

**Public Affairs Assessment Grant Progress Report**  
**December 12, 2014**  
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Upon approval for the Public Affairs Assessment Grant the following assignment was added to my course, CSD 495 Section 002, Observation Clinical Practicum

*Select a film from the approved list or gain approval of a film of your own choice. After viewing the film you have selected write and 2 to 3 page reflection focusing on the following:*

- *Describe cultures (including macro and micro cultures) of the main characters*
- *Compare and contrast the cultures within the film with your own.*
- *Describe how cultural differences impacted the dramatic conflict in the film.*
- *Give examples of culture specific communication or communication challenges between characters in the film and/or with the healthcare/education system*
- *What cultural perceptions were expressed?*
- *What impact did this film have on your cross cultural awareness?*
- *What preconceived notions or beliefs did this film challenge for you?*

*Note: For extra credit: Continue this assignment with up to 3 additional films for up to 3 points each (submit these extra reports in your final portfolio).*

Class lectures and videos had already addressed these topics in general as related to the cultural humility movement, healthcare, and specifically related to cultural issues in Speech Language Pathology in assessment and treatment. This served as a basis for the students to direct their attention in watching the films they selected.

The initial list of approved films consisted of:

- **Children of a Lesser God:** An adaptation of the Tony Award winning stage play about a hearing speech teacher and deaf custodian who have conflicting ideologies on speech and deafness.
- **Dallas Buyers Club:** (2013) In 1985, electrician and hustler Ron Woodroof works around the system to help AIDS patients get the medication they need after he is himself diagnosed with the disease. Rated R.
- **Diving Bell and the Butterfly:** True story of the Elle editor who suffered a stroke and has to live with an almost totally paralyzed body
- **Gran Torino:** (2008) Disgruntled Korean War veteran Walt Kowalski sets out to reform his neighbor, a Hmong teenager who tried to steal Kowalski's prized possession: a 1972 Gran Torino. Rated R.
- **I am Sam:** The story of a father with a developmental disability and his 17 year old daughter
- **The King's Speech:** (2010) The story of King George VI of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, his impromptu ascension to the throne and the speech therapist who helped the unsure monarch become worthy of it. Rated R.
- **My Left Foot:** a 1989 Irish film directed starring Daniel Day Lewis. It tells the true story of Christy Brown, an Irishman born with cerebral palsy who could control only his left foot. Christy Brown grew up in a poor, working-class family, and became a writer and artist.
- **The Miracle Worker:** The story of Helen Keller and her teacher Annie Sullivan

- **Nell:** (1994) In a remote woodland cabin, a small town doctor discovers Nell- a beautiful young hermit woman with many secrets. Rated PG-13.
- **Philadelphia:** (1993) When a man with AIDS is fired by his law firm because of his condition, he hires a homophobic small time lawyer as the only willing advocate for a wrongful dismissal suit. Rated PG-13.
- **Rain Man:** (1988) Selfish yuppie Charlie Babbitt's father left a fortune to his savant brother Raymond and a pittance to Charlie; they travel cross-country. Rated R.
- **Taare Zameen Par-Like Stars on Earth:** Reissued by Disney, a 2007 award winning Indian drama about an eight year old who excels at art, whose teacher suspects that he is dyslexic and helps him to overcome his disability.
- **Temple Grandin:** The 2010 biopic about an autistic woman who revolutionized practices for humane handling of livestock on cattle ranches.
- **What's Eating Gilbert Grape?:** (1993) Gilbert has to care for his brother Arnie and his obese mother, which gets in the way when love walks into his life. Rated PG-13.
- **Young At Heart:** British documentary about a chorus of twenty-two senior citizens with an average age of eighty.

All 43 students completed reflections on 1-4 films of their choice from the approved initial list. Through the semester, the list was expanded based on input from the faculty as indicated in the initial proposal and now also includes these films:

#### Film List for Cross Cultural Awareness

- **Assisted Living:** (2003) A comedy which depicts a day in the life of Todd, a janitor at an assisted living facility. He befriends the residents, one of whom confuses him for her son. Rated R.
- **Awakenings:** (1990) The victims of an encephalitis epidemic many years ago have been catatonic ever since, but now a new drug offers the prospect of reviving them. Rated PG-13.
- **And the Band Played On:** (1993) The story of the discovery of the AIDS epidemic and the political infighting of the scientific community hampering the early fight with it. Rated PG-13.
- **Bless Me, Ultima:** (2013) Deals with "Curanderas" or Healers in the Hispanic culture (recommended by Yolanda Lorges). A drama set in New Mexico during WWII, centered on the relationship between a young man and an elderly medicine woman who helps him contend with the battle between good and evil that rages in his village. Rated PG-13.
- **The Doctor:** (1991) Jack McKee is a doctor with it all: he's successful, he's rich and he has no problems... until he is diagnosed with throat cancer. Rated PG-13.
- **The Elephant Man:** (1980) A Victorian surgeon rescues a heavily disfigured man who is mistreated while scraping a living as a side-show freak. Behind his monstrous façade, there is revealed a person of intelligence and sensitivity. Rated PG.
- **Fixed** (recommended by Steven Willis)
- **Immortal Beloved:** (1994) The life and death of the legendary Ludwig van Beethoven. Rated R.
- **The Normal Heart:** (2014) A gay activist attempts to raise HIV/AIDS awareness during the early 1980s.
- **Patch Adams:** (1998) A medical student in the 70's treats patients, illegally, using humor. Rated PG-13.

Students' reflections were very positive in response to the assignment and consistently evidenced the assignment's contribution to new insights. I couldn't have been more pleased. Some excerpts from the students' reports follows.

This film [*The King's Speech*] challenged me to remember that what I think may be most important for a client is not necessarily what they think is most important...I also need to remember that not all of them value or want to change the things I value or want to change.

The impact this film [*Like Stars on Earth*] had on my cross cultural awareness was how hard it can be for a child suffering who family does not believe in therapy...It also gives me a good idea of how to approach children with learning disabilities coming to therapy from other cultures, and realize how important it is to include the family...

*And Your Name is Jonah* has and will continue to help me remember that every individual is struggling with something challenging in his or her life...

This film [*Nell*] helped to challenge my preconceived notion that nearly all Americans share the same cultural identity.

This movie [*Gran Torino*] opened my eyes to the idea that these extremely racist opinions are still prevalent to this day.

This film [*I Am Sam*] challenges me to believe that a diagnosis does not have to be a definition of your capabilities.

During the process of film selection I was tempted to select a film I was more comfortable with such as *Gran Torino*. I chose instead to watch a movie [*Dallas Buyers Club*] that I had never seen, nor would have watched on my own...The fact that everyone thought Ron was gay since he AIDS kind of blew my mind. I guess I never realized how closely the two were associated in the 80's. The film also brought to my attention the way the FDA operates. I guess just like any other government bureaucracy they can be bought, and the consequences can be detrimental.

**Plan:** This assignment will definitely be repeated for future classes. Now that funds have been received, as many of these films as possible will be purchased. In addition, there is an intention to host a department "movie night" with talk back for faculty and students to expand on the cultural awareness issues relevant to the professions in Communication Sciences and Disorders that these films can generate. It is also hoped that this activity will contribute not only to the knowledge and understanding of the students, but foster stronger bonds between students and faculty thus contribute positively to student retention. Films will be available for other faculty for their courses as appropriate.