Beyond sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch there exists a sixth sense. There have been many explanations of this extra sense in both classical and current literature. Some describe it as intuition, clairvoyance, prevision, telepathy, extrasensory perception, and sensitivity. Hospital healthcare workers often describe their ability to know when a patient is about to have an adverse event based on their “gut feeling.”

The Sixth Sense isn’t a thriller in the modern sense, but is more of a ghost story. However, it can still evoke a wide range of emotions based on an individual’s concept of death and dying. In this film, a small boy tells his psychologist, “I see dead people; they want me to do things for them.” The child seems to be correct. The child psychologist is Malcolm Crowe (Bruce Willis), who is shot one night in his home by a previous patient who thought he was wrongfully treated. The movie jumps to the next autumn, where we see Crowe counseling Cole Sear (Haley Joel Osment), who exhibits some of the same problems as the patient who shot him. Of course, Crowe believes this is his chance to “get it right” this time.

The movie can be useful for teaching the concept of worldview in transcultural nursing.
Worldview can be defined as the collection of knowledge that has both formed and informed an individual’s perception of their existence in the world. The overarching theme that joins this movie to the concept is, “How would you have viewed this movie differently if your world view was different?” Most students do not understand the connection between the movie and transcultural healthcare without a discussion of the overarching themes of the film.

In the classroom, general questions that can be asked of each student are:

- “What emotions did you express while watching this movie?”
- “How do you think viewing this movie will change your practice in healthcare?”
- “Who are the caregivers in this movie?”
- “Did you notice the clues of red in the movie, and what other clues did you observe?”
- “Have you ever been in a situation where you thought you knew what was going on, but in fact you were totally clueless?”
- “How did this movie change your world view?”
- “Did you see the relevance of viewing this movie as it relates to transcultural healthcare?”

Additionally, there are three additional concepts can be explored with students in depth. First, in The Sixth Sense, the film shows viewers things that adults do not see, through the eyes of a child. By viewing this film, students can see the subtle differences between non-professional and professional care through the eyes of the various characters. The students are asked how professional healthcare, backed by a rigorous educational process, helps as well as hinders providers to see things (or not see things) that non-professionals do not see. Of course, one of the most important aspects of this discussion is to ask students how can a health professional best articulate this difference to their patients and their family members.

The second important concept that is explored in depth is based on the question posed by Cole Sear to Malcolm Crowe: “How can you help me if you don’t believe me?” Healthcare providers are taught how to be sensitive and empathize with their patients, but unfortunately this can be difficult to accomplish at times. Healthcare providers working with the dying may reflect on situations that are not explainable, as are nurses working with mentally ill patients. Nurses working in emergency departments often articulate their concerns over pain scales and those seeking care with hidden agendas. These discussions may also lead to a secondary topics of the culture of drug abuse, the culture of homelessness, and the culture of chronic conditions. The third important concept that is explored in depth is based on Cole’s statement to Malcolm regarding talking to his wife. Cole states, “talk to her when she’s asleep; that’s when she’ll hear you.” This is a concept that healthcare providers often need to explain to families of critical care patients who may be on life support. Those working in critical care areas are most likely to relate to this statement, as many have helped families to cope with illness or injury of loved ones, and talking to a patient can be therapeutic to both families and the patient who is on life support.

On the other hand, some students may elect not to view the movie due to their religious values. In a classroom setting, it is important to engage these students in a class discussion to help others understand why their religion states that it is not proper to view the movie according to their religious values. This experience is particularly valuable for students because it allows the declining student to explain their religion and religious values to the rest of the class, which becomes a rich and valuable cross-cultural experience outside of the context of the movie but within the classroom setting.

Even though The Sixth Sense was released in 1999, some students have never viewed the
film. Others watch the movie with a renewed sense of meaning as they try to understand how it relates to the concept of worldview. The movie is subject to spoilers, so it is important for previous viewers to be sensitive to first time viewers.

Reference

The Reviewer
John S. Vanderlaan, DNP, MSN, RN, CEN, CTN-A
Dr. Vanderlaan is managing editor of the *Online Journal of Cultural Competence in Nursing and Healthcare*. He is currently faculty at University of Michigan-Flint where he teaches transcultural healthcare. He also works in the emergency department at Metro Health Hospital, Grand Rapids, Michigan.