

## Half a day at the movies: film studies in the VTS course

John Salinsky Br J Gen Pract. 2005 Oct;55(519):806-9.

Well worth a read for John's lovely writing, and bursting with ideas for using films in a Medical Education setting.

At the time of writing (June 2011) you can see the whole article for free at:

<http://tinyurl.com/5s6dk4z>

He describes the experience of using films on the Vocational Training half day release course for GP trainees. Whole films (not clips) were shown (one each term), as the films were chosen as pieces of art, which needed to be experienced as a whole. In the paper he gives the reasons for trying this approach:

- To give the registrars an artistic experience that they would otherwise have missed. To show them something that they might want to see again and which might stay with them for life;
- To help them see that the characters so brilliantly brought to life on the screen were not very different from the patients they engage with in the surgery. As a result they might be able to view some difficult patients with greater tolerance, sympathy and respect. They might be enabled to stand back a little from the symptoms and signs and see their patients as fellow human beings trying to make sense of their lives and their emotions. The films do not show medical scenes and are not really about doctors, although in one of them (Wild Strawberries) the central character happens to be a doctor;
- To share our own pleasure in these great films with our group.

And makes it clear what was not being attempted:

- To provide talking points to illustrate clinical problems;
- To make people better doctors or better human beings;
- To teach communication skills;
- To improve the doctors' ability to handle ethical problems.

Films discussed in the paper:

1. Wild Strawberries, directed by Ingmar Bergmann, Sweden (1958)
2. La Grande Illusion, directed by Jean Renoir. France (1940)
3. Citizen Kane, directed by Orson Welles US (1941)
4. Il Postino, directed by Michael Radford Italy (1994)
5. Les Enfants du Paradis, directed by Marcel Carné, France (1945)
6. Pather Panchali, directed by Satyajit Ray, India (1956)