This short play is set in a multi-grade 1 to 3 classroom. It is the final minutes of the teacher’s after-school cleanup; post a short run production of a condensed and adapted version of Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (Carter, 2008). One of the packing boxes transforms into a shadow puppet theatre and soon we have several locations and situations suggested by the dialogue and the shadows.

The play is primarily the dramatization of research data generated within a scholarly inquiry. How might exploring drama and producing Shakespeare help to build a greater sense of learning and community?

The time is the present.

The script published here takes the smallest of moments from the data to give a glimpse of the learning. We are pleased to have the rare opportunity to publish a full script of a research based drama. Most of the shadows that are embedded in the script were created by the elementary student participants with the guidance of researcher, Amanda Wager, and further participation by the research team. The students were proud to know their work would be seen in places as far away as Australia.

The play may be performed by at least two actors. In our production, one actor played both Mr. Calby and Bottom.

**Characters:**

**Mr. Calby,** inspired by the elementary teacher of the class where the research project was based.

**Bottom,** inspired by Shakespeare’s original working class amateur actor. Some lines provided to him may be traced to varied sources of the research.

**Shadows**

Different voices may be used to represent Students and Family. Characters are given an individual essence. But working within the limits of the box of resources, the play focuses more on giving an overall impression of the learning moments throughout the journey, these include: Student as Oberon, Student as Lion, Student as Bottom, Titania Student, Researching Student, At Home Practicing Student, Granddad, Comforting Parent, and the Principal.

I named many of the shadow characters according to the function, or the original role played in their production, rather than by names as this was an effective way of writing the moments and tracking them through the script.

**Workshop Production History:**

*Naming the Shadows* was performed for the original research participants (Vancouver Montessori classroom), the UBC Drama Institute (2009), and three scholarly conferences: the International Drama Education Research Institute (Sydney, AU), Canadian Association for Theatre Research (Ottawa, CA), Canadian Society for the Study of Education (Ottawa, CA) in 2009. The cast in all performances included Jaime Beck, George Belliveau, Graham W. Lea and Amanda Wager.
Workshop Production Credits:

**George Belliveau:**
Principal Investigator;
Mr. Calby, and Bottom;
Dramaturge.

**Amanda Wager:**
Student Participant Drama Coach/Researcher;
Shadow manipulation/design;
Student voices.

**Jaime Beck:**
Researcher;
Music and Sound Composer;
Student Voices; Musician.

**Graham W. Lea:**
Researcher;
Stage Manager/Lighting;
Student voices; Musician.

**Donnard R. MacKenzie:**
Playwright; Researcher;
Production Coaching.

**Ahava Shira:**
Researcher.

Students of the research project did the original creation for the shadows used as puppets for this production.

**Additional Credits:**

**Stuart Mathews**
Commentary Graphics

**Amanda Wager, Graham W. Lea**
Research and Development
Photography

**Alexander Daust and Donnard R. MacKenzie**
Archive Photography

Acknowledgements: We wish to send our thanks to the students and their teacher Sue and the parents, for their invaluable contribution to the research and this research based drama. We also thank our UBC colleagues and the Faculty of Education and the department of Language and Literacy Education.

Primary funding for this project and presentations was provided by the Social Sciences Humanities Research Council of Canada, through a grant obtained by Dr. George Belliveau, and by the UBC Faculty of Education and Canadian Association of Theatre Research.

Planned Shadows

Research Note: The list that follows is the list as prepared PRIOR to the workshop, and a different reading of the script might generate additional or different shadows.

There is also the potential for interpreting the script with multiple shadow boxes.

We also considered possibly projecting the shadow scene titles as listed throughout the script.

Through photographs, the script that follows shows a large selection of some of the shadow scenes.
### Planned Shadows List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene</th>
<th>Shadow</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Box lights up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Clown/character on a giant trapeze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rabbit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Real stream on stage (using a scarf)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Parent and student - looking at internet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Box lights out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Lines, words “lines, lines, lines”</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Donkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Small lion w/“roar” coming out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Weeping flower in the rain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Egg and a whisk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Music notes in the air</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>A crown – look through scene 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Dad in China – globe, plane, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Boy on playground (playground separate) platform holding a flower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Titania with wings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Titania, 3 students (build on one)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Puck and parent – bedtime at home, book, bed, lamp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Box lights off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Walking in moonlight, Granddad with donkey ears</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Lantern on a stick</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Student with flower</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Create something – dream scape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Plants appear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Big LION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Airplane crossing the world</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Student taking bows</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Sun &amp; moon</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Bottom &amp; teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Lots of shadows</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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FORMAT THE SHADOWS
Playscript by Donnard R. MacKenzie

(Setting: Classroom--final cleaning after a performance run. A few boxes. The text quoted from Shakespeare as part of this play appears in italics.)

(From offstage we hear drumming. From offstage these few lines of text from Midsummer Night's Dream are sung. For possible example of melody see the acapella version from Ralph Vaughan Williams. Teacher enters in the song singing with the offstage voices.)

CHORUS

Over hill, over dale,
Through bush, through briar,
Over park, over pale,
Through flood, through fire
I do wander everywhere.

(Perhaps there's a large box which will open up into a shadow screen. Teacher is packing boxes and stacking them. He turns to the audience and speaks directly to them.)

TEACHER

(As the song fades, looking around.)
This is my favourite moment. It's all been said and done. William Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream as produced by Cedar Springs Primary class.
TEACHER (CONTINUED)

Our class. Our space. All quiet. But for the happy ghosts of what's left. Faces of our audience. Faces of the actors. We were all met here once. I can't believe how well they made paintings for the set. How they learned their lines. How they helped each other. How their parents helped them if they could. So much how. For five performances the wild imaginings of the forest world of Fairies was here. Puck sang his magic. Weddings were celebrated. I've been so lucky again to be here with these primary students. But it's no cakewalk. It's not just a walk on the beach picking up seashells. It's a real mountain to climb. And every time I have come to this moment in my career, I say—Never Again! Tonight I'm going to take a long jog through the forest trail and then sleep until next week. Sleep, perchance to dream.

(The actor switches to play the character from Shakespeare’s Midsummer Night’s Dream, Bottom. For the purposes of the written script, that switch is represented here by the shadow puppet which only appears at the play’s end.)

(Bottom straddles both the shadow world of fairies and dreams and theatre, and the real world. In the presentation, the actor played both distinct characters.)

BOTTOM
Dreaming is it? No one's dreaming now. There's still work to be done. Nick Bottom at your service. In this your hour of need.

TEACHER
But the play is over.
BOTTOM
It’s never over. There are always parts to be played, songs to be sung, children still laugh, people still cheer. See and hear the ghosts, the shadows of what’s left. A parent whistling and hollering through her teeth. A laughing grandmother from Hong Kong who barely speaks English. Her smile spans oceans and time. Echoes. Hear Charlene finally roaring as the Lion. Oooh, the Lion!

(Overcome as an actor, he roars loudly)
ROARRRRRR!
(Turning to the audience.)
Just me. It's pretend.

TEACHER
I thought I had control of you.

BOTTOM
Not this time my lad.

TEACHER
But--

BOTTOM
--No buts--you can sleep when you tell us what it meant for you, and for your ensemble. Tell us what's left in these shadows.

TEACHER
What's left?

BOTTOM
Do I need Peter Quince to write a prologue for you? What's left? What do the kids take away? Yes there were performances, but it's about the process you understand. That's the grit of the matter.

TEACHER
But you were only in it for the Duke's money.

BOTTOM
I'm in it for love, like you man, like your company of young players.

(Bottom goes to open the large box.)
People who say you have to think outside the box have probably never made a box and learned the magic that they can contain inside the box.
(He gestures for there to be light on the screen and then says dramatically.)

Oh, for a muse of fire!

(The box lights up. Bottom responds with childlike excitement as if waiting for all the shadows that might appear. Perhaps we hear some magic drum and flute sound. There appear images in shadow as described by the student character. The shadows were created by the Grade 1 to 3 participants in the research.)

With help from your students we search into the shadows left from the play. If you peek quickly, you might think, is anyone doing any work?

(SHADOW SCENE: Spinning Pinwheel, to keep it simple. Add what shadows are available. Sound Cue: Rhythmic Click. Perhaps a wheel of fortune like sound.)

BOTTOM (CONTINUED)
Children are running the show! Movement everywhere. Wordwalls; Cue Cards; Fairy Magic; Family Reading; Character Hotseats; Running Lines; Playground Play; Building Community--one word of dialogue at a time. Holy Zeus, what chaos! Round and round the shadows dance.
SCENE 1
CHILD RESEARCHING SHAKESPEARE ON THE NET

STUDENT 3
Look, look, Mom, here's another.

*Midsummer Night's Dream* on giant trapezes. Wow! They swung in the air in a huge all white room.

(Checking the name carefully)
Peter Brook. Hmm. And, and, look at this picture--Mom--of a different production--real rabbits and a real stream onstage--this play has been done so many ways.
PARENT
Now you have your turn for your production. Casting is all done, and now rehearsals, and then you open.

STUDENT 3
I know, I know! Oooh, look this would be great for my Peter Quince costume.

PARENT
You're so well cast. He was the director of the play within the play. And you like to think about the whole production, like a director.

STUDENT 3
I love learning all about the play.

(The lights of the box go out.)

(Musical effect)

BOTTOM
Now you see! What do the ghosts mean?

SCENE 2
THREE STUDENTS ARE DISCUSSING THEIR ROLES

STUDENT AS OBERON
Look how many lines! I can't do this. It's too much.

STUDENT AS BOTTOM
(Really excited)
I'm cast as Bottom. I get to be a donkey!
STUDENT AS LION
I'm the lion. I don't know if I can do this.

STUDENT AS OBERON
But it's mostly roaring.

STUDENT AS LION
I know, that's the problem. I don't like roaring. I can't roar. At least not loudly.

STUDENT AS OBERON
You'll be fine.

STUDENT AS BOTTOM
My granddad says you learn it one line at a time.
STUDENT AS LION
But I'll never be able to roar. Really, I get too scared.

STUDENT AS BOTTOM
By the opening, you'll be scaring all the other grade twos with how loud your roars are. Just you wait.

STUDENT AS LION
(She tries to roar, it comes out as a squeaky whisper.)
rrrrroar.

SCENE 3

LANGUAGE PLAY IN THE HOME

(Shadow Box: flowers on a rainy day. There is a sound of rain. Other shadows as per the text.)

STUDENT
Good Mother, The blue sky flowers weep in the rain.

PARENT
Um yes...did you just make that up?

STUDENT
Shakespeare is my constant good friend, wondrous words.

PARENT
Yonder are the eggs, shall I batter them liquidy yellow?
STUDENT
Oh Mom! Hark thy son doth approach, treat him with smiles.

(They laugh, Shadow lights go out, onstage actor takes focus.)

(MUSIC: Reprise of opening melody.)

BOTTOM
It's just like the playing of music--even after the musician has stopped playing, we can still hear the notes. They live in the air.

TEACHER
Like the play. Yes, the sounds echo and vibrate through each person, I knew that.

BOTTOM
Now you know it again. Down through the ages.

(Pause, to illustrate.)
I'm a character with four hundred years of echoes. That child who played me in this production--she was very good---Good feet placement, a good mover. She moved me. And you know why?

TEACHER
I've a feeling you'll tell me--

BOTTOM
--Because each time she speaks her lines

(Jabbing at the teacher)

--even if they are considerably cut--

TEACHER
We needed to have a running time of well under an hour--
BOTTOM
--Indeed--well my good man, there's lots of good stuff for her.

(Quickly returning to his original point) And each time she speaks she has a conversation with history. All the actors who have spoken those lines for all of the audiences, and with the writer himself.

TEACHER
Shakespeare? That grade three student is clairvoyant?

BOTTOM
Are you being “ironical” with me good sir?

TEACHER
Well, no, if you mean she enters into a dialogical relationship with the writer and the audience--

BOTTOM
--Ooooh “dialogical”. Fifty Quid word for something so simple. Cite your references Master Teacher. Come on, cite them! Put the periods in the right place.

SCENE 4

REAL LIFE STUFF
STUDENT AS EGEUS
My gracious duke, before your grace, I beg the ancient right: The privilege of Athens says I may dispose of her as I might. As she is mine, I give her to Demetrius with my last breath; or, according to our law she goes immediately to her death--

(Reflect seriousness in box and actor)

STUDENT 3
--Hey! He's a big bully.

TEACHER
I think every parent I know wants a good match for their child.

STUDENT 3
But he's just telling her what to do. That's not fair. I'd runaway, I bet.

STUDENT AS EGEUS
But it says death. Like you'd be dead. D-E-A-D!

TEACHER
But what about the other people of the court? What could they do to help?

STUDENT 2
Start a petition. Help her, stand up for her.
TEACHER
Yes, good idea. But you'd need to be very brave.

STUDENT AS EGEUS
'Cause you'd be d-e-a-d.

STUDENT 3
But this would never happen in real life.

TEACHER
Perhaps. Right now we are pretending. But what do you think, does it really happen in life?

BOTTOM
Of course it could! This isn't children dressing up. This is work. This ain't no cake walk.

TEACHER
Yes exactly.

STUDENT 3
I hope in real life my dad comes. He's always away on business in China.

TEACHER
He works hard to support his family.

STUDENT 3
Yeah, but I really want him to see the play.

SCENE 5
PRETENDING FOR LIFE

(Shadow: a boy standing on top of the playground platform. He holds a flower.)
(Sound: Kids playing at lunch hour)

STUDENT AS OBERON
Flower of this purple dye, hit with Cupid's archery...all through lunch everyone will be in love with everyone. Wild! I am King of the Magic Spirits. Give me the changeling and all will be well.

(Shadow box: Titania crosses to Oberon, flapping her arms.)

STUDENT AS TITANIA
I was foolish to disobey. Fly! Fly! Fairies, Titania commands.

(Lights out on shadow box and the focus returns to the actor.)

BOTTOM
That meddler Oberon--He'll get in your dreams. Careful for that child, he's messing with magic.

TEACHER
It's just a play.

BOTTOM
Bite your tongue my man. Just a play indeed! The play is the thing.

TEACHER
I've heard that.

BOTTOM
From me, just now. Shall I say it again?
TEACHER
No, it's alright--

BOTTOM
--It's not alright. You've got the post show blues. Why it's just like me and the boys after performing for the Duke. We wanted to take it on the road. Sparta, Gaul, Ottawa...Think big. But be prepared.

SCENE 6

THINKING LIKE YOUR CHARACTER

(Shadow: Titania in hot seat, other students.)

TITANIA-STUDENT
I'm a good dancer and I know magic. I love music and playing games.

STUDENT 2
What games do you play? Do you like to skip?

TITANIA-STUDENT
Yes, yes I do. I skip in the forest and over by the lake until it starts to get bright.

STUDENT 3
What food do you like to eat in the forest?

TITANIA-STUDENT
Uhm-Honey Suckle Soup. It's great. My great grandmother taught me.

TEACHER
Excellent character work Titania. How did you think of that soup?

TITANIA-STUDENT
I just made it up. But I do make a special soup with my great grandma. She's had the recipe forever since before we came from the old country.

TEACHER
Good connection.

BOTTOM
Marvelous imagination. Marvelous. Good character work.
SCENE 7

SHAKESPEARE, MY BUDDY

(Shadow: Bedtime, home of a student.)

PUCK STUDENT

(Reading the text)
If we shadows have offended...I love this part. It means actors and the fairies. It's magical pretend. Let's read the scene again all the way to the call for applause.

PARENT

Phoebe, I'm so impressed. I didn't start reading Shakespeare until I was in Grade ten.

PUCK STUDENT

Oh Dad, you missed out.

(Shadow box lights go out, with final sounds of magic and thunder.)

BOTTOM

You bet you did. Until now. Marvelous, brave new world. That girl is now the teacher. Ah my creator's genius, my good Shakespeare. His work is filled with lessons for the ages.

TEACHER

It's good to remember how Shakespeare has inspired them. But it might be so much easier to just do The Three Little Pigs or--
BOTTOM
Oh, I could be the wolf, I'll huff and I'll puff and I will bloooooooww your house down.

TEACHER
On second thought--

BOTTOM
Too much?

TEACHER
A tad.

BOTTOM
Right you are mate.

SCENE 8
FAMILY CONNECTIONS
(Shadow: walking in the moonlight. Cooler, blue light from the shadow box. Granddad with donkey ears. Granddad plays bottom and the student plays the other parts.)

GRANDDAD AS BOTTOM
Thisbe! I were only thine, if I were fair.

STUDENT GRANDCHILD AS QUINCE
O monstrous! O strange! We are haunted! Fly masters! Help!
(Exeunt all except Bottom and Puck)
STUDENT GRANDCHILD AS PUCK
So then they are alone on the stage, and Puck will play his trick. He says: "Now that's what I call an entrance. Go on, yelp, I'll follow you, lead you round and about. With a neigh, and a bark, and a grunt, and a shout!"

(Exit puck)

GRANDDAD AS BOTTOM
Why do they run away? This is knavery to fright me.

(They laugh.)

STUDENT GRANDCHILD
Granddad that's great...It's so funny. Now let's do the whole scene about Bottom's dream.

GRANDDAD
Alright. You know I played Bottom in high-school. And Malvolio too.

STUDENT
Malvolio?

GRANDDAD
Twelfth Night--Hilarious play. Sure fire. Comic-Tragic. Perhaps next year your teacher could do that one.

STUDENT
Laughing and crying. That's a good combination.
GRANDDAD
Like life Sam.

STUDENT
Did you read all the plays Granddad when you taught University?

GRANDDAD
At least twice.

(Shadow: Lights Out)

BOTTOM
Hmm, I saw his playing of Bottom. A tad intellectual I felt. Marred by Freudian interpretation.
   (Suddenly reveling in a memory of his sexual prowess)
Ahh Titania, me thought I had--

TEACHER
   (Calling for classroom decorum)
Enough of that Sir.

BOTTOM
Yes, well, the play takes you places--

TEACHER
   --And leaves you places.

BOTTOM
Yes, and what's left?

TEACHER
What's left?

SCENE 9

TEAMPLAY LINES

STUDENT
Uh...uh..Doth the moon..uh..

STUDENT 2
Shine...that...

STUDENT
--Shine that night?

TEACHER
It's not a question.
STUDENT
I know. I was just making sure I heard it right.

TEACHER
Thanks for prompting Sam.

STUDENT
I'm trying to know it as good as Sam does.

TEACHER
I know you are. We are all working together.

STUDENT
Cause we're a team.

(Lights/Music Transition)

BOTTOM
Yes, exactly. We all have our parts to play.

SCENE 10

OBERON AND TEACHER'S NIGHTMARE

(This scene may be both condensed, and broken up, dreamily disjointed.)

OBERON STUDENT
I met Shakespeare. Too many lines. All the lines.

ANNOUNCEMENT
Sorry for the interruption again. Teachers can we have a brief five minute meeting at recess about the playground opening. In the staffroom at recess. Thanks. And I apologize for the interruption.

(Oberon Student and the teacher might share some of these lines. It will become apparent Oberon Student is having an actor's nightmare.)

OBERON STUDENT AND TEACHER

(Inner voice)
Ah, this is crazy! There's too much going on!
ENSEMBLE
*If we shadows have offended, think but this and all is mended.*

BOTTOM
Your students made cue cards, all on their own!? 

OBERON STUDENT AND TEACHER 
Fairies, let's work on the revels dance. Let's begin from the circle formation. Serena, you're kneeling down so the audience can see Titania in her bower._

(Knock on the door again.)

DOOR STUDENT
We're collecting the field trip forms for the Watermania outing.

DOROTHY
Mr. Calby, can I go to the bathroom?

TEACHER
Yes Dorothy. Who is going with you?

DOROTHY
Sam, can you come with me?

SAM
Sure, we can practice our lines while we go!

(Sound: recess bell, Oberon student, stirs in his bed.)

TEACHER AND OBERON STUDENT
This is madness.
OBERON STUDENT
Too many lines. Learning. Interrupt--Practice--No stops. Will we ever be ready?

PARENT
(Parent is checking on his/her child)
Michael, Michael, are you all right?

OBERON STUDENT
Yes, I was having an amazing dream.

PARENT
I heard you call out.

OBERON STUDENT
I was really scared. I was dreaming I was Mr. Calby and I had to organize our play. So much work.

PARENT
If you've been so worried, why are you smiling?

OBERON STUDENT
Because I really love our play Mom. And! I know all my lines now.

PARENT
You've wrestled and named your fear. I'm so proud of you. The poet's eye, in fine frenzy rolling, /Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven; And...

ENSEMBLE
(Said with precision, voice bodying forth)
...as imagination bodies forth/The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen/Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing/A local habitation and a name.
PARENT
Dreams help us understand our awake world.

OBERON STUDENT
Like doing our play. We can try on our dreams for life.

PARENT
When did you get so smart!

OBERON STUDENT
Day by day. One line at a time.

SCENE 11
FINAL TOUCH
TEACHER
Places please for the start of the run.

PARENT
Mr. Calby-

TEACHER
Please--no interruptions, we have just one more day.

PARENT
I was talking with Dorothy and I brought these in.

(Different plants appear lining the bottom of the screen.)

TEACHER
What a wonderful final touch. Thank-you.

PARENT
See you at the opening everyone.

DOROTHY
Thanks Mom.

TEACHER
Places everyone.
SCENE 12

PRINCIPAL AND COMMUNITY

(Quick transition. Now the time is just before the performance and the principal is giving a welcome speech to the invited audience.)

PRINCIPAL
As your principal, I wish to congratulate all of you and a special word for Mr. Calby. There are many teachers who make big plans in the fall for their student's school year. But who would have expected to have a production with lights, sounds, costumes and set design. All of you have worked as a team and you have done our school community proud. Thanks to our wonderful audience. I lend you my hands because you all deserve a round of applause.
SCENE 13

FINDING YOUR VOICE

STUDENT LION
ROARRRRRRRRRR! HEAR ME ROAAAAAAAAARR!!!!

SCENE 14

BRING THE PLAY HOME

(Shadow: Airplane crossing the world.)

(Students are taking bows at the close of the play, sound of applause.)

STUDENT 3
Dad! You made it!

(Student takes a moment to acknowledge her dad’s travelling all the way to see her play.)

Um, this is my dad everyone! Oh, um--Are there any questions?
OBERON PARENT  
How do you memorize your lines?

OBERON STUDENT  
Oh Mom, you know. You helped me.

(There's a pause and then one student prompts.)

GIRL STUDENT  
Any other questions? You can ask us questions like--Did you like the costumes? We made them. Did you like the set? We made it too. Did you like the play? We made it. Well, Shakespeare wrote the story. He lived a long time ago. Um are there any other questions?

(Shadow lights out.)

TEACHER  
More questions.

BOTTOM  
I'm really on the verge of tears thinking of how proud those parents must be.

TEACHER  
Yes--I--

BOTTOM  
--We're sensitive, we artists.

TEACHER  
--I'm a teacher too.
SCENE 15

SISTER’S WORD REVEL

(This scene could be cut for time.)

DOROTHY
That was so fun. Granddad, thanks for that tip about the pause line. Dad! Did you see the revels? I was reveling.

(Turning to her sister)
Revel means--

DOROTHY'S SISTER
I know what it means.

PARENT
Rissa!

(Now speaking to Dorothy)
Your sister is really proud of you.

DOROTHY'S SISTER
Yeah, I am. I wish I did a play when I was in your grade.

BOTTOM
You are indeed a teacher. Not knowing the future, but touching it just the same.

SCENE 16

TO THE FUTURE

(Shadow: The girl who was researching before is at it again. Romeo and Juliet scene appears.)

GIRL STUDENT
Arise fair sun and kill the envious moon. Mom!
(Arriving into scene)
What Phara?

GIRL STUDENT
What does envious mean?

MOM/DAD
It means jealous, like you want what someone else has. The moon wants to be as bright as the sun. Romeo and Juliet? You're reading this again?

GIRL STUDENT
Yes. Really, really carefully. For next year. It's got so many good parts.

MOM
Ah yes my Juliet, next year you are in Grade Three. The oldest of the group--Perhaps you will get that part.

GIRL STUDENT
I hope so.

MOM
But it's such a sad play. They both die. When we read the story version it made you cry.

GIRL STUDENT
Because it's real Mom. I like it.

(Lights out from the shadow box, focus taken by actor. Musical notes heard with the flute.)
BOTTOM
There it is. The dream continues; the music plays on.

TEACHER
We had high expectations. Sometimes I had to remind myself "Hey some of them are just six years old." But they created an ensemble of players and really cared for the work. They were brilliant.
(pause.)
Yes, you're right; your work here is done.

BOTTOM
For now.

(Bottom starts to exit. Teacher stays out.)

TEACHER
Where are you going?

BOTTOM
Aye boyo, I knew you'd miss me.

(Bottom fully exits behind the screen and beckons Teacher)

BOTTOM (CONTINUED)
Follow me. You know it's your desire. It is Faerie hour

(Teacher looks around and follows with great curiosity. Now they both become shadows as part of the shadow box.)

BOTTOM AS SHADOW
You're one of us now.

TEACHER AS SHADOW
What do I do here?

BOTTOM AS SHADOW
Chase airy nothings. Find meaning. Name the shadows. It's a good life's work.

(As many as possible of the shadows join them in chorus in an expression of a happy community of players.)
CHORUS

(Repeating the music and singing from the start of the play so that the sharing arrives full circle.)

Over hill, over dale,
Through bush, through briar,
Over park, over pale,
Through flood, through fire
I do wander everywhere.

END OF THE PLAY
(Within the shadows)
TEACHER: What do I do here?
BOTTOM: Chase airy nothings. Find meaning. Name the shadows.
- Mackenzie, 2009

Using an elementary class’ journey with Shakespeare, a group of researcher-artists developed a research-based play to explore the nature of learning in the classroom. The research took place over a three-month period while students aged six through nine in a Montessori classroom in Vancouver, Canada worked on an adapted version of Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (Carter, 2008). Data generated from the preparation, process, and production of the Shakespeare play provided the resources from which to create the research-based play: *Naming the Shadows*. The research-based play has been performed five times,¹ and with the help of participant and audience feedback the text below reflects an artistic representation of the research.

*Naming the Shadows* shares key moments of learning that emerged for students, parents, and the teacher during the Shakespeare project. The play represents a desire to blend the work of artists and researchers.² This *métissage*, as Irwin (2004) refers to in her work on A/r/tography, is part of the ongoing journey of finding ways to weave the complex negotiations of writers/artists/researchers, the participants, and the data we are working with in our research. We have chosen to integrate A/r/tography as a methodology to emphasize our shifting identities. This approach offers a way to examine these interactions of the self and the ideas that weave their way within a creative project (Sinner et al, 2006).

*Naming the Shadows* tries not to privilege the artistry over the research, or vice versa. Instead the play seeks the connections and spaces that intersect, which when engaged in arts-based educational research, are many and overlapping. Our team sought to articulate and perform the connections and spaces, so that we could share, explore, and expand our art and research in dynamic and multiple ways. In working towards integrating research and art, the play provides shadows to convey meaning rather than facts and certainty (Bochner & Ellis, 2000; Greene, 1995).

In this commentary section we offer a brief representation of the importance of engaging with the question of source for a research-based drama, which includes both the research data itself and what we bring to the process as individuals. We view the work as a rhizome, which in a/r/tographic terms is “an assemblage that moves and flows in dynamic momentum” (Irwin and Springgay, 2008, p. 20). The concept is originally derived from the name given to plants whose roots travel and entangle such that it is difficult to follow the path to the beginning. In his poem “A Tangle of Lines,” Leggo challenges us to avoid straight lines “instead a/r/tographers weave their ways in tangled lines/ know wholeness/ in holes and gaps, in fragments” (2008, p. xiv).

Here now are a few of the tangled lines of the rhizome as we sketch the sources of writing and then producing *Naming the Shadows*.

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¹ *Naming the Shadows* was performed for the original research participants (Vancouver Montessori classroom), the UBC Drama Institute (2009), and three scholarly conferences: the International Drama Education Research Institute (Sydney, AU), Canadian Association for Theatre Research (Ottawa, CA), Canadian Society for the Study of Education (Ottawa, CA) in 2009. The cast in all performances included Jaime Beck, George Belliveau, Graham W. Lea and Amanda Wager.
² For a full analysis of the playwriting process for this play, see MacKenzie & Belliveau in this issue.
To write a play and especially a research based drama, there is always the question of source. The question is akin to considering where the ideas come from. Viewing the work as a rhizome helps me to become more aware of the improbable challenge of mapping and pin-pointing a source for the writing (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Source is not only the research data, but more. I wonder about the wealth of energy that emanates from the beginning place (if we could ever arrive there) that makes the work matter to an artist-scholar.

Put simply, what is the origin of our source? The seemingly commonplace and ever-present nature of the question of the origin-source makes it easy to dismiss engagement. John Dewey writes that “experiencing like breathing is a rhythm of intakings and outgivings” (1934/2005, p. 58). Perhaps the source of our work as artists and researchers is as present as breathing and we don’t stop to ask why we breathe, we simply do, because art is an action.

Yet such is the work of practice-based research, where in my case I must ask not just what I did to get here with the script, but WHY did I get here; WHERE does it come from? These questions were demanded of my colleagues who collectively shared the workshop production of *Naming the Shadows*. It is a profoundly personal interrogation, but with implications that move into the entire realm of theatre research and education. I hope some of my attempt to answer is found for the reader in the script. My colleagues and I tried to stretch the boundaries of the box through whatever rough theatrical arts that might be available, while still maintaining the research parameters.

*What brings us the light that causes the shadows we hope to name?*

Donnard MacKenzie, Playwright
Amanda Wager:
I am yearning to feel my familiar identity of a teacher.

Walking into a familiar space ... I feel at home in this school, this classroom, surrounded by children eager to share their insights. But instead of filling up our time with math and science and rules and rewards, we focus solely on our storytelling through the creation of silhouettes. Their creations will be shadows within the research. It seems easy to forget that the children are the core, the beginning, the reason. I began as an artist. I became a teacher. And I am so unclear of my present identity of a researcher.
Jaime Beck:
Drumming for me has always been about community.

People go to drum circles with enough instruments to share, everyone is always welcome. I was excited to weave these feelings of community and these instruments into the production, drumming is usually part of my life that is quite separate from the academy. I began with a simple walking beat, added a simple melody to the play’s refrain, and from there added accents to the shadows and to the script: a singing bowl for magical moments, soft rolls of thunder for suspense, and the shake of a coin belt to transition scenes. I was most nervous to play in front of the classroom students whose story we were representing. I wanted them to find it entertaining; I also wanted them to see their own reflection.

Over Hill, Over Dale

Music: J. Beck  Lyrics: W. Shakespeare

Students creating shadows for the play about their play production, from list by drama coach/researcher A. Wager.
Part of the stage managerial responsibility is to remain grounded, considering practical matters such as re-use, portability, and safety: a balancing act between research, artistry, and practicality. Integrating shadow puppetry into Naming the Shadows played to our strengths as a research team, but also introduced additional time and design constraints. This balancing act continues through production and performance: maintaining a detailed stage script including blocking notes, and audio/lighting cues. These cues become characters in performance responding to performers and audience to help convey meaning.
George Belliveau: Performing as an actor to share research.

Sharing allows me to play, test out, interpret and use the tools (theatre) that were being researched in the elementary classroom. Acting with my graduate students develops community, where we’re creating together, taking risks, and breaking down some of the hierarchies of the professor/student power relationship. Acting also takes me back to my initial theatre training where I developed a love for, and understanding of, the power of theatre as both a learning medium and a form of sharing heightened moments of human behavior. Performing research brings more than data to life, it allows for new understandings and interpretations to occur for both audience and performers.
Student participants with their set design canvases and their plants brought in by a parent.

Playwright’s early working sketch note.

Pyramus and Thisbe symbol.

Early formal theatre in ancient Greece as acknowledgement of the rhizomatic nature of source.

Representations of some sources for the creation of Naming the Shadows.


