

Literature and the Arts in Medical Education

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Feature Editor

Editor's Note: In this column, teachers who are currently using literary and artistic materials as part of their curricula will briefly summarize specific works, delineate their purposes and goals in using these media, describe their audience and teaching strategies, discuss their methods of evaluation, and speculate about the impact of these teaching tools on learners (and teachers).

Submissions should be three to five double-spaced pages with a minimum of references. Send your submissions to me at University of California, Irvine, Department of Family Medicine, 101 City Drive South, Building 200, Room 512, Route 81, Orange, CA 92868-3298. 949-824-3748. Fax: 714-456-7984. jfshapir@uci.edu.

Lights, Camera, Action: Using Film to Teach the ACGME Competencies

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This article describes the use of "cinemeducation" as a tool to facilitate the teaching of the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) competencies¹ as part of an overall family medicine curriculum. Cinemeducation refers to the use of movie clips or whole movies to help educate learners about biopsychosocial-spiritual aspects of health care.² It is a teaching tool that is receiving considerable attention in the medical literature.³⁻⁷ Examples are given of a movie clip appropriate for teaching each of the six competencies. In addition,

(Fam Med 2007;39(1):20-3.)

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three different formats (ie, role play, guided discussion, lecture) and five different content areas (ie, alcoholism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), chronic illness, death and dying, and sexuality) are discussed as they relate to these clips. Counter times for VCRs and chapter numbers for DVDs are provided in Appendix 1 to help educators find clips mentioned in this paper.

Patient Care

Patient care is defined as the provision of care that is compassionate, appropriate, and effective.⁸ A clip from the movie "When a Man Loves a Woman" is used to set up a role play to improve patient care competency in the area of alcoholism. The "identified patient" is Alice, as portrayed in the movie by the actress Meg Ryan, a 34-year-old Caucasian mother of two, married to an airline pilot.

Prior to enacting the role play, learners are asked to watch the

identified clip in which Alice comes home clearly inebriated after a lunch with friends. After viewing the clip, learners choose to either role play Alice or the family physician. Remaining learners are asked to observe the role play and comment later. The two actors are then given scripts (see Table 1) specific to their particular role to facilitate the enactment. The goals of the two role plays are to allow learners the opportunity to practice using screening and assessment tools^{9,10} in the treatment of the alcoholic patient and to practice confronting the alcoholic patient.

Clips from a variety of other movies can be used in similar ways to set up role plays to teach patient care competency on topics such as depression, anxiety, family violence, or psychiatric disturbance.⁵

Medical Knowledge

The core competency of medical knowledge refers to the application of biomedical, clinical,

Table 1
Role Plays

Alcoholism Screening (Role Play 1): “When a Man Loves a Woman”

Doctor—Alice is a long-standing patient with chronic headaches and unresolved hypertension. You smelled alcohol on her breath in your last visit and want to screen for alcoholism in this visit. You start with caffeine consumption and then ask about cigarettes before doing the CAGE and quantity questions.

Alice—You are aware there may be a problem and while accurate in responding to the screening questions (ie, you *have* tried to cut down and see this as evidence of no problems, your husband *is* concerned but you have worked this out, you *have* felt a little guilty but never have had an eye opener), you are also deliberately vague—you think you only have one drink a night and more on the weekends.

Alcoholism Confrontation (Role Play 2): “When a Man Love a Woman”

Doctor—Based on your screening and assessment, including elevated liver enzymes, you decide to confront Alice. If she gets defensive, you will suggest a drinking diary, talking to her spouse, going to an open AA meeting, and cutting back.

Alice—You get very defensive when confronted. You threaten to leave the practice. You say that your pilot husband will be angry when he hears about this and you will *not* allow the doctor to speak to him. Since you do *not* have a problem, you see no point in “cutting down.” However, you reluctantly agree to go to an open AA meeting and keep a diary.

Family Conference (Role Play 3): “Steel Magnolias”

Doctor—Set goals for the conference, elicit different perspectives from all participants, focus on resources and strengths, and establish a plan.

M’Lynn—Express frustration that Shelby ignores your entreaties for her to be more mindful of limitations imposed by her diabetes. Attempt to get doctor to take your side.

Shelby—Express frustration that M’Lynn continues to “baby” you.

Drum—Attempt to mediate tension between M’Lynn and Shelby.

Jackson—Act disengaged and express anxious laughter. Take Shelby’s side if pressed.

epidemiological, and behavioral sciences to patient care⁸ and can be taught with cinemeducation. As one example, clips from the movie “Dennis the Menace” can be used to anchor teaching points during a lecture on ADHD. Prior to the use of clips, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) *Six Clinical Practice Guidelines*¹¹ are presented, and the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition (Text Revision)* (DSM-IV-TR) diagnostic criteria for ADHD are reviewed in slide format.¹² Goals of the initial visit to evaluate for ADHD, and key open-ended interview questions are discussed. The importance of the use of parent and teacher rating scales is emphasized.

With this content presented, a clip from the film is shown. The identified child patient is Dennis, a hyperkinetic prepubescent male

who is at his neighbors’ home with a card of apology for Mr Wilson.

After showing the clip, learners are asked to assess Dennis’s symptoms. These are recorded on a flip chart prior to the showing of a second clip. In this second scene, Dennis is being looked after by the Wilsons while his parents are away. While alone in the bathtub, he is in constant motion.

Learners are then asked the following questions to improve medical knowledge:

(1) Do you see any signs or symptoms of ADHD in this clip?

(2) Do you believe that Dennis has ADHD?

(3) What else might be needed to make the diagnosis?

(4) What conditions can mimic ADHD and/or coexist with it?

Practice-based Learning and Improvement

The core competency of practice-based learning and improvement refers to (1) investigation and evaluation of one’s own patient care and (2) appraisal and assimilation of scientific evidence and improvement in patient care.⁸ A clip from the movie “Torch Song Trilogy” can be used to teach this competency as it relates to the issue of parental reactions to homosexuality in their offspring and adoption by same-sex couples. The identified family members are portrayed by Anne Bancroft as the mother and Harvey Firestein as Arnold, a gay male in a committed relationship who is arguing with his mother following a visit to his father’s gravesite. Multiple issues of misunderstanding and conflict are portrayed.

Following the clips, reactions from the audience can be elicited.

Structured discussion and content areas pertaining to practice-based learning and improvement can include:

- (1) Is homosexuality a biological imperative or a lifestyle choice?
- (2) What does the evidence show? Current research in this area can be presented in slide format.
- (3) How would you respond to a questioning youth or parent who asked you question #1?
- (4) How might your personal beliefs interfere with your ability to respond professionally?
- (5) How would you approach a mother's shame about having a homosexual son or daughter?
- (6) How would you respond to someone questioning the ability of gays/lesbians to parent?
- (7) What conclusion does the psychological literature draw with regard to child outcomes of those raised by gay/lesbian parents?
- (8) How would you help Arnold's mother understand her son's desire to parent?

Interpersonal and Communication Skills

The core competency of interpersonal and communication skills refers to effective information exchange and teaming with patients, families, and other health professionals.⁸ A clip from the movie "Steel Magnolias" can be used to set up a role play with learners designed to teach them when, why, and how to conduct a family conference. The ability to effectively lead a family conference is one demonstration of high-level competence in interpersonal and communication skills.

The clip used from the movie takes place in the small-town hair salon where M'Lynn and her daughter, Shelby, a diabetic, are having their hair done in preparation for Shelby's upcoming marriage to a young lawyer. Things heat up when Shelby goes into diabetic shock, which is relieved when M'Lynn forces her to drink orange juice.

This part of the scene illustrates the deeper tensions between mother and daughter.

Following the viewing of the clip, learners are asked to construct a family genogram. Given both the medical exigencies and complicated family dynamics portrayed, learners are then asked to consider initiating a family conference concerning Shelby's medical noncompliance. Volunteers are solicited to play the parts of the physician and associated family members (see Table 1). After the role play is completed, learners are asked the following questions:

- (1) How did the role play go?
- (2) How did the role play feel?
- (3) What parts of the role play went well?
- (4) What parts of the role play could have gone better?
- (5) What skills did you learn that you could apply to future family conferences you might conduct in your clinical practice?

Professionalism

The core competency of professionalism is manifested through a commitment to carry out professional responsibilities, adhere to ethical principles, and show sensitivity to a diverse patient population.⁸ The movie "Wit" lends itself to discussions of professionalism on multiple levels. "Wit" focuses on Vivian Bearing, PhD, a Donne scholar (portrayed by the actress Emma Thompson) who recently has been diagnosed with late-stage ovarian cancer. The clip from "Wit" shows Dr Bearing waiting in a large and sterile exam room about to be examined by the oncology fellow. While taking Dr Bearing's history, the oncology fellow appears to be distracted and lacks good communication skills. He places Dr Bearing in the stirrups and is about to begin a pelvic exam when he stops and says he needs to have "a girl in the room." Dr Bearing is seen in the stirrups as the physician leaves to find a medical assistant.

Questions for learners after seeing this clip can be focused to address the various aspects of professionalism:

- (1) How would you describe the quality of the doctor-patient relationship in this scene?
- (2) What attributes of professionalism are demonstrated?
- (3) What aspects of professionalism could be improved?
- (4) How would you feel if Dr Bearing was a member of your family?
- (5) What factors might contribute to the physician's behavior?

Systems-based Practice

The core competency of systems-based practice refers to the awareness and responsiveness of the physician to the larger context and system of health care as well as the ability to effectively call on system resources to provide care that has optimal value.⁸ A clip from the movie "The Doctor" is used to teach this competency. The movie is about Dr McGee, a married heart surgeon battling throat cancer. In this clip, Dr McGee, an attending physician at the very hospital where he is now a patient, and his wife have to wait through an inefficient intake procedure. When the intake is finally completed, Dr McGee is then told he must be transported by wheelchair (due to hospital regulations) even though he is healthy enough to walk unaccompanied to the suite where he is due to have a biopsy.

After the clip is shown, learners are asked the following systems-based questions:

- (1) How do "front office staff" impact patient satisfaction?
- (2) How do our values match with those of our coworkers/employees?
- (3) How can we maximize consonance between our values and those of the bureaucracies in which we practice?

Discussion

Cinemeducation provides an innovative, informative, and fun tool for teaching the ACGME competencies. Cinemeducation can simultaneously be used in a variety of formats, ie, guided discussion, role play, and lecture, to teach a whole host of content areas. Educators need to be aware of movies and scenes from a variety of movies. Fortunately, there are several excellent guides and resources available to assist them in this process.^{5,13,14} Educators need also to be aware of how to use VCR and DVD formats to minimize distractions in the classroom. Sufficient time needs to be allowed for the processing of any strong emotions that might arise in learners after viewing the clips.

Space did not allow the authors to illustrate how one movie clip can be used to teach all six ACGME competencies. Interested readers are encouraged to contact the lead author for a copy of the full manuscript that addresses this issue.

Presently, the scientific evidence supporting the use of cinemeducation is mostly anecdotal. There is, however, one recent survey that

demonstrated the usefulness of cinemeducation to graduates of a Southeastern family medicine residency program.¹⁵ There is another ongoing controlled study comparing cinemeducation directly with a more didactic approach in the area of domestic violence education (Jay Wilder, personal conversation, May 17, 2006). It is the authors' hope that more research will be forthcoming to document the value of cinemeducation in medical and graduate education.

Acknowledgment: This paper was presented at the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine 2006 Annual Spring Conference in San Francisco.

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Appendix 1

Counter Times

“When a Man Loves a Woman”—Alice comes home intoxicated.

VHS counter times: 0:30:40–0:35:77, DVD chapter: 8

“Dennis the Menace”—Dennis brings a card of apology.

VHS counter times: 0:35:08–0:39:00, DVD chapter: 11

Dennis splashes in bathtub.

VHS counter times: 0:47:15–0:47:38, DVD chapter: 14

“Torch Song Trilogy”—Arnold and his mother argue.

VHS counter times: 1:37:23–1:42:54, DVD chapter: 24

“Steel Magnolias”—Scene in hair salon.

VHS counter times: 0:18:37–0:28:02, DVD chapters: 7–8

“Wit”—Physical examination.

VHS counter times: 0:14:11–0:23:45, DVD chapter: 5

“The Doctor”—Hospital intake/standard operating procedure.

VHS counter times: 0:28:16–0:32:14, DVD chapter: 4
