

*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).  
Transcribed by R. Lucas (www.medieval-baltic.us).

*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*,<sup>i</sup> 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*,<sup>i</sup>  
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 fe conozca fi eftà bien enterado de las de la mano, y despues interpoladamente fe le yran moſtrando en la letura del libro, pidiendole que fignifique con fu mano la que el maeftro tocara con el dedo. Y ferà muỹ neceſſario que en la caſa donde huuiere mudo todos los que fupieren leer, fepan eſte abecedario para hablar por el al mudo, y no por las feñas, que entendiẽdo por la mano, o por eſcrito no ferà bien q̃ vſen dellas, los que le hablaren, ni le permitan a el que fe valga dellas, fino que relponda a boca a lo que fe le preguntare, aunque yerre en la locucion de fus reſpueſtas: y tendraſe cuydado de enmendarle fiempre, que todos los que aprenden qualquier lengua eſtraña haziendo folecifmos, y notando como fe los corrigen, llegan a faberla.

### Capitolo III.

*Decleracion de las demoftraciones que fignifican la jota, ygriega, zeda, y tilde.*

Las demoftraciones deſte abecedario de manos dan a entẽder q̃ fignificã las letras q̃ tienẽ fobre ellas, y por fer tã diferẽtes en las formas las mayúſculas de las comunes, fe ponẽ como eſta dicho ambas, y aduertefe para entẽder quã do la I, ha de tener voz de jota, q̃ fe ha de menear la mano (eftandofe en fu miſma figura de I,) como fi con el dedo pequeño quifiẽffen hazer vn circulo arqueado deſde la mano yzquierda a la derecha, como fe demueſtra en la miſma figura. La, y, y la, z, tienen tambien vna miſma demoftraciõ, pero difieren en q̃ para fignificar la, y, fe ha de eſtar la mano quedapueſtos los dedos en la forma q̃ fe demueſtra y para la z, fe ha de menear la mano como fi en el ayre la quifiẽffen eſcriuir, como tambien lo mueſtra vna linea que baxa culebreando, que acaba en el dedo pequeño, pero eftando fiempre la mano en la figura de la y. Las tildas quando fuere neceſſario fe haran, ſin guardar orden en poſturas de dedos, fino con toda la mano, como fi en el ayre fe quifiẽffe hazer aquella linea q̃ firue 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 fe 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 conuerſe 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 pronounciation 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.

<sup>i</sup> 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=lvHGquqHymgC>

<sup>ii</sup> 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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  - <http://books.google.com/books?id=rDBtfqSyFnMC> (better quality scan, no plates)
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