

American Stories

“Love of Life,” Part Four, by Jack London

Lesson Plan

This lesson plan is to accompany Part Four of the American Stories series episode “Love of Life” by Jack London.

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

Begin, "Today, we will read Part Four of 'Love of Life,' by Jack London. This is the final part of the story. But, let's start by reviewing some of what we have already read. As I write some words on the board, I'd like you to discuss their meaning and role in the story with the person sitting next to you."

Write the following words on the board: grass, stones, muskeg berries, wolf, moose-skin, tin container, hallucination and cough.

Give students time to discuss these. Then ask volunteers to share their responses with the class.

After the review, say, "At the end of Part Three of the story, the man sees something that gives him hope. What is it?" Allow students to answer.

Say, "Yes, a ship. But, the ship is still far away from him. So, he cannot yet communicate with the people on the ship. Think about a situation where you could not communicate with someone very well. Maybe they spoke a different language. Or, maybe they could not hear you very clearly. Or, maybe they were very young or very old. What did you do in order to communicate better? Tell your story to the person next to you."

Give students time to discuss this, then ask a few volunteers to share their stories. At least one student will likely respond that using *gestures* helped them communicate with someone better. Since they will likely not know the

word for this, explain to them that *gesturing* is when you move your body to express an idea.

Continue, "By the end of the story, we will find out whether the man is able to communicate with the people on the ship. Sometimes, when we have a hard time communicating with a person or people, using gestures can help. When we do this, we sometimes call this *acting it out*. Today, we are going to practice using the learning strategy *Act It Out*. Let's first learn the new vocabulary. We're going to use gestures to learn some of the words."

Hand out copies of the vocabulary list to students. This can be found on the pages following the story transcript. Many of the words will be easy to act out. Some of the words are more abstract and therefore difficult to act out. You can skip those as you see fit.

For each word, allow one volunteer to act out the meaning. But, don't go in order. Instead, ask the volunteer to come to the front of the class and then point to the word that you'd like them to act out. Tell the class that they'll need to find this word on their vocabulary list. (The volunteers are not allowed to speak or use sounds to act out the words.)

Reinforce the definitions they're acting out by having the person who guessed the correct word read the definition aloud.

Be sure that many students get a chance to act out the new vocabulary.

Present

Hand out copies of the story transcript.

Introduce the task to students: "As we read the story today, we will practice the strategy *Act It Out* to help us understand the story better. I'll show you how to do this. After I read, I'm going to act out some of the events in the story. I will not use my voice or any sounds from my mouth. I will only use gestures and I want you to try to guess what I'm doing."

Play or read aloud to the end of the second paragraph.

Model the strategy: act out the below actions from the story.

"He saw a moose-skin bag, exactly like his own. It had been torn by sharp teeth. He picked it up, although its weight was almost too much for his weak fingers."

Ask students to try to guess what you were doing and to find those actions in the section you read/played. Once they locate the sentences, ask the volunteer to read them aloud.

Say, "Let's try another example." Would anyone like to volunteer? Have the volunteer come to the front and then point to the sentences you'd like them to act out (without letting the rest of the class know what those sentences are).

"He laughed loud, making an unhuman sound, and the sick wolf howled with him. The man ceased suddenly.

Again, ask students to try to guess what the volunteer student was doing and find those actions in the transcript. Ask the person who guessed to read the lines aloud.

Practice

Place students into groups of four and give each group a number (group 1, group 2, et cetera). Say, "Now, it's your turn. I'm going to play [or read aloud] some more of the story. As I read, take a mental note of a few parts of the story that your group would like to act out for the class. Remember, you can use silent acting, body language, pointing, even drawing in the air with your finger, but you cannot use your voice in any way and you cannot pick objects up."

Play or read aloud to the note that says, "END OF SECTION 1."

Tell students that members from one of the groups will be asked to act out some of the actions from this section of the story but that you will not yet announce which group it will be. Instruct the groups to choose parts from this section of the story to act out but only let their group members know what they are. Then, stand and huddle together to practice acting out these parts.

Now, randomly choose one of the groups to go to the front of the class. Individually or together – whichever way they choose – the members of that group will act out the scenes they chose. As they do, the other groups should look for these actions in the transcript. Be sure students stick to only the section of the transcript that you just played/read aloud.

(Alternately, before using this lesson in class, you can pre-select scenes from each section of the story and then ask each group to act out one of the scenes from that section. Or, you can have all groups act out the scenes you chose to show the class how they each interpreted them. Students should still be given time in their groups to come up with a way to act out the scenes you selected.)

Say, "Let's listen to some more of the story. Continue to take mental notes of parts you'd like to act out."

Play or read aloud to the note that says, "END OF SECTION 2."

Proceed with this activity exactly as the previous one.

Play or read aloud to of the story.

Proceed with this activity exactly as the previous one.

Self-Evaluate

Say, "Now, I'd like to ask: what do you think about using this strategy, act it out, when you read? Did it help you understand the events of the story?"

Write two or three sentences to turn in about how acting it out helped you today."

Expand

Say, "Are there other school classes that where acting it out can help you? You can use this strategy for reading and listening. When you read a story, you can act it out with friends to help you understand and remember it. Or you can listen to a recording of a story and use gestures or actions to help you remember parts of the story. Let's say you are listening to a story about a knight riding a horse. Can you act out someone riding a horse? As you listen to the story, moving like someone riding a horse may help you put yourself into the story and start to think more deeply about the characters in the story. And you may make the librarian smile if you are sitting in the library while you are listening!

Please try acting out something you hear or read in the next few days, and let me know how it helps you.

"Love of Life," Part Four

by Jack London

In the afternoon the man came to a track. It was that of another man, who did not walk, but who dragged himself on his hands and **knees**. The man thought it might be Bill, but he thought about it without any interest. He had no **curiosity**. Feeling and emotion had left him. He was no longer able to feel pain. Yet the life that was in him drove him ahead. He was very tired, but it refused to die. It was because it refused to die that he still ate muskeg berries and small fish, drank his hot water, and kept a careful eye on the sick wolf.

He followed the track of the other man who dragged himself along. Soon he came to the end of it. There were a few freshly cleaned bones where the grass was marked by the **footprints** of many wolves. He saw a moose-skin bag, exactly like his own. It had been torn by sharp **teeth**. He picked it up, although its weight was almost too much for his weak fingers. Bill had carried it to the end. Now he would have the last laugh. He would live and carry it to the ship in the shining sea. He laughed aloud, making an inhuman sound, and the sick wolf **howled** with him. The man **ceased** suddenly. How could he laugh at Bill, if that were Bill; if those bones, so pinky-white and clean, were Bill?

He turned away. Bill had **deserted** him. But he would not take the gold, nor would he eat Bill's bones. Bill would have done so, however, had their situations been exchanged.

He came to a pool of water. **Bending** over it in search of fish, he threw his head back as if he had been struck. He had caught sight of his face in the water. So **awful** was it that his feelings were stirred long enough to be shocked. There were three fish in the pool, which was too large to empty. After several attempts to catch them in his tin container, he stopped. He was afraid, because of his great weakness, that he might fall and sink into the water. It was for this reason, too, that he did not trust himself to ride down the river atop one of the many **logs** to be found along its banks.

That day he lessened the distance between him and the ship by three **miles**. The next day he traveled only two miles, because he was now dragging himself on his hands and knees as Bill had done. At the end of the fifth day the ship was still seven miles away. He was unable to travel as much as a mile a day. However, the summer weather continued, and he continued to move toward the ship. And always the sick wolf coughed at his **heels**.

His knees had become red meat like his feet. Although he bound them with the shirt from his back, it was a red track he left behind him on the grass and stones. Once, glancing back, he saw the wolf licking his bloody track hungrily. He saw clearly what his own end might be— unless he could kill the wolf. Then began as awful an event as has ever been told: two sick creatures dragging their dying bodies across a wasteland and hunting each other's lives.

Had it been a well wolf, it would not have mattered so much to the man. But the thought of feeding the mouth of that nearly dead thing was hateful. His mind had begun to wander again and he was troubled by hallucinations. His reasonable moments grew shorter.

He was awakened once from a faint sleep by a cough close to his ear. The wolf leaped back, losing its footing and falling in its weakness. It was a funny sight, but he could not laugh. Nor was he afraid. He was too far gone for that. But his mind was for the moment clear, and he lay and considered.

The ship was no more than four miles away. He could see it quite well when he rubbed his eyes. He could also see the white **sail** of a small boat cutting the water of the shining sea. But he could never drag himself those four miles. He knew that, and was very calm about the fact. He knew that he could not travel another half a mile. And yet he wanted to live. It was unreasonable that he should die after all he had been through. **Fate** asked too much of him. And, dying, he could not accept death. It was **madness**, perhaps, but in the very grasp of death he refused to die.

He closed his eyes and tried to keep himself calm. He struggled against the awful desire for sleep that threatened him. It was much like a sea, this deadly sleepiness. It rose and rose, mastering his entire self, bit by bit. Sometimes he was almost lost, swimming through its waters with a weakening effort. Then, by some strange power of the soul, his will would strike out more strongly against it.

Without movement he lay on his back. He could hear, slowly drawing nearer and nearer, the sound of the sick wolf's breathing. It came closer, always closer, and he did not move. It was beside his ear. The dry **tongue** moved across his face. His hands struck out. Actually, he had willed them to strike out. The fingers were **curved**, but they closed on empty air. Quickness requires strength, and the man had not his strength.

The quiet waiting of the wolf was awful. The man's waiting was no less awful. For half a day he lay without motion, fighting off sleep. He waited for the thing that was to feed upon him and upon which he wished to feed.

Sometimes the sea of sleep rose over him and he dreamed long dreams. But always, through it all, waking and dreaming, he waited for the noisy breath and the feel of the tongue.

This time he did not hear the breath. He slipped slowly from some dream to feel the tongue along his hand. He waited. The teeth pressed softly, then more firmly. The wolf was using its last strength in an effort to sink its teeth into the food for which it had waited so long. But the man, too, had waited long. The hand closed on the wolf's mouth. Slowly, while the wolf struggled weakly, the other hand moved across the wolf's body. Five minutes later the whole weight of the man's body was on top of the wolf. The hands had not sufficient strength to grasp the wolf about the **throat** until it died. But the face of the man was pressed close to the throat of the wolf and the mouth of the man was full of hair. At the end of half an hour the man felt some warm drops of blood in his throat. It was not pleasant. It was like hot, melted metal being forced into his stomach, and it was forced by his will alone. Later the man rolled on his back and slept.

There were some scientists traveling on the fishing ship Bedford. From where they stood on the ship, they could see a strange object on the **shore**. It was moving down the beach toward the water. They were unable to decide what it was. Being men of science, they climbed into a smaller boat and went ashore to examine it. And they saw something that was alive but which could hardly be called a man. It was blind and did not know what it was doing. Its movements produced little effect. But still it continued to drag itself across the ground at the rate of about twenty feet an hour.

Three weeks later the man lay in a bed on the fishing boat. With tears streaming down his face, he told who he was and what he had experienced. He also talked without meaning about his mother, and a home in California among the flowers.

The days were not many after that when he sat at table with the scientists and the ship's officers. He delighted in the sight of so much food and watched it carefully as it went into the mouths of others. With the disappearance of each mouthful an expression of **sorrow** came into his eyes. He was not mad. However, he hated those men at mealtimes. He was afraid that there would not be enough food. He **inquired** of the cook, the **cabin boy**, the **captain**, concerning the food supply. They **reassured** him numerous times. But he would not believe them and went into the **kitchen** to see with his own eyes.

It was noticed that the man was getting fat. He grew bigger with each day. The scientists shook their heads and gave their opinions on the problem. They limited the amount of food given to the man at his meals, but still his weight increased.

The seamen smiled. They knew. And when the scientists decided to observe the man, they learned the reason. They saw him walk about the ship after breakfast. Like a man **begging** with an outstretched hand, he approached a **seaman**. The seaman smiled and gave him a piece of bread. He grasped it, and looked at it as a greedy man looks at gold. Then he put it inside his shirt. He received similar gifts from other smiling seamen.

The scientists were careful. They allowed him to continue. But they secretly examined his bed. It was lined with bread; every inch of space was filled with bread. Yet he was not mad. He was preparing for another possible **famine**—that was all. He would recover from it, the scientists said. And he did, even before the Bedford sailed into San Francisco Bay.

New Vocabulary

knee - *n.* the joint that bends at the middle of your leg

curiosity - *n.* the desire to learn or know more about something or someone

footprint - *n.* a track or mark left by a foot or shoe

tooth - *n.* one of the hard white objects inside the mouth that are used for biting and chewing (plural: **teeth**)

howl - *v.* to make a long, loud cry that sounds sad

cease - *v.* to stop happening; to end

desert - *v.* to leave and stop helping or supporting someone or something

bend - *v.* to move your body so that it is not straight

awful - *adj.* extremely bad or unpleasant

log - *n.* a long, heavy section of a tree that has fallen or been cut down

mile - *n.* a unit of measurement equal to about 1,609 meters

heel - *n.* the back part of your foot that is below the ankle

sail - *n.* a large piece of strong cloth that is connected to a ship or boat and that is used to catch the wind that moves the ship or boat through the water

fate - *n.* a power that is believed to control what happens in the future

madness - *n.* behavior or thinking that is very foolish or dangerous

tongue - *n.* the soft, movable part in the mouth that is used for tasting and eating food and for speaking

curve - *v.* to turn or change from a straight line, shape, or path to a smooth, rounded one

throat - *n.* the tube inside the neck that leads to the stomach and lungs

shore - *n.* the land along the edge of an area of water

sorrow - *n.* a feeling of sadness or grief caused especially by the loss of someone or something

inquire - *v.* to ask for information

cabin boy - *n.* a boy employed to wait on a ship's officers or passengers

captain - *n.* a person who is in charge of a ship or an airplane

reassure - *v.* to make someone feel less afraid, upset or doubtful

kitchen - *n.* a room in which food is cooked

beg - *v.* to ask people for money or food

seaman - *n.* an experienced sailor

famine - *n.* a situation in which many people do not have enough food to eat

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.