COMIC BOOK TECHNIQUE AS A METHODOLOGICAL RESOURCE APPLIED IN NURSING

TÉCNICA DO GIBI COMO RECURSO METODOLOGICO APLICADO NA ENFERMAGEM

TÉCNICA DEL CÓMIC COMO RECURSO METODOLÓGICO APLICADO A LA ENFERMERÍA

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How to cite this article: Brito MJM, Caram CS, Moreira DA, Rezende LC, Cardoso CML, Caçador BS. Comic Book Technique as a methodological resource applied in nursing. Rev. baiana enferm. 2019;33:e29895.

Objective: to describe the use of the Comic Book Technique as a methodological resource applied in nursing care, teaching and research. Method: this is a user experience study developed in teaching, with undergraduate and graduate students in nursing, assistance during nursing consultations, and research as a way of collecting data in qualitative investigations. Results: the Comic Book Technique proved to be a strategy accessible to different audiences and situations, favoring the expression of individual and collective subjectivities. From this point of view, the (re)meaning and (re)construction of daily experiences, based on the use of the Comic Book Technique, has become relevant, becoming an object of investigation. Conclusion: the Comic Book Technique has been presenting itself as an innovative methodology in the health field, favoring the critical-reflexive approach to everyday practices, considering its different forms of expression and approaches.


Objetivo: descrever o uso da Técnica do Gibi como recurso metodológico aplicado na assistência, no ensino e na pesquisa em enfermagem. Método: trata-se de estudo tipo user experience desenvolvido no ensino, com estudantes de graduação e de pós-graduação em enfermagem, na assistência, durante consultas de enfermagem, e na pesquisa, como forma de coleta de dados em investigações qualitativas. Resultados: a Técnica do Gibi revelou-se como estratégia acessível a diferentes públicos e situações, favorecendo a expressão de subjetividades individuais e coletivas. Nessa ótica, a (re)significação e a (re)construção de experiências cotidianas, almejadas na utilização da Técnica do Gibi, tem-se mostrado relevante, passando a configurar-se como objeto de investigação. Conclusão: a Técnica do Gibi vem
se apresentando como metodologia inovadora no campo da saúde, favorecendo a abordagem crítico-reflexiva sobre as práticas cotidianas, considerando suas diferentes formas de expressão e abordagens.


Objetivo: descript el uso de la Técnica del Cómic como recurso metodológico aplicado en la asistencia, la enseñanza y la investigación en enfermería. Método: es un estudio del tipo user experience realizado, en el ámbito de la enseñanza, con estudiantes de grado y post-grado en Enfermería; en la asistencia, durante consultas de enfermería; y, en la investigación, como una forma para recolectar datos en investigaciones cualitativas. Resultados: la Técnica del Cómic se evidenció como una estrategia accesible a diferentes públicos y situaciones, favoreciendo la expresión de subjetividades individuales y colectivas. Desde esta perspectiva, se ha demostrado que la (re)significación y (re)construcción de experiencias cotidianas, basadas en el uso de la Técnica del Cómic, resulta ser relevante, configurándose entonces como un objeto de investigación. Conclusión: la Técnica del Cómic se presenta como una metodología innovadora en el campo de la salud, favoreciendo así un enfoque crítico-reflexivo sobre las prácticas cotidianas, si se consideran sus diferentes formas de expresión y enfoques.


Introduction

The Comic Book Technique is a methodological strategy that uses comics to generate a medium of communication that blends individual, collective image, text, and experiences\(^1\). Comic books are considered a form of artistic expression that enables the externalization of subjectivities\(^2\). In the Comic Book Technique, the subject, through these stories, submits interpretations of their experience, establishing a relationship with their context, which is essential for the discovery of new knowledge and exchange of knowledge.

Nursing, from its conception, was linked to care and involved technical-operative, ethical-moral and social responsibility elements\(^3\). In this logic, it is assumed that care encompasses dimensions that include care, teaching and research. Thus, the use of the Comic Book Technique in nursing seeks to pay attention to changes and improvements in the pillars that make up nursing care.

Historically, health practices were based on positivist bases, curative logic and hegemonic models that favored the logic of the objectivity of doing, making secondary the expression of subjectivities of the actors involved in different processes and professional practices. However, global changes in society, and specifically in the field of health, have brought to light the need and relevance of rescuing the subjectivities of individuals involved in the diverse spaces of action and care production. Thus, it is necessary to adopt innovative strategies that grasp the subjectivity involved in the care process and meet the individual and collective demands in nursing care, teaching and research that allow reflection and sensitization of the subjects\(^4\).

In the present study, care is considered the proper end of nursing practice, that is, its internal good\(^5\). As an internal good, we understand what is inherent in a practice, giving it meaning and social legitimacy\(^6\). Thus, assuming care as a proper end of nursing practice requires recognizing that the means used for its implementation are transformed by the contextual changes, as well as the economic, social and political dynamics of society\(^5\).

In this context, the Comic Book Technique is revealed as a strategy for rescuing the subjectivity of the actors involved in care through the images and stories told in comic books. Such a strategy is capable of providing an individual reading of the experiences, which are situated in a certain context, causing the subject to develop his own discourse and not to use prescribed and mechanical discourses that arise in his context of practice. In addition, the Comic Book Technique allows for exchanges of experiences and knowledge, allowing a “think
about” the daily practices, which is facilitated by the representation, in comics, of real life events, in which the characters express feelings that surround the life of the way it goes.

This article can contribute for nurses working in different contexts of health services, teaching and research to create possibilities for new modes of care production, seeking to understand the subject in its context. Moreover, it may allow the dissemination of an innovative methodological strategy in the production of knowledge.

This study aims to describe the use of the Comic Book Technique as a methodological resource applied in nursing care, teaching and research.

Method

A study of the user experience type about the use of the Comic Book Technique developed in health services, teaching and nursing research, which are configured as different contexts of care production.

The use of the Comic Book Technique is a playful strategy aimed at capturing experiments on specific phenomena represented by comic book comic books. The Comic Book Technique is presented as a resource to be used in individual and collective spaces that require the expression of subjectivities of certain people or groups, providing interaction between those involved.

The Comic Book Technique methodology can be applied individually or collectively. Those involved should choose pictures in any part of the magazine, including the front and back cover, that refer them to a previous question or guiding statement. Low cost resources such as scissors, glue, paper, and copies of comic books.

This report presents experiences regarding the use of this technique in nursing care, teaching and research, describing how the technique was applied, as well as its potentiality and weaknesses.

Regarding the use of the Comic Book Technique in nursing care, it should be noted that it was applied in a prenatal nursing consultation of a teenager, to explore singularities of her experience as a pregnant woman. To this end, the teenager was invited to reflect, having the comic as a trigger element. The questions that guided the technique were the following: What does it mean to be a mother to you? What feelings have you experienced in pregnancy? What changed in your life after pregnancy? Then, the teenager presented her pregnancy experience through the elected figures, explaining the meaning of each one.

In teaching, the use of the technique occurred in undergraduate and postgraduate Nursing courses of a Brazilian university and also in a training course for professionals related to the care of users of alcohol and other drugs, in a rural municipality of Minas Gerais.

In undergraduate course, the technique was applied in the Collective Health Nursing II discipline, 6th period of the Nursing course, in which 32 students participated. The Comic Book Technique was used at the beginning of the course, with a view to capturing the students’ previous experiences, their historicity and life background. This was a trigger moment for the student to reveal his understanding of specific content, favoring debates and analogies with daily life. At the end of the course, the technique was used again, so that the students, in groups, could synthesize the theoretical contents learned.

In graduate school, the technique was used in the Care Management discipline, in which 25 students participated, organized in groups. The guiding question permeated the discussion about the management and production of health care, considering the dimensions of the manager, the worker and the user. Aspects related to the care of the other and the care of the caregiver were analyzed, as well as the technological knowledge in the work management. It was proposed to the students to retrieve their experiences from the professional practice and from the readings previously indicated.

In the health improvement course, the Comic Book Technique was used so that the professionals who serve families and users of alcohol and other drugs could build reflections.
Comic Book Technique as a methodological resource applied in nursing care, teaching and research. In the scope of assistance in Primary Health Care the section will address the contribution of the technique to the creation of bonds with users, as well as the promotion of autonomy and the provision of humanized care. As for its use in teaching, the section will express the use of the technique as an active teaching methodology, enabling the construction of knowledge in a participatory and reflective manner. In the scope of the research, the use of the Technique will be approached in the apprehension of the experiences and capture of the subjectivity.

Using the Comic Book Technique for Nursing Assistance

The Comic Book Technique was applied during prenatal consultations of a teenager who lives in rural areas of a municipality in the inland of Minas Gerais. The teenager was being accompanied by the clinical nursing teacher, along with students, in the curricular stage of the Collective Health discipline.

The bond with the adolescent was created before her pregnancy, during a consultation in which she sought the service to learn about her menstrual cycle, fertile period and contraceptive methods. To assist her, a work of approximately two months with monthly consultations was performed. During this follow-up, the teenager became pregnant. This moment was of frustration for students and teacher, as they believed that they had failed in the approach, which had been considered as complete and integral.

During consultations, the adolescent was happy with the pregnancy, but did not adhere to the necessary care guidelines, even if the students and the teacher exhausted their pedagogical
resources so that she understood the importance of these recommendations. Among the identified nursing problems, gestational weight gain stood out due to inadequate nutrition.

Considering the behavior adopted by the teenager, the teacher was motivated to use the Comic Book Technique, in order to understand the moment lived by her and, through this information, contribute to the development of her self-care. The subjective production of care must consider the environment in which it lives, and this is marked by constant deconstruction and construction of knowledge, according to certain criteria that are given not only by prior knowledge, but also by the sensitive dimension of the perception of life and the self even in the construction of social reality\(^{(8)}\). Thus, the technique allowed for the understanding, by the professionals, students and teachers, of the subjectivities that permeated the adolescent’s ways of being and living, contributing to a coherent assistance with the lived reality.

The use of the Comic Book Technique to approach the pregnant adolescent allowed the realization that the pregnancy was planned, that the adolescent was happy and naturally waiting for the moment to experience motherhood. Her yearning to see her belly grow, to take photographs, was also clear, which justified the weight gain. Thus, it was possible to understand representations about the ways of taking care of the baby, highlighting problems and nursing diagnoses that had not been identified before, such as the belief that it was necessary to put on a lot of weight so that the baby was healthy.

It is noteworthy that nursing is connected to health production and has care as the focus of its actions, its internal good. Thus, the practice should combine technical and ethical elements of nursing care, based on principles, values and skills in a co-responsible and welcoming environment.

Therefore, it is necessary for nurses to improve their skills in order to use intervention strategies based on values that manifest themselves in the interest, respect, attention, understanding, consideration and affection for the other and the community\(^{(9)}\). From this perspective, nursing practice tends to reach care in an intentional and planned manner, based on the mobilization of competences that are facilitated by instruments such as the Comic Book Technique.

This technique allowed the team that accompanied the adolescent to approach the world lived by her, deconstructing expectations elaborated by health know-hows, for the construction of a care consistent with the adolescent’s reality. Thus, the Comic Book Technique enabled the exchange of knowledge, the expansion of the bond and autonomy of the user and provided the provision of humanized and welcoming care\(^{(9)}\).

**Using the Comic Book Technique as a Strategy in Teaching Care**

The Comic Book Technique was applied in different teaching contexts: undergraduate, postgraduate and further training courses. The participants, in the context of teaching, expressed their representations on specific themes, through the relationship with the image, related to the affective, cognitive and aesthetic; to reading, which is expressed in world views; and the created reflections, emanating from future experiences and projections, revealing the density of the information that could be obtained through the technique\(^{(10)}\).

Regarding the use of the technique in nursing education, it is worth considering that the changes in the social, political, economic and cultural context, linked to the technological and digital revolution, led to new demands and a new student profile. Traditional training no longer meets students’ ideals and the new health paradigm. Therefore, it is necessary to train professionals who question the current model of health care, seeking to focus on the authenticity of relationships and the involvement of subjects towards co-responsibility and humanization\(^{(11)}\).

A study\(^{(12)}\) conducted with students from the Federal Institute of Education, Science and Technology of Rio de Janeiro, which aimed at the creation and evaluation of a comic and a
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paradigmatic text as an educational resource for teaching about the risks of self-medication, revealed that the comic strip aroused greater interest and motivation of the participants. The data showed that the methodology employed helped in the learning, increasing the knowledge about the approached theme. The use of comics enables dynamic teaching, which can contribute to the learning of subjects from the areas of Health Sciences and Social Sciences.

The technique allowed for reflective and investigative learning, and provided conceptual, methodological and behavioral changes in the participants through questions and expressive daily life experiences. In addition, it enabled theoretical deepening and processes of subjectivation of hitherto abstract concepts, such as health surveillance and management and leadership, which brought them closer to daily reality through the expression of knowledge on the subject materialized by the comic book figures.

A research study developed with students from the Undergraduate Course of the Nursing School of the University of São Paulo (Escola de Enfermagem da Universidade de São Paulo, EEUSP) used comics and revealed that this type of methodology allowed for the synthesis and expression of knowledge in a playful and dynamic way. In addition, the learning process was active, allowing for the protagonism of the students.

The current context of training requires that the educator encourages the protagonism of the student, through the use of strategies that aim at a process of knowledge construction with dialog and participation, without the imposition of knowledge transmitted vertically. Thus, the potential of the Comic Book Technique is to enable the mediation of knowledge construction processes in a playful, participatory and reflective manner.

Using the Comic Book Technique as a nursing research strategy

The innovative research process is one of the key points for nursing to reach new levels in terms of the research. Thus, the Comic Book Technique in the research was used as a data collection strategy, providing the researcher with a new look at the study’s object. This is made possible by the engagement with the image, reading and the reflective proposition created by the participants.

The figures that make up the comic reveal the representation of each subject’s world view, portraying an individual reading. The participants can produce a speech of their own, away from the “ready-made speech” created in the workspace and shared by everyone on the team. In addition, free expression by the participants is a facilitating factor for communication/interaction between those involved in the research process, and another important attribute that qualifies the use of the Comic Book Technique in this context.

In qualitative research, the Comic Book Technique offers a range of application possibilities. Thus, after performing the first stage, which consists of guiding participants on the technique, each researcher may choose to follow different paths, considering their object of study. In the next stage, the magazine is delivered to the participant, so that the participant can choose figures that help them in the answer to the guiding question.

In one of the dissertations, 31 professionals from the multidisciplinary team of an Intensive Care Unit of a Teaching Hospital took part. The participant was asked to cut and paste figures representing the following statements: “a job that has meaning...”, “a job that has no meaning...”. In this study, the participants could choose the image or speech of the characters anywhere in the magazine.

In another study, the application of the technique was performed with seven Primary Health Care nurses and guided by the following statement: “Express, through a figure, your experience with the Manchester Protocol in this unit.” In this research, we decided to photograph the chosen figures, because more than one participant could select the same one. In addition, the participants were instructed to...
choose only the scenes presented in the comic and not the speech.

The third dissertation\(^{(17)}\) applied the Comic Book Technique with five professionals from the Family Health Strategy team. The guiding statement was the following: “Represent, through one or more figures, health care practices in the context of the Quilombola Community”. For this study, the participants could choose the image or speech of the characters and it was established that he could choose more than one comic book figure, and could even retell a story.

The application of the Comic Book Technique enabled the participants of the research described to retrieve everyday experiences. In addition, it favored the capture of the subjective aspects, which reinforces the need to use innovative methodological resources in qualitative investigations.

Conclusion

The Comic Book Technique has proved to be an innovative methodological strategy, favoring the imagination and helping to rescue forms of expression of subjectivities in the production of the care.

In the care, the technique made it possible to reach objective and subjective aspects that permeate the process of living, becoming ill and being healthy, related to the expression of feelings, beliefs, values and meanings. Using images and textual constructions typical of comic books stimulated the reflection process and made the environment warm and playful, favoring communication. It is considered that adopting the Comic Book Technique in health services may provide subsidies for a better understanding of the context of the lived experience, contributing to the construction of care practices closer to the comprehensiveness and reality of being cared for.

In teaching, the technique consists of a resource that helps teachers to elaborate reflections on the students’ previous experiences, as well as to facilitate the group discussion and reflection on the subject at hand. Moreover, because it is a playful moment and active participation of students, allows greater interaction between participants and capture of the lived moment, because it involves manual activity of construction, sensation and feelings.

In scientific research, the technique was considered as a potential strategy for data collection, as it provides the investigation of complex phenomena, which require a greater degree of analysis. It is worth highlighting the use of the technique specifically in qualitative research, given that this type of study requires the researcher creativity to make use of methodological alternatives that enable breaking with positivism, with a view to achieving the subjectivity of the subjects, in the midst of their experiences. Therefore, this data collection strategy allows participants to express representations about a given reality, contributing to the researcher’s grasp of subjectivity.

It is important to emphasize the importance of the dialogic encounter between researchers/study participants, teachers/students and professional/patient, since the use of a playful technique fosters creativity and sensitivity in the field of knowledge production in nursing and care.

It is noteworthy that the Comic Book Technique requires time, creativity, and sensitivity in the elaboration of guiding questions or discussion triggers. In addition, it is necessary to open oneself to listening and undressing preconceptions and preconceived constructions. Due to the effectiveness on using the technique in the experiments described, it is essential that further studies are carried out in order to diversify scenarios, themes and ways of application.

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