

American Stories

“The Blue Hotel,” Part Three, by Stephen Crane

Lesson Plan

This lesson plan is to accompany Part Three of the American Stories series episode “The Blue Hotel” by Stephen Crane.

A transcript of the story is included at the end of this lesson to print so students can read as they listen. Teachers who cannot play the audio from the website can read the story aloud or have students read it.

American Stories lesson plans are based on the CALLA approach. See the end of each lesson for more information and resources on teaching with the CALLA approach.

CALLA has five lesson elements:

Prepare: Engage students in the topic and identify objectives for the lesson. Find out what students already know about it and motivate them to learn more. Teach new vocabulary.

Present: Present new information. Explain the target learning strategy for the lesson. Model what the students are asked to do. Discuss connections to students’ prior knowledge.

Practice: Give students an authentic, active task that they can do in a small group or in pairs. Remind students to use the target learning strategy.

Self-Evaluate: Question students so they will reflect on their own learning. Ask students to evaluate their own learning rather than wait for the teacher to assess them. Find out if using the learning strategy helped students’ understanding.

Expand: Guide students on how to apply what they learned to their own

lives. Point out other contexts where the learning strategy may help. Make connections between content and language or to the student's first language. When appropriate, request that parents contribute to learning.

And now for today's lesson:

Prepare

If students are sitting next to a person they almost always sit next to, ask them to sit next to someone new. As they change seats, write the names Mr. Scully, Johnnie, the Swede, the Easterner and the cowboy on the board or shared screen. Introduce the story: "Today, we will read Part Three of 'The Blue Hotel' by Stephen Crane. But first, let's review the events and characters from the story." Tell students that this will help them remember the characters and events of the story.

Then, ask students to discuss what they remember about the listed characters and the events of the story with the person sitting next to them. Give them a couple of minutes to do this. Next, ask a few volunteers to describe the story characters and events to the whole class. ("Can someone tell me who Mr. Scully is and tell me a little bit about him?" et cetera.)

Then say, "When you read a story or watch a movie or TV show in English or in [native language], and you see or hear words or sentences that you don't understand, what do you do?" Give students time to discuss this with their partner. Then, ask several students to share their responses with the class. Responses may include: look up the words on a translation website or phone app; ask a friend, teacher or family member; skip that part and keep reading or watching; stop reading or watching; try to guess the meaning from the words before and after it; or use what I already know to make a guess about the meaning.

Continue: "When you use information or knowledge that you already have to

help you understand something you're reading, listening to or watching, you are using a learning strategy called *Use What You Know*. Today, we are going to listen to the story and use what we know to help us understand events or details that are not written in easy and direct language. This strategy helps us to connect what we have already learned to the new things we are learning as we read or listen. First, let's review a few vocabulary words from last week and learn the new vocabulary."

Teach the vocabulary found on the pages following the transcript. If it's useful, use gestures to help convey understanding.

Present

Introduce the task to students: "As we listen to the story today, we will look for words and sentences we are not sure about and then use the knowledge we already have to help us understand the meaning."

Model the strategy for students: "I will show you how to do this." Play or read aloud to the end of the second paragraph. Then, make two columns on the board or shared screen. At the top of the left column, write, "What the story says." At the top of the right column, write, "What I think that it means."

Then, write the following sentence in the left column (as shown below): "Instantly a wild wind caused the flame of the lamp to struggle for its life." This sentence appears in the second paragraph of the story.

Say, "Ok, I know that a flame is not a living thing, so it doesn't really have a 'life.' Therefore, I know that fire does not 'struggle.' But, I also know from experience that, during heavy winds, flames move around and get smaller and *seem* like they are trying to stay alive. So, if I use what I already know, I understand what the writer is trying to tell me. He's telling me that the heavy winds made the flame look like it was going to 'die.'"

Write an abridged version of this in the right column, as shown below.

What the story says	What I know that it means
"Instantly a wild wind caused the flame of the lamp to struggle for its life"	The speed of the winds was making the lamp flame look like it was going to 'die,' or go out.

Then say, "When we use what we know – whether it's from life experience, academic knowledge, or something we have seen or heard about – it becomes easier for us to connect that knowledge with new information in order to understand it."

Practice

For this next part, students may remain with their previous partners or sit with a new partner.

Hand out copies of the transcript and vocabulary list to students.

Tell them, "Now, it's your turn. As we hear the story today, we will practice the strategy *Use What You Know* to understand what the writer is trying to tell us. While we listen, use your pen or pencil to underline sentences or parts of sentences that you don't fully understand." (Students should do that individually so that they have different things underlined from their partner.)

Play or read aloud to the end of paragraph twelve: "The cowboy stood rock-like." (The transcript is marked to show when to stop.)

Ask students to now take a minute to use any knowledge that they already have to help them understand the things they underlined. After the minute is up, ask them to share with their partner what they underlined, what they think it means, and how they know this. Tell them that their partner can also help them understand the parts they are not sure about.

If students choose to, they can make two columns (as demonstrated from the small table above) on the back of their transcript and write in them.

Now, ask several volunteers to share one part they underlined, what they think it means, and how the knowledge they already have helped them understand the meaning. Tell them not to worry if they guess the meaning wrong. You can gently correct their meaning or ask the class to respectfully assist.

Say, "Let's listen to some more of the story now. Remember to underline parts of or whole sentences that you don't fully understand."

Play or read aloud to the end of paragraph 24: "Wait a second." (The transcript is marked to show where to stop.)

Again, ask students to take a minute to use any knowledge they already have to help them understand the parts they underlined. Then, as before, ask them to share and discuss these with their partner. Afterward, as before, ask several volunteers to share with the class.

Play or read aloud to the end of the story and proceed with the activity in the same way.

Self-Evaluate

Say, "Now I'd like to ask: What did you think of using the strategy *Use What You Know* when you listened and read? Did it help you understand any unfamiliar words and sentences in the story? Tell your partner what you thought."

Give students a moment to discuss this and then ask a few students to share their thoughts on the strategy.

Expand

Ask students to think about other times they can use the strategy *Use What You Know*. Response may include some of the following: listening to a lecture; reading the news online; and watching a movie. Encourage students use what they know in their next class or to do tonight's homework assignment.

"The Blue Hotel," Part Three

by Stephen Crane

The men prepared to go out. The Easterner was so nervous that he had great difficulty putting on his new leather coat. As the cowboy pulled his fur cap down over his ears, his hands trembled. In fact, Johnnie and old Scully were the only ones who displayed no emotion. No words were spoken during these proceedings.

Scully threw open the door. Instantly a wild wind caused the flame of the lamp to struggle for its life. The men lowered their heads and pushed out into the cold.

No snow was falling, but great clouds of it, swept up from the ground by the fierce winds, were streaming all around. The covered land was a deep blue, and there was no other color except one light shining from the low, black railroad station. It looked like a tiny jewel.

The Swede was calling out something. Scully went to him, put a hand on his shoulder, and indicated an ear.

"What did you say?"

"I said," screamed the Swede again, "I won't have a chance against this crowd. I know you'll all jump on me."

"No, no, man—" called Scully. But the wind tore the words from his lips and scattered them far.

The Swede shouted a curse, but the storm also seized the remainder of the sentence.

The men turned their backs upon the wind, and walked to the sheltered side of the hotel. Here a V-shaped piece of icy grass had not been covered by the snow. When they reached the spot, it was heard that the Swede was still screaming.

"Oh, I know what kind of a thing this is! I know you'll jump on me. I can't beat you all!"

Scully turned on him angrily. "You won't have to beat all of us. You'll have to beat my son Johnnie. And the man that troubles you during that time will have to deal with me."

The arrangements were quickly made. The two men faced each other, obeying the short commands of Scully. The Easterner was already cold and he was jumping up and down. The cowboy stood rock-like. **[STOP AUDIO]**

The fighters had not removed any clothing. Their hands were ready, and they eyed each other in a calm way that had the elements of fierce cruelty in it.

"Now!" said Scully.

The two leaped forward and struck together like oxen. There was heard the dull sound of blows, and of a curse pressed out between the tight teeth of one.

As for the watchers, the Easterner's held-in breath burst from him in relief, pure relief after the anxious waiting. The cowboy leaped into the air with a scream. Scully stood unmoving, as if in complete surprise and fear at the fierceness of the fight which he himself had permitted and arranged.

For a time the fight in the darkness was such a scene of flying arms that it showed no more detail than a moving wheel. Sometimes a face would shine out, frightful and marked with pink spots. A moment later, the men would be only shadows.

Suddenly the cowboy was caught by warlike desires, and he leaped forward with the speed of a wild horse. "Hit him, Johnnie! Hit him! Kill him! Kill him!"

"Keep still," said Scully, icily.

Then there was a sudden loud sound, dull, incomplete, cut short. Johnnie's body fell away from the Swede, with sickening heaviness to the grass. The cowboy hardly had time to prevent the mad Swede from throwing himself upon the fallen body.

Scully was at his son's side. "Johnnie! Johnnie, my boy!" His voice had a quality of sad tenderness. "Johnnie! Can you fight some more?" He looked anxiously down into the bloody, beaten face of his son.

There was a moment of silence. And then Johnnie answered in his ordinary voice, "Yes—I—it—yes."

Helped by his father, he struggled to his feet. "Wait a minute now till you get your breath," said the old man.

A few steps away, the cowboy was telling the Swede, "No you don't. Wait a second." **[STOP AUDIO]**

The Easterner was pulling at Scully's arm. "Oh, this is enough!" he begged. "This is enough! Let it go as it is. This is enough!"

"Bill," said Scully, "get out of the way." The cowboy stepped aside. "Now."

The fighters advanced toward each other. Then the Swede aimed a lightning blow that carried with it his entire weight. Johnnie, though faint from weakness, luckily stepped aside, and the unbalanced Swede fell to the ground.

The cowboy, Scully, and the Easterner cheered, but before its finish the Swede was up and attacking his enemy madly. There were more wildly moving arms and Johnnie's body again fell away, like a stone.

The Swede quickly struggled to a little tree and leaned upon it, breathing hard, while his fierce and flame-lit eyes wandered from face to face as the men bent over Johnnie.

"Can you still fight, Johnnie?" asked Scully in a voice of despair.

After a moment, the son answered, "No—I—can't fight—any— more." Then, from shame and bodily ill, he began to weep, the tears pouring down through the blood on his face. "He was too—too—too heavy for me."

Scully straightened and spoke to the waiting figure. "Stranger," he said calmly, "we're finished." Then his voice changed into that deep and quiet tone which is the tone of the most simple and deadly announcements. "Johnnie is beaten."

Without replying, the winner moved away to the door of the hotel. The others raised Johnnie from the ground, and, as soon as he was on his feet, he refused all attempts at help. When the group came around the corner they were almost blinded by the blowing snow. It burned their faces like fire. The cowboy carried Johnnie through the piles of snow to the door.

Inside they were greeted by a warm stove and women who took Johnnie to the kitchen. The three others sat around the heat, and the sad quiet was broken only by the sounds overhead when the Swede moved about in his room.

Soon they heard him on the stairs. He threw the door open and walked straight to the middle of the room. No one looked at him. "Well," he said loudly to Scully, "I suppose you'll tell me now how much I owe you?"

The old man, with a dull expression, remained calm. "You don't owe me anything."

"Mr. Scully," called the Swede again, "how much do I owe you?" He was dressed to go, and he had his bag in his hand.

"You don't owe me anything," repeated Scully in the same unmoved way.

"I guess you're right. I guess the truth would be that you would owe me something. That's what I guess." He turned to the cowboy.

"Kill him! Kill him! Kill him!" he repeated, in the tone the cowboy had used. Then he laughed.

But he might have been laughing at the dead. The three men did not move or speak—just stared with glassy eyes at the stove.

The Swede opened the door and passed into the storm, giving one last glance at the still group.

Review Vocabulary

stove - *n.* a flat piece of kitchen equipment for cooking that usually has four devices (called burners) which become hot when they are turned on

cards - *n.* a small piece of stiff paper that is marked with symbols or pictures to show its value, comes in a set, and is used for playing games

lamp - *n.* a device that produces light

New vocabulary

display - *v.* to put something where people can see it

proceeding - *n.* things that are said or done at a meeting, conference or ceremony

flame - *n.* the hot, glowing gas that can be seen when a fire is burning

fierce - *adj.* having or showing a lot of strong emotion; very strong or intense

stream - *v.* a continuous flow of liquid, gas or air

jewel - *n.* a valuable stone that has been cut and polished

obey - *v.* to do what someone tells you to do or what a rule, law, etc., says you must do

arrangement - *n.* the way that things or people are organized for a particular purpose or activity

leap - *v.* to jump from a surface

oxen - *n.* a cow or bull

cruelty - *n.* a desire to cause others to suffer; the quality or state of being cruel

blow - *n.* a hard hit by using a part of the body or object

curse - *n.* an offensive word that people say when they are angry

tenderness - *n.* a gentle form of affection

anxious - *adj.* afraid or nervous especially about what may happen; feeling anxiety

shame - *n.* a feeling of guilt, regret or sadness that you have because you know you have done something wrong

About the CALLA Approach

This lesson is based on the CALLA approach. The Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) is an instructional model for second and foreign language learners based on cognitive theory and research.

CALLA integrates instruction in priority topics from the content curriculum, development of the language skills needed for learning in school, and explicit instruction in using learning strategies for academic tasks.

The goals of CALLA are for students to learn essential academic content and language and to become independent and self-regulated learners through their increasing command over a variety of strategies for learning in school. CALLA can be used in ESL, EFL, bilingual, foreign language, and general education classrooms.

A list of CALLA learning strategies follows. These strategies were researched by J. Michael O'Malley and Anna Uhl Chamot.

See a list of language learning strategies below.

METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES

Plan / Organize

Before beginning a task:

Set goals.

Plan the task or content sequence.

Plan how to accomplish the task (choose strategies).

Preview a text.

Monitor / Identify Problems

While working on a task:

Check your progress on the task.

Check your comprehension as you use the language. Do you understand? If not, what is the problem?

Check your production as you use the language. Are you making sense? If not, what is the problem?

Evaluate

After completing a task:

Assess how well you have accomplished the learning task.

Assess how well you have used learning strategies.

Decide how effective the strategies were.

Identify changes you will make the next time you have a similar task to do.

Manage Your Own Learning

Determine how you learn best.

Arrange conditions that help you learn.

Look for Ways to Practice.

Focus your attention on the task.

TASK-BASED STRATEGIES - USE WHAT YOU KNOW

Use Background Knowledge

Think about and use what you already know to help you do the task.

Make associations between new information and your prior knowledge.

Use new information to clarify or modify your prior knowledge.

Make Inferences

Use context and what you know to figure out meaning.

Read and listen between the lines.

Go beyond the text to understand its meaning.

Make Predictions

Anticipate information to come.

Make logical guesses about what will happen in a written or oral text.

Make an estimate (math).

Make a hypothesis (science).

Personalize

Relate new concepts to your own life, to your experiences, knowledge, beliefs and feelings.

Transfer / Use Cognates

Apply your linguistic knowledge of other languages (including your native language) to the target language.

Recognize cognates.

Substitute / Paraphrase

Use a synonym or descriptive phrase for unknown words or expressions.

TASK-BASED STRATEGIES - USE YOUR SENSES

Use Images

Use or create an actual or mental image to understand and/or represent information.

Use or draw a picture or diagram.

Use Sounds

Say or read aloud a word, sentence, or paragraph to help your understanding.

Sound out/vocalize.

Use your "mental tape recorder" to remember sounds, words, phrases, and/or conversations.

Use Your Kinesthetic Sense

Act out a role, for example, in Readers' Theater, or imagine yourself in different roles in the target language.

Use real objects to help you remember words, sentences, or content information.

TASK-BASED STRATEGIES - USE YOUR ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS

Find/Apply Patterns

Apply a rule.

Make a rule.

Recognize and apply letter/sound, grammar, discourse, or register rules.

Identify patterns in literature (genre).

Identify patterns in math, science, and social studies.

Classify/Sequence

Categorize words or ideas according to attributes.

Classify living things; identify natural cycles.

Identify order and sequences in math, science, and social studies.

Sequence events in history.

Take Notes

Write down important words and ideas while listening or reading.

List ideas or words to include in speaking or writing.

Use Graphic Organizers

Use or create visual representations (such as Venn diagrams, time lines, webs, and charts) of important relationships between concepts.

Summarize

Create a mental, oral, or written summary of information.

Use Selective Attention

Focus on specific information, structures, key words, phrases, or ideas.

TASK-BASED STRATEGIES - USE A VARIETY OF RESOURCES

Access Information Sources

Use the dictionary, the internet, and other reference materials.

Seek out and use sources of information.

Follow a model

Ask questions

Cooperate

Work with others to complete tasks, build confidence, and give and receive feedback.

Talk Yourself Through It (Self-Talk)

Use your inner resources. Reduce your anxiety by reminding yourself of your progress, the resources you have available, and your goals.