

TEACHING TIP

Comparing the AIDS and COVID-19 Pandemics Using the 5B Documentary

Documentary films bring viewers into new worlds and experiences through the presentation of factual information about real people, places, and events usually portrayed through the use of actual images and artifacts.¹ 5B, a 2019 American documentary, tells the story of a group of nurses and caregivers at San Francisco General Hospital who took extraordinary action to comfort, protect, and care for AIDS patients by opening the first AIDS hospital ward in the world, during the 1980s AIDS pandemic.² I incorporated 5B into an online nursing doctoral leadership course—in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic—as a visual tool to help students compare both pandemics from a personal and nursing leadership perspective. Students were instructed to consider the reflective questions of the “what” (describe both pandemic events), “so what” (apply leadership concepts such as self-knowledge, emotional intelligence, communication, and professionalism to the events), and “now what” (summarize how they will use their learning in developing their leadership skill). Using Web-based video conferencing in conjunction with an asynchronous discussion board, students discussed a plethora of leadership topics, highlighting how both pandemics are filled with an extraordinary nursing response. Students enthusiastically welcomed the opportunity to learn from peers and faculty with firsthand experience in either or both pandemics and to discuss the importance of leaders being visible, taking disciplined decisive action, and providing timely, honest communication in a crisis.

References

1. Bernard SC. *Documentary Storytelling: Creative Nonfiction on Screen*. 3rd ed. Taylor & Francis; 2011.
2. Krauss D, Haggis P. 5B. Released 2019. Available at <https://5bfilm.com>. Accessed August 4, 2020.

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