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SEX EDUCATION AND MEDIA: CHALLENGES AND POSSIBILITIES FOR SCHOOLS

EDUCAÇÃO SEXUAL E MÍDIAS: DESAFIOS E POSSIBILIDADES PARA A ESCOLA

EDUCACIÓN SEXUAL Y MEDIOS DE COMUNICACIÓN: RETOS Y POSIBILIDADES PARA LAS ESCUELAS

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ABSTRACT: The debate surrounding the inclusion of sexuality in the school curriculum has not been resolved since its introduction in the National Curriculum Parameters (PCN) in 1998. Recently, terms related to sexuality were removed from the latest version of the National Common Curriculum Base (BNCC) of 2017 for Early Childhood and Elementary Education, reinforcing the fact that sexuality remains a taboo, especially in discussions about the school curriculum for children. On the other hand, the difficulties faced by teachers when attempting to address this topic highlight the need for continued studies in the area that value discussions about practices in sex education. This article aims to foster reflection on possibilities for addressing sexuality in schools and the introduction of sex education in elementary school. It brings the issue of media into the discussion, considering possibilities for practices in sex education in which they can be great allies. For data collection and analysis, we chose a narrative literature review. This article can contribute to the continuing education of teachers and spark interest in this area of education.

KEYWORDS: Sex education. School curriculum. Media. Elementary education.

RESUMO: O debate sobre a inserção da sexualidade no currículo escolar não foi resolvido após sua introdução nos Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais (PCN), em 1998. Recentemente, termos relacionados à sexualidade foram suspensos da última versão da Base Nacional Comum Curricular, de 2017, para a Educação Infantil e Ensino Fundamental, o que reforça ser a sexualidade ainda um tabu, principalmente quando nas discussões sobre o currículo escolar para crianças. Por outro lado, a dificuldade apresentada pelos/as professores/as quando nas tentativas de abordagem sobre essa

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temática salienta a necessidade de continuidade de estudos na área que valorizem a discussão sobre as práticas em educação sexual. Este artigo tem como objetivo fomentar a reflexão sobre possibilidades de abordagem da sexualidade na escola e a introdução da educação sexual no Ensino Fundamental. Traz para a discussão a questão das mídias como coadjuvantes nas práticas em educação sexual, da qual podem ser grandes aliadas. Para a coleta e análise de informações, escolhemos a revisão narrativa da literatura. O artigo pode contribuir para a educação continuada de professores e despertar o interesse por esta área da Educação.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Educação sexual. Currículo escolar. Mídias. Ensino Fundamental.

RESUMEN: El debate sobre la inclusión de la sexualidad en el currículo escolar no se ha resuelto desde su introducción en los Parámetros Curriculares Nacionales (PCN) en 1998. Recientemente, los términos relacionados con la sexualidad fueron suspendidos de la última versión de la Base Curricular Nacional Común (BNCC) de 2017 para Educación Infantil y Primaria, lo que refuerza el hecho de que la sexualidad sigue siendo un tabú, especialmente en las discusiones sobre el currículo escolar infantil. Por otro lado, las dificultades que presentan los docentes al intentar abordar este tema resaltan la necesidad de estudios continuos en el área que valoren la discusión de las prácticas en educación sexual. Este artículo tiene como objetivo fomentar la reflexión sobre las posibilidades de abordar la sexualidad en la escuela y la introducción de la educación sexual en la Educación Primaria. Trae a la discusión la cuestión de los medios de comunicación como coadyuvantes en las prácticas de educación sexual, de los cuales pueden ser grandes aliados. Para la recolección y análisis de datos, optamos por una revisión narrativa de la literatura. Este artículo puede contribuir a la formación continua del profesorado y despertar el interés por esta área de la educación.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Educación sexual. Currículo escolar. Medios de comunicación. Educación primaria.

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of sexuality becomes complex when we consider its different dimensions, as well as the interferences that have occurred throughout human history, which have guided our understanding of this issue, transforming its meanings. Among those responsible for these influences that have directly influenced and continue to influence the way human sexuality is understood are religion and science linked to medical-hygienist currents, according to Ribeiro (2002).

According to Maia and Ribeiro (2011), the social dimension that influences the conception and standards related to sexuality is part of what is understood as sex education, which, when carried out in a systematic and planned manner in the educational sphere, is understood as school sex education.

Such education, in the early decades of the 20th century, was the subject of many books released by renowned publishers in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo (Reis & Ribeiro, 2004) and, closer to the 1980s, sex education was the subject of major debates in the sphere of educational policies that discussed the school curriculum, according to Barroso and Bruschini (1982). In the 1930s, physician José de Albuquerque created the Brazilian Circle of Sex Education (CBES), proposed that sex education be brought to schools across the country, published books, organized conferences, and used radio to disseminate sexual topics to the public through lectures (Reis & Ribeiro, 2004). Precisely because he effectively brought sex education to the radio, José de Albuquerque is the great pioneer who managed to reach many listeners simultaneously using one of the most important traditional media outlets (Albuquerque, 1935). Another space used by José de Albuquerque for sex education was the museum. In 1934, he created the Museum and Art Gallery of Sex Education, which received student excursions organized by school principals (Oliveira et al., 2023). Until its official recommendation to be introduced into the Brazilian school curriculum as a cross-cutting theme, through the National Curriculum Parameters (PCN) (Brasil, 1998), in the 1980s and 1990s there were several attempts to include and work with sexuality in schools, but these always came up against moral obstacles surrounding the issue, as pointed out by Werebe (1998) and Gallacho (2000).

Sex Education is a subject that provokes conflict when discussed as a possibility for inclusion in the curriculum. After the inclusion of “sexual orientation” in the National Curriculum Parameters (PCN) in 1998, this issue was not resolved and opinions continue to diverge. In 2017, the terms “gender identity” and “sexual orientation” were removed from the latest version of the National Common Curriculum Base (BNCC) for Early Childhood Education and Elementary School, a fact that highlights the existence of certain conservative views on issues related to sex education, especially when directed at children.

In this sense, the taboo surrounding sexuality seems to be amplified when it is brought into the realm of childhood, which can be observed historically when we consider, for example,

the repercussions of the first studies on this subject conducted by Freud in the 19th century, which, in turn, caused astonishment in society, for which sexuality contradicted the ideas of “purity” and “innocence” linked to childhood (Werebe, 1998).

However, beyond discussions about the concept of childhood, it is important to note that, since Freud, different studies have addressed the issue of sexuality in childhood and the way in which it manifests itself. According to Maia (2005), these manifestations of childhood sexuality are diverse and can occur in peculiar ways, often as a means of expressing curiosity and discoveries about the body, as well as personal relationships.

Thus, when it comes to sex education for children, many obstacles are encountered that are not limited to curriculum policies, but also to “how to do it.” This difficulty in relation to the practice of sex education for children is mentioned among teachers according to different studies that address this theme, pointing to the need for specific training that meets the needs of these teachers on the subject, in addition to discussion about practices in sex education, reflecting on the possibilities and challenges in light of the current curriculum configuration.

In this sense, this article aims to encourage reflection on possible approaches to sexuality in schools, considering sex education in the early years of elementary school. For the collection and analysis of information, we chose a narrative review of the literature, which, according to Rother (2007, p. v-vi), is appropriate

to describe and discuss the development... of a given subject from a theoretical or contextual point of view... [consisting] basically of an analysis of literature published in books, printed and/or electronic journal papers. This category of papers plays a fundamental role in continuing education because it allows readers to acquire and update their knowledge on a specific topic in a short period of time... These are considered narrative review papers and are qualitative.

Based on this methodology, we were able to gather information to describe and analyze sex education as a fundamental element of basic education and how its applicability encounters political and social barriers mistakenly based on prejudice, value judgments, and ignorance of its meaning and essence (Ribeiro, 2013, 2019).

CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING GENDER AND SEXUALITY ISSUES

According to Anacleto and Maia (2010), gender relations are culturally constructed based on the socialization of individuals in the family and at school, and in childhood, this socialization becomes important both for recognizing biological differences and for constructing an understanding of masculinity and femininity.

Thus, the first notions about gender issues are constructed as we come into contact with different information about gender roles, which are transmitted to us in various ways

from an early age. This process already includes expectations regarding the individual's gender and sexual orientation. According to Silva (2017), once they know the sex of their child, some behaviors are common among parents who announce their expectations regarding their child's gender. Thus, even aspects such as the decoration of the baby's room, in addition to the types of first gifts, often express these expectations.

More recently, a practice related to the moment before the baby's arrival can also exemplify how much society still naturalizes what is socially constructed as feminine or masculine. Some families prepare an event commonly called a "gender reveal party." The purpose of the event is to reveal the sex of the unborn child to the family and guests. To this end, at a certain point during the event, some devices (smoke, liquids, among others) are presented to everyone, revealing the color blue when the baby is a boy and pink when it is a girl.

We cannot ignore the fact that there are different social and economic contexts and that, therefore, the issue of colors and clothing is not always a choice, but rather a condition. After all, we are talking about children, not a universal model of childhood (Kramer, 2006). The processes of constructing sexuality and gender occur in a unique way for each child based on the dialogue between their experiences in the school and family context, with the participation of everyone involved, in a process of learning exchange that occurs explicitly and implicitly (Schindhelm & Evangelista, 2013).

However, in addition to colors, attitudes and behaviors understood as appropriate for girls or boys are also transmitted from childhood. The behaviors and social roles exercised within the family convey notions about the expectations attached to each gender. And so, in general, children reproduce certain patterns observed in everyday family life in their play (Kishimoto & Ono, 2008).

Furthermore, according to Figueiró (2007), from a very early age we understand that "being a man" or "being a woman" is determined by one's sexual organs. Consequently, sexual orientation would be closely linked to this determination. In other words, individuals born with male sex organs would be attracted to individuals born with female sex organs and vice versa.

However, first of all, it is necessary to consider that gender identity is a plural concept, since individuals are constructed through different experiences, categories, and dimensions, such as religion, culture, social class, among others. These make gender identities no longer defined solely by male and female, based on the fact that there are multiple masculinities and femininities (Silva, 2017). Secondly, sexual orientation is a concept independent of gender identity and is not defined in childhood, as stated by Petrenas et al. (2014). In this sense, there are multiple ways of constructing and experiencing sexuality, and it is necessary to consider this aspect so that behaviors and attitudes of discrimination and prejudice are not reproduced.

According to Silva (2017), the plurality involved in the norms of experiencing sexuality, both in relation to gender identities and sexual orientation, is not considered in the school context, which reinforces the cis/heteronormative model.

According to Maia and Ribeiro (2011), schools have a role to play in denaturalizing sexist concepts and promoting sex education for children so that they have the necessary resources to critically reflect on the content they receive through the cultural industry, among other media. Sex education in schools requires reflection on the possibilities of a process that promotes criticism and the overcoming of taboos and prejudices related to sexuality, and also broadens its scope to include issues of citizenship and human rights (Ribeiro, 2013).

APPROACHES TO SEX EDUCATION

According to Brol and Martelli (2018), the insecurity reported by teachers in developing sex education in their work environment, coupled with the lack of attention to this issue in the training of these professionals, hinders the implementation of enlightening practices regarding sexuality in the school context and, in this sense, reinforces the need for educators to have continuing education that addresses this topic. Thus, sex education is often based on the experiences of teachers, who transmit their own beliefs and values according to how they were educated about sexuality.

In this sense, it is necessary that the training of these professionals provide conditions for them to reflect on their taboos and prejudices about sexuality, in addition to overcoming the conception that it is limited to the biological dimension.

When discussing the issue of addressing sexuality in school, Brol and Martelli (2018) state that teachers, as sex educators, play an important role in students' knowledge of the subject, even if they remain silent about it: "When we are in contact with a child or adolescent, whether or not we answer their questions, we are educating them sexually and, directly or indirectly, influencing the construction of concepts, ideas, and values" (Brol & Martelli, 2018, p. 279).

The authors justify the need for this approach to be taken in the school context, considering that, outside of it, sex education can be restricted and influenced by repressive conceptions, as well as prejudices.

According to Furlani (2011), many of those who propose thinking about sex education do not consider it necessary to reflect on the approach to be followed, and most relate this work directly and solely to the field of Biology. However, according to the author, there are different contemporary approaches to sex education in schools, with differences and similarities between them, but which reflect implicit concepts in pedagogical actions. These are: the "biological-hygienist approach"; the "moral-traditionalist approach"; the "therapeutic approach"; the "radical religious approach"; the "human rights approach"; the "sexual rights approach"; the "emancipatory approach"; and the "queer approach." According to the author, the latter four approaches are similar in terms of valuing diversity.

Furlani (2011) adds that the “human rights approach” stems from a historical context that emerged after the second half of the 20th century, when social movements and theoretical currents propagated categories of analysis other than social class, demonstrating the multiplicity of subjects based on markers such as gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, among others, which were often linked to mechanisms of social exclusion that revealed the lack of universality of human rights, forming a contingent of excluded groups. Thus, the “human rights approach”: “[...] is one that speaks, explains, problematizes, and destroys the negative representations socially imposed on these subjects and their excluded identities” (Furlani, 2011, p. 24).

The “sexual rights approach” is based, as its name suggests, on the Universal Declaration of Sexual Rights. According to Furlani (2011), the document was initially drafted in Spain at the 13th World Congress of Sexology, then revised and finally approved at the 14th World Congress of Sexology, held in China in 1999. According to Furlani (2011): “Although it was drafted in a general sense with regard to diverse sexual identities, the declaration can be seen as a political document, one of demands and achievements, of recognition and respect for subordinate groups and/or individuals” (p. 24).

In this sense, sex education based on the “sexual rights approach” encompasses not only knowledge about the biological dimension of sexuality, but also the problematization of social aspects that include issues of gender, sexual orientation, and all the multiplicity involved in matters related to sexuality, in order to combat discrimination of this kind.

Another very important point regarding the declaration is the recognition of sex education as a right that must be guaranteed throughout the lives of individuals. Thus, this approach provides for working with sexuality in schools from childhood onwards, which, according to the author, requires specific training so that it can be carried out appropriately by teachers.

The assumptions of the “emancipatory approach” are based, above all, on Marxist ideas disseminated in Brazil, especially by Paulo Freire, according to whom education is a political act aimed at transforming reality, granting freedom to the oppressed through an educational practice based on criticism and active participation. According to the author: “In general terms, it is possible to say that the idea of emancipation advocated by this academic strand is associated with enlightenment (awareness) that will lead to individual freedom of choice” (Furlani, 2011, p. 33). Oppression in relation to sexuality occurs through sexual repression, which must be overcome through critical awareness made possible by education.

The “queer approach,” according to Furlani (2011), emerged at the end of the 20th century, based on challenges made mainly by gay and lesbian feminist liberation movements regarding the hegemony of a single homosexual identity. However, according to the author, queer theory is not limited to sexual issues, but encompasses other categories of analysis. Thus: “It is an intellectual, investigative, and critical attitude, a rejection of a normative system of meaning” (Furlani, 2011, p. 36). To think about a proposal for sex education based on

a queer approach is to think about an educational stance that guarantees constant critical reflections on “truths,” in order to provoke questioning about the mechanisms that explain their construction within a normative field. It is also essential to think about sex education in an approach that involves citizenship and human rights, as Ribeiro (2013) argues.

Based on this brief explanation of approaches that understand diversity as positive for today’s society, it is necessary to think about the possibilities of working with sex education that are relevant to this position.

Among the difficulties reported by teachers in attempting to address sexuality in school, based on studies by Spaziani and Maia (2015), Fiorini (2016), Campos and Miranda (2022), Ribeiro and Desidério (2023), Jesus and Silva (2025), among others, we were able to formulate these questions: How can sex education be linked to the current school curriculum? What activities in the field of sex education are relevant when considering teaching and learning situations involving children? How can activities in the field of sex education be linked to other areas of knowledge? What resources can be used in this work?

Thus, we consider that reflection and study on practices in sex education and continuing teacher training are extremely important for overcoming the difficulties of working with sexuality topics in school.

MEDIA CONTENT AND SEX EDUCATION: A WORKING PROPOSAL

While the inclusion of sexuality in school curricula still faces obstacles, informal sex education has been provided through various means, particularly the media in general, which deliberately conveys sexual content, as well as attitudes and behaviors that explicitly express ideas about gender issues, either implicitly or explicitly.

According to Varela and Mello (2015), it is necessary to promote dialogue about sexuality-related content that is accessed indiscriminately by children through digital media. Among media resources, television is still an important means of communication, given the large number of people who have access to this device. Although there is a wide variety of media, especially with the advancement of new technologies and the internet, and children and young people’s access to these new resources is growing, television, as well as other devices considered more traditional, currently coexists with new media resources.

According to Fischer (2013), television is a medium that influences the behavior and ideas of those who watch it. This influence extends to issues related to gender relations and sexuality. For Ribeiro (1990), television disseminates content related to sexuality through soap operas, among other programs that exert a strong influence on attitudes and ideas about sexuality.

It is necessary to reiterate that when we say sexuality, we are referring to sexuality in its broadest sense, which also involves gender issues. In this regard, it is possible to observe that this content also gains space in television programming. Thus, models of family,

behaviors conceived as feminine or masculine, and social roles according to gender are equally transmitted, albeit implicitly, on a daily basis, reinforcing patterns that are disseminated indiscriminately.

Therefore, it is up to schools to address this issue, offering opportunities for clarification and providing people with the tools they need to critically analyze television content.

As stated in the BNCC, one of the general competencies presented in the document refers to “understanding, using, and creating digital information and communication technologies in a critical, meaningful, reflective, and ethical manner in various social practices [...]” (Brasil, 2017, p. 9). In this sense, it is necessary for students to have the ability to understand the influence that media content has on people’s lives and, thus, to be able to critically analyze it.

It is interesting to note the space that digital language has taken up in the curriculum through the BNCC, being mentioned at various points in the document, which suggests a change in teaching methods. Thus, it is possible to establish a connection between the various media and the school and to think of ways to promote not only sex education, but education in its broadest sense, in a critical way.

According to Kornatzki and Chagas (2015), the field of study focused on the educational process in the face of the development of new technologies, especially involved with projects such as Innovative Technologies for an Engaging Classroom (iTEC), has used the term “learning scenario” to consider the possibilities and limits of initiatives in the field of education that involve the use of technological resources.

According to Cranmer and Ulicsak (2015), learning scenarios are narratives that describe teaching and learning situations, which, unlike lesson plans, are flexible and can be adapted to the needs of each context.

Seeking to describe teaching and learning situations involving sex education using media resources, the aim is to inspire reflection on the possibilities and challenges of working with sexuality in schools. Two books edited by Desidério (2016, 2018) offer reflections on the media as a resource in Sex Education, including chapters in which advertising campaigns and commercials are analyzed in terms of their use of contexts in which gender inequality appears. With a view to contributing to teacher training, the publishing house Pedro & João has published a collection on Sexuality & Media with a series of books that address sexuality in films, of which we highlight Bortolozzi and Carvalho (2020) and Carvalho and Bortolozzi (2020).

To construct this scenario, therefore, some guiding aspects were considered: objectives based on the school curriculum for Elementary Education (Brasil, 2017); activities and tasks, that is, what happens in the scenario; the space in which the scenario will develop; those involved in the learning scenario; and resources to support the development of activities.

Although topics related to gender and sexuality issues have been removed from the latest version of the BNCC for Early Childhood Education and Elementary School, Leão et al.

(2024) point out that some skills contained in the document, specifically in the area of Science, can guide work involving these themes.

In addition, it is necessary to consider some of the general objectives of the BNCC expressed in the document itself:

1. Value and use historically constructed knowledge about the physical, social, cultural, and digital world to understand and explain reality, continue learning, and collaborate in **building a fair, democratic, and inclusive society...**

9. Exercise empathy, dialogue, conflict resolution, and cooperation, commanding respect and promoting **respect for others and for human rights**, welcoming and **valuing the diversity** of individuals and social groups, their knowledge, identities, cultures, and potential, **without prejudice of any kind.** (Brasil, 2017, p. 9, emphasis added)

In this sense, we understand that “building a fair, democratic, and inclusive society” that promotes “respect for others and for human rights” as well as “valuing the diversity” and combating “prejudice of any kind” is a society that promotes sex education in order to discuss ideas, taboos, and prejudices about gender and sexuality issues, aiming to overcome them.

Although these topics are not explicit, it is clear that they are relevant to be addressed in school, considering the general objectives outlined by the BNCC.

Furthermore, when we think about work involving media resources, we have the support of the BNCC, which emphasizes the importance of a critical and reflective approach to different types of language: “Critical reflection on the topics covered and the validity of the information” (Brasil, 2017, p. 73).

Below, in Table 1, we will describe these scenarios which, as Cranmer and Ulicsak (2015) point out, can be thought out and adapted according to the contexts.

Table 1

Learning scenario

Gender stereotypes present in the media	
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowing how to identify stereotypes present in the media regarding gender issues; • Critically reflect on stereotypes involving play; • Valuing diversity within the children’s universe; • Taking an investigative approach to knowledge; • Using language appropriately to express ideas and opinions; • Understanding art as a way of interpreting the world, capable of expressing feelings and opinions; • Using graphic language to express information.
Spaces	Classroom; computer lab
People involved	Teacher and students
Resources	Cardboard; markers; computer; internet

Gender stereotypes present in the media

Activity 1: Survey of previous knowledge

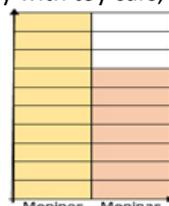
The activity begins with the following questions for students:

- 1) Have you ever played or often play with toy cars, kites, or balls?
Personal answer.
- 2) Have you ever played or often play with dolls, “mommy and daddy,” or kitchen?
Personal answer.

After answering the questions, students share their answers with their classmates.

Based on the answers, the data will be organized into two graphs created collectively, as shown in the following example:

Have you ever played or often play with toy cars, kites, or balls?



Sources: The authors

The graphic resource will display the results of this small survey. The questions below will help analyze the answers:

- 1) Were there any differences between boys’ and girls’ answers regarding playing with toy cars, kites, or balls? Comment.
- 2) Regarding playing with dolls, “mommy and daddy,” or kitchen, was there a difference in the responses between boys and girls? Comment.

Thus, the initial discussion on the topic takes place when, upon analyzing the answers given to the questions, students are encouraged to reflect on their prior knowledge about gender issues, which are also present in their choices of children’s games.

Activities and tasks

Activity 2: Textual analysis and initial discussion

First, the title of the text, available on the internet, *Kitchen for boys and toy cars for girls! Brand creates gender-neutral toy catalog* (Crescer, 2014) is presented without the other structural elements, so that students can activate their prior knowledge and make inferences about the text.

At this point, hypotheses regarding the term *gender*, which may not be known to everyone, are discussed. Then, the text is shared in its entirety. The first reading is done by the student.

Thus, some questions may be proposed:

- 1) What do you understand by gender?
Personal answer.
- 2) Now, with the help of a dictionary, write down the meaning of this word and share the definitions you find with the class.
- 3) Have you heard or seen this word before? Discuss and share with your classmates.
Personal answer.
- 4) Looking at the title, what do you think the text will be about?
Personal answer (it is interesting to note down your inferences about the title so that, after reading, they can be compared with the ideas presented in the text).

Subsequently, students read the entire text and observe whether their hypotheses are correct or not in relation to it. After the students have finished reading, they are given the opportunity to discuss the text. This discussion is developed through the following questions:

- 1) What is this text about?
It is about toy brands that have created catalogs without gender determination for their products.

Gender stereotypes present in the media

- 2) List and briefly describe the images in the text.
Image 1: A boy and a girl playing with toys that imitate kitchen utensils.
Image 2: A boy and a girl playing together with small dolls.
Image 3: A boy and a girl playing with different toy guns.
Image 4: A boy and a girl playing together with toys that represent tools.
- 3) What is curious about this images?
The images show boys and girls playing with different toys.
- 4) Have you ever played with a toy that you consider to be of a different gender than yours? How did you feel?
Personal answer.
- 5) Have you ever witnessed a situation of prejudice involving these issues? If so, comment.
Personal answer.

It is important that the teacher encourages the class to reflect on possible experiences in which the issue of colors, toys, and playing brings this differentiation between what may be part of the female world and what may be part of the male world, always with a view to overcoming this dichotomy and determinism.

Activity 3: Further exploration of the topic

The next text is entitled *Why is pink a "girl's" color and blue a "boy's" color?* (Ferraza, 2018) and is also available on the internet. It provides important explanations on issues involving gender relations.

Students read the text and then answer the following questions:

- 1) What is the subject of the text?
The historical explanation for things that are considered for boys and girls.
- 2) According to the author, why are there colors for boys and girls?
For commercial reasons (marketing).
- 3) Today, people often say that dresses are "for girls." Has it always been this way? Explain it based on the text.
No. Until the end of the 19th century, young children of both sexes wore dresses, which facilitated movement and hygiene.
- 4) What did the Cambridge University study conclude?
The study concluded that the preference for toys is socially acquired, not innate..
- 5) What is your opinion on this after reading this article?
Personal answer.

Below are some words related to toys, objects, and actions:

VARRER A CASA	SKATE	JOGAR FUTEBOL COZINHAR	CHORAR	BOXE
COR DE ROSA	BOLA	CAIXA DE FERRAMENTAS	BONECA	COSTURAR
BALLET				BICICLETA

Source: The authors.

The children copy and organize the words according to their opinion in a table arranged in three columns, named respectively: "things for men or boys"; "free"; "things for women or girls." When the word indicates something that the child considers to be "a thing for men or boys," they copy it into the first column. When the word indicates something that the student considers to be "a woman's or girl's thing," they copy it into the third column. When the word indicates something that the child considers to be a man's/boy's or woman's/girl's thing, that is, free, they copy it into the middle column.

Activities and tasks

Gender stereotypes present in the media

Activity 4: Television media analysis:

The teacher shows the video Brinquedos Estrela (Children's Day) – 1989. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SbmvHLISnFQ>. This is a commercial made by the company Estrela (Manufatura de Brinquedos Estrela S.A), shown in the 1980s in Brazil, around Children's Day. The commercial shows images of children playing with some toys made by the company. The images, according to an analysis of the material, contain a lot of content related to gender issues, which can be critically addressed in the school context.

First, the children are informed about the task to be performed in groups. Each group first identifies some important aspects related to the material itself. Thus, it is important that they create hypotheses about the type of media, when it was broadcast, by what means of circulation, which company was involved in the work, what it aimed to achieve with it, and what audience it wanted to reach. These questions are recorded so that all groups know how to focus their attention on the object to be analyzed.

The groups are also informed of their second task, which consists of analyzing an image taken from the video. Based on this image, the groups produce a short text describing and reflecting on possible issues related to the theme addressed in the previous activities.

Beforehand, however, everyone will watch the commercial a few times and discuss it among all the groups.

This debate is conducted through a series of questions posed by the teacher, such as:

- What is the difference between these images you saw and the images in the article Kitchen for boys and toy cars for girls! Brand creates gender-neutral toy catalog?
- How does this video relate to what we have already studied and discussed about girls and boys?
- What is your opinion on this?
- Is it correct to say that dolls are toys for girls? Why?
- Have you ever seen anything like this on TV?
- Script template for analysis:

About the video:

- 1) Through which medium was this media broadcast?
- 2) When was it broadcast?
- 3) Which company was involved in the work?
- 4) What was this company's objective with this work?
- 5) What audience did it want to reach?

About the image:

- 1) Describe what is happening in the image you received.
- 2) What concept related to gender issues is present in it?
- 3) After what we have discussed, what is the group's opinion on this?

Activities and tasks

Activity 5: Expressing opinions through Art:

Each child receives a sheet of paper on which they express their opinion on the following question through painting and drawing: does play have a gender? The drawings should also be displayed on the class board.

Activity 6: A sort of conclusion:

Finally, the teacher revisits the poster made in activity 3 with the class and redraws it according to the new opinions formed on the subject. The new poster will be displayed on the class board.

It is important to emphasize that this moment is called a "sort of" conclusion, as work on issues related to sexuality should be continuous in the school environment, whether in relation to other regular school content or in the attitudinal content that occurs in everyday life.

Classes can be adapted according to the needs of each group. In addition, other subjects, such as Science, can be incorporated into this approach.

Note. Own work.

The activities were designed to promote interaction between different areas of knowledge. An attempt was made to create a scenario consistent with the current configuration of most Brazilian public schools. Thus, simple and traditional resources are mentioned, but also content conveyed in digital media.

FINAL REMARKS

Sex education as a subject taught in schools and an area to be included in educational practice was first proposed in the early decades of the 20th century and reached its peak in the years 1990-2012, when Brazilian society experienced its period of greatest freedom, resulting from the struggles for civil rights after the 1964-1985 dictatorship and the promulgation of the 1988 Constitution (Bedin, 2010, 2016; Bedin et al., 2020; Ribeiro, 2019).

However, a conservative morality took hold in Brazil starting in 2014, and progressive issues such as sexuality, gender equality, homophobia, diversity, human rights, violence against women, and freedom of expression began to be opposed and execrated by half of Brazilian society, a half that called itself “right-wing” or “far-right” and became the most powerful political configuration in Brazil, which since 2018 has incited unparalleled hate speech in Brazil against any thought, idea, or value that could be associated with the left-wing. As a result, the issue of sex education, especially sex education for children, has become a major taboo. The subject of diverse opinions, the issue has ultimately suffered the consequences of these conservative conceptions that ignore science, new studies, and the scope of the topic.

Brazilian schools no longer have as one of their goals the development of reflection, criticism, questioning, empowerment, and political awareness. Instead, the object of desire is civic-military schools that create subservient, unthinking students and future citizens who follow orders and are likely to reproduce hate speech and trivialize science.

We do not agree with this perverse, reckless and uneducated direction taken by a large portion of Brazilians, which has hindered the country’s social and political evolution and confused the unwary minds that today claim the right to lead the nation. That is why we insist on the importance of fostering reflection, political awareness, and empowerment, both social and gender-based, as well as stimulating and creating possibilities for sex education practices that consider teaching methods in which the student is an active subject in the process, taking advantage of the different resources we have at our disposal in order to make them active citizens aware of their rights and duties, as well as those of others. In this sense, we reiterate the importance of proposing studies that socialize sex education as a transformative practice, valuing diversity and life.

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