



A CAROLYN JONES DOCUMENTARY

THE AMERICAN

NURSE

HEALING AMERICA

*A FILM COMPANION GUIDE
FOR ACADEMIC AND CLINICAL NURSING*

PRESENTED BY

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**AMERICAN NURSES
FOUNDATION**

Transforming The Nation's Health Through The Power of Nursing



EDUCATION TEAM



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American Nurses Foundation

American Nurses Foundation, the charitable and philanthropic arm of the American Nurses Association, is the oldest national foundation devoted to the support of programs that transform the nation's health through the power of nursing. To learn more, visit www.givetonursing.org.



INTRODUCTION

ON JULY 26, 1954, the city of New York held a ticker-tape parade in honor of Geneviève de Galard-Terraube, a nurse known as “the angel of Dien Bien Phu,” for her heroic work with wounded soldiers during the French-Vietminh war (Vietminh is the organization that led the fight for Vietnamese independence from French rule). In a ceremony at the White House, President Dwight Eisenhower awarded her the Medal of Freedom, extolling her service marked by the “courage of a woman in battle and by the devotion of a nurse to her sworn duty.”

Whenever we pass by the marker of the ticker-tape parade (it’s on the east side of Broadway between Cedar and Pine streets in Manhattan), we wonder why we don’t celebrate nurses and their life-changing contributions to health and well-being in the ways that we used to. Currently, celebrations involving parades are most often given to honor professional sports teams, not nurses. What filmmaker Carolyn Jones and producer Lisa Frank have given us is a cinematic tribute to the work of nurses — not the singular accomplishment of nurses like Geneviève but the subtle, interrelated work of five representative nurses of our time. They have made explicit what is implicit in the quotidian of American nursing life. The film is a close-up portrayal of the essence and substance of nursing. With this documentary, viewers are invited to admire, acknowledge and better understand our collective selves as nurses.

The aim of the companion guide is to offer suggestions for reflection and celebration — exercises with unlimited potential for each viewer. Sample questions and strategies provide guidance for meeting a variety of learning outcomes after viewing the film. The film allows the viewer to explore Carper’s (1978) fundamental patterns of knowing — empirical, personal, ethical and aesthetic — that nurses experience daily in their work. We encourage the users of this companion guide to continue to explore the creative uses of “aesthetic knowing” in nursing that allow for the discovery of the authentic nurse-self.

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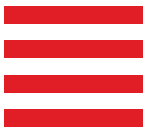
Sister Stephen helps a resident at the Villa Loretto Nursing Home to feel the benefits of animal therapy by holding baby chicks



HOW TO WATCH THE FILM

This guide is meant to accompany the feature documentary *The American Nurse: Healing America*, which was released theatrically in May 2014. There are several ways to purchase and watch the film, individually or as a group:

- If you'd like to assign the film to your students, you can ask them to purchase the rental or download version (above) to watch at their leisure prior to the classroom discussion.
- If you'd like to show the film in the classroom, an Education & Library License allows the purchaser to use the film in the classroom setting or other educational forum. This license does not allow for screenings in theaters, for charging of admission of any kind or for broadcast to the public. You can purchase an Education & Library DVD and License here as well: www.nehst.com/product/the-american-nurse.
- If you're interested in hosting a screening event, please contact DigiNext for pricing and details: <https://lm142.infusionsoft.com/app/form/e49278370183551de6707ecde4416cb1>.
- If you'd like to see *The American Nurse* in a theater near you, please check The American Nurse Project's Screenings page for information on upcoming screenings in your area: <http://americannurseproject.com/screenings>.
- For in-home personal use, you can purchase the DVD, download it or rent it online: www.nehst.com/product/the-american-nurse.



ABOUT THE FILM

The American Nurse explores some of the biggest issues facing America — aging, war, poverty, prisons — through the work and lives of five nurses. It is an examination of real people that will change how we think about nurses and how we wrestle with the challenges of healing America.

Jason Short drives up a creek to reach a homebound cancer patient in Appalachia. Tonia Faust runs a prison hospice program where inmates serving life sentences care for their fellow inmates as they're dying. Naomi Cross coaches patient Becky, an ovarian cancer survivor, through the cesarean delivery of her son. Sister Stephen runs a nursing home where she uses goats, sheep, dogs and llamas for animal therapy and the entire nursing staff comes together to sing to a dying resident. And Brian McMillion, an Army veteran and former medic, rehabilitates wounded soldiers returning from war.

The film is a part of the American Nurse Project and made possible with the generous support of Fresenius Kabi. To learn about the Project visit www.americannurseproject.com.



THE NURSES FEATURED IN THE MOVIE

SISTER STEPHEN

Sister Stephen is the director of nursing at the Villa Loretto Nursing Home in rural Wisconsin, where she has cultivated a menagerie of animals including dogs, cows, sheep, llamas, alpaca and ring-tailed lemurs. The villa is also the weekend home of children in need of respite — some are in foster homes, others have emotional problems or have been victims of abuse — and the animals are therapeutic for the children and the elderly residents alike. In a tender scene, Sister Stephen brings all the nurses and staff members together to sing a last hymn to their long-term and beloved residents as they approach the end of life.



BRIAN MCMILLION

Brian McMillion, a military nurse with the VA San Diego Health System, was on an uncertain path when at age 19 his father gave him two choices: “Go to college or enlist in the military. Except you’re not ready for college.” He spent time overseas, where he was the first person catastrophically wounded soldiers would see when they woke up, often missing limbs and suffering from PTSD, wanting only to go back to their brothers in combat. In his current role, Brian works with young injured soldiers fresh from the combat theaters of Iraq and Afghanistan.

NAOMI CROSS

A labor and delivery nurse at the Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Naomi Cross spends most of her days filled with the joy of helping bring new life into the world. When hopes and dreams don’t go as planned, Naomi also serves as a neonatal bereavement counselor, drawing from her own experience of loss to counsel a family when their baby dies, even before being born.

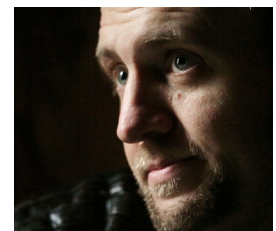


TONIA FAUST

With a mother who worked as a security guard at the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola, Tonia Faust grew up in the shadow of a maximum-security prison. She started working as a nurse and ended up following her mother’s path to Angola, where she now directs the hospice nursing program. Tonia also oversees a team of inmates who volunteer to care for their dying peers with an outpouring of compassion and grace not expected behind bars.

JASON SHORT

Born and raised in one of the poorest rural counties in the U.S., Jason Short was a mechanic and truck driver who has transitioned from fixing cars to fixing people. He spends his days forging into the remote hollows of Eastern Kentucky, helping his patients in their battles with cancer, diabetes and black lung disease. Providing care in a region plagued by poverty, drug addiction, industrial pollution and more, Jason is intimately acquainted with a part of America few will ever see.

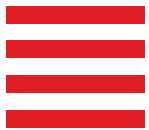




THE PRE- AND POST-FILM SCREENING DISCUSSION GUIDE

As the heading suggests, this is only a guide. The key driver that determines how the guide will be used is the specific learning outcomes desired by each stakeholder who shows the film. In general, most people go to the movies to be entertained or simply to take their minds off the daily grind of life. In contrast, nurses (and other health care professionals) who will watch *The American Nurse* will be transported back to work and will be challenged to reflect on and discuss issues that have deeply personal meanings. These exercises are just one of the many threads in the tapestry of lifelong learning in nursing.

Nursing faculty, nurse educators, career counselors and other health care stakeholders who will screen the film and use this companion guide are encouraged to first identify their learning outcomes or objectives. In the succeeding sections, there are specific suggestions for interactive discussions, writing assignments and other strategies to guide both the facilitator(s) and the learners.



HOW TO USE THE COMPANION GUIDE

The user is encouraged to exercise creativity in adopting the suggested activities listed here. In order to facilitate a purposeful and meaningful discussion after the film screening, it is best to answer in advance the following questions:

- Who are the viewers (learners)?
- What are the possible learning outcomes?
- Will the film be viewed by the group or will the learners watch it individually?
- Will advance (pre-screening) readings be assigned?
- Will there be a panel discussion after the film screening?
- Will there be class assignments that help meet learning goals of specific nursing classes?

The facilitator can use the guided questions suggested below or design his or her own variation of these questions based on learning needs. If the organizers plan a workshop activity, determine who will facilitate discussion and how many facilitators are required. This is also a good opportunity to enhance the group dynamic skills of the participants.



LEARNING OUTCOMES

General learning outcomes based on screening the film followed by a group discussion are listed below. Some of the learning outcomes are better suited for academic settings and others for clinical settings. Example outcomes follow.

At the end of the discussion following the film screening, participants will be able to:

- Develop an aesthetic appreciation of the science and the art of nursing.
- Experience the multiple ways of knowing embedded within the lifelong learning process.
- Reflect on the collective and personal meaning of nursing.
- Identify influences in the evolution of the nursing profession.
- Expand the student's affective experience of nursing.
- Engage in meaningful debates on ethical issues involving the nursing profession.
- Relate theoretical foundations of the nursing profession to everyday practice.
- Justify personal values related to nursing practice.
- Discuss potential evidence-based projects related to education, practice, research and health care policy.
- Appreciate the many contributions of nursing to society, culture and the health care enterprise.

Alternatively, the learners can be asked to identify their own learning outcomes as a pre-screening assignment/activity.



Tonia works with her patients, inmates in the hospital ward at the Louisiana State Penitentiary



GUIDED REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS — POST-FILM DEBRIEFING AND DISCUSSION

Although the film can be used as an educational tool for various academic purposes, it is likely that most educators will use it as a one-time event in the context of formal instruction (e.g., Professional Nursing or Fundamentals of Nursing course). Others may use the film as an event to showcase nursing during the annual celebration of National Nurses Week. If a panel discussion follows the screening, the moderator or faculty may adopt the following suggested questions for reflection/discussion addressed to the audience or the panelists.

QUESTIONS ON NURSING PRACTICE

- When did you know that you wanted to be a nurse? How was this revelation conveyed to you?
- Which of the five nurses featured in the film do you relate to the most?
- Which scenario in the film spoke to you or made you feel especially connected?
- What “caring values” have you identified in the film?
- What practice challenges did you see nurses face in the film that mirror your own experience?
- Are exemplary nurses born or are they fostered in distinctive situations?
- How do you personally cultivate practice excellence?
- How do you think the image of nurses and the nursing profession was portrayed in the film?
- What components of care spoke to evidence-based practice?
- Do you think religion and/or spirituality are essential elements within the practice of nursing?
- How can nurses cope with compassion fatigue? What are the risks of caring deeply for others?
- Is the male perspective of caring/nursing different from the female perspective (two of the five nurses featured in the film are men)?
- How are the religious/spiritual perspectives of caring/nursing different among the nurses featured in the film?

QUESTIONS ON NURSING EDUCATION

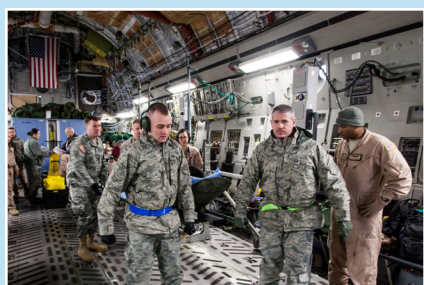
- How can nurse educators best prepare future nurses for the “real life” challenges in health care, many of which are featured in the film?
- How do the changing demographics of current nursing students (i.e., more second-career and life-experienced nurses) affect nursing education and the teaching-learning process?
- What is the role of films such as *The American Nurse* in the education of future nurses?
- How do you think this film impacts the public perception/image of nurses? (This would be an excellent opportunity to refer to the finding that nursing is the most trusted of the professions.)
- How do educators align the nursing curriculum with the ongoing emphasis on patient-centered care?

QUESTIONS ON NURSING RESEARCH

- What research agenda or quality improvement project might be possible based on constructs, problems, variables or outcomes featured in the film? (This would be a good spot to refer to Patient Population, Intervention, Comparison, and Outcome (PICO)-type clinical improvement questions and processes.)
- What are the best ways to study/research the phenomena encountered in nursing?
- What are vulnerable populations? What ethical issues arise in each of the five practice areas covered in the film in regard to research methods?
- What educational/instructional research questions “bubble up” from each of the five practice areas? (For example: Will watching this film help develop critical thinking skills of students?)
- Do you think the film has universal appeal? Would non-American nurses relate to the film in equally meaningful ways?

QUESTIONS ON NURSING/HEALTH CARE POLICY

- Are the nurses featured practicing to the full extent of their preparation? Discuss the possible differences in how associate degree and baccalaureate degree nurses practice.
- How does the film impact the ongoing discussions regarding the role of advanced practice nursing? (Note: None of the featured five nurses is a nurse practitioner, yet each setting may have multiple opportunities for APRN impact.)
- What health policy issues and social determinants of health are featured in the film?
- In regard to the above question, what do you think is the role of the nurse in shaping health care policies?
- What do you think is the role of the nurse in terms of narrowing the gaps in health care disparities?



Soldiers carry a patient on a gurney off the military aircraft upon its arrival at Ramstein Air Base in Germany



STRATEGIES ON HOW TO USE *THE AMERICAN NURSE* AS AN EDUCATIONAL TOOL

The uses of film in nursing education have been explored and validated in the nursing literature (Northington, Wilkerson, Fisher & Schenk, 2005; Oh, Kang & De Gagne, 2012; Zauderer & Ganzer, 2011). Film media are easily accessed and provide an opportunity to evoke both affective and visual experiences that can enhance critical reflection and ethical comportment when used effectively.

Depending on the learning objectives, types of learners, availability of resources and instructional fluency of the facilitator/moderator/faculty, the film can be used to complement existing educational strategies such as lectures, clinical simulations, book reviews and bedside rounds. The following are suggested strategies in using *The American Nurse* as an educational modality.

AS PART OF FORMAL NURSING EDUCATION

The formative education of nurses calls for the mastery of natural sciences and the humanities. The development of the nurse's professional identity requires much more than technical proficiencies. To cultivate the affective domains of education, the film is a powerful tool to stimulate reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action (Tanner, 2006) discussions. Specific strategies for use of the film in academic settings are offered below.

TO CELEBRATE NURSES AND NURSING

Annually, from May 6 to May 12, the nation celebrates National Nurses Week. In addition to the traditional staples of the celebration (award ceremonies, gift bags and breakfast for the staff), hospitals may showcase the work of nurses by screening the film or providing access to the film as a way to celebrate the accomplishments of nurses. A panel discussion or an essay contest can also be organized around the film. Nursing alumni gatherings and strategic planning events for nursing stakeholders are other occasions during which the film can be featured to honor nurses, inspire students, and affirm the work and contributions of practicing nurses.

TO RECRUIT FUTURE NURSES

Although nurses have been featured in various films (both commercial and educational), *The American Nurse* is unique in that it highlights the real-life work and accomplishments of seemingly ordinary nurses performing extraordinary acts of caring. Guidance counselors and career advisers may use the film to offer future nurses a glimpse into contemporary nursing.

AS PUBLIC SERVICE EDUCATION

When the film premiered in movie theaters across the U.S., the various reports and reviews about the film helped educate the public about the important work that nurses do. In collaboration with various health, social and advocacy organizations, the film can be screened to sustain the public trust of nurses as vital members of the health care workforce.

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SPECIFIC STRATEGIES FOR FORMAL NURSING EDUCATION:

TO CULTIVATE REFLECTION (REFLECTION PAPER) — The use of reflection in nursing education is well-established (Tanner, 2006; Draper, 2014). The film itself is a form of cinematic reflection. In various nursing courses (didactic and clinical), students can be assigned to view the film individually or in class. This assignment can be used throughout the nursing education program, depending on the learning outcomes.

Students can be assigned to write a reflection paper based on specific learning goals. A grading rubric that includes the component parts of the reflection should be provided. If available, students should submit their work through an anti-plagiarism program (e.g., Turnitin). Examples of reflective questions to be explored are:

- > Discuss your philosophy of nursing.
- > Describe the caring values you learned from watching the film.
- > Identify health disparity issues in the film and provide a reflective commentary.
- > Reflect on the therapeutic role of storytelling/life review in the practice of nursing.
- > Discuss the integration of the science and the art of nursing.

TO TEACH THERAPEUTIC COMMUNICATION — Observing and actively listening to “role models” who effectively connect with their patients will foster advanced communication skills. The film brings to life nurse-patient interactions that articulate ideal therapeutic communication skills in various settings. If the aim of the film screening is to highlight therapeutic communication strategies, students/viewers can be instructed ahead of time to take notes and identify communication techniques put into action by each nurse in the film. The type of “checklist” below can be provided before the screening to guide the activity:

Nurse	Instance/Scene of Therapeutic Communication	Therapeutic Communication Technique(s) Used
Sister Stephen		
Brian McMillion		
Naomi Cross		
Jason Short		
Tonia Faust		

TO EXERCISE THE POWER OF OBSERVATION —

“The most important practical lesson that can be given to nurses is to teach them what to observe, how to observe ...”

— Florence Nightingale
(Notes on Nursing, 1859, p.59)

Critical observations made by nurses are foundational to the nursing process. Observation advances and contributes to heightened skills in awareness and assessment. In *Educating*

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Nurses: A Call for Radical Transformation, Benner and colleagues (2010) cite numerous examples of how transformative education, both in classroom and clinical settings, harnesses students' innate capacity to observe and elevates their clinical judgment.

A focused observational exercise can be done using the film. For instance, a scene can be paused while the faculty/moderator asks the viewers to name or write down what caught their eye first. Alternatively, the film can be viewed uninterrupted and the viewers asked to jot down what captured their attention. A debriefing to tease out the themes from these paradigmatic observations would then follow. Below is a sample worksheet that can be handed out before the screening:

Write down or take note of a specific scene, dialogue, object, activity, visual cue, etc., that captured your attention and explain why.	
Nurse	_____
Sister Stephen	_____
Brian McMillion	_____
Naomi Cross	_____
Jason Short	_____
Tonia Faust	_____

It is suggested that the faculty/moderator do the same activity and compare notes with the viewers. For example, scenes involving the hospice nurse in the correctional setting yield the stark prominence of gates, bars, razor wire, cages, cuffs, keys, chains, etc. — objects that are evocative of captivity, dependence and isolation. The hospice nurse cares for a patient who appears emaciated, with wounds that will not heal, who is totally dependent on the provider(s) of care.

TO HIGHLIGHT QUALITY AND SAFETY EDUCATION FOR NURSES (QSEN)

COMPETENCIES — QSEN is the nursing response to the growing concern about safety and quality issues in health care in the U.S. The aim of QSEN is to address the ongoing challenge of ensuring that future nurses possess the competencies necessary to provide safe and quality care (Cronenwett et al., 2007). The film can be useful in cultivating the affective (attitudinal) domain of the six competencies. Examples of questions for group discussion are offered below. Alternatively, an assignment (paper, logs, blog posts, etc.) can be made for the students to identify the competencies exhibited by the nurses featured in the film. Likewise, the students may be asked to identify ideal behavior of nurses based on the scenarios in the film.

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QSEN Competency	Sample Questions for Discussion Derived From QSEN
<p>Patient/Family-Centered Care — Value seeing health care situations through the “patient’s eyes.”</p>	<p>How does diversity in the human condition impact the delivery of nursing care?</p> <p>How do personally held attitudes affect the care provided to patients from diverse social, economic and cultural backgrounds?</p> <p>How do nurses willingly support patient-centered care for individuals and groups whose values differ from their own?</p> <p>How do nurses dispel the tensions that may exist between the patient’s rights and the organizational responsibilities to deliver professional, ethical care?</p>
<p>Teamwork and Collaboration — Integrate contributions of the health care team in helping the patient achieve health care goals.</p>	<p>How do nurses respect the centrality of the patient/family as core members of any health care team?</p> <p>What can nurses do to value different styles of communication used by patients, families and health care providers?</p> <p>How can nurses support the importance of intra- and interprofessional collaboration?</p> <p>What is the role of “culture” and “mindset” in terms of the interactions among provider, patient, family and community?</p>
<p>Safety — Use national patient safety resources to increase professional development and to focus attention on safety across care settings.</p>	<p>How do cognitive and physical limits of human performance affect patient safety?</p>
<p>Evidence-based Practice — Describe how the strength and relevance of available evidence influence the choice of interventions in the provision of patient-centered care.</p>	<p>Identify evidence-based practice guidelines for health care issues presented in the film.</p> <p>Identify personal limitations in knowledge and clinical expertise in implementing evidence-based interventions.</p>
<p>Quality Improvement — Recognize that nursing and other health professions students are component parts of care systems and care processes that affect outcomes for patients and families.</p>	<p>Describe a quality improvement project based on health systems issues identified in the film.</p>
<p>Informatics — Employ communication technologies to coordinate patient care.</p>	<p>Describe examples of how nurses can protect the confidentiality of protected health information in electronic health records based on the scenarios in the film.</p> <p>Discuss how to record vulnerable and very personal information gained from patients and families.</p>

TO COMPARE PALLIATIVE AND HOSPICE NURSING CARE — Each of the nurses in the film deals with the realities of death and dying with his or her patients in unique ways; the setting often sets the tone for how events play out. These scenarios present multiple opportunities to engage students in discussions about the art of caring for the chronically ill and the actively dying. The following questions may be helpful in promoting such discussions:

- > Discuss how each nurse encounters death and dying in his or her practice setting.
- > Compare and contrast palliative care and hospice care.
- > Describe possible ethical issues involved in managing pain and suffering in those who are chronically ill versus those who are actively dying. (Example topics might include discussions about tolerance, dependence, addiction, fear of opioids [e.g., morphine], how to rate pain on various scales, the concept of pain specialties in various care settings, palliative sedation and terminal sedation.)
- > Discuss the following concepts: DNR, DNI, and comfort care only.
- > Encourage students to engage in a discussion about provider-assisted dying, and review data from those states that allow physician-assisted dying (formerly called “assisted suicide”).

Closely linked to the topics above are discussions of advance directives that focus on making personal preparations for dying. Important concepts include informed consent, health care literacy, the importance of one’s culture, the concept of surrogacy, cure and care, and how plans and hopes are communicated to family and to health care professionals. A related “aesthetic” activity is to ask the viewers/students to read *Critical Care: A New Nurse Faces Death, Life, and Everything in Between* by Theresa Brown to stimulate further discussion.

TO DISCUSS THE CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS OF DEALING WITH VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

(the incarcerated, the mentally challenged, the unborn, those with few financial and social resources). Vulnerable populations have needs that are unique to each. Sensitivity and a covenant to be nonjudgmental during the discussions are important to acknowledge. The film brings to life the challenges in nursing those without resources and those who are considered on the “margins” of society. Some questions that might be asked to broach such sensitive topics for discussion include:

- > Do you want to know the crime(s) of the prisoner to whom you have been assigned to deliver care?
- > How does the ethical principle of justice apply to community-based hospitals with limited operating funds?
- > What are your feelings about delivering care to homeless/impoverished populations?
- > What are the roles of nurses and the nursing profession in promoting social justice?
- > How would you respond to the patient who asks you to help end his or her life?

A relevant preparatory reading for this exercise is the seminal article “Cultural Humility Versus Cultural Competence: A Critical Distinction in Defining Physician Training Outcomes in Multicultural Education” by Tervalon and Murray-Garcia (1998).

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TO DISCUSS THE IMPORTANCE OF RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY IN PATIENT

CARE — Humans are intrinsically spiritual, and spiritual beliefs affect health care decision-making and health care outcomes. Spirituality may include specific religious beliefs, be completely divorced from them or consist of various combinations of beliefs depending on patient/family circumstances (Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association [HPNA], 2012). The film has touched on various manifestations of spirituality in the work of nurses (i.e., praying with a patient, singing hymns to patients, telling the patient he/she is “doing the right thing”). Some helpful questions for discussion include:

- > Compare and contrast religion and spirituality (concepts include authoritative texts, teachings, customs, moral code(s), meditation, awareness, mindfulness, universal consciousness).
- > What is spiritual distress, and how is it manifested in patient care situations?
- > How does one help patients handle the grief work that is associated with loss?
- > Does being an agnostic or atheist hinder or help the provision of spiritual care to various patient populations?
- > What should a nurse do when the patient or family asks for prayer from the nurse?

For the post-film discussion, an interprofessional panel working with vulnerable populations (board-certified chaplains, nurses, social workers and correctional workers involved in health care, etc.) is suggested.

TO ENGAGE IN A PHILOSOPHICAL DISCUSSION ON A VARIETY OF NURSING

CONSTRUCTS — The essence of “nursing” (both as a noun and as a verb) was once a topic of lively discussion among leading nurse theorists (Reed, 1997). The film can be used to renew this dialogue with reflective questions that explore epistemology (theories of knowing) and ontology (theories of being). Higher levels of abstraction in regard to the philosophy of nursing are integral to a deeper understanding of the theoretical basis of nursing (Rogers, 1970). Some examples of questions for discussion include:

- > How is nursing both a science and an art?
- > What is the science of the discipline and practice of nursing?
- > What is the essence of nursing?
- > How is technology influencing the nature of nursing?
- > Where does one learn to care?
- > What are the advantages of nurses who have various types of disabilities?
- > What is the face of nursing?
- > What are vulnerable conversations (difficult conversations) in nursing?
- > What does it mean to be an ethical whistleblower?

Prior to this exercise, viewers can be directed to read classic writings in nursing philosophy such as *Fundamental Patterns of Knowing in Nursing* (Carper, 1978) or “Story as Link Between Nursing Practice, Ontology, Epistemology” (Boykin & Schoenhofer, 1991). The film can also be used to foster understanding of qualitative inquiry at the graduate level (Edmunds, 2013).



OTHER INTERACTIVE TEACHING STRATEGIES BASED ON THE FILM

HOLD A DEBATE

A structured debate can be organized to promote a lively discussion after the film screening. Several nursing trends and practices were illustrated in the film, such as the nurse praying with the patient and the portrayal of two male nurses. Students can be assigned to one of two groups (pro and con) and spend 10 minutes offering oral evidence or rebuttal of “positions” assigned in advance. Examples of debate topics include:

- Did the film affirm your personal values of nursing and the art of caring?
- Should nurses pray with their patients?
- The male perspective of nursing: Is it different?
- Nurses as heroes: A blessing or a burden?
- What are the limits (cost, availability, time) to care in various populations/settings?

MAKE A COLLAGE OR DRAW A RENDITION OF THE AMERICAN NURSE

Another evocative exercise after the film is having the students/audience create a collage or draw/compose an image of the American nurse. Provide arts and crafts materials for the participants and allow them ample time to complete and present their work to their colleagues. This aesthetic activity will allow for reflection on the core values of caring and validate the mission of the nursing profession.

MAKE YOUR OWN AMERICAN NURSE VIDEO

Given the ubiquity of camera phones-cum-video recorder, students can be tasked with creating a “trailer” or a two-minute video of their own American nurse movie. This assignment will enhance the students’ creative talents and promote aesthetic learning (Northington, Wilkerson, Fisher & Schenk, 2005). In universities that have a film school, nursing students can collaborate with film students to create their project. Films can be uploaded to educational platforms such as Blackboard, and student peers can review the film clip.

INTERVIEW A NURSE

Inspired by the film, students can be assigned to interview a nurse in a practice, education, research or policy-making setting in order to explore perspectives on caring, the nursing profession, human nature and the value of personal stories. The students can prepare a transcript of the interview and provide reflective commentary to be graded by the faculty. A variation of this assignment is to invite exemplary local nurses (e.g., from clinical sites used by the school) and interview them in class or have them offer commentary after the film is shown via a panel discussion.

The preceding suggested activities are just a sample of the uses of the film as an aesthetic medium for learning. The transformative and unlimited power of film as an educational medium lies in its ability to let the viewer ponder the many shapes, designs, forms and sensory aspects of knowing the incredible realities of all it means to be a nurse (Carper, 1978; Brown, 2010).



THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE MOVIE



CAROLYN JONES

Director and Executive Producer

Carolyn Jones is an award-winning photographer and filmmaker who specializes in telling stories that shed light on issues of global concern. Carolyn founded the non-profit 100 People Foundation which creates educational films and curricula for school children worldwide. She has spent the last three years interviewing nurses from all over the country for the book and documentary film: *The American Nurse*.



LISA FRANK

Producer

As Director of Programs and Production for the 100 People Foundation, Lisa has traveled the globe with director Carolyn Jones to produce award-winning short documentaries on global issues for students worldwide. She has spent the last three years in collaboration with Jones to produce the book, film and website that comprise *The American Nurse Project*.

Through the generosity of Carolyn Jones Production and DigiNext 10% of movie sales support scholarships for nurses from The American Nurse Foundation. To support the fund visit www.givetonursing.org.



Jason cares for his patient Jeff in his home in Appalachia



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