

American Stories

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

Lesson Plan

This lesson plan is to accompany Part Four 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

Introduce the story: "Today, we will read Part Four of 'The Blue Hotel' by Stephen Crane. In this last part of the story, one of the characters finds himself in a dangerous situation. Think about a book you've read or a TV show or film you've seen where a character was in danger. What did they do? How did they handle it? Did they escape danger?"

Instruct students to jot down a few notes on a piece of paper to help them remember the character and details.

Then say, "Now, imagine you are that character. Would you have handled the danger the same way? Think about what you would have done similarly or differently. Then, turn to your neighbor, and tell them about the book or film, the character, the dangerous situation, and how you would have responded to that situation."

Continue: "Today, we're going to listen to the story and think about *ourselves* in the role of a character in the story. Imagining ourselves in the story makes what we are reading more meaningful. It helps us to connect with the characters and events. We're going to learn about this strategy in today's class. First, let's learn some new vocabulary."

Teach the vocabulary that can be found on the page following the transcript.

Present

Introduce and then model the task to students: "Today, we're going to listen to the story and ***Personalize***, or imagine ourselves in the role of a character

or characters. When you *personalize*, you relate new information to your own life. This strategy is useful for reading or listening to literature because it can make the story have real-life meaning for us as we follow it. I will show you how to do this. As we listen to the beginning of Part Four, I am going to personalize."

Play or read aloud to the end of paragraph four: "It's good enough for me."

As the teacher, you can choose what to focus on in the first four paragraphs. Here is one possibility: say, "As I read these paragraphs, I am imagining myself in the position of the saloon-keeper. If I worked at a saloon and saw the remains of blood on a customer's face, I would think there might be some kind of trouble coming. Maybe the man was in a fight and maybe he started the fight. So, I would begin to prepare myself. Because this was the late 1800s before telephones, and there were no police in or near the saloon, I would probably make sure the people around me could help protect me. I would signal to the other men with my eyes to be ready to stop the man if he started trouble. And, I would look around to make sure I had something to hit the Swede with in case he became violent, such as a bottle of alcohol, a large piece of wood, or something else. But, what I would do similarly to the saloon-keeper is to say, "bad night," or simply "good evening," in a disinterested voice. Just like the saloon-keeper, I would not want the Swede to know that I was closely watching him."

Practice

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

Place students into pairs. Say, "Now, it's your turn. As we listen to the next section of the story, imagine you are in the saloon and you see everything that is happening. What would you say? What would you do?"

Play or read aloud to: "By God, I've beaten a man tonight, and I beat

him good, too! Gentlemen,' the Swede cried to the men at the table, 'have a drink?'" (The transcript notes where to stop the audio.)

Continue, "Now, I'd like you to imagine that you and your partner are characters in the story. You and your partner should each choose a different character. Are you the saloon-keeper? Are you the Swede? Another man in the saloon? What would you do and say? First, write down your ideas. Try to write down exact words that you might say to the other character in that situation. Change the words of the Swede or the saloon-keeper or anyone else in the saloon to match what *you* would say and do. Then, share this with your partner."

After the pairs have had time to discuss their personalizations, ask several students to share them with the class. Then say, "Let's listen to some more of the story."

Play or read aloud to: "A moment afterward the saloon-keeper was in the street racing through the storm for help and, more important, companionship." (The transcript notes where to stop the audio.)

Proceed with the activity in the same way as the previous one. But, make sure students know that they don't have to choose the same character as before. (Pairs should still choose two different characters.) And then, again, ask several students to share their personalizations with the class. Then say, "Let's listen to the remainder of the story."

Play or read aloud to the end of the story.

Allow students to proceed with the activity in the same way. Then, ask several volunteers to share their personalizations.

After this last part, ask students to share with the class whether they agreed with the cowboy's opinion or the Easterner's opinion and why.

Self-Evaluate

Ask students, "What did you think of the strategy *Personalize*? Did it help you to connect with the characters in the story?" Ask a few volunteers to share their answers.

Expand

Say, "Are there are other times aside from reading literature and watching films or TV that personalizing is useful?" Ask students to share their answers with their partners and then elicit responses from a few volunteers.

Continue, "Personalizing is useful in a lot of different situations. For example, when your friend or family member is telling you about a happy or difficult event in their lives, if you imagine yourself in their situation, you can share their joy or understand their problem better. And, there are many jobs that use personalizing. For example, people who market products to the public have to be good at connecting with people's lives and needs in order to sell their products – whether the products are food, technological gadgets, clothing, or something else. And, in school, when you are learning about history, for example, you can imagine yourself in the role of the historic individual or people to help you connect with the historic figures or events. Try personalizing later today at home or in your next class. Let me know how it goes!"

"The Blue Hotel," Part Four

by Stephen Crane

The Swede's face, fresh from Johnnie's blows, felt more pleasure than pain in the wind and the whipping snow. A number of square shapes appeared before him and he recognized them as the houses of the town. He traveled along a street until he found a saloon. He pushed open the door and entered. At the end of the room four men sat drinking at a table.

The Swede dropped his bag upon the floor and, smiling at the saloon-keeper, said, "Give me some whiskey, will you?" The man placed a bottle, a whiskey glass, and a glass of ice-filled water upon a table. The Swede poured himself an extra-large amount of whiskey and drank it down.

"Bad night," remarked the saloon-keeper, without interest. He was acting as though he were not noticing the man, but it could have been seen that he was secretly studying the remains of blood on the Swede's face. "Bad night," he said again.

"Oh, it's good enough for me," replied the Swede, as he poured himself some more whiskey. "No," continued the Swede, "this isn't too bad weather. It's good enough for me."

The large drinks of whiskey made the Swede's eyes watery, and he breathed a little heavier. "Well, I guess I'll take another drink," said the Swede after a while. "Would you like something?"

"No, thanks; I'm not drinking. How did you hurt your face?"

The Swede immediately began to talk loudly. "Oh, in a fight. I beat the soul out of a man at Scully's hotel."

This caught the interest of the four men at the table.

"Who was it?" asked one.

"Johnnie Scully, son of the man who owns the hotel. He will be nearly dead for some weeks, I can tell you, I beat him well, I did. He couldn't get up. They had to carry him into the house. Have a drink?"

Instantly the men in a quiet way surrounded themselves in privacy. "No, thanks," said one.

It was a strange group. Two were well-known local businessmen; one was a lawyer; and one was a gambler.

But a close look at the group would not have enabled an observer to pick the gambler from the other men. He was, in fact, so delicate in manner and so

careful with whom he gambled that the men of the town completely trusted and admired him.

His business was regarded with fear and lack of respect. That is why, without doubt, his quiet dignity shone brightly above the quiet dignity of men who might be merely hat-makers, or builders or salesmen. Beyond an occasional unwise traveler who came by rail, this gambler supposedly cheated only careless farmers who, when rich with good crops, drove into town full of foolish pride. Hearing at times of such a farmer, the important men of Romper usually laughed at his losses. And if they thought of the gambler at all, it was with a kind of pride of knowing he would never dare to attack their wisdom and courage.

Besides, it was known that this gambler had a wife and two children in a nice little house, where he led a perfect home life. And when anyone even suggested that there was a fault in his character, the men immediately described the virtues of his family life.

And one must not forget to declare the bare fact of his entire position in Romper. It is true that in all affairs other than his business, this card-player was so generous, so fair, so good, that he could be considered to have a higher moral sense than nine-tenths of the citizens of Romper.

And so it happened that he was seated in this saloon with two local businessmen and the lawyer.

The Swede continued to drink whiskey and to try to make the saloon-keeper drink with him. "Come on. Have a drink. Come on. No? Well, have a little one, then. By God, I've beaten a man tonight, and I beat him good, too! Gentlemen," the Swede cried to the men at the table, "have a drink?" **[STOP AUDIO]**

"Ssh! Quiet!" said the saloon-keeper.

The group at the table, although really interested, had been trying to appear busy in talk. But now a man lifted his eyes toward the Swede and said shortly, "Thanks. We don't want any more."

At this reply, the Swede straightened. "Well," he shouted, "it seems I can't get anybody to drink with me. I want someone to drink with me now. Now! Do you understand?" He struck the table with his hand.

Years of experience had hardened the saloon-keeper. He merely answered, "I hear you."

"Well," cried the Swede, "listen then. See those men over there? Well, they're going to drink with me, and don't you forget it. Now you watch."

"Stop that!" shouted the saloon-keeper.

"Why should I?" demanded the Swede. He walked to the men's table, and by chance laid his hand on the shoulder of the gambler. "What about it?" he asked angrily. "I asked you to drink with me."

The gambler simply turned his head and spoke over his shoulder. "My friend, I don't know you."

"Never mind!" answered the Swede. "Come and have a drink."

"Now, my boy," advised the gambler kindly, "take your hand off my shoulder and go away." He was a little, thin man and it seemed strange to hear him use this tone to the big Swede. The other men at the table said nothing.

"What! You won't drink with me, you little fool? I'll make you then! I'll make you!" The Swede had grasped the gambler fiercely at the throat, and was dragging him from his chair. The other men jumped up. The saloon-keeper ran toward the table. There was a great scene of shouts and movements, and then a long knife appeared in the hand of the gambler. It shot forward, and a human body was cut as easily as if it had been a piece of fruit. The Swede fell with a cry of greatest surprise.

The businessmen and the lawyer must have rushed out of the place backward. The saloon-keeper found himself hanging weakly to the arm of a chair and gazing into the eyes of a murderer.

"Henry," said the latter, "you tell them where to find me. I'll be home waiting." Then he left. A moment afterward the saloon-keeper was in the street racing through the storm for help and, more important, companionship. **[STOP AUDIO]**

Months later, the cowboy was cooking meat on the stove of a small cattle farm near the Dakota border when there was the sound of a horse stopping outside. The Easterner entered with mail and newspapers.

"Well," said the Easterner at once, "the fellow who killed the Swede will spend three years in prison. That's not much, is it?"

"He will? Three years!" The cowboy turned the meat in the pan. "Three years. That isn't much."

"No," replied the Easterner. "There was a lot of sympathy for him in Romper."

"If the saloon-keeper had been any good," said cowboy thoughtfully, "he would have gone in and hit that Swede on the head with a bottle in the beginning of it. That would have stopped all this murdering."

"Yes, a thousand things might have happened," said the Easterner sharply.

The cowboy moved his pan of meat on the fire, continued with his philosophy. "It's strange, isn't it? If he hadn't said Johnnie was cheating, he'd be alive this minute. He was an awful fool. I believe he was crazy."

"I feel sorry for that gambler," said the Easterner.

"So do I," said the cowboy. "He doesn't deserve three years in prison for killing that fellow."

"The Swede might not have been killed if everything had been honest."

"Might not have been killed?" exclaimed the cowboy. "Everything honest? When he said that Johnnie was cheating and acted so crazy? And then in the saloon he practically asked to get hurt?" With these arguments the cowboy made the Easterner angry.

"You're a fool!" cried the Easterner fiercely. "You're a bigger fool than that Swede. Now let me tell you one thing. Let me tell you one thing. Listen! Johnnie was cheating!"

"Johnnie," said the cowboy, blankly. There was a minute of silence, and then he said strongly, "Oh, no. The game was only for fun."

"Fun or not," said the Easterner, "Johnnie was cheating. I saw him. I know it. I saw him. And I refused to stand up and be a man. I let the Swede fight alone. And you—you were simply jumping around the place and wanting to fight. And old Scully too. We are all in it! This poor gambler just got pulled into it. Every sin is the result of shared effort. We, five of us, have shared in the murder of this Swede. You, I, Johnnie, old Scully; and that fool of an unfortunate gambler came merely at the end of a human movement, and gets all the punishment."

The cowboy, hurt and angry, cried out blindly into this mystery of thought: "Well, I didn't do anything, did I?"

New Words

saloon - *n.* a place where alcoholic drinks are served

drink - *v.* to drink an alcoholic beverage

saloon-keeper - *n.* a person who runs a bar; bartender

whiskey - *n.* a strong alcoholic drink made from a grain (such as rye, corn, or barley)

lawyer - *n.* a person whose job is to guide and assist people in matters relating to the law

gambler - *n.* a person who plays a game in which he/she can win or lose money or other valuable things

rail - *n.* train

courage - *n.* the ability to do something that you know is difficult or dangerous

fault - *n.* a bad quality or part of someone's character

character - *n.* the way someone thinks, feels, and behaves; someone's personality

virtue - *n.* morally good behavior or character

drag - *v.* to pull or someone or something that is heavy or difficult to move

gaze - *v.* to look at someone or something in a steady way and usually for a long time

cattle - *n.* cows, bulls, or steers that are kept on a farm or ranch for meat or milk

sin - *n.* an action that is considered to be wrong according to religious or moral law

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.