Exposing Students to Healthcare Through Film

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What's the "big idea" of this video? I'm hoping to teach my students how to figure that out

Introduction

I am a teacher at the Conrad Schools of Science in Wilmington, Delaware. Conrad is a 6th-12th grade allied health and biotechnology magnet school located on the edge of the city of Wilmington. As such, it is considered an urban school. Over 1200 students have been selected to attend Conrad. Students who are interested in attending complete a School Choice application and are interviewed by staff members. Those meeting minimum requirements are entered into a lottery from which the student body is chosen. Although Conrad is a fully choice school, our students come from a variety of backgrounds; the majority of students are from other Red Clay district elementary and middle schools, but there are also students from private and home school environments. The Red Clay Consolidated School District comprises a wide variety of communities from the more affluent to those in need, producing a diverse student body.

As an allied health and biotechnology magnet school, Conrad has various pathways students can pursue, including Physical Therapy, Nursing, Biomedical Science, Biotechnology, Animal Science, and Computer Science. I teach in the Physical Therapy program. My primary courses include the senior Physical Therapy 3 course and the freshman Introduction to Health Science course, although I have been asked to teach other courses, including middle school courses, in the past. Conrad operates on an A/B block schedule. Students attend four classes on A-days and four different courses on B-days, each class block lasting approximately eighty-eight minutes.

Rationale

Field trips, although agreed to be an excellent experience for students, are often difficult to schedule. Not only are they logistically challenging (setting up a congenial time, getting all of the necessary paperwork in place, etc.), but they are also disruptive because students miss other classes. In our building, colleagues have to cover other classes that aren't on the field trip. In the case of my Health Science classes, I must also consider the issues of appropriate places to take fourteen-year-old students and the proper number of students to take. Bringing in guest speakers is much easier from an administrative standpoint, but this too can be a challenge: speakers' schedules must allow them to be available at certain times on certain days in order to speak to the target classes. There is

also the issue of multiple classes. Is the speaker willing to present at multiple times, possibly on different days? The teacher can always record the original presentation on video and show it to other classes, but this strategy isn't nearly as engaging as having the live person in the classroom. These challenges make using film an excellent medium for exposing students to many things they would otherwise not have the opportunity to learn.

This unit will focus on the freshman Introduction to Health Science students. Approximately two-thirds of the incoming freshman class consists of students who attended Conrad for middle school; the remaining students have come from other schools. The vast majority of freshmen take the Health Science course, which is split into one semester with the nursing teachers and one semester with me as the physical therapy teacher. Because of this, I touch almost every freshman in the school (approximately 140 freshmen throughout the year). The purpose of this course is to give students an idea of what they will be studying in the nursing and PT pathways so that they can make an informed decision whether they want to choose these pathways. These pathways involve a double-block schedule that gives them twice as much time as any other course students take. Once students have chosen the pathways that begin in their sophomore year, they cannot change. Two class blocks per year for three years is a lot of time for students to be in classes they aren't interested in. The discontent of these students often results in behavior issues because they don't like what they are doing and have no way out. As nursing and PT teachers, we need to make sure that students want to be in our pathways and have an interest in them.

As the PT teacher of the Health Science course, I attempt to expose my students to many things in our semester together—professionalism and why it is important, various allied health careers, diseases and disabilities their patients may have, body systems and how they are affected by these diseases or disabilities, and several skills that healthcare workers may use when working with their patients. Throughout this wide curriculum, I often use videos, such as clips from the internet or YouTube, documentaries, episodes of television shows, and movies based on true stories to help students understand the concepts we are studying. Because I often feel as if my students are simply watching these videos as entertainment, I frequently stop and point out details to make sure my students are following and understanding what I want them to get out of the video. Everyone watches movies and other types of videos, but I want to make sure that my students are able to extract information from the videos I have shown them and think critically about the meaning behind the entertainment.

Using film in the classroom can benefit students with learning disabilities and English Language Learners because it makes the content accessible to all students (Heitin 2013). Having students look for particular things while watching a video, also referred to as critical viewing, is very similar to analyzing written texts, but the students don't have to be good readers to display their thinking about or understanding of the material. Visual literacy connects the concepts being taught in the classroom to images and shows

students how what they are learning is used outside of their classrooms (Fisher and Frey 2011). This can be very powerful, especially in the field of health science. Using film, students can "observe" things like surgeries or medical treatments without the liability associated with actually going into a hospital or clinical setting to see them. Additionally, many more people can watch the procedure at the same time rather than squeezing thirty students into a small treatment room. Of course, nothing can compare with experiencing these things firsthand, but considering the circumstances, watching on video is the next best thing.

In order to use films effectively, the teacher must be prepared. In particular, he or she must decide which places to pause for discussion and which questions to ask. Having questions or activities to highlight the concepts you want the students to consider while watching the video is very helpful. It is best to provide students with some sort of graphic organizer to ensure they are actively viewing the piece. This could include a chart with columns to take notes on certain things or "as-you-watch" questions to complete. Having students complete such an assignment holds them accountable for the information presented and can help eliminate laziness while viewing. In addition to preparing activities for the students, teachers may also need to provide information on various aspects of the film, such as its setting or time period, issues that may be dated or sensitive, or the cultural context of the piece, prior to beginning the viewing (Barry 2012). However, sometimes it is more powerful to not prepare students for the obvious issues and let them react to the film without an intermediary pre-interpretation.

Numerous things go in to making a film or video, and each adds its importance to the overall story. In the films I will be using, I will ask students to pay particular attention to the characters and their actions. The characters are created by a combination of the actor's believability and the appropriateness of the costume designs. Both the costumes and sets must be of the correct time period in order for the character and the story to be accurate. Appropriate costume design gives the film credibility and consistency, making it believable and realistic (Kawin 1992). Movie scenes can also teach students about characters. Directing students to focus on a particular scene or action of a character can help them understand the overall message of the film. Asking what a character learns about himself can help students think more critically about a concept of the film. This is best done in the moment by stopping the video and giving students time to reflect on the scene.

Aside from its use in the classroom as a teaching tool, video can also be used as an assessment tool. Originally, Smarter Balanced, the assessment used in Delaware for grades three through eight, included analysis of video clips (Heitin 2013). These clips were later eliminated because of technical issues, but the fact that they were going to be included in a standardized state test speaks to the validity of their use. Film quizzes can be used to hold students accountable for their viewing and to allow them to display their understanding. Students can also create their own short videos about a particular concept

demonstrated in a film, further applying their new-found knowledge in a creative way (Fisher and Frey 2011).

Objectives

Students love watching movies for entertainment. My goal is to teach my students how to watch movies more critically and to pull out meanings from what they see that may not necessarily be spelled out to them. This unit will focus on the development of these skills but will continue with other applications of the skills throughout the semester.

Essential Questions

In order to direct the students' attention as they learn and practice the skills, they will focus on the following essential questions:

- Define: What does it mean to be a professional or to act in a professional manner?
- Describe: What are the essential characteristics of a healthcare professional?
- *Demonstrate:* How are these characteristics conveyed to the patient or client?
- *Connect/Reflect:* Why is it important to act in a professional manner in a healthcare setting and in your relationships with others?

Standards

As a health science instructor I teach the National Health Science Standards put out by the National Consortium for Health Science Education. This first unit for which I will use film will address each of the following standards:

- 2.1 Concepts of effective communication
- 4.1 Personal traits of the health professional
- 4.2 Employability skills
- 6.1 Ethical practice
- 7.1 Infection control
- 7.5 Emergency Procedures and Protocols
- 8.1 Healthcare teams
- 8.2 Team member participation

Strategies

In my research I came upon a video of an ELA teacher teaching her class how to think critically about different kinds of text and how to get the implied meaning from what they

were looking at, both text and images (Wessling n.d.). I would like to teach my students this skill using video rather than print pieces. By learning how to get more information out of the things they watch, they can use this skill with any video, not just what they see in my class. I will also expect them to use this new skill throughout the semester as we watch more videos. I will begin as the teacher did, showing the class a print ad for something health-related (a drug advertisement, for example) and ask them to tell me what things they literally see. After making a list, I will ask them what they think these things symbolize and then how they think these concepts apply to what is being advertised. Once they understand this idea, I will show them a short video commercial for something health-related and go through the same process, listing the things actually seen and heard in the video and then asking what those things represent and how they relate to the product. The final step will be to apply this skill to lengthier videos used to convey various concepts in healthcare. I generally begin the semester discussing professionalism, which includes concepts of effective communication, personal traits of a healthcare worker, ethical practices, infection control, and working as part of a healthcare team. All of these topics are found in Gifted Hands, a great movie to help students strengthen their new video viewing skills. This video activity will be integrated with general discussions and activities surrounding the ideas of professionalism and ethics in the healthcare field. Out of the five or six days I devote to the entire professionalism unit, I expect to spend three days teaching and practicing these video viewing skills.

Classroom Activities

The activities I will use are geared toward high school health science students, but with appropriate modifications they can be adapted for all subjects and possibly all grade levels. I will teach the students to observe, find patterns, and then draw conclusions about various print advertisements and short videos. I use advertisements because they are brief representations of ideas which would be good for practicing the new skills. Once these skills are learned I will use longer videos and ultimately movies. First, I will ask students to observe the advertisement, whether print or video. I will ask what images they see. Are there important phrases included in the ad? What potential connections do these images and/or phrases have to each other? Next I will ask them to find patterns in the images and to classify the parts that seemingly go together, making notes as they connect each one. Questions such as "What does xxx represent?" help guide the students' thinking. Finally, I will ask them to draw conclusions about what they see by taking the images seen in the advertisements and turning them into abstract ideas and thoughts. Asking what ideas are being sold or conveyed leads students to the larger concepts within the advertisements. When I ask them to discuss what the advertisement is selling, their answers cannot be things, but must be larger, more abstract concepts. Students will work in pairs for these activities and will turn and talk to each other as they work through each step, ending with the full class reporting before we move on to the next step.

Print Advertisements

Each student will have a blank sheet of printer paper for brainstorming. I will explain that we will be looking at several advertisements and that I want them to write down the things they see. I will use print advertisements I have found in health and fitness magazines, but these can also be found by searching key words and images for appropriate ads based on the concept being taught. I will start with a basic advertisement for a sports drink (google "sports drink advertisement" or "Isopure advertisement" and choose an appropriate ad with an active subject). Students will begin by observing. I will ask students to look at the advertisement and write down the things they literally see in the ad. After a few minutes I will have the students report what they saw, and I will write all of their ideas on the board. Once most of the images have been documented, we will move on to finding patterns. I will ask them for a more abstract sense of what each of these images represents. For example, in the sports drink ad, we may assume that the tennis player is practicing because the stadium is empty. This practice could represent hard work and diligence. The well-developed muscles in her arms, legs, and abdomen could represent strength or fitness. After going through all of the concrete ideas and determining their more abstract representations, we will move to the final step of drawing conclusions. I will ask the students, "What is it the advertisement is selling that is not an actual thing?" The ad is obviously selling the Isopure sports drink, but it is also selling the ideals of strength and hard work. An example of a student response could include "If you drink our sports drink and work hard, you can be strong and successful."

Next I will put up a different advertisement, such as one for a multivitamin (search key words "multivitamin advertisement"). Again I will go through the steps beginning with observing the ad and writing down what students literally see. In the process of finding patterns, students may decide that the woman in the ad is happy by the expression on her face and strong because she is holding a child rather than a toddler. Finally, they may draw the conclusion that if you take the multivitamin you will be strong, healthy, and happy.

As the last print example, I will show an advertisement for a heart drug (search "heart failure drug advertisement"). In this ad the students may notice the words in addition to the images. We will talk about what the words could mean and how they relate to the images. The large word "tomorrow" and the beginning of the phrase "I hope to teach..." may lead students to the final conclusion that whatever the medication is, it is something that may help the older man live a longer life.

Commercials

Once I am sure the students understand the process and objective of the exercise with the print advertisement, we will apply these deeper thinking skills to short commercials. I will begin by showing each commercial without the sound so as not to distract the students from their primary objective of focusing on the imagery of the commercial

rather than what the narrator is selling. After showing each commercial twice without sound, I will ask the students to write down their observations. We will then go through the three-step process as we did with the print ads, starting with literal observations, progressing to what these might represent, and finally identifying what ideals and values the commercial is selling.

The first commercial I will use is one for Lunesta (Sunovian Pharmaceuticals n.d.), a sleep aid. Students may note the prominent image of a butterfly "visiting" each of the subjects of the video. They will discuss how each subject begins restless and unhappy (we will discuss how they know the subject is unhappy), but once the butterfly lands on them, they become relaxed and fall asleep. They may note that each subject looks much happier upon waking. They may also note that after the butterfly visits one subject in a city apartment or condo, it flies out of the city and visits another subject in a house in a more suburban area, suggesting that sleeplessness affects people no matter where they live. When asked what the general idea of the advertisement is, students may respond, "Getting a good night's sleep leads to happiness." We will then watch the video with the audio, confirming students in their conclusion.

The second commercial I will use is for Opdivo (Bristol-Myers Squibb 2016), a lung cancer treatment drug. Again students will watch the video without sound first. This video, unlike the previous one, includes a lot of text. Words are shown on buildings, and the subjects of the video are seen reading the information. Students may note that the subjects look serious or even sad at the beginning of the commercial, but happier at the end. Images of time spent with family may also be noted. I will ask about the opening scene of the sun over the buildings: "Was this a sunrise or a sunset? Why do you think that?" Students may determine the image to be a sunset because of the nature of the medication being promoted and the words "A chance to live longer" seen on the buildings. Students should determine that the overall concept of this advertisement is that it is important to spend time with family and friends, especially when you know you are at the end of your life.

Professionalism Discussion and Videos

The next day we will begin by discussing what professionalism is and what it means to be a professional. The discussion will lead to why it is important to act in a professional manner as a healthcare worker. Topics such as being taken seriously, showing respect for patients and building rapport with them, and ethical obligations such as HIPPA will be discussed. A short video clip of professionalism in the workplace (Employee Development Systems, Inc. 2013) will be shown twice. The first time students are to write down as many "tips" the speaker gives as they can. I will pause the video several times throughout this first showing because the speaker talks very quickly and I want the students to be able to write down the information she presents. The second time they watch the video, I will ask students to note images of professionalism that the speaker

displays. After viewing the video, we will discuss it as a class. Did the speaker follow her own tips? What makes her look professional? How can you use these tips in the future as a healthcare professional or in other areas of your life? Are these things you can do now to affect how others perceive you? Why is this important?

At this point I expect the students to be ready to watch the movie Gifted Hands: The Ben Carson Story (TNT, 2009). This movie begins by presenting Dr. Carson with the challenge of separating craniopagus twins (joined at the head). As Dr. Carson works toward a method of separation that ensures that both babies survive, the story of his childhood is told in flashbacks. The movie addresses many health science standards: effective communication, personal traits of the health professional, ethical practice, infection control, healthcare teams, and team member participation. Students will be given a graphic organizer (Appendix B) to complete while watching the movie. Before starting the movie, we will discuss what each box on the organizer (representing a standard) means and will discuss examples of what might represent each standard. I will tell them to look for images in the movie that depict all of these things and suggest that since these might not be obvious, they need to pay attention to the details they will see in the movie. On the back of their organizer will be these questions: "What obstacles or issues did Ben Carson have to deal with throughout his life? Tell how he overcame each." and "What is the big idea the movie is trying to convey?" I will point these questions out to the students and tell them to look for evidence that would help answer them as well.

In the opening scene of the movie, Dr. Carson is seen scrubbing in for surgery. I will pause the video and ask, "What do you see?" When students respond, "He's washing his hands," I will follow up: "What does that represent?" They should immediately respond: "Infection control." I will tell them to write it down in the "infection control" block of their organizer and will point out that these are the types of things to look for and record throughout the film. I will stop the film at various points to discuss things that are important to understand, such as explaining why Ben brings flowers to the nurse who had mistaken him for an orderly, establishing the growing pattern of anger he demonstrates as he becomes an adolescent, and noting evidence of the racism he encounters throughout his life. Because the movie takes more than one class period to view, we will pause at the end of the first day to discuss what the students have written down for each standard on their organizer. When the movie is over, we will review each standard and summarize what they saw relating to it as well as reviewing Ben's struggles and successes throughout his life. Finally, I will ask students what big idea they think the movie is trying to convey, and we will discuss their ideas as a group.

Other Activities and Films

I want the students to continue using these skills to identify examples of standards in other contexts. As part of our disabilities unit, students will read "Shark Attack Survivor" (Lewis 2011), the Bethany Hamilton story from *Scholastic* magazine, and answer

questions based on the reading before watching the movie *Soul Surfer* (TriStar Pictures, 2011). In this way they will have an idea of what the movie is about and therefore they can focus on the imagery. They will use a graphic organizer similar to the one used for *Gifted Hands* (see Appendix C) that includes the standards of infection control, personal traits of a healthcare worker, emergency procedures and protocols, and healthcare teams. This time I will ask students to pay particular attention to healthcare professionals who are not directly depicted in the film but are implied based on Bethany's actions in the movie in order to encourage them to connect what the character is doing with a healthcare professional who would advise or help her do certain things. For example, the scene in which Bethany makes breakfast for her family implies that she has worked with an occupational therapist to learn how to cook using only one arm; her making a smoothie with many fruits implies that she has worked with a nutritionist; and her training to return to competition implies that she is working with a personal or athletic trainer. Finally, students will identify what they think the big idea of the film is.

Continuing the study of disabilities, students will read "Different Like You" (Mercer 2014), the story of a young boy with Tourette's Syndrome, and will answer questions before watching the movie *Front of the Class* (CBS Television Network, 2008). This film presents the story of a boy growing up with Tourette's Syndrome, showing the problems to which his disability leads in school and in his job hunt. I will ask students to take notes on the obstacles the main character encounters as a result of his disability and identify particular people who helped him overcome these obstacles. Ultimately we will also discuss the big idea, as we have done with the previous films. Although this film does not directly address many of the health science standards, it will serve as an awareness lesson for students. In this case the lesson is about learning to accept others, an attitude that is not only essential in a healthcare career but also an important life lesson.

After students learn some basic medical terminology, I will ask them to listen for and record ten medical words while watching an episode of *House* (Fox, 18 April 2006). They will again be given a graphic organizer to record observations from the episode including infection control, personal traits of a healthcare worker, healthcare teams, and ethical practice, in addition to ten medical words (see Appendix D).

These procedures and questions can be used with many other films as they depict or otherwise relate to the health science standards. Student discussions can be based on the symbolic meanings found in the films, such as professional work ethic or general life inspiration. Other reflective questions could focus on critically thinking about what products or attitudes the films are selling. For instance, the movie *Front of the Class* is selling acceptance of all, regardless of differences. Other selections model the importance of acceptable behavior for future health professionals and the importance of behaving ethically. All these concepts are important for students to learn and apply to life in general, but they are of particular importance for those who wish to pursue an occupation in the healthcare field.

Commented [Office1]: Did Hugh Laurie really direct this episode, or just star in it? You list the director below as Greg Yaitanes. But TV shows are usually cited by network and exact broadcast date—in this case, (Fox, 18 April 2006)—not by either director or lead performer.

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Appendix A – National Health Science Consortium Standards

Foundation Standard 2: Communications Demonstrate methods of delivering and obtaining information, while communicating effectively.

2.1 Concepts of Effective Communication

- 2.11 Model verbal and nonverbal communication.
- 2.12 Identify common barriers to communication.
 - a. Physical disabilities (aphasia, hearing loss, impaired vision)
 - b. Psychological barriers (attitudes, bias, prejudice, stereotyping)
- 2.13 Identify the differences between subjective and objective information.
- 2.14 Interpret elements of communication using basic sender-receiver-message-feedback model.
 - 2.15 Practice speaking and active listening skills.
- 2.16 Modify communication to meet the needs of the patient/client and be appropriate to the situation.

Foundation Standard 4: Employability Skills Utilize employability skills to enhance employment opportunities and job satisfaction.

4.1 Personal Traits of the Health Professional

- 4.11 Identify personal traits and attitudes desirable in a member of the career ready healthcare team.
 - a. Acceptance of criticism
 - b. Competence
 - c. Dependability
 - d. Discretion
 - e. Empathy
 - f. Enthusiasm
 - g. Honesty
 - h. Initiative
 - i. Patience
 - j. Responsibility
 - k. Self-motivation
 - 1. Tact
 - m. Team player
 - n. Willingness to learn
- 4.12 Summarize professional standards as they apply to hygiene, dress, language, confidentiality and behavior.

4.2 Employability Skills

4.21 Apply employability skills in healthcare.

- a. Chain of command
- b. Correct grammar
- c. Decision making
- d. Flexible
- e. Initiative
- f. Integrity
- g. Loyalty
- h. Positive attitude
- i. Professional characteristics
- j. Prompt and prepared
- k. Responsibility
- 1. Scope of practice
- m. Teamwork
- n. Willing to learn

Foundation Standard 6: Ethics Understand accepted ethical practices with respect to cultural, social, and ethnic differences within the healthcare environment.

6.1 Ethical Practice

- 6.11 Differentiate between ethical and legal issues impacting healthcare.
- 6.12 Identify ethical issues and their implications related to healthcare (such as: organ donation, in vitro fertilization, euthanasia, scope of practice, ethics committee).
- 6.13 Utilize procedures for reporting activities and behaviors that affect the health, safety, and welfare of others (such as: incident report).

Foundation Standard 7: Safety Practices Identify existing and potential hazards to clients, co-workers, and self. Employ safe work practices and follow health and safety policies and procedures to prevent injury and illness.

7.1 Infection Control

- 7.11 Explain principles of infection control.
 - a. Chain of infection
- b. Mode of transmission (direct, indirect, vectors, common vehicle [air, food, water], health care associated infections [nosocomial], opportunistic)
 - c. Microorganisms (non-pathogenic, pathogenic, aerobic, anaerobic)
 - d. Classifications (bacteria, protozoa, fungi, viruses, parasites)
 - 7.12 Differentiate methods of controlling the spread and growth of microorganisms.
 - a. Aseptic control (antisepsis, disinfection, sterilization, sterile technique)
 - b. Standard precautions
 - c. Isolation precautions
 - d. Blood borne pathogen precautions

e. Vaccinations

7.2 Personal Safety

- 7.21 Apply personal safety procedures based on Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and Centers for Disease Control (CDC) regulations.
 - 7.22 Demonstrate principles of body mechanics.

7.5 Emergency Procedures and Protocols

- 7.51 Practice fire safety in a healthcare setting.
- 7.52 Apply principles of basic emergency response in natural disasters and other emergencies (safe location, contact emergency personnel, follow facility protocols).

Foundation Standard 8: Teamwork Identify roles and responsibilities of individual members as part of the healthcare team.

8.1 Healthcare Teams

- 8.11 Evaluate roles and responsibilities of team members.
 - a. Examples of healthcare teams
 - b. Responsibilities of team members
 - c. Benefits of teamwork
- 8.12 Identify characteristics of effective teams.
 - a. Active participation
 - b. Commitment
 - c. Common goals
 - d. Cultural sensitivity
 - e. Flexibility
 - f. Open to feedback
 - g. Positive attitude
 - h. Reliability
 - i. Trust
- j. Value individual contributions

8.2 Team Member Participation

- 8.21 Recognize methods for building positive team relationships (such as: mentorships and teambuilding).
 - 8.22 Analyze attributes and attitudes of an effective leader.
 - a. Characteristics (interpersonal skills, focused on results, positive)
 - b. Types (autocratic, democratic, laissez faire)
 - c. Roles (sets vision, leads change, manages accountability)
- 8.23 Apply effective techniques for managing team conflict (negotiation, assertive communication, gather the facts, clear expectations, mediation).

Appendix B – *Gifted Hands* graphic organizer

Front:

Name: Gİİ	Gifted Hands
Healthcare Teams	Infection Control
Personal Traits of a Healthcare Worker	Communication
Ethical Practices	Bonus: Medical Terminology (as related to communication)

Look for examples of each of the following in the film. You may note actual words or images/scenes.

Back: What obstacles or issues did Ben Carson have to deal with throughout his	
life? Tell how he overcame each.	
What is the big idea the movie is trying to convey?	

Appendix C– *Soul Surfer* graphic organizer

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Infection Control	Healthcare Teams
	Note possible allied health professionals who might help Bethany whether seen in the film or inferred.
Personal Traits of a Healthcare Worker	
Emergency Procedures and Protocols	What obstacles does Bethany have to overcome and how does she do this?

Look for examples of each of the following in the film. You may note actual words or images/scenes.

Appendix D – *House* graphic organizer

Medical Terminology

Note 10 medical words you hear throughout the episode. House: Sleeping Dogs Lie Ethical Practice Personal Traits of a Healthcare Worker Healthcare Teams Infection Control Name:

Look for examples of each of the following in the film. You may note actual words or images/scenes.