queen.

A preferable option might be a multi-purpose room with lots of open space, especially if it can be made available to your class for an extended period of time. Another option is to transform your classroom into a stage setting and have the production there.

Presenting your work in your classroom may be the optimal option, particularly for the younger children, for these reasons:

- » The production is a showcase of the learning that took place within the classroom.
- » A number of the activities within the role dramas and the reading of the story involve creating artifacts, such as masks, flowers, and leaves. All these pieces can be displayed on the walls, helping to transform the classroom into the world of the play.
- » Younger students may be more comfortable in their own classroom and may feel less overwhelmed when it is performance time.
- » The acoustics and sight lines are easier to manage in a classroom.
- » You will have more flexibility with times for rehearsing and other class work; as well, you will be able to leave props, costumes, and instruments in the space between rehearsals.

However, limitations of space within a classroom can be an issue. This means the audience must remain small and the space must be managed carefully, which might result in more performances for your students!



PART V



**ADAPTED SCRIPT: A *MIDSUMMER*
*NIGHT'S DREAM***

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NOTE: The 30-minute adapted play script of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* that follows is available in class sets for student use. The font size in the student script version is large for easy reading. Please contact pep.sales@ubc.ca for ordering information or visit the publisher's website (www.pacifiedpress.ca).

ACT 1, SCENE 1

Athens. The palace.

THESEUS *enters with* HIPPOLYTA *and* ATTENDANTS

Now, fair Hippolyta, our nuptial hour draws on apace;
Four happy days bring in another moon.

HIPPOLYTA

Four days will quickly steep themselves in night;
Four nights will quickly dream away the time.

EGEUS *enters with* HERMIA, LYSANDER, *and*

DEMETRIUS

Happy be Theseus, our renowned duke!

THESEUS

Good Egeus: what's the news?

EGEUS

Full of vexation come I, against my daughter Hermia.

Stand forth, Demetrius.

My noble lord, this man hath my consent to marry her.

Stand forth, Lysander.

This man hath bewitch'd the bosom of my child.

I beg the ancient law of Athens.

THESEUS

What say you, Hermia?

Demetrius is a worthy gentleman.

HERMIA

So is Lysander.

THESEUS

In himself he is; but in this kind, wanting your father's voice,

The other must be held the worthier.

HERMIA

I do entreat your Grace to pardon me.

But I beseech that I may know the worst that may

befall me,

If I refuse to wed Demetrius.



THESEUS

Either to die the death or to become a nun.

HERMIA

So will I grow, so live, so die, my lord.

THESEUS

Take time to pause; and, by the next new moon,
Either prepare to die, become a nun, or wed Demetrius.

DEMETRIUS

Relent, sweet Hermia, and, Lysander, yield.

LYSANDER

You have her father's love, Demetrius; let you marry him.

EGEUS

Scornful Lysander!

LYSANDER

I am, my lord, as well derived as he,
As well possess'd; my love is more than his.
And Demetrius, he loved Helena,
And won her soul; and she dotes upon him.



THESEUS

I must confess that I have heard so much.

Demetrius, come, and Egeus.

Fair Hermia, look you fit your fancies to your father's will;

Or else the law of Athens yields you up—

To death, or to a vow of single life.

Exit ALL but LYSANDER and HERMIA

LYSANDER

The course of true love never did run smooth.

HERMIA

O cross!

LYSANDER

Hear me, Hermia. I have a widow aunt who hath no child:

And she respects me as her only son.

From Athens is her house remote seven leagues.

There, gentle Hermia, may I marry thee;

And to that place the sharp Athenian law

Cannot pursue us. If thou lovest me, then,

Steal forth thy father's house to-morrow night;

And in the wood, there will I meet thee.



HERMIA

My good Lysander! In that same place, to-morrow,
I swear to meet with thee.

LYSANDER

Keep promise, love. Look, here comes Helena.

Enter HELENA

HERMIA

Fair Helena!

HELENA

Call you me fair? Demetrius loves your fair;
O, teach me how you look, and with what art
You sway the motion of Demetrius' heart.

HERMIA

I frown upon him, yet he loves me still.

HELENA

O that your frowns would teach my smiles such skill!

HERMIA

The more I hate, the more he follows me.

