



# THE EFFECTS OF COMIC BOOKS ON BODY BEAUTY STANDARDS IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION CLASSES

## OS EFEITOS DAS HISTÓRIAS EM QUADRINHOS SOBRE OS PADRÕES CORPORAIS DE BELEZA NAS AULAS DE EDUCAÇÃO FÍSICA

## LOS EFECTOS DE LOS CÓMICS SOBRE LAS REFERENCIAS CORPORALES DE BELLEZA EN LAS CLASES DE EDUCACIÓN FÍSICA

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### ABSTRACT

This work is aimed at analyzing a pedagogical experience with comic books in Physical Education classes, up to Junior High school, with 14 ninth grade Brazilian students. Bibliographic and field researches were used as methodological procedures, characterizing a qualitative research. The field research was based on a pedagogical experience in the city of Cosmópolis/SP/Brazil. Field diary, participant observations and questionnaire were used. Women's participation in comic books, social values, the presence of technology in comic books and body beauty standards were the aspects identified by the students during the pedagogical experience.

**Keywords:** Physical Education; Comic Books; Culture.

### RESUMO

Este trabalho tem como objetivo analisar uma experiência pedagógica com o uso de histórias em quadrinhos em aulas de Educação Física, no Ensino Fundamental, com 14 estudantes brasileiros do nono ano. Pesquisa bibliográfica e de campo foram utilizadas como procedimentos metodológicos, caracterizando esta pesquisa como qualitativa. A pesquisa de campo foi baseada em uma experiência pedagógica na cidade de Cosmópolis/SP/Brasil. Diário de campo, observações dos participantes e questionário foram utilizados. A participação feminina em histórias em quadrinhos, valores sociais, presença de tecnologia em quadrinhos e padrões de beleza corporal foram os aspectos identificados pelos alunos durante a experiência pedagógica.

**Palavras-chave:** Educação Física; Histórias em Quadrinhos; Cultura.

### RESUMEN



Este trabajo tiene como objetivo el análisis y la experiencia pedagógica con el uso de los cómics en las clases de Educación Física, en la Enseñanza Primária, com 14 estudantes brasileiros del último año. Investigación bibliográfica y de campo fueron utilizadas como procedimientos metodológicos, caracterizando esta investigación como cualitativa. La investigación de campo fue basada en una experiencia pedagógica em la ciudad de Cosmopolis/SP/Brasil. Diário de campo, observaciones de los participantes y cuestionario fueron utilizados. Participación femenina en cómics, valores sociales, presencia de tecnología en cómics y padrones de belleza corporales fueron los aspectos identificados por los alunos durante la experiencia pedagógica.

**Palabras clave:** Educación Física; Cómics; Cultura.

## INTRODUCTION

According to data from IBGE (the Brazilian Institute of Statistics and Geography) from the second quarter of 2013 (Brazil, 2016a), in Brazil, among people at working age, 41% had not finished Junior High and 40.3% had managed to get at least a High School diploma. According to information provided by the Brazilian government (BRAZIL, 2016b), the biggest problem of school dropouts occurs at the final years of Junior High. During Physical Education classes, many students from Basic Education do not participate in the activities for various reasons: methodology and school curriculum cause exclusion and consequent dropping out from the proposed activities (DARIDO, 2004).

If the students do not take part in Physical Education classes, they do not have access to knowledge related to their bodies and about physical activities, as well as education for leisure and therefore miss out on the possibility of reflecting about its influence in their social environment. The mass media has a major role in the spreading of certain beauty standards. We can see, for instance, the image of the super heroes in comic books, movies, toys, items of clothing and so on. Then new studies and pedagogical experiments are needed for the change of these rates of Basic Education in Brazil. Thus, this research has this intention.

Taking this into account, Marcellino (1987) claims that it is necessary to consider leisure as an object of education – the education for leisure in a society guided by consumers' culture. The situation of the society at this stage of industrial production and consumption favors the cultural industry, which generates standard needs to make consumption easier, perpetuating or

making it harder to overcome conformity. Hence, it is really necessary to have an educational process which encourages imagination, criticism, i.e., education for leisure, not to create needs as the media does, but to satisfy individual, social and educational needs, which are transformed along the vital process.

## METHOD

It was made both bibliographic and field researches and the study is characterized as qualitative narrative study. This kind of study, according to Minayo (1994, p. 22) works with the “[...] universe of meanings, aspirations, beliefs, values and attitudes, which correspond to a deeper space in relationships, of processes and phenomena which cannot be reduced to the operationalization of variables”.

A revision of literature about the pedagogical action in Junior High School, based on super heroes comic books and education for leisure, was carried out by means of a bibliographic study, and that is the first stage of the research. Libraries from public Brazilian universities were used for looking up books, papers, dissertations and thesis, in addition to the Scielo database. The key words were: Comic books, Leisure, Pedagogical Action, Junior High School, Physical Education, Contemporaneity.

The second stage of the investigation was the field research carried out in a public school in the state of São Paulo, in the city of Cosmopolis, with students from the ninth grade (last year of junior high school) during Physical Education classes. The research was approved by the ethics committee under protocol 78/13. The group of volunteers was girls and boys. The students were



invited to participate in the research by the researcher in a Physical Education class. The volunteers were considered for the research. All the students this research are Brazilians. Eight classes on super heroes comic books were held at that location, during four weeks' time. There were two classes in a row every week. This place was chosen due to accessibility. The choice for the students is because ninth graders are more likely to be comic book readers, either Marvel's or Panini's; and also because they can buy products related to the characters and for being at a level in school in which theoretical elements can be introduced so they can have a qualified reading of media productions. The choice for Physical Education classes is due to the fact that comic books consider matters such as ideal body standard, in addition to compliance with the school authorities for the fulfillment of the investigation. The field research took place at Escola Municipal de Ensino Básico (EMEB) Cecília Meireles, in Cosmópolis – SP. Fourteen students participated in the investigation together in two classes on the same day once a week for a four-week period.

The aim for the group in the pedagogical experience was to enable them access to theoretical elements so they could develop critical thinking about Panini and Marvel Comic Books, taking into consideration education for leisure. The pedagogical action was based on Freire (2005) and Smolka (2000). At first, the researchers made sure the students understood the comic book story, so they could give some input of systemized knowledge. The schedule for the classes was the following:

#### **Week 1**

1. Presentation of the researchers and the research to be carried out and giving out of the "Agreement Form to Participate in a Research" to the students taking part in the research and their parents, according to the criteria from the Ethics Committee of Research in Brazil;

2. Reading a spidergirl Marvel's comic book together with the students (GUIA DOS QUADRINHOS, 2015);

3. Giving out one issue of the comic book so the students could read it as homework.

#### **Week 2**

1. Identify what the students grasped of the comic book;

2. Discussion of the main points that stood out from the story;

3. Enable them some critical thinking of the contents, in order to identify the meanings of the comic book, the characters' traits and dialogues.

#### **Week 3**

1. Present an analysis of the spidergirl Marvel's comic book to the students, in order to emphasize the relation between the content of comic books and the values and characteristics of modern society, as well as super heroes' body standards and the pursuit for beauty styles in modern society.

2. Identification of how the students understood the comic book they've read, considering the theoretical elements that were presented.

#### **Week 4**

1. Carry out a general evaluation together with the students in order to talk about the main points of the Marvel's comic book;

2. Apply the research questionnaire with the following question: what have you learned about comic books in Physical Education classes?

The register of the field research was carried out as a narrative of each class. The following techniques were used: 1) the field diary to take notes about the pedagogical process; 2) the observation of participants, according to Bruyne et al (1982), as well as the recording of classes. In addition to that, the questionnaire was used to identify the students' understanding of the comic book given.

In the third and last stage of the research, data analysis was carried out based on the bibliographic research performed in the first stage of the investigation.



During the whole process of data description and analysis, no identification of participating subjects was ever disclosed. Each subject was identified by means of a letter. In the register of the narratives during the classes, the word “teacher-researcher” was used to identify the person who developed the pedagogical actions with the students. In this case the investigation researcher.

The focus of the proposal was the development of a teaching method for Physical Education classes, aimed at education for leisure. In order to fulfill the proposal, a lot of knowledge is necessary from different fields such as Education, Physical Education, Leisure, and this will make the proposal multidisciplinary. Its multidisciplinary trait can also be observed in the construction of content to be discussed during Physical Education classes: the question about body beauty standards and the social values to be debated from super heroes comic books. In order to build this proposal, many subjects of the humanities are necessary such as: Anthropology, Sociology, Arts, Education applied to Physical Education.

## RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

1. Narratives related to the pedagogical action carried out at the school

### Week 1

First of all, the Physical Education teacher informed the students about the research to be carried out at the school and introduced the teacher-researcher to them. After that, the teacher-researcher introduced herself as an undergraduate student of Physical Education in a Brazilian university. Then she explained to them the objective of carrying out a field research and that they would take part in the following classes: super heroes comic books, education for leisure and body culture, which is how the media presents the image of super heroes. Next she told the students that they would participate in eight classes, which would be based on the reading of a super heroes comic book and they would have to answer questionnaire about the classes at the

end. In addition to that, during the second and third classes, they would do an analysis and some critical thinking about the same story from the comic book.

The students were asked about their reading habits and most of them said they were regular readers. When they were asked if they wished to participate in the research, they all agreed to do so.

After that, the teacher-researcher asked the students if they liked super heroes comic books and most of them said they did. Then she proceeded to ask who their favorite characters were and if they saw them in other places rather than in the comic books. There were various answers, but as a whole, most of them said on the *internet*, movies and the most popular one is “The Avengers”.

The students were given out one TCLE (Agreement Form to Participate in a Research) and one was also given to their parents, in compliance with the criteria of the Ethics Committee of Research in Brazil. Next, the teacher-researcher explained to them how to fill out their TCLEs and also asked them to instruct their parents, in case there could be in doubt and so on. They all agreed to bring their parents' TCLE by the following class, which should be given back to the teacher-researcher.

After the paperwork was out of the way, the teacher-researcher started the research by handing the students the following story - “She's one of my girls”, taken from the comic book entitled “Spiderman's Web: the essence of fear”, from Marvel Comics. In this story, the main character is Spidegirl (Anya Sofia Corazón), licensed by Marvel Comics, an American company created by the authors Fiona Kai Avery and Mark Brooks. The character of Anya Sofía Corazón, who is 16, is a super heroin with the secret identity of Spidegirl, who fights crime in her spare time. She got her powers from a member of the Society of the Serpent and she has a simbiotic exoskeleton, as well as agility and superhuman force. (GUIA DOS QUADRINHOS, 2015).

*Summary of the plot: She's one of my girls...*



*New York is under siege by many gigantic robots called Octobots (created by Dr. Octopus). Spiderman and other super heroes are fighting these robots in the city. Amidst all the chaos, Spiderman is knocked unconscious by one of the Octobots and falls into a swimming pool. At this moment, Spidegirl comes to his rescue and he's out of harm's way – at least temporarily. After that, he tells her not to get involved in the battle against the robots. She takes his advice and goes back to fighting petty crimes because there was a lot of looting around the city.*

The teacher-researcher gave the students some time to read the story silently. When they had finished reading, she asked for volunteers to read aloud. A girl was picked to play Spidegirl and a boy was Spiderman. The other characters were played by the teacher-researcher. Then they all started reading it as a group and everyone followed the plot.

## **Week 2**

At first the teacher-researcher took back the comic books she had lent the students and started to explain about the origin of the comic book, which it is believed to be very primitive, since prehistoric times, because cavemen depicted their activities on the walls of caves and they had a sequence to them, even though they were not drawn inside frames. She also explained that nowadays the comic books have their own characteristics – they are basically composed of reframing, which means that each frame divides the story by time, images, captions, onomatopoeias and texts, and that all those components are used to create a comic book.

After that, the teacher-researcher asked if they had identified any aspects from the story that could be related to their daily lives. They said yes. One thing was about Spidegirl who was always posting pictures on social media or making comments about things she did. The students were excited about some similarities and things they could relate to. Social media is so commonplace nowadays that virtually everyone

keeps posting what they are doing, much like the plot in the comic book.

One of the students pointed out that he had never seen a woman rescuing a man in a comic book before. Most of the other students agreed. After that, the teacher-researcher talked about certain super heroes' traits. What did the super heroes have in common? What caught the students' eyes? One student said “[...] their specific weapons which made them very different”. Another one said “their outfits were similar, specially in this story of Spidegirl and Spiderman”. Another student didn't know Spidegirl even existed. These and other observations can be found in Senna (1999) about the diversity of characters' styles present in comic books.

Next the teacher-researcher explained the origin of Spiderman - that he was a regular teenager who had been stung by a spider created in a lab by a scientist, and all his powers derived from that, such as the web coming out of his wrists, the ability to climb walls and so on. To wrap it up, the teacher-researcher asked the students if they had noticed the language used in the stories, which contains a lot of slangs and very informal vocabulary. They agreed and she continued explaining that this is commonplace in most stories – the fact that writers want to relate to the teenagers, who are the majority of the readers, thus getting closer to the way they speak and communicate among themselves.

## **Week 3**

This class took place at the Multimedia Room and a Power Point presentation helped students to visualize the plot more vividly. The teacher-researcher told the students that a comic book is a form of art depicted in frames, and that nowadays it has been transformed into products, which strengthen the cultural industry, i.e., the stories are created in such a way aimed at selling whatever products which are related to them. The products can be found not only in the comic books, but also in books, movies, TV series, items of clothing, toys, album of cards, and so on. Virtually anything is targeted at the consumer



market, even the body standards, since they try to impose them to the readers and wish they will pursue those standards and buy whatever products which are related to them.

The teacher-researcher also explained that comic books have their own characteristics and when they are created the writers use:

- Frame/reframe: they are only squares in which the time and events are divided into the story;
- Captions: where the characters' dialogues or words go;
- Reminders: frames which tell readers if something happened between one frame and the next;
- Onomatopoeia: are the sounds which replace words;
- Kinetic lines: are the lines related to the characters which show when they are moving;
- Visual metaphors: they can replace some words to convey an idea, such as a skull would mean danger or death, hearts on top of the head would mean the character is in love, and so on.
- Drawings: are the characters, backgrounds, etc.
- Contents: are the plots.

After that, the teacher-researcher got to the main topic of the class which was the super heroes comic book in itself. She said that the creation of such stories is targeted at young audiences and the act of reading them is considered leisure - that this kind of material is an object for leisure. The super heroes have super human powers, that is, we don't see people with those powers walking around us. The super heroes also have common traits such as they are normally caucasian, Americans, very strong, with noble intentions and wear very tight outfits which are hard to ignore in the sense that you can see every single muscle and every single curve.

After that, the teacher-researcher made a list of some points the students thought were relevant. Then she showed them an image of the story they had read, in which the informal language was spoken by the super heroes. In addition to that, she asked them if this kind of language is common in their lives, and they said

yes. Actually, most of the time, and that it is quite common to hear a lot worse than that because people make many mistakes when they speak. She explained that this kind of colloquial language is intended to bring the reader closer to the plot and characters, so the story is more appealing, and that the reader is motivated to buy other comic books and keep on reading.

The teacher-researcher showed the students that technology is also present in this story, because Spidegirl keeps posting what happens on social media. Next she asked the students if technology was something positive or negative and most of them agreed it was something positive because it made communication a lot easier and faster. They also mentioned that they can talk to people anywhere in the world and learn about different cultures without leaving their houses.

Berton (2000) cited by Dias and La Taille (2006) points out the benefits from the use of the *internet* to broaden horizons, relationships, knowledge, and so on, but that we must use technology sensibly without letting it affect our daily lives to the extent that we do not enjoy the company of people who are near us.

The teacher-researcher drew attention to the fact that technology was something positive, if used wisely, like Spidegirl did in the story: the heroin posted the address of the flower shop which belonged to the woman who got hurt and asked readers to go there and buy flowers to help her out. She also said that it is very easy to be connected 24/7 and do not realize what is going on around us; that we can miss out on the really important things, and spend time with other things that will not benefit us in any way.

Another topic which was analyzed with the students was about girl power – how much women have achieved over the years. The students said that they had never seen a female character saving a male character in a comic book. The teacher-researcher said that the empowerment of women is present everywhere; that women are working hard for their place in society and that they do not depend economically on men anymore. Women are not treated as victims or as people waiting to be rescued; so much so that they are rescuing others too. In the



professional field, they are also having jobs that were predominantly held by men in the past. She told students that most comic book plots are intended to the male audience, and that is the reason why the way women are portrayed in the stories is the way men would like them to be.

After that, she showed the students some magazines with advertising about the pursuit for the perfect body and asked them if they had seen similar images from other means of communication. Then she told them that the media has a calculated intention by advertising those images, because the super heroes are always in excellent shape, they are good-looking and strong, and that should be our goal to achieve too. This fact alone boosts an entire industry dedicated to products related to the ideal body shape that we are all supposed to attain, regardless the cost. However, this so called “perfect body” may never be achieved and can also cause a series of psychological problems related to the rejection of one's own body such as low self-esteem. People will do whatever it takes, even if this means resorting to the use of illegal substances to speed the process, which could lead to several problems to one's health and even the risk of death.

As previously mentioned, the comic books are an object of leisure. There are three levels to leisure: the elementary/conformist, in which the reader reads and accepts everything without questioning anything; the medium/critical: in which the reader can criticize what it is read to see if it is feasible or not; and last, but not least, the critical/ creative, which is the level she hopes everyone gets to in their leisure activities, when they come to a point in which they can be critical of what is being imposed to them and be creative to have their own ideas about any topic imposed by the media.

After talking to the students about those topics, the teacher-researcher made two questions so the students could think about them: to what extent can the media influence the pursuit for the perfect body? Do we have to adapt to the body standards spread by the media?

One student who goes to the gym said that he liked it a lot because he wanted to have a nice

body, to be more attractive to the ladies; but not to be huge, but not fat either. But if you are fat and good-looking... Then the teacher said: can you be fat then? And the same student replied “[...] fat, no way”. Another student said she goes to the gym “to be prettier”. Bodies that are out of shape feel dissatisfied and are often reminded of that. The reinforcement of the media in showing attractive bodies drives people into pursuing an idealized body shape (RUSSO, 2005, p. 81).

We can see similar results in a study by Fermino, Pezzini and Reis (2010) in which the reasons why younger people go to the gym are mostly related to the appearance and improvement of quality of life motivated by social matters. They also point out that the dissatisfaction with their body image is more related to well-being than physical fitness.

Therefore, it is crystal clear that the students admit they must pursue the body standards imposed by the media. Featherstone (1991 cited by RUSSO, 2005, p. 81), says:

[...] the muscle is a way of life nowadays. The means of communication contribute and motivate the struggle for “beauty”. At present, when you watch TV or browse a magazine or newspaper, perfectly curved girls and muscle toned guys try to sell a car, a household appliance, a pair of sneakers, in such a way that establishes body standards. This fact turns people into slaves of an ideal body shape, enhancing narcissism and imposing an extremely severe discipline that can also be painful.

The teacher-researcher concluded by saying to the students that the purpose of the third class was to make them more aware of things they read, hear, watch and in this way they can be more critical of the comic books and the way body standards are spread by the media, so that they can be more accepting of differences and avoid excessive consumption, prejudice of race, gender, body shapes and so on.

#### **Week 4**

During the last class, the teacher-researcher recapped the topics from the previous class. When



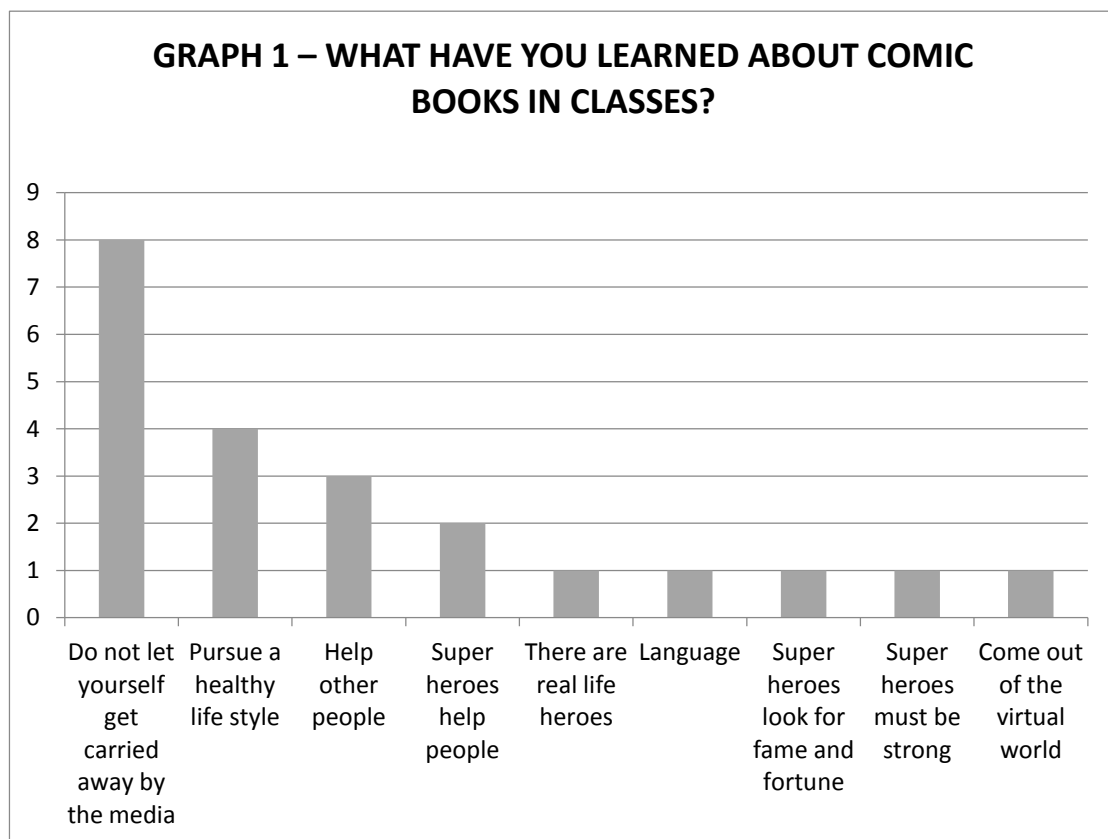
asked what the main points were and what they had grasped, one of the students said “we should respect other people's bodies”; another one said “we shouldn't care about the media and be happy with the way our bodies are”; yet another said “health is the most important thing”.

The teacher-researcher reminded them of what they had discussed in the previous class about body shapes, that super heroes are good-looking, strong, and wear tight fitting costumes to reinforce that idea. Therefore, that is the standard we should follow and it is present everywhere we go – the pursuit for the ideal body. However, they may use illegal substances to achieve their goal more quickly, and that can harm their bodies, and the market of such substances is growing very fast. Consequently, we should think about the need for following whatever is thrown at us, once those standards can generate conflict among people.

Next the students were reminded of the technological aspects, and how they can facilitate the spreading of information and how this phenomenon is present in our daily lives by all the posting on social media that goes on at every moment people do things almost simultaneously, like Spidegirl did in the story. She also reminded them about the language used, that it is the closest to the way teenagers would speak, i.e., slangs, condensed words, informal dialogues so that the young readers relate to the stories.

At the end of the class, the students were asked to answer a written questionnaire about the content of the classes. The main question was: “What have you learned about comic books in classes?” The answers were summarized in the graph below. More than one answer was considered for each student.

Figure 1 – Question to students



Note: By the authors

The results from this question point to clues to the importance of the development of

pedagogical actions with the students stemming from the comic books and if they can contribute





with the development from the conformist to the critical/creative level as far as leisure is concerned.

The responses related to the media as an influencer to body standards and the search for a healthy life style were more present. As one student pointed out: "I've learned that we must accept ourselves the way we are because a healthy life style is much better than keeping up with appearances. I've learned that we cannot let ourselves get carried away by the media" and another student said: "comic books are always in the media and motivate us to follow a standard to be like the characters".

We can see that the students made critical comments about the super heroes from comic books, thus reinforcing the fact that they are a great source of teaching material for the diversity of topics to be discussed, as Vieira (2007, p. 88) claims:

From the moment the hero is not the symbol of the dominating ideology anymore to become the focus of criticism and resistance to the reader's passiveness, comic books transcend the level of leisure to represent a form of liberation endowed with all the virtues of literature and the great arts. Therefore, every day we come across works of strong critical and political contents, with increasingly more humane heroes who are close to our daily lives, and whose narratives serve as case studies about the time and context they are inserted in.

According to the results, we can make a correlation with Mauss (2003) and Ferrés Prats (2014). Mauss (2003) speaks about body techniques considering that the way we walk, the way we behave, and how we express ourselves physically derive from a social learning, and the main motivating element for this learning process is the role models from higher social status; and the process stems from imitation. Therefore, it is common to see families, for example, with children who walk like their parents. According to Mauss (2003), this is a construction mediated by the family relationship and by the prestige which drive the

children to learn the body techniques by imitating their parents. We can transfer this to consider superheroes from comic books as being the prestigious characters for their readers because they have a desirable body shape which is the reference for the beauty standard, in addition to social values because the superheroes are good-natured and want to help people, do good deeds and so on.

Thus comic books as a media and art production can convey to the reader this reference of physical beauty by means of the superheroes and make the readers appreciate these characters for their achievements. This can generate the effect of imitation and the pursuit for role models who come closer to this beauty standard. Therefore, it is necessary a pedagogical process at school in order for the students to have the chance to think about that, as the purpose of this investigation has been. The generation of conditions so that students can develop critical thinking also involves the knowledge about themselves. Ferrés Prats (2014) makes contributions to our analysis since he, based on studies of Educational Communication and neuroscience grounds, indicates that the development of a critical point of view from students concerning the media takes place through the process of understanding their own emotions.

Hence, media productions in general motivate the subjects to produce emotions which support the idea that is being conveyed, as in the case of comic books, for example, the support would be to appreciate the way the characters are, with their powers, in addition to the plot. This process generates an array of emotions in the subjects which can lead them to wish they were like the superheroes, or to have the superheroes as their role models. This can lead to the purchase of products such as clothing, food, and even lead to the extreme measure of undergoing cosmetic surgery to achieve the ideal body.

The school has the fundamental mission of enabling students access to knowledge, and this can be achieved by the construction of situations in which the students can display their emotions,



express their thoughts about the proposed topics, where the media and the superheroes can be the center of observations, according to what has been developed in this investigation. Consequently, it is expected that the students will rationalize their emotions and the meanings assigned to the superheroes and the comic books in order to develop a more critical and creative attitude. Marcellino (1987) claims that education for leisure at school is necessary so that the individual can develop a more critical/creative capacity of consumption of leisure objects.

The answers related to gender, which are present in the discussions of contemporaneity such as the role women play in society and the predominance of male readers, must be emphasized and we consider that they can be used as a central topic in future researches.

We will not deepen ourselves into some of the answers given by the students; not because we deem them unworthy, but because they do not fit the purpose of the present study. However, we know that the use of comic books as teaching material together with the pedagogical practices can help develop other aspects beyond one's objectives, in a more pleasurable way.

Educators working with this kind of resource are responsible for interpreting both literary and linguistic aspects (SANTOS; VERGUEIRO, 2012), along with the visual aspects which characterize comic books (MCCLLOUD, 2005), thus enabling the reader to acquire new knowledge and understand the relation between the subject and values of society (RAMOS; DUMONT, 2008).

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to the students' opinions and their responses in the final questionnaire, it was

possible to identify some elements stemming from the classes which signal the students' understanding of the topic investigated here: Women's participation in comic books, social values, the presence of technology in comic books, and body standards were the aspects identified by the students during the pedagogical experience. The results showed that there was a development on the part of the students in the school investigated as to the awareness of the presence of the media as an influencer of beauty standards.

The pedagogical process developed here in four weeks of classes was also an attempt to construct pedagogical actions in order to identify what knowledge students had about comic books, and also to compare their initial ideas about this topic. The inspiration for this pedagogical process was one of the educational processes of leisure – the education for leisure, which is based on the studies of Marcellino (1987). The novelty of what was constructed in this work stemmed from the combination of pedagogical, cultural and leisure references, which had as the central element the meanings attributed by the students to the comic books and the superheroes - in this case the main character was a superheroine. We want to make clear that we did not have the intention of making students dislike comic books, but to make possible their access to knowledge so that they can appreciate comic books in a critical and creative way, as an option for a reading activity in their free time.

Other investigations about the topic carried out in both public and private schools in different cities are welcomed and can be used as a source of comparison in terms of the results that were obtained.



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