ABSTRACT

The use of film in nursing and medical education has been supported as an effective instructional method. The purpose of this article is to identify and synthesize the available studies on teaching–learning strategies to be used with film for prelicensure students. Electronic databases were searched to identify studies published in the English language between January 1990 and March 2012. Twenty-seven articles met the selection criteria for this review and were analyzed. After in-depth discussion about and investigation of the relevant literature, we narrowed down three teaching–learning strategies: reflective activities, practical activities, and evaluative activities. The synthesis of the identified teaching–learning strategies provides a data point for the development of more effective evidence-based learning activities for prelicensure students. Future studies should focus on the examination of teaching effectiveness and learning outcomes, as well as the evaluation of using film, to achieve nursing competencies appropriate to role preparation.

Nurse educators are challenged to adapt their teaching to different learning needs and to embrace the knowledge and experience that students bring to the classroom (Lowenstein & Bradshaw, 2004). They also face the challenge of how they can facilitate nursing students’ appreciation of the wholeness of individuals with life-threatening or debilitating diseases and how students can become expert nurses sensitive to caring (Purnell, Walsh, & Milone, 2004). To overcome such challenges, nurse educators should be able to create motivational, student-centered, and interdisciplinary curricula and develop instructional strategies such as the use of learning mentors or instructional designers (Billings & Halstead, 2009). To meet students’ individual learning needs, nurse educators should design evidence-based instruction and plan appropriate evaluation methods that can ensure quality and accountability, thereby facilitating continuous improvement and innovation of the processes (Billings & Halstead, 2009; Cronenwett et al., 2009). Among many teaching–learning strategies, the use of films has become a unique way to encourage active student learning (Edmonds, 2011; Herrman, 2006). Determination of copyright laws and fair use may not be clear cut, but according to the Association of Research Libraries (2007) and Nemire (2007), in face-to-face teaching at nonprofit educational institutions, copyright law allows the use of film for instructional purposes. Although traditional lecture and clinical experiences are undoubtedly important, the use of film has positively affected the cognition and attitudes of prelicensure students in the classroom and in the clinical experience (Brown, Kirkpatrick, Mangum, & Avery, 2008). Because film is designed to capture the attention of viewers, it can stimulate students’ personal awareness while allowing them to explore their emotional reactions to situations resembling real life but for which they bear no clinical responsibility (Alexander & Waxman, 2000). Thus, over the past 20 years, there has been growing interest in the use of film in the teaching–learning process and outcomes in nursing and medical education in many countries (Lumlertgul, Kijpaisalratana, Pityaratstian, & Wangsaturaka, 2009). For example, Hyde and Fife (2005) attested that students engaged autonomously in creating meaningful learning or constructing knowledge from seven films related to mental health, whereas Lumlertgul et al.
(2009) used film clips as a part of case-based modules in medical education.

Refining the concept of cinemeducation (Alexander, 1995), cinenurducation was introduced specifically for use in nursing education, practice, and research (Oh, Kang, & De Gagne, 2012). Cinenurducation is characterized as student-centered, experiential, reflective, and problem-solving learning; these learning processes work together and impact each other’s elements, much like the reels of a film projector (Oh et al., 2012). Watching commercial films makes it possible for nursing students to learn with interest and to experience practice indirectly (Karlowicz & Palmer, 2006). Realistic and thought-provoking scenes stimulate empathy and strengthen the caring elements of the nursing role (Herrman, 2006).

Films in and of themselves are not educational tools. Because they provide valuable examples of the patient experience, nursing care, and specific health and healing background or strategies, as well as potentially inherent misinformation, they call for careful coordination of teaching strategies to be used as a successful resource (Northington, Wilkerson, Fisher, & Schenk, 2005: Oh, 2010). Although cinenurducation has been developed as an effective teaching medium, it has frequently been used in a nonuniform way in didactic and clinical settings (Furst, 2007). In spite of such development, little effort has been made to ascertain and synthesize key teaching–learning strategies in using film for learning related to students of health professions. More systematic research is urgently needed to fully explore the methods of using film among prelicensure students (Datta, 2009; Oh et al., 2012; Rivers, Rivers, Nichols, & University, 2011). Therefore, the purposes of this integrative review are to examine the current evidence available for the use of film in nursing and medical education and to analyze teaching–learning strategies for using film for prelicensure students. The ultimate goal of this review is to provide a data point on the development of more effective evidence-based learning activities in undergraduate nursing education. Given that nurse educators widely use film in their classrooms and that they require their students to view certain movies for educational purposes, this review article is timely and will facilitate the best use of film as a teaching resource.

**METHOD**

Aiming to provide evidence-based teaching–learning activities for use with film in nursing and medical education, we conducted a literature review using Whittenmore’s and Knaff’s integrative method (2005). Intensive literature searches were conducted to organize teaching strategies that entail learning activities. Searches were made through CINAHL®, MEDLINE®, PsycINFO®, PubMed®, and Scopus® databases using the terms (nurs* OR medic*) AND (film OR cinema OR movie) AND (educa* OR learn* OR teach*). The search terms were extracted from teaching–learning strategies with film in nursing and medical education and matched to titles, abstracts, keywords, and subject headings. Hand searches of journals and ancestry searches were also conducted.

Peer-reviewed studies written in the English language and published between January 1990 and March 2012 were considered. The inclusion criteria for this review were mainly related to nursing and medical education domains. Although RNs pursuing their baccalaureate degrees have already earned their nursing license, they were included in the review because they were learning through an undergraduate nursing curriculum. Medical residents and dental students were included if they took courses with undergraduate medical students. Studies were excluded if they (a) combined film and other formats (book, music, painting, play, TV drama, and documentaries); (b) guided faculty teaching; (c) were unpublished theses or dissertations; or (d) were conference proceedings.

Requiring the authors’ consensus for the selection procedure, a review process identified 225 studies after eliminating duplicates at title. Applying the aforementioned exclusion criteria, we narrowed down our search to 57 articles. Fifteen studies were added by hand search of references. Of the 72 original empirical studies from the review of literature, 45 studies were excluded because some targeted graduate or professional students, guided faculty on the use of film, or combined film with other teaching strategies. Finally, we organized our own readings in a Microsoft Excel® spreadsheet on a shared network drive to synthesize analytical tools grounded from the 27 retained appropriate empirical studies (Figure 1).

All selections from the literature were reviewed if they met the inclusion criteria, regardless of their quality. Although no formal quality scores were calculated, the relevance of the retrieved studies was assessed by the first author and verified by the other authors. The full contents were read and further discussed in case of any disagreement in the selection process. The extracted data comprised bibliographic details, countries of origin, participants and sample sizes, courses and topics, and teaching–learning strategies. Thematic analysis included becoming familiar with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing and naming themes, and producing the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006).
RESULTS

Using the aforementioned inclusion and exclusion criteria, we selected 27 studies, 14 of which involved nursing students and 13 involving medical students (Table A; available as supplemental material in the online version of this article). Studies involved more than 1,308 participants (705 nursing, 568 medical, and 35 dental students). Although the levels of participants and the sample sizes varied (ranging from first-year student participants to senior students and from sample sizes of 8 to 330), all studies emphasized the effectiveness of using film in their curriculum. Although 19 studies were undertaken in the United States, seven were produced by authors from Argentina, Canada, Lebanon, New Zealand, Slovenia, Thailand, and the United Kingdom. Of the selected 27 studies, five were used for elective courses. Various topics and themes were selected in classes and clinicals to examine prelicensure students’ knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The main topic was mental health, followed by professional role development, communication, ethics, family system, pain management, end-of-life care, public health, growth and development, and empathy (Table A). After an in-depth discussion about and investigation of the relevant literature, we narrowed down the core attributes of teaching–learning strategies to three activities: reflective, practical, and evaluative. Figure 2 shows subactivities of each teaching–learning strategy.

DISCUSSION

A dearth of investigation exists about teaching–learning strategies regarding the use of film for prelicensure students. Results of this study suggest that the core attributes of teaching–learning strategies include three activities: reflective, practical, and evaluative. The following is a narrative synthesis of the extracted data—the results of the important elements of each theme.

Reflective Activity

According to Brookfield (1995), critical reflection should be integral to the discussion of the reflective process. On the basis of his notion, we have defined reflective activity as learning that is central to critical reflection. Reflection is a learning experience that generates positive change through a rational and intuitive process (Taylor, 2000). The value of reflection has been highly recognized as an important skill to be developed in the context of health profession education (Brett-MacLean, Cave, Yiu, Kelner, & Ross, 2010). According to Oh et al. (2012), the concept of reflective learning is one of the main characteristics of cinemurducation. Examples of reflective activities found in the literature included discussion, writing assignments, and post-film presentations and role-playing.

Discussion, recognized as the most used form of reflective activity, included seminars, small-group debates, and film analyses. Using film before a discussion, which was described as useful and enjoyable learning, served as an accelerant that highlighted emerging topics that can successfully be reflected in the professional attitudes and values of prelicensure students (Blasco, 2001). Questioning, by means of open-ended or written questions, was also used to provoke discussion. For example, Brett-MacLean et al. (2010) used a discussion technique as a way of introducing narrative reflective practice and a questioning strategy as a warm-up class activity. Zauderer and Ganzer (2011) gave written questions to students that reflected the course content presented in the movie before watching film clips. After watching the clips, students were able to use critical thinking skills to assess how the characters’ illnesses influenced their behaviors, relationships, and lives (Zauderer & Ganzer, 2011).

Writing, an effective strategy to enhance personal reflection, stimulates the active involvement of critical thinking through learning to make judgments (Billings & Halstead, 2009; Schmidt, 2004). Examples of writing assignments include personal reflection essays, position papers in a debate format, weekly journals, two- to three-page film critique assignments, and other compositions ranging from a four-page written assignment to an up-to-3,000-word essay. Brett-MacLean et al. (2010) posited writing as a valuable way to express students’ thoughts, feelings, and stories. At the same time, students were able to discover their beliefs, values, and writing styles during the writing process (Lasater & Nielsen, 2009). To complete...
an essay, for example, students speculated and organized their reflections on paper after watching films (Akram, O’Brien, O’Neill, & Latham, 2009). Homework assignments about films enabled students to connect with characters in the films and share what they felt (DiBartolo & Seldomridge, 2009). However, if students focused on faculty approval and on the mechanics of writing itself, they would not experience the effectiveness of using films as planned. Therefore, nurse educators should encourage students to discover their own knowledge and attitudes as they use the various self-reflection techniques mentioned in the reviewed literature.

Presentations and role-playing are examples of students’ post-film activities. To promote multiple learning strategies, Hyde and Fife (2005) instructed students to use concept maps to create a nursing assessment and provide a presentation based on the films they had selected to watch. Weber and Silk (2007) stated that presentations were powerful media as a means for quiet, observant students to express themselves, whereas role-playing was a beneficial way for students to express what they saw in the film (Brett-MacLean et al., 2010). Role-playing, as a dramatic approach in which individuals assume the roles of characters, improved the observation and comprehension of complex human behaviors (Alexander, Pavlov, & Lenahan, 2007).

Although discussion, writing, presentation, and role-playing can be used as separate teaching–learning strategies, when used together such combinations can strengthen the reflective process. For example, Parker and Faulk (2004) recommended that students review the cinema reflective learning activity combined with discourse and questions. In their study, students were able to continue with critical reflection by using the reflective activities with film. After role-playing was completed, students were also asked questions and participated in a discussion (Alexander et al., 2007). Students’ reflection activities help them understand complicated human behaviors through critical thinking and decision-making skills (Billings & Halstead, 2009). Consequently, students are better able to judge the quality of information or knowledge they have, to organize them logically, and to express their ideas clearly and critically.

Practical Activity

According to Quality Assurance and Accessible Training 2 (QATRAIN2; 2012), “practical activities enable students to put into practice the theory and/or skills they are studying, often in a practical environment” (“Description of Practical Activities,” ¶ 1). Changing students’ environments can make these practical activities more diverse so that students are able to not only demonstrate and extend “their skills” but also “their subjective knowledge” (QATRAIN2, 2012, “Description of Practical Activities,” ¶ 2). On the basis of these characteristics of practical activities, we have defined practical activity as the integration of theoretical perspectives into clinical experience. Although only three studies related film to practical activities (Akram et al., 2009; Masters, 2005; Zauderer & Ganz, 2011), these studies highlighted the effectiveness of using film in practice. The authors suggested visiting related settings, such as a psychiatric unit to interact with patients or an electroconvulsive therapy suite, after watching movies or participating in clinical rotations prior to watching related movies.

Film has been used as an effective method to understand patients and simulate clinical environments. For example, in the study by Akram et al. (2009), students were asked to speak with a patient with schizophrenia after watching the film Some Voices (Jones, 2000). They affirmed that interacting with patients after watching films helped medical students enhance their understanding of people with mental illnesses. Altindag, Yanik, Ucok, Alptekin, and Ozkan (2006) suggested that viewing films can change medical students’ acceptance and attitudes of patients with mental disorders. Their study demonstrated favorable attitude changes via film toward people with schizophrenia. Therefore, the use of film has the potential to communicate the universality of the experience as shown by the actors and how the experience relates to real people in wards (Furst, 2007). Moreover, students’ preconceived ideas and communication barriers dissolve as they come to really know their patients, which improves their confidence and communication skills.

Alexander et al. (2007) asserted that film can help students internalize and maintain their knowledge. To identify psychiatric symptoms, Akram et al. (2009) visited an electroconvulsive therapy suite after watching One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest (Forman, 1975). Zauderer and Ganz (2011) used combined didactic lectures and clinical rotations at hospital settings. In a study by Zauderer and Ganz (2011), students discussed how treatments were realistically portrayed in A Beautiful Mind (Howard, 2001), which assisted them to connect theory to clinical situations through a purposefully selected movie. A movie with a follow-up lecture facilitated students to better understand the lecture content (Zauderer & Ganz, 2011).

According to Lasater and Nielsen (2009), nursing students should have an awareness of their own values, biases, and experiences and how these attributes affect individual thinking about a patient situation. In fact, students who do not exercise critical thinking may not question their practice, which can lead to a lack of clinical judgment and decision making (Killam, Luhanga, & Bakker, 2011). In Masters’ study (2005), students attended clinical rotations and then viewed films with course content to develop critical thinking. Questions such as, “If you were working on a unit where Peter [from clinical rounds] was a patient, what would be most important to include in your plan of care?” were discussed. Here, students applied knowledge they acquired from the film to their experience in a clinical setting. Students were able to experience what they learned in the classroom and vice versa.

The use of film can enable students to vicariously experience diverse health issues in a safe learning environment (Oh et al., 2012). Although movies trigger interest and enjoyment, they can also provoke unsettling emotions in students during or after watching them. Scenes in fictional movies may include exaggerated or unrealistic situations, making it necessary for instructors to be aware of and prepared for a variety of possible responses, ready to deflect any emotional reaction that might detract from the planned clinical objectives. When using film as part of clinical experiences, instructors must establish ground rules, write course expectations in the syllabus, and state their philosophy and purpose for using film in their clinical activity. The creation of such activities will guide students toward active involvement and meaningful learning experiences.
Evaluative Activity

It is important for educators to obtain feedback from students that will allow them to adjust their teaching strategy to fully meet the goal of the course and the needs of their students (Smith, 2004). If the goal is to develop students’ critical thinking, for example, the course should be based on classroom observation and participation, student feedback, and other sources of information written into their course evaluations. Therefore, evaluative activity is defined as teaching—learning that is central to the improvement of student achievement by measuring the effectiveness of teaching—learning methods. Our reviewed articles indicated that course feedback, goal achievement, and grading by teachers have been used in classrooms as evaluative activities.

Both open-ended and close-ended questions were used as course evaluation tools. A survey that evaluated film effectiveness demonstrated that students found the use of film to be effective and helped them to focus on content. Written assignments for evaluative purposes included course feedback comments (Gallagher, Wilson, Edwards, Cowie, & Baker, 2011) and journaling, which enabled educators to understand and evaluate course outcomes (Lasater & Nielsen, 2009). Students tended to be more comfortable with written work that did not require the expression of personal feelings, beliefs, or experience (Schmidt, 2004), and they needed guidance beyond an initial orientation to fully explore their thinking (Jensen & Joy, 2005). More evidence-based research is needed regarding the complexity of critical thinking and how to evaluate students’ critical thinking skills (Nielsen, Straggell, & Jester, 2007). Hyde and Fife (2005) and Saah, Usta, Major, Musharrafieh, and Ashkar (2005) used a satisfaction survey to gain additional course feedback. The use of course evaluation as a measure of student satisfaction, rather than student skill development, has rapidly increased (Smith, 2004). Here, evaluation is about the meaning and quality of the teaching—learning activity for the student, rather than a way to determine how much was taught (Russell, 2004). As with customer satisfaction, student satisfaction (with faculty) should include an evaluation of friendliness, availability, competence, and professionalism (McCull-Kennedy & Schneider, 2000). Nursing student evaluations provided evidence that teaching—learning strategies helped develop students’ emotional responses that enhanced positive outcomes regarding meeting the needs of caring for patients (Purnell et al., 2004).

After films were used, written questionnaires were also used to assess course objectives and attitudinal changes (Briggs, 2011; Kirkpatrick, Brown, Atkins, & Vance, 2001). Rivers et al. (2011) used Rosenberg’s Self-Esteem Survey to measure how nursing students perceived the nurses portrayed in films such as The White Angel (Dieterle, 1936), whereas Self, Baldwin, and Olivarez (1993) adopted Rest’s (1979) Defining Issues Test to evaluate moral reasoning in medical students. Wilt, Evans, Muenchen, and Guegold (1995) used the Layton (1979) Empathy Test to measure the impact of modeling behaviors on empathy. Although the content was unknown, Stringfield (1999) provided course content tests to evaluate student understanding of lectures and textbooks after watching films.

Reflective and practical activities with the use of film provide beneficial ways for students to expand their critical thinking ability; however, evaluating critical thinking poses a challenge for educators (Lasater & Nielsen, 2009). Moreover, faculty’s evaluation of students’ self-report or written assignment activities calls for careful attention and deliberation (Schmidt, 2004). In the literature, the methods of grading assessments varied from 5% to 10% of the final grade in their course or, simply, graded participation with pass or fail. For better performance outcomes, use of grading criteria such as checklists, guidelines, or grading rubrics (Taggart, Phifer, Nixon, & Wood, 1998) is suggested. Although the outcomes are influenced by different grading criteria, educators must understand that the evaluation of instruction is fundamental to demonstrating and improving quality of education (Keating, 2006). To improve quality and meet the requirements of regulatory bodies and agencies, instructors must consider the design and implementation of evaluation activities when using films in their curricula. It is the educator’s responsibility to identify the appropriate model or framework of evaluative activities to achieve expected outcomes.

CONCLUSION

The use of film in nursing and medical education has been supported as an effective instructional method. An investigation of relevant literature yielded three evidence-based teaching—learning strategies for the use of film in the classroom and in clinical experiences for prelicensure students: reflective, practical, and evaluative. Students’ narrative responses consistently revealed the positive impact of the use of films had on their learning in both theory classes and clinical experiences.

Although use of film in the classroom has become a popular teaching method at various levels of health-related courses, this study included only undergraduate nursing and medical courses. Potential bias may exist in that participants were recruited mainly by convenience sampling, despite students’ voluntary participation. Nevertheless, the reviewed studies demonstrate that film is effective with teaching—learning activities to improve cognitive outcomes and to help translate indirect experiences into authentic perspectives. Now accepted as a viable method of teaching, film has been used in many health profession education and training settings. Future studies should focus on the examination of teaching effectiveness and learning outcomes, as well as the evaluation of using film, to achieve nursing competencies appropriate to role preparation.

REFERENCES


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<th>Course / Students (n)</th>
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| Akram et al. (2009) | UK | 5th year medical (unknown) | Psychiatry Special Study Modules (SSMs) | Mental illness | • Meeting with a patient after watching a movie  
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| Alexander & Waxman (2000) | USA | 3rd year medical and 2nd year residents (unknown) | Family Medicine | Family system theory; differentiation; homeostasis; overfunctioning/underfunctioning; crosscultural coupling | • Guided discussion  
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| Bhagar (2005) | USA | 2nd year medical (unknown) | Psychiatry | Psychiatry disorders; multi-axial diagnosis system | • Presentation  
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| Brett-MacLean et al. (2010) | Canada | 1st year medical (n = 155) and dental (n = 35) | Patient-Centered Course | Professional identity | • Small-group debate  
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• Survey on the effectiveness of using films |
| Briggs (2011) | USA | Nursing (n = 24) | Fundamental Nursing | Cancer patient care; clinical trials; chemotherapy; medication side effect; self-determination; ethical care; nutrition | • Group discussion  
• Survey on the effectiveness of using films  
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- Brief group discussion
- Grading (pass/fail)
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- Rest’s (1979) Defining Issues Test
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- Guided discussion
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- 10- to 15-minute class discussion
- Hospital-based clinical rotation

Note. BSN = baccalaureate nursing.