

Book 2: Arte para enseñar a hablar a los mudos.

(Method of Teaching Deaf-Mutes to Speak)

By Juan Pablo Bonet (1620; 125-133) - Translation by H.N. Dixon (1890; 151-6).
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Capitulo III.

*Que por demoftraciones fe lehan de dar a entender
al mudo las letras.*

Por lo que auemos dicho en el capitulo antecedente quedamos excluydos de podernos valer del oydo, y conforme a esto, necesitados de procurar q̄ otro sentido fupla la falta de aquel. Esto podrá hazer la vista, que ya que por ella no pueda entrar la voz, podrá el cono cimientto de su formacion, tan abil y perfectamente, que la forme el mudo como si la huiera oydo. Y para esto fe deue tener por cierto que son prestisimos en aprehender las demoftraciones que fe les hazen, porque afsi pretenden fuplir la falta del oydo, y muy abiles en facilitar las, que ellos hazen para fer entendidos, y fuplir la de la habla. Y afsi el inftrumento q̄ fe ha de tomar para enseñarles, ha de fer aquel en q̄ ellos eftà mas diestros, y el fonido de las letras fe les ha de dar a entēder por demoftraciones. Y podráfe hazer por auerlas dexado en el libro paffado defnudas y purgadas de aquella compoficion q̄ tenian los nombres de las diez y siete, y con esto apropiadas para que las reciba el mudo, porque no le pediremos mas que vna refpiracion, que effa tambien pueden expelerla los mudos, como los que no lo fon, y aquella refpiracion arrojada, eftando los labios y dientes en la parte que fe requiere la formacion del nombre de alguna letra, formarle hã: y el exēplo de esto lo conoceremos en vna guitarra, que pueftos los dedos en la confonancia que quifieremos, qualquier que con su mano llegare a dar vn golpe en las cuerdas, hara vn mismo fonido, aũq̄ no quiera. Afsi tãbiẽ teniẽdo el mudo su boca en la forma q̄ los q̄ no los fonos, la ponemos para la formacion de vna letra y arrojãdo la refpiracion q̄ significã nueftras letras, fabrà leer, q̄ effa facilidad trae cõfigo el auer dados nombres fimples, pues cõyrlas nombrando el mudo aprieffa, guardãdo en las dicciones las paufas que ellas mismas dan a entēder, yrã leyendo y por que antes de enseñarle a que nombre las letras en voz, las ha de conocer

Chapter III.

*The letters have to be taught the deaf by means of
signs.*

By what has been said in the preceding chapter we find ourselves excluded from using the hearing, and we are therefore obliged to make some other sense supply the lack of this one. This the sight is able to do for though by its means the sound itself cannot enter, yet the knowledge of its formation can do so, and so well and perfectly that the deaf-mute can pronounce it as well as if he had his hearing. And for this it must be accepted as certain that the deaf are both most quick to comprehend the gestures made to them, because they attempt thus to supply the loss of hearing, and very clever at making use of them themselves, which they do in order to make themselves understood, and to fill the place of speech. And so the instrument to be chosen should be one to which they are habituated, and the sounds of the letters must be made known to them by signs. And this can be done, as in the former book [Simplification of the Letters of the Alphabet], by denuding and clearing them of that compound part which the names of the seventeen letters possess; and they are thus made fit for the deaf-mute to receive, since we need but a single articulation for each, and this can be uttered by the deaf as well as by the hearing; and they have to pronounce any letter by producing this articulation with the lips and teeth in the position required for the pronunciation of its name. An illustration of this may be found in the guitar, for if the fingers are placed on any combination of strings, it matters not who strikes the strings the same sound will be produced, whether voluntarily or not.

Thus, also, when the deaf-mute holds his mouth in the same position as ordinary people, we have put him in the position to form a letter, and if he utter the sound the same letter will be pronounced that we make; and by learning to pronounce the total

muybiẽ, y faber por demoftraciones de la mano loq̃
repreſenta cada vna, fe pone acabado eſte capitulo
el abecedario demoftratiuo de manos, ſignificando
la poſtura que tiene cada vna, la letra que eſtã
fobre ella vna mayuſcula, y otra comun, para que
à ambas conozca el mudo, y ſepa que a vna y otra
repreſenta aquella figura. Y demas de para los
mudos es curioſidad que deũẽ faberla todos para
diferentes caſos que fe pueden ofrecer.

Y en la antiguedad fe deuio de tener por
conueniente el faber vſar de demoftraciones de las
manos y de oſtras partes del cuerpo, para
ſignificar letras ycuẽtas, fegũẽ colige de lo q̃
eſcriue Iuan Bautiſta Porta en fu libro de *Furtiuis
literarum*,ⁱ trayendo muchos modos de cuentas
que vſauan por la mano. Y como tambien por
demoftraciones di diferentes partes del cuerpo que
fe tocauan, vſauan ſignificar las letras, entendiẽdo
la A, por *Auris*, que fon las orejas, B. *barbã*, la
barba, C. *capud*, la dabeça, D. *dentes*, los dientes,
E. *epar*, el higado, F. *frontem*, la frente, G. *gutur*, la
garganta, H. *humeros*, los ombros, I. *ilia*, la hijada,
L. *linguam*, la lengua, M. *manũ*, la mano, N. *naſum*,
la nariz, O. *oculos*, los ojos, P. *palatum*, el paladar.
Q. *quinquedigitos*, los cinco dedos, R. *renes*, los
riñones, S. *supercilia*, fobre las cejas, T. *tempora*, el
eſpacio de las fienes, V. *ventrem*, la barriga. No
vſaron demoftraciones para la K, x, y, z, porque
como queda dicho en el libro primero, eſtas no fon
vſadas en la lengua latina.

Y boluiendo a nueſtra enſeñança, le haran formar
al mudo con fu mano derecha todas aquellas
figuras como parecen pintadas, y el que le
enſeñare las hara tambien, por que aprenda con
mayor facilidad, viendolas imitadas en la mano del
maeſtro, y a cada vna que le fueren haziẽdo, le
yran ſeñalãdo con el dedo de la mano yzquier da la
letra que ſignifica, hafta que ſin ver la
demoftracion de la mano del que le enſeña, ni las

number of articulations which our alphabet
represents, he will know how to read, and the
facility with which he does it is the result of having
given the letters their ſimple names: then by
proceeding to name them quickly, retaining the
pauses between the words, the deaf-mute will
learn to read. And ſince, before teaching him the
ſpoken names of the letters, he muſt be well
acquainted with them and know the manual ſign
which represents each one, we have placed the
manual alphabet at the cloſe of this chapter,
ſhowing the poſition of the hand for each letter,
with the ſymbol written above it – both the capital
and the ordinary form, ſo that he may know both
of them and the figure which represents them. And
apart from the deaf it is a matter of intereſt that
all ought to learn for ſpecial occaſions that may
ariſe.

In ancient times it uſed to be held a conuenience
to know the uſe of ſigns with the hands and other
parts of the body, to represent letters and
numbers, as we gather from the writings of John
Baptiſta Porta, in his work *De Furtiuis Literarum*,ⁱ
where he enumerates many ways of reckoning by
means of the hand. And in the ſame way, touching
different parts of the body uſed to ſignify letters:
indicating A by *auris*, the ears; B, *barba*, the
beard; C, *caput*, the head; D, *dentes*, the teeth; E,
epar, the liver; F, *frons*, the forehead; G, *guttur*,
the throat; H, *humeri*, the ſhoulders; I, *ilia*, the
flanks; L, *lingua*, the tongue; M, *manus*, the hand;
N, *naſus*, the noſe; O, *oculi*, the eyes; P, *palatus*,
the palate; Q, *quinque digiti*, the five fingers; R,
renes, the kidneys; S, *supercilia*, the eyebrows, T,
tempora, the temples; V, *venter*, the belly.
We have not given the manual geſtures for k, x, y,
z, ſince, as has been ſaid in Book I., they are not
employed in the Latin language.

Returning to our teaching, we muſt cauſe the deaf-
mute to form with his right hand all theſe ſigns as
they are ſeen in the pictures, the teacher doing
the ſame, ſince the pupil will learn them with more
eaſe if he ſees them imitated on the hand of his
maſter; and when each one is made we muſt point
with the left hand to the correſponding letter, until,
without ſeeing the picture or the ſign on the hand
of the teacher, he knows how to make each letter,

pintadas, fepa hazerlas, y conocer la letra de cada vna en vn abecedario que adelante pondremos de letras mayúsculas y comunes, que le feruirà de prueua, para que se conozca si està bien enterado de las de la mano, y despues interpoladamente se le yran mostrando en la letura del libro, pidiendole que signifique con su mano la que el maestro tocara con el dedo. Y ferà muy neccessario que en la casa donde huuiere mudo todos los que supieren leer, sepan este abecedario para hablar por el al mudo, y no por las señas, que entendiendo por la mano, o por escrito no ferà bien que vñen dellas, los que le hablen, ni le permitan a el que se valga dellas, fino que responda a boca a lo que se le preguntare, aunque yerre en la locucion de sus respuestas: y tendrase cuidado de enmendarle siempre, que todos los que aprenden qualquier lengua estraña haziendo folecismos, y notando como se los corrigen, llegan a faberla.

Capitolo III.

Declaracion de las demostraciones que significan la jota, ygriega, zeda, y tilde.

Las demostraciones deste abecedario de manos dan a entender que significan las letras que tienen sobre ellas, y por ser tan diferentes en las formas las mayúsculas de las comunes, se pone como esta dicho ambas, y adviértese para entender quã do la I, ha de tener voz de jota, que se ha de menear la mano (estandose en su misma figura de I,) como si con el dedo pequeño quisiessen hazer un circulo arqueado desde la mano izquierda a la derecha, como se demuestra en la misma figura. La, y, y la, z, tienen tambien vna misma demostraciõ, pero difieren en que para significar la, y, se ha de estar la mano quedapues todos los dedos en la forma que se demuestra y para la z, se ha de menear la mano como si en el ayre la quisiessen escribir, como tambien lo muestra vna linea que baxa culebreando, que acaba en el dedo pequeño, pero estando siempre la mano en la figura de la y. Las tildas quando fuere neccessario se haran, sin guardar orden en posturas de dedos, fino con toda la mano, como si en el ayre se quisiessen hazer aquella linea que sirve de tilde: pero no ay que embarçar al mudo con enseñarle aora la jota, ni la tilde, mas de tan folamente la z, que della se dirà quando se le enseñaren las letras con voz.

and to recognize them all on an alphabet we shall give further on of both capitals and small letters which will serve as a test of his knowledge of the, manual alphabet. Afterwards we must go on to show him printing in a book, asking him to show on his hand any letter that the master touches with his finger. And it will be very necessary that, in a house where there is a deaf-mute, all who can read should be acquainted with this alphabet, in order to converse with him by its means and not by other signs, which will be less beneficial to him, whether it be writing or manual gestures; nor should they permit him to make use of them, but he should reply by word of mouth to the questions put to him, even though he may err in the pronunciation of his replies; and we must take care to correct him constantly, for this is the way in which all who are learning a new language succeed in mastering it, by making mistakes and noticing the corrections.

Chapter IV.

Explanations of the manual signs which represent the j, y, z and (~).

The signs depicted in this manual alphabet represent the letters that are written above them, and as the capitals differ so much from the small ones in form, they are both given; and it must be remembered that when I has the value of J, the hand, being placed in the position of I, has to be moved so that the little finger describes an arc of a circle from left to right, as is shown in the plate. The Y and Z also have the same sign, differing in that to make Y the hand has to remain in the position depicted, while for the Z the hand must move as if writing the letter in the air, as is shown by the zigzag line beneath, ending at the little finger, the hand being kept all the while in the position for Y.

To form the *tilde* (~) the position of the fingers is not to be altered, but the whole hand is to be moved as if to make the turn in the air; there is no need however to puzzle the deaf-mute by teaching him the J, nor the (~), but only the Z, and the others can be taught when he learns the sounds of the letters.

Assuming him to have become thoroughly

Sabido que tenga el mudo el abecedario de la mano muy bien, fe comprouara por los dos que fe ponen aqui, vno de las letras mayúsculas, y el otro de las comunes, y feñalarfe ha con el dedo cada letra, dandole a entender que la fignifique con fu mano, y no folamente las vnas tras las otras, fino interpolandolas y en la que errare, boluerfele ha à mostrar en el abecedario de las manos, donde eſtà fobre cada vna la fuya, para que lo fepa por difcurfo, entendiendo que aquella, y eſta es vna miſma, demanera que hafta, faber cõ toda deftreza y prontitud hazer las letras por la mano, y conocerlas en qualquiera parte que las vea, no fe le ha de enfeñar la pronunciacion dellas, por no ofuſcarle con nueas cofas, hafta eftar capaz de otras.

A B C D E F G H I L M N O P Q R S T U X Y Z.

a b c d e f g h i l m n o p q r s t u x y z.

Ya que eſtè bien enfeñado en las letras de la mano, conocidas las deftos dos abecedarios paſſaran a enfeñarfe las en voz como fe dirà en el capitulo figuiente.

acquainted with the manual alphabet, the deaf-mute must be tested by the two alphabets given below – the one of the capital, the other of the small letters. He must be shown each letter with the finger, and made to understand that he is to form the sign for it on his hand, and this not only in consecutive order, but irregularly; and if he makes any mistake he must be turned back to the plate – where each letter is given with its name over it – and shown what is right; so that he may know them all intelligently, understanding that the sign and the character are the same; and until he knows how to form the letters on his fingers with perfect dexterity and quickness, and recognizes them in whatever order he sees them, he is not to be taught their pronunciation, in order not to confuse him with new things before he has mastered the old.

A B C D E F G H I L M N O P Q R S T U X Y Z.

a b c d e f g h i l m n o p q r s t u x y z.

As soon as he is well versed in the manual and in these two alphabets, we must proceed to teach him the pronunciation of the letters, as will be shown in the following chapter.

Notes, Ligatures and Abbreviations

There are a few scribal abbreviations in the original Spanish, that appear to be ã for “an,” ã for “en” or “em,” õ for “on” or “om,” ù for “un” and ñ for “que”. As I am not fluent in Spanish, it is difficult for myself – the transcriber – to know for certain what was intended. Due to this, I cannot guarantee that the Spanish is entirely correct, and recommend you double-check with one of the various online facsimiles freely available online.

It is my understanding that in the USA and Australia these two texts are now in the public domain. The 1890 text by Henry Neville Dixon (1861-1944) and Abraham Farrar (1861-1944) is in the public domain in Australia because they died before January 1st, 1955. In the USA, this text was published before 1928 so it appears that copyright has expired. If I am incorrect, and you are the copyright holder for this work, please contact me via my website.

ⁱ Better known today as *De Furtivis Literarum Notis*, published in 1563. It was republished in 1606 as *De Occultis Literarum Notis*. This later edition is available online:

<http://books.google.com.au/books?id=lvHGGuqqHymgC>

ⁱⁱ According to Richter-Sherman (2000; 188), these plates were originally engraved by Diego de Astor the Elder (c. 1585-1590 - c. 1650).

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