

Harry Potter: The Hamlet of the 21st Century

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INTRODUCTION

Getting to know Shakespeare is a new world of discovery. For the students it is like starting a new adventure without knowing where it is going to take them. It is fascinating, but at the same time it is scary, too. However, once you have encountered the author and his work, you cannot escape his greatness. Although some people have been exposed to this author from an early age, most of elementary school students will never know anything about this great author until they go to middle or high school.

Great Hollywood productions have been made and most people have seen at least one version of a Shakespearean play, but what about adaptations for kids? Book adaptations for children are better known than film ones, and they would be very useful. However, many elementary teachers will hesitate to watch one of those adaptations and work with the complexity of one of those plays. When I was thinking on how I could make my didactic unit more appealing to my fourth graders, I came up with an idea that I was sure would spark the students' interest and get them excited about studying Shakespeare's life, time, and work.

ACADEMIC SETTING

My school's population is made up of 63 percent Hispanic students and 33 percent African American students. I am in charge of the writing class for 3rd and 4th bilingual students. Being a bilingual teacher and teaching in the bilingual program requires a lot of effort teaching your curriculum in Spanish and at the same time trying to give as much English as you can to your students to help them to smoothly change from mainly-Spanish instruction to all-English instruction. In order to achieve this, after the writing Spanish 4th grade TAKS in February, I completely change from Spanish to all English instruction. This is a great change to the students and although they like to learn English, each one of them is at a different level, going from very proficient native-like students to a child who has just arrived from Mexico.

Having all these things I have explained above in mind and trying to think about how I could motivate my students in the learning of Shakespeare and one of his plays, I came up with the idea of comparing Harry Potter, a character all children love and know, to Hamlet, a character that is going to be completely new to them but who shares lots of things with their beloved Harry Potter. Learning about Harry Potter, Hamlet, and their creators will intellectually cultivate my students and without noticing they will be practicing their English. If the necessity arises, I will prepare bilingual materials for my students. I am planning on doing this unit in English, always taking into account that I will use the Spanish language and bilingual materials if there are students who need that.

With this unit I am trying to teach my students something new and different from what they have ever been taught. I am trying to elaborate a unit on a very well known author rarely studied in elementary grades. Doing that I hope to enrich my students' knowledge of the world and give them an introduction to Shakespeare and his world that will help them understand the author much better when they encounter his plays again in middle or high school. This unit will help me

as well as other teachers who teach in elementary grades and have always been scared of teaching Shakespeare.

My students will realize how very familiar children's books are so similar to a play written hundreds of years ago. My students will also be able to discover the world of Hamlet and compare it to Harry Potter and find out that those two characters share very similar characteristics.

OBJECTIVES

As the unit is going to be taught to 4th grade students at the end of May, my students should have covered nearly all of the TEKS objectives, and they can review some of the academic skills learned during the school year in the writing class. At this point, 4th grade bilingual students in the writing class are able to write to express themselves, to influence others, to inform, and to entertain. They have practiced a lot in the writing class, and they can produce compositions in Spanish, such as short stories, personal narratives, reports, letters or poems. Besides, students know how to perfectly use the Spanish writing conventions. They know the capitalization and punctuation rules, they spell accurately or use dictionaries to spell correctly, and they know how to write using standard grammar.

After the Spanish writing TAKS in February, bilingual 4th graders in my school need to start using more English in the writing classroom. They need to learn and practice the same TEKS writing objectives they had learned during the school year in Spanish, but now in English. They need to increasingly use the English language in the classroom. In that way, they will be more prepared for an all-English setting in fifth grade.

Most of my students have been born in the United States; consequently, they have very high listening and speaking skills. However, their writing and reading skills are very low, and they need more reinforcement to learn the grammar or spelling of words. I will use this didactic unit to motivate my students to practice more their English. They all know Harry Potter, and they enjoy watching Harry Potter movies, reading Harry Potter books, and playing with Harry Potter toys. I think this is a very good topic to help them develop their reading, listening, speaking and writing skills in the writing classroom. Besides, they will be learning about one of the best writers, about Shakespeare and his play *Hamlet*. Students will be introduced to the author, his time, and his work.

My 4th grade students will use also listening and speaking skills when watching the movies in English and when commenting on the movies. Besides, they will use writing when answering their activities, and they will develop their reading skills in English doing the final project and when reading selected passages from *Hamlet* and the Harry Potter books. Students are going to use writing for learning and research when studying the Elizabethan period.

One of the main objectives of this unit is to develop English reading, listening, and writing skills in bilingual students. In reading, students will be able to read drama (*Hamlet*) and fiction (*Harry Potter*) and they will acquire new vocabulary and bring meaning to words in a given context. In writing, students will be able to write to inform (studying the Elizabethan period) and write to express themselves when writing letters. In listening, students will listen to understand major ideas and interpret speaker's messages when they watch the different selected movies or pieces of movies.

SIMILIARITIES BETWEEN HAMLET AND HARRY POTTER

I started thinking about the Harry Potter books and movies and the tremendous success they have had on young as well as adult audiences. I suddenly saw myself comparing Hamlet to Harry Potter, and I found that there are a number of common characteristics that connect them in

different ways. Not only this, but also there are many things that can be compared between Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter books. Here I am going to mention some of the most important ones that I found.

Evil uncles and dead fathers

Hamlet's father was killed by Hamlet's evil uncle; Harry Potter's parents were killed by the dark wizard Lord Voldemort. Both Hamlet and Harry have an enemy; this enemy is the person who killed their relatives, and they try to defeat their enemies. In Hamlet until the last scene when he dies and in Harry Potter, this dark force continues to appear in all the books. It is clearly seen that both of them try to fight against crime. Hamlet tries to avenge his father's assassination while Harry tries to solve all the mysteries that happen in his different adventures. Besides, when doing so, they both show a very strong and brave personality. Both of them share this desire for revenge. In *Hamlet* we clearly see it while Harry Potter always tries to defeat the dark force, Lord Voldemort, and in doing this he is always thinking that he was the one who killed his parents.

Talking about families and relationships, we should not forget Claudius, Hamlet's evil uncle, who plotted to kill his brother, marry his sister-in-law and become the new King. On the other hand, we have the mean Dursleys, Harry Potter's uncle and aunt, who force him to live in a tiny room under the stairs. Both characters have mean uncles, so their relationships with their own families are going to be dramatic. Evil uncles and dead fathers is the most important characteristic both characters share. Hamlet's destiny is going to be marked by the appearance of his father's ghost while Harry Potter's desire to see his parents in the mirror make him weak in front of Lord Voldemort.

Supernatural Elements

There is also a supernatural element in both Shakespeare's play and J.K. Rowling's books. Hamlet sees his father in a form of a ghost, and Harry Potter sees his parents through a mirror in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of the Secrets*. They may be hallucinations or tricks of their minds, but the case is that both characters see a kind of ghost advising them about something. Undoubtedly, we find more supernatural elements in Harry Potter. The author, J. K. Rowling, creates a magic world to make the books more appealing to children and teenagers.

Setting

Hamlet and Harry Potter are very similar characters that, although living hundred of years apart, live similar situations and move in similar settings. We imagine the Prince of Denmark's home, Elsenore, being a dark, poorly lit medieval castle as the one we can see in the Harry Potter movies. Hogwarts, the school where young witches and wizards study and live during the school year, is a medieval, poorly lit British castle, too.

Both Hamlet and Harry Potter are sent away from their hometowns to study. Harry Potter goes to Hogwarts, while Hamlet was studying in Wittenberg before he returned to Denmark.

Mothers

We can also compare the women that surround Hamlet and Harry Potter. If we look at their mothers, they both die although for different reasons. According to Harry Potter's lexicon web page (information taken from the books) Lily, Harry's mother, tried to escape with him, but Lord Voldemort caught her, and although he offered to spare her life, she stood in his way and Voldemort killed her to get to Harry. That was a great sacrifice that Harry Potter's mother made for him, and it was so strong that it made the curse's force to rebound onto Voldemort.

On the contrary, we have Gertrude, who although dying by accident poisoned by her current husband, she does not do anything for Hamlet, and she leaves her own son alone. In an

unconscious way, the poison in the drink that was supposed to be drunk by Hamlet kills her and saves Hamlet. However, Hamlet is killed eventually anyway by the poison on the sword. Gertrude's attitude towards Hamlet is then very different from Lily Potter towards her son Harry Potter. This last one dies defending her own son, while Gertrude does not do anything to defend her son, and she is blind and does not want to find out the plot that surrounds her.

Comic Elements

Another thing that both the play and the book have in common is the comic element. Hamlet's comic elements would be the clowns, the players representing the assassination of Hamlet's father and also the gravedigger and his companion when digging Ophelia's grave. These are humorous elements added to break a little bit with the seriousness of the play. We should also take into account the humorous roles of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern that appear in *Hamlet*, although they do not appear in the version I am going to show the students.

We also find comic elements in Harry Potter's movies. We have for example Gilderoy Lockhart, the Defense against the Dark Arts professor, who is obsessed with himself and his image. In the movie *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* this character is played by Kenneth Branagh, one of the best well-known actors playing and directing Shakespearean plays on the big screen. We need to consider that one of the latest productions of *Hamlet* in the big screen has been directed by Kenneth Branagh, who was at the same time playing the character of Hamlet.

Besides, in each one of the Harry Potter movies there are always funny elements that the author creates to entertain us, such as fantastic situations with different characters. Comic elements are really useful to break up the serious stuff in *Hamlet* and in Harry Potter's adventures.

Other Female Characters

But not all the things are similar between Harry Potter and Hamlet. There are also some differences that need to be taken into account. One of the most remarkable female characters in *Hamlet* is Ophelia. Ophelia is shown as very fragile, obedient to the people who surround her, sensitive, thoughtful and naïve, but at the end, this weak character goes mad. In contrast to this character, we have Hermione, the brightest witch at Hogwarts. She has a brilliant mind, and she knows about everything. She has a very strong character, and she is stubborn and bossy. Moreover, I want to say that even J. K. Rowling chose that name from a character in *A Winter's Tale* by Shakespeare. Hermione in *A Winter's Tale* is a faithful wife and mother. We can also consider this character to be the opposite of Gertrude.

The role of women has changed a lot through the time and this is a great difference we notice between the Shakespearean play and the J.K. Rowling books. In Elizabethan times women were much more passive and they hardly showed any action (without taking into account the Queen herself who was doing a man's role). Ophelia herself is a weak and vulnerable female character, a victim of the society that surrounds her. On the contrary, we have Hermione, a young woman of action from the 21st century, ready to do whatever she puts her mind to. It is interesting to see how women's roles have changed over the years, and how we find Hermione as one of Harry Potter's best friends, while we see Hamlet just surrounded by male friends, such as Horatio, who are at his same level. Society has changed and developed, and we can see this when comparing both Hamlet and Harry Potter.

UNIT DEVELOPMENT

This curriculum unit will examine in depth both Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter books and movies. However, I would not start the unit going directly to the play, or

using all of the Harry Potter books and movies. This unit will be taught to 4th graders in May, the last month of the school year, when everybody is more relaxed and when the 4th graders have already mastered the 4th grade objectives and are mostly ready for 5th grade. The unit will be divided in different sections and each section will be taught in periods of one hour and twenty minutes.

SECTION I: *HAMLET*

Elizabethan Society

The first thing I am going to do is to let the students approach the author, Shakespeare. However, before meeting the author, they should know about the time in which he lived. I am planning on doing an activity with the students that will allow them to explore different important characteristics of Elizabethan society. I will do some research for them and I will look for different items such as children, cities, clothes, houses, education, royal family, or transportation in Elizabethan times. This information will be about different themes that will help the students to know about Shakespeare's world and society. I will divide the students into different groups, and I will give each group a theme to study. Each group should read the information, summarize it, and do a poster including drawings.

Finally, they should show their project to the rest of the class and explain to the rest of the students what they have learned. After this, I will give each student a chart that he or she will need to complete. Students will need to write three things they have learned about the presentation each group has done. With this activity each student will be able to study his or her own theme and learn about other themes by listening to the different presentations and by seeing the murals. When they all finish their presentation and complete their charts, I will hang all murals around the classroom; in that way, we will be surrounded by the items studied about Elizabethan time.

Shakespeare

After that, I will introduce Shakespeare to the students using different activities. I am planning on doing a short survey, and this will give me an idea of what my students know or do not know about this author. I presume that not many of them will know anything about him, but that would be normal because they may have never been introduced to the author or seen any movie based on a Shakespearean play. Next, I am planning on using Lois Burdett's book, *A Child's Portrait of Shakespeare*; I will read to my students some of the most important facts of Shakespeare's life. In that way we can all create a lifeline for the author. After having given the students a grasp on the author's life, I will give them two cards where they can ask one or two questions regarding Shakespeare's life. I will put all those questions inside a box and I will randomly select some of them. I will read the questions aloud and answer them.

The Globe

I will briefly talk about the Elizabethan theatre, the Globe. I have a book called *Shakespeare's Theatre* that talks extensively about the Globe theatre and everything that surrounded it. I will show the pictures to the students to let them have an idea about how the theatre looked at that time.

Hamlet

Next, they will learn about the play *Hamlet*. We will watch *Hamlet* from the Animated Tales. I have been lucky, and I have found the written version of that film in a used-books library. So, before watching the movie I will give my students a copy of a piece of the script from the beginning of the play. We will all read that excerpt of the play, and I will help the students with vocabulary problems they may have. As soon as they get the gist of the play, we will watch

Hamlet, from the Animated Tales version. I will be stopping the movie as new characters come into scene. In that way I can solve possible questions and doubts my students may experience.

After having watched the film, I will give my students a blank copy of a story map. For writing narrative texts I always use the same story map to help my students to think about their ideas to write a good story. This time I will use this story map to draft the content of the play they would have just seen. I always use this organizer from the beginning of the school year to write stories, so now they are going to use it to summarize the film they have just watched. This is a very simple organizer divided into different parts where they need to write who the main character is, where and when the story happens, the main problem in the plot, the first, second and third main events and the resolution of the problem. This would be an easy way for the students to organize what they have just seen. As group, we will comment on what information students have added in each one of the blanks.

I would like to show my students some pieces of other *Hamlet* productions, so I will complement the study of the play showing them pieces of Kenneth Branagh's *Hamlet*, as I think it would not be appropriate to show this version of the play completely.

SECTION II: *HARRY POTTER*

J. K. Rowling

After having finished with the study of *Hamlet*, the students will have learned many things about the author and his play, and they will be ready to watch one of the Harry Potter movies. Nevertheless, I will do some activities before watching that movie. Students already know about Shakespeare, so now they need to learn about J. K. Rowling. To do so, I thought it could be interesting taking my class to the computer lab. Then, I will tell them to do some research going to a search engine and writing the author's name.

One of the first links will take the students directly to J. K. Rowling official web page and this is where I want my students to go. This is a very interactive web page, and my students can learn a lot about the author there. Besides, it is in different languages, so if any of my students have trouble with the English version, they can use the Spanish version of the web page. I will allow them to surf a little bit inside J. K. Rowling's web site. However, they will not have much time to do that because I am also going to give the students a sheet with questions about the author's life and work. They will need to search the web page carefully to answer those questions.

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone

After having studied the author for a little bit and know more about her life, students will realize that both Shakespeare and J.K. Rowling are British, and they move in the same scenario, England, though separated by some centuries. Now it is time to discover J.K. Rowling's piece of work. Her books are very long and a little bit tough maybe for 4th grade, so I am not planning on telling my students to read her books. We will read selections from her first book, as it is going to be the movie we are going to watch in class.

Then, we will go directly to the movie *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. This movie shows the beginning of the series of books and movies, so students may discover from the beginning where Harry Potter comes from, his origins, how he met his friends, how he faces for the first time his enemy Lord Voldemort. Most kids are familiar with these movies, so I do not think it will be very tough for them to follow or understand. Moreover, students should be very excited about watching the movie, and it will motivate them, which is going to be perfect for the activities I have planned.

So, once we have watched this first movie, I am going to talk about letters. Letter writing in J.K. Rowling's book is quite important. The first book starts with a letter left with the baby Harry Potter addressed to his new family. Besides, he is always notified by mail when to go back to Hogwart's. Letters have also produced some laughs when we remember Ron's mother sending him a letter and the letter even could talk and scream at Ronald because he took the family's car. Owls are always delivering letters to the students in an unusual way. However, it is not just in Harry Potter, but also in Hamlet we see different letters: a love letter from Hamlet to Ophelia, the letter that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are carrying, and we assume that Hamlet is told by letter that his father has died and that he needs to go back to Denmark. This would be a perfect moment to talk about writing letters and do an activity on writing letters.

Students have written letters in Spanish at this stage in the year, but not in English yet. It would be a perfect moment to introduce to them how to write letters in English, that although very similar to Spanish letters, they vary in form. For this activity I will use some Harry Potter stationary, and I will give each one of the students a Harry Potter sheet of paper and an envelope. I will give them different themes they can choose from and they need to produce a letter. I will tell students that they need to pretend they are one of the characters in the movies we have watched (Harry Potter, Hermione, Ron, Hamlet or Ophelia) and they will need to address the letter to another character. For example, a student may pretend that he is Harry Potter and sends a letter to Hamlet. Or another student may pretend she is Ophelia and writes Hermione for advice.

SECTION III: HAMLET AND HARRY POTTER

After having showed *Hamlet* and *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, the students will be ready to compare and contrast the main and secondary characters, setting and problems. They will be able to see all the similarities and differences I have explained at the beginning of the paper.

I will start by asking my students if they see any similarities between the two main characters in the movies and I will give them a Venn diagram that they need to complete. The Venn diagram is a diagram that helps students to compare and contrast different elements in stories, different characters or objects. In this activity this Venn diagram will help students to see characteristics that both characters share as well as characteristics that differentiate them. They will work individually and they will complete their own Venn diagrams. After some minutes, I will do a big Venn diagram on the board and students will tell me what they have found. At the end, they should see all the similarities I have already explained here and if not I will guide them to arrive to those conclusions. They may realize that Harry Potter and Hamlet have lots of things in common. Moreover, after this activity I will ask my students to think about more elements that can be compared between Harry Potter's world and Hamlet's. They may compare Ophelia to Hermione, Elsinore to Hogwarts or Harry Potter's mother to Hamlet's mother, among other themes.

To finish with this unit, I am going to propose my students to do a more creative activity that I am sure will enhance their learning in this project. After having encountered the authors Shakespeare and J.K. Rowling and their literary creations, students may be ready to become writers themselves. I will divide the classroom into groups, and they need to write a scene of an invented play. They need to have in mind all that they have learned because their main characters are going to be similar to Harry Potter and Hamlet. Besides, after having written this scene, they will need to become actors and actresses themselves and represent it in front of the class.

This project will be perfect to finish with this unit as it is going to be an activity where they need to use all what they have learned. They will also need to rehearse their scene and perform it, so I think that would be very exciting for them as we do not have a drama club or class in our

school and they are not used to these kinds of activities. I am sure they will enjoy it enormously and it is going to help them a lot with their writing, speaking and listening skills.

LESSON PLANS

Lesson One: Discovering the Elizabethan Society

This is going to be an introduction to the unit. Before studying Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter*, students are going to do an activity that will allow them to explore different aspects of the Elizabethan society. The teacher needs to divide the classroom in groups of four. The teacher can use different techniques to divide the students, such as numbering students one through four and grouping them by like numbers. After that, the teacher is going to assign each group a theme to study. Previously, the teacher would have done some research, in that way he or she only needs to give each group some materials on each theme. The selected items to study could be chosen from this list, although it will depend on how many students a teacher would have: Elizabeth I, clothing, England & London, medicine and health, education, food, music and British army. There are very interesting web pages that talk about Elizabethan clothing, such as <http://ise.uvic.ca/Library/SLT/stage/fashion.html> or <http://www.springfield.k12.il.us/schools/springfield/eliz/womensfashion.html>.

The materials will be from different sources: books, magazines, and the Internet. I specially recommend the interdisciplinary unit: *Shakespeare*, a book from the collection Teacher Created Materials. This book has information about different aspects of the Elizabethan society and it could be very useful for the teacher. Giving the students these printed materials will allow them to go faster in the activity because this is not a research activity. We only want to show the students a gist of what was going on in Shakespeare's time.

Once each group has its materials, the students need to summarize all the information and do a poster or mural. They need to do bilingual posters, so they will need to write in one column information in English and in the other one, the information needs to be translated into Spanish. Students have to decorate the posters, and to do that they need to draw and color drawings related to their subject of study. When all the groups finish, each group of students will go to the front (this presentations can be done sitting the students on the carpet and the group presenting its poster standing or just letting the group of students go to the front of the class). Each group will do a short presentation of its poster. They will explain the others what they have learned about Elizabethan society. In turn, each group will go to the front and explain the others what they have learned. When they all finish, they would have learned much about the time when Shakespeare lived. After that, the teacher will give a chart to each student and they need to write three things they have learned about the other themes. (See Worksheet 1.)

After that, the teacher will hang the posters on the walls. In that way students will be surrounded along this unit by Elizabethan society. This would be an introductory lesson to this unit, and in that way students will be able to have an idea of the period when Shakespeare lived. After that, the teacher will give another worksheet to the students, where students will need to think about Shakespeare and his works. The teacher will pick up all the worksheets, take them home and do an evaluation of the knowledge of the students about the theme they are going to study in this didactic unit. (See Worksheet 2 in this section.)

*** Worksheet 1: Different aspects in Elizabethan times**

	DIFFERENT ASPECTS IN ELIZABETHAN TIMES/ DIFERENTES ASPECTOS EN LA ÉPOCA DE ELISABETH I
<i>Elizabeth I / Elisabeth I</i>	1. 2. 3.
<i>England & London / Inglaterra y Londres</i>	1. 2. 3.
<i>Clothing / Ropa</i>	1. 2. 3.
<i>Food / Comida</i>	1. 2. 3.
<i>Education / Educación</i>	1. 2. 3.

*** Worksheet 2 (SURVEY)**

1. Do you recognize the name William Shakespeare? / ¿Reconoces el nombre William Shakespeare?

2. Have you ever heard this: "To be, or not to be, that is the question."? / ¿Has escuchado alguna vez esta oración: "Ser o no ser, ésta es la cuestión?"

3. Have you ever seen a play or a movie called <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> ? / ¿Has visto alguna vez una obra de teatro o una película llamada <i>Romeo y Julieta</i> ?

4. Do you know who J. K. Rowling is? / ¿Sabes quién es J.K.Rowling?

5. Can you say three things about Harry Potter? / ¿Puedes decir tres cosas sobre Harry Potter?
a) _____
b) _____
c) _____

Lesson Two: *Hamlet*

After watching *Hamlet* from the children's collection *The Animated Tales*, students will complete a story map. Students may be familiar with this kind of diagram as they may have used them when studying narrative texts. Students normally use these diagrams to organize their ideas and to brainstorm before actually starting to write. In this case the story map is going to be used to summarize the movie they have just watched.

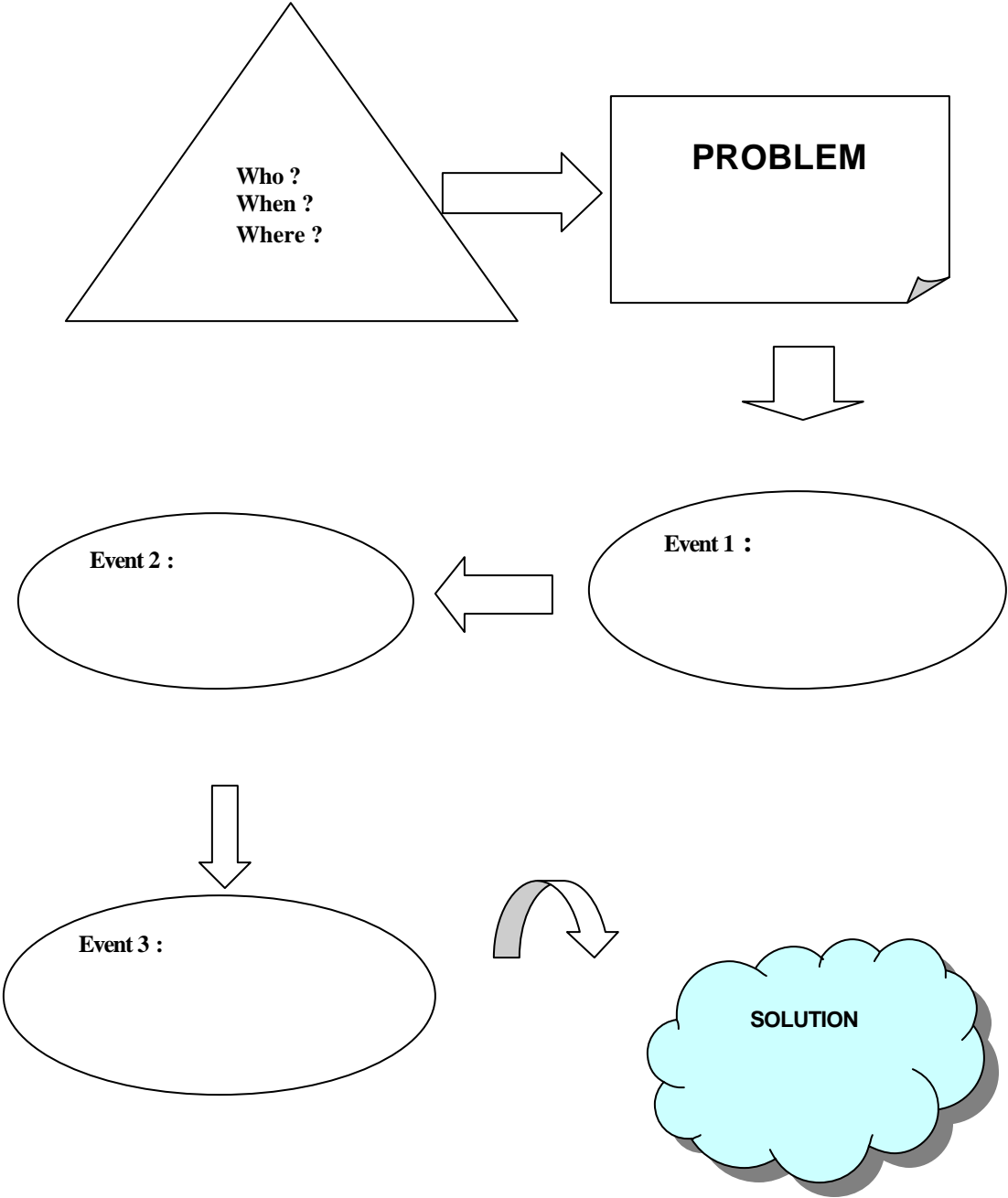
This diagram is divided into different parts and each one of the parts needs to be filled in with information seen in the movie. The first piece of information they need to complete is the who, the when, and the where. These would be the main character, when the main action happened, and where it happened. The next piece of information students need to add in the story map is the problem of the story. This will take them to divide the story in three different events. Finally, they will arrive to the solution of the story.

I have created the diagram both in English and in Spanish; in that way some students struggling with their English will have the opportunity to write their summaries in Spanish. This diagram is very well organized, and it is going to help the students in that they will see more clearly what has been happening in the story.

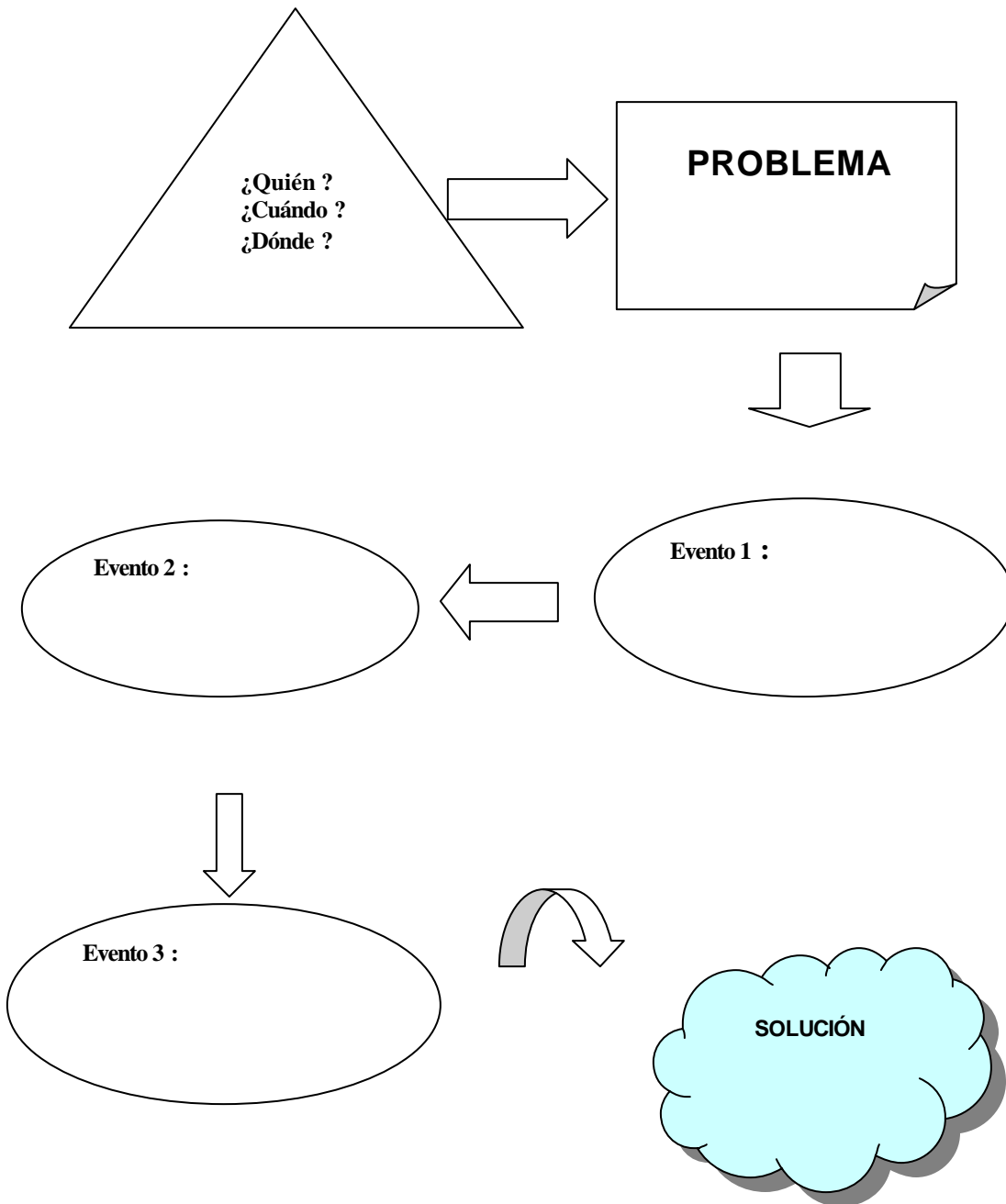
When students finish completing the diagram, the teacher draws a big diagram on the board and he can even take students to the board to complete the diagram, or he can ask and write everything on the board. This is a good way of correcting this activity, as a whole group, in that way students retell the story and some of the ideas that may be a little bit confusing should be clarified by the end of this activity.

(See Worksheet 3 in English and Spanish)

*** Worksheet 3: Story map (English)**



* **Worksheet 3: Story map** (Spanish)



Lesson Three: Adding a Scene

After watching both movies and having compared and contrasted them, this is going to be the last activity they are going to do, and so far, it may be the most exciting activity for them. First of all students will be divided in groups – they can be in the same groups as when they did the murals, or the teacher can group them in different groups using different techniques.

The teacher explains to students the activity. In groups, students need to write a scene they would add either to *Hamlet* or to *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. They need to think about the movies we have watched, and they need to think about everything we have studied. Taking all those things into account, they will know how to characterize the main character (Hamlet or Harry Potter) and put into the scene other characters.

Students will have time to write the scene, to rehearse it and finally to perform it in front of the class. All the groups will do a brief introduction of the scene in order to tell their friends which movie they chose and where they will add the scene. After that, students will role-play their scenes. They may also use different clothes to best depict the new scene and make it more real.

CONCLUSION

Most of the times elementary school teachers try to avoid teaching our students high level literature, just because we think they will not understand anything. We should challenge ourselves as well as our students and teach them literature that they may study in middle or high school. Besides, we need to do the effort and look for adaptations for kids, because sometimes we do not know the resources that are available in the market. This unit tries to be an interesting theme of study for kids. Comparing Hamlet and Harry Potter is going to be very appealing to elementary students, and they will be experiencing their first encounter with one of the best writers in the world. Besides, bilingual students will be interested in using English if they are going to participate in fun enriching activities.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Works cited

Burdett, Lois. *A Child's Portrait of Shakespeare*. Willowdale, Ontario: Firefly Books Ltd., 1995.

This book explains Shakespeare's life in a very easy and understandable way to kids. Besides, the book is illustrated with drawings of Lois Burdett's students.

Garfield, Leon. *The Animated Tales: Hamlet*. London: Heinemann Youth Books, 1992.

This is the book of the movie I am going to watch with students.

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone and Other Harry Potter Books. Westminster, CA: Teacher Created Materials, Inc.

I have ordered this book although I could not get it yet. It may be very useful because there are not many book sources for teachers that talk about Harry Potter.

Morley, Jacqueline, and John James. *Shakespeare's Theater*. New York: Peter Bedrick Books, 1999.

This book provides information on theatre at the times of Shakespeare and it is for kids, so it is made very appealing for them and easy to understand.

Robbins, Mary Lu. *Shakespeare: An Interdisciplinary Unit*. Westminster, CA: Teacher Created Materials, Inc., 2000.

You can find very nice writing and reading activities for kids on Shakespeare.

Supplemental Resources

Burdett, Lois. *Hamlet for Kids*. Willowdale, Ontario: Firefly Books Ltd., 2000.

This version is foreworded by Kenneth Branagh.

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Some very interesting activities on one of the authors being taught in this unit.

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