

# **Joy of Reading**

Learning to read and write through  
Mobile Phones and other Devices

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# Abstract

This work is intended for the illiterate people, in the broad sense of the word, of any social group and of any age. Illiterate people, in the narrower sense, are those who don't know the letters of the alphabet and don't know how to read and write. The word "illiterate" is seen by most, as a pejorative term, a term used to identify part of the population who, by not knowing how to read or write, is taken for being destitute of average intelligence and, in a situation of disadvantage.

Then, there are the illiterate people who know how to read and write, but don't understand what is written, they are incapable of understanding the meaning of what they read. These are the illiterate in the broader sense of the word, and they constitute 74% of the students who finish their studies in Brazil, according to statistics presented at the Museum of Portuguese Language in São Paulo. These illiterate people, even that they do know the letters of the alphabet, they are excluded, defined as people who in some way don't have access to forms of self-expression in a social sphere.

How should reading and writing be taught to help them? Writing can be considered either a representation of language or a code of graphic transcription of sound units. Learning it as a transcription code, consists in acquiring a skill. Learning it as a system of representation, consists in taking on a new knowledge of meanings.

Joy of Reading combines these two concepts in a single learning experience. Joy of Reading is based on music lyrics, poems and other daily manifestations seen as a semantic or syntactic unit, to be learned by parts never separated from the whole. For, one student might well know the name of the alphabetic letters, and yet not understand the writing system, and inversely, another student might make substantial progress in comprehension of the writing system, without having received any particular instruction about the names of the letters of the alphabet. The skill of reading is learned by reading. Joy of Reading is a learning system designed for mobile phones and other portable devices.

## **Goals:**

- . teach to read and write or aid for school teaching,
- . refine the perception of reality related to the world of writing,
- . link the written word to its meaning, movement towards lowering illiteracy rate in Brazil,

- . stimulate creativity,
- . make learning a smooth experience, in which students discover their own talents and ways of increasing their personal possibilities, according to their own needs,
- . encourage freedom, independence and motility,
- . increase students' confidence and assurance,
- . appreciate local culture by interpreting music and poems,
- . enable the deaf to be taught to read, write and lip read,
- . encourage improvement in correct pronunciation of words,
- . constitute a nurturing, cohesive atmosphere to transform and construct a better world, not a competitive, conflicting and divided environment.
- .utilize the least costly, but the most popular technology on the market.

**Characteristics:**

1. Formal

- 1.1. technology in direct contact with the student, as a mediator between student and instructor, as an alternative to quality teaching,
- 1.2. the instructions are always given verbally
- 1.3. the finalizing with home images caption bringing the student closer because of the familiar tone.

2. Pedagogic

- 2.1 Every word studied is presented, at some point, with its corresponding sound, sonority, image of the object and image of the lip movements,
- 2.2. learning deals with elements to be taught as they show up in the music, poem or other cultural expression,
- 2.3. after having explored the text in its various aspects, imagery, linguistic, (syntactic and semantic), one returns to the original music or poem to evaluate what was learnt.

**Conclusion:**

This project is part of the effort of groups which intend to expand the awareness by means of a great net of solidarity like Internet or other similar tools, creating possibilities never imagined before to increase and expand human awareness. In other words: "Love is our biologic founding and is the only basis for preserving our human quality as well as our well being" (Maturana, 227)

# Presentation

Joy of Reading is a project for reading-writing teaching and learning of the Brazilian-Portuguese language, at the level of learning to read and write, using wireless devices. Illiteracy prevents individuals from effectively participating in society. The term illiterate<sup>1</sup> is used to identify the share of the population who not knowing how to read and write, is deemed destitute of average intelligence or in disadvantage. Teaching and learning reading and writing is the essential tool to ascend to more elaborate forms of thought, knowledge and communication.

According to statistics, in the State of São Paulo, only 4,5% of illiterate youngsters and adults attend any reading and writing course. Countrywide, this percentage is yet smaller: 3,9%. (newspaper "Folha de São Paulo", 14 June 2009). Another figure indicates that one in every ten Brazilians, at the age of 15 or over, neither know to read nor write a simple note (newspaper "Folha de São Paulo", 28 September 2009). This work proposes bridging that gap in our social and educational system.

In 1996, when the "Law of Directives and Bases of National Education" bill was passed, long distance education was introduced in the Brazilian educational system. The goal is: " the new technology is intended to generate important innovations in the educational processes, enabling education to be catered for the aspirations and needs of human societies in the new international scenario, in which knowledge and capacity or ability of learning and creating solutions are essential aspects for the development and well being of the populations and nations." (Scavazza: 2000, 40). Long distance education has proved to be very successful. While regular in-class courses for Teaching Education increased 17%, the same course in the long distance modality increased 270%, in 5 years. So, there are systems to educate teachers, but none to educate students at the level of learning to read. Joy of Reading tries to fill this education void in Brazil: to date, there is no electronically delivered reading course system available.

An electronic reading course system fills a basic social need and in this mode is included in a more sophisticated level of the new culture, which currently faces a period of euphoria and at the same time, one of challenge. "Cyber culture presents itself as partial solution of problems of earlier times, but it constitutes an immense field of problems and conflicts for which there is no clear configuration of any perspective of a global solution. The relationship with knowledge, work, employment, money, democracy or with the State must be reinvented, just to cite a few of the most brutally questioned social forms." (Levy:1998).

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<sup>1</sup> The term illiterate is used to describe the segment of the population, that by not knowing how to read and write, is considered devoid of average intelligence or at a disadvantage. Learning to read and write is the essential means of access to more elaborate forms of thought, knowledge and communication.

Joy of Reading's central goal is independent learning and support for school learning, through wireless devices, for anyone of any age and anywhere in the Country. To take on this challenge, the type of device must be decided first. We picked mobile or cellular phone as the most adequate device for this. The mobile phone, is financially<sup>2</sup> accessible, the most popular means of communication in Brazil. It is more familiar and tangible to the larger share of Brazilian urban population than school is. Why not use this fact and transform mobile phones into teaching/learning devices? Adapting human knowledge to these new devices, is a huge challenge to the current artists, teachers, scientists and other professionals.

In the teaching field, Paulo Freire, theoretical reference, speaks in defense of "education based on ethics, respect to dignity and to the autonomy of the student. There is no use of rhetoric if educational activity is impermeable to change... the pedagogic space is a text to be read over and over, and interpreted, written and re-written."(Freire: 1999, 12).

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<sup>2</sup> It is in this direction that technical development is going: it will continue generating cheaper and more sophisticated products, enabling increased access of population to education, commencement, training, qualification

# Direction

In 2008, it was estimated that there are 50 million functional illiterates in Brazil of which 90% do not attend classes; and the remaining 10% that are enrolled in schools, don't usually finish their studies, constituting the group of illiterates<sup>3</sup> (newspaper "Folha de São Paulo", 28 September 2009). Yet, many of those who complete elementary education still can neither read nor write at even a basic level. These are illiterate in the sense that they cannot read or write well enough to deal with the everyday requirements of life. An example, with a grocery shopping list written by a domestic maid, who completed the last year of High School in SP: "*azeite, queijo, **nostra moiveis, bisaquinha, bolacha de maizema, biscoito de povilho, guaranpo, ovos, papel higiênico, ervilha***". The mistakes, denote that the maid does not know the right pronunciation of the words she wrote. Therefore, at first instance, Joy of Reading is designed for those who have restricted or no access to teaching system and for those who have no interest attending a course or sitting in a classroom at school.

At a second instance, Joy of Reading is designed for the ardent followers of the mobile phone technology regardless of age and social group. In general, they are people who have initiative to search, to learn and shape their lives. This is why, as authors and articulators of this system of learning, we don't hesitate in focusing on people who are independent and confident.

Illiterate<sup>4</sup> people in one way or another have no access to forms of expression of themselves in the social sphere. To revert this situation it is necessary to invent ways of social inclusion, as we intend with Joy of Reading. We want to build an environment of collaboration and construction, to achieve through solidarity, a better and a more just society.

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<sup>3</sup> The broader band of illiterate is people oldert than 60 years of age, totalling 40%.

<sup>4</sup> According to the pedagogue Barbara Freitag "people who don't know how to read and write suffer very much. They are ashamed and feel guilty for not having acquired the competency attributed to a 7 year old child. They are foreigners in their own land." (Grossi: 1990, 8).



# Learning

The acquisition of new information and performance processes provided from learning, lead the student in the long run, to form "new social abilities" and to the creation of a new subjectivity. All our corporal dynamics participate in this process - gestures, sounds, body positions, emotions, etc.- where what we do shapes our language and vice-versa. All this modification is constructed. "The person tends to consider his or her self image as something given by nature, though it is in fact, the result of the person's own experience. One's appearance, way of thinking, environment, how one relates to time and space - to pick random examples - are all taken by innate characteristics, while each important element in the individual's relationship with other people, and with society is the result of extensive training. To walk, read, recognize three dimensions in a photograph are abilities that an individual amasses over several years." (Feldenkrais; 1977, 37).

The acquired knowledge that is experienced and internalized by a person, allows this person to reflect about his or her own learning process, and the change process that occurred by comparing the before and after<sup>5</sup>. From this, cognition is inseparable from living, shaped by many factors that are not part of school. And it is in this sphere, that we discuss learning or knowledge acquisition. The person is not a stagnant or fixed identity. The person is being, in constant change, going through stages and forms of thinking. The person changes and learns.

What takes a person to change is curiosity, wonder, unease or necessity. Thus, teaching should consider the construction of a person on all levels of his or her existence, including the whole organism, mental and corporal aspects of that person.

Technology has been linked to our body as if it were a prosthetic accessory. Posture of people has changed: the head projecting forward is very noticeable. Personal behaviour is drenched in technology, more specifically, with the mobile phones. The relationships have been deeply transformed by mobile technology. The strongest characteristic that the pedagogic enabling process brought by cellular phones is its plasticity, the freedom of movement , enabling great flexibility in learning and in displacing the body. This is an updating, not a linear or continuous change in the process of learning. Joy of Reading considers a simultaneity between the intuitive path - the student reaches out and experiments - and the school path - where the student is guided by a teacher along an established and tested path.

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<sup>5</sup> It can be said that "ignorance is the presence of intelligence in a mistaken or incomplete way", according to Sara Pain (Grossi; 1990, 54).

# Teaching

The world is not stagnant and set. The world is being, flowing and changing. Nobody is permanent and still. Everyone is being, experiencing, learning and changing. These phrases indicate learning and building of knowledge. Knowledge that is individual and social, that results whether from a free and open learning experience or from school learning. In institutional terms, there are, innumerable types of courses and schools, on just about any topic or subject.

Historically, it was by social learning that people realized that it was possible to teach. The current alphabet<sup>6</sup>, which we use to notate the words we know, is so old, and is the result of a long process of human need to encipher and register facts, ideas and thoughts. Teaching reading and writing in Ancient Greece and Rome, emphasized the mastering of the alphabet to such a degree that learning the alphabet started by calligraphy and by oral sound reconnaissance of each letter assigned by its name. Then, the combination of letters forming syllables, then the combination of the syllables, forming the words, then phrases, until they worked on texts. Later on, in the Middle Ages, the letters were taught by their sounds, and not by their respective names. This was the phonetic method. Only in the twentieth century, the phonemic method of teaching where the vowel letters are connected to the consonant letters helping its oral enunciation, as in the Montessori method in Italy<sup>7</sup>. The syllabic method, also taught today, is characterized by the formation of words since the beginning of the process starting from the joining and building of the known syllables. (Rizzo: 2005, 14/15). In this brief display, one notices that for centuries, the teaching methods, have been renovated and updated.

Joy of Reading, as a plan to renovate teaching of reading and writing, accepts learning from two points of views, at the same time: as a representation of language and as a graphic transcription code of sound units. As a graphic transcription code, learning it is an acquisition of a technique. As a system of representation, learning it is an appropriation of a new knowledge object, conceptual learning. In this way, we diminish or minimize the generation of illiterates in the narrow sense, those who know how to write words, who know the words spelling, that is, they know their graphic transcription code, but do not know what they mean or what they represent in language.

Still, in this renovation effort, the device that we chose to fill this social void in the schooling is the mobile phone and other mobile devices of recent technology. Many Brazilian enthusiasts are willing follow this trend in this direction. We cite two independent examples. In the city of João Dias, in the northern State of Rio Grande do Norte, when a student succeeds, this student is awarded access to the internet, which is very rare in this remote locality (newspaper "Folha de São Paulo", 22 October 2009). Then, Glauca Brito, of the Federal University of Parana, says: "Paraná is

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<sup>6</sup> Teaching the alphabet letters coined the Portuguese name to teach and to learn to read and write, "alfabetizar".

<sup>7</sup> In Brazil, the method was introduced by the Jesuit priests.

ahead of the other states because they made computer accessibility unlimited. And, one still must listen to what the teachers have to say, what they need, beyond offering a consistent pedagogical program, as for the student to make good use of this structure.” (Magazine - "Revista Carta Capital", 3 June, 2009). Both examples support the idea that people are giving up their isolated and passive attitude in front of the television screen, for an active and social attitude on the Internet.

“A new culture is emerging, one which involves much more than just pop culture of music, MTV, and the movies. This is a new culture in the broadest sense, defined as the socially transmitted and shared patterns of behavior, customs, attitudes, and tacit codes, beliefs and values, arts, knowledge, and social forms.” (Tapscott:1997, 55). Information becomes culture if we have an attitude characterized by careful evaluation and judgment. This happens with the Internet, when information is criticized and transmitted in a non passive and non democratic manner. As a consequence, we are experiencing a reformulation regarding authority and hierarchy<sup>8</sup>.

From pedagogy's stance, this attitude modifies the teacher-student relation leading to important questions. How to deal with students curiosity? Is this easily met, or will it turn into new curiosities? Which sources will be tapped to satisfy this curiosity\_ books, dictionaries, computers or questions to other people? Answering these questions, students and teachers will need new forms of teaching.

Renovation is the students' use of expressions and content to learn, reading and writing. It is the student's life and his or her reality that becomes the content for individual or collective creation of stories, using forms of communication available in the new technologies as in SMS, for exemple<sup>9</sup>.

Another renovation is the use of music and poems, seen as semantic/syntactic units to be learned as a whole. Music and poems not only get young people interested, they are part of the family of histories. As an example, the song Asa Branca, is so significant to the northeastern migrants. Music and poetry also contribute to the spirituality, which mostly comes accompanied by happiness, Joy of Reading. “There is a relation between the necessary educating activity and hope. Hope that teacher and the students together can learn, teach, become restless, produce and overcome the hurdles, to our delight.” (Freire: 1999,75).

Old form may be traditional but if it is renewed maintaining its identity, it continues to be admired as new form.

In this new context, what role does the teacher have? The role is to help structure thoughts and devices to communicate them. In this sense teaching to think properly is not about an isolated

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<sup>8</sup> The critical attitude began to consider the individual. “what could have been seen as an inconsequent act in the field of design programing a short while ago, is now seen as necessary and welcome boldness. Not exactly for the technical functionality or predictability of the systems, but for the fact that subjective elements have been incorporated to the development of products and technology. Less as war strategies and more as consumer strategies, it seems that the things are blending in. The individual has never been such a valuable target.” (Mello: 2002)

<sup>9</sup> These are activities that Joy of Reading will use at a second instant. At the current stage, it intends to teach reading.

experience, but a process while one is living<sup>10</sup>. Thus to think properly becomes an act of communication that implies an object and the people who think about this object or with this object.

Learning to read is essentially to think properly, to understand the relation between the spoken word and the written word, which requires students' reasoning. For this, students' rational, intuitive and creative capacity is engaged<sup>11</sup>. This is why learning is a process where the construction starts from within, where knowledge is not acquired from a teacher, but from the student's own construction that comes closer to the few rules of the lacto-written system.

For successful learning, the teacher must, on one hand, channel without subduing the students efforts, support the students confidence in their capacity to learn; and on the other hand, encourage practicing reading and writing, through which the skill and ability will be acquired and consolidated, especially when the subject is of interest to the student.

This way, the most updated didactic position<sup>12</sup> is that of "one learns by solving problems"<sup>13</sup>. For this, the student must be considered holistically the rational aspect connected to the emotional aspect<sup>14</sup>. Reading is a logic operation, while teaching and learning to read is a relation of love. Reading depends on the perceptomotor development while teaching/learning to read and write depends on organic maturity.

Joy of Reading intends, not only to teach reading and writing, to participate in a great solidarity network like that one of the Internet, creating possibilities to extend human awareness.

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<sup>10</sup> Technically, readers in any idiom use the same procedures: they select, forecast, they infer, confirm and they correct. They also experience the same cycles: optical, perceptive, syntactic e semantic.

<sup>11</sup> According to Jonas Salk, "creativity is on the margin between intuition reasoning." (Varela:2001, 189). There is no contradiction between intuition and reasoning. Reasoning without intuition is empty and intuition without reasoning is blind.

<sup>12</sup> According to Sara Pain, didactic discipline connects knowledge to learning, establishing methodologies that lead to lecto-writing acquisition in accordance to the explicit pedagogic objectives.

<sup>13</sup> "Thinking begins only when there is doubt" (Hegel in Rizzo: 2005, 11).

<sup>14</sup> Piaget "The building of knowledge is nothing but a problem of accommodation. No one learns in a state of anxiety." (Rizzo 2005, 40).

# Reading and Writing

Learning to read and write is acquiring the skill and comprehending the meaning<sup>15</sup>. Teaching the skill of reading and writing, traditionally, presumes the following stages: pre-syllabic1, pre-syllabic2, syllabic and alphabetic.

At the first pre-syllabic stage, the expression is through drawings; and then transitions to graphic signs. This transition is not smooth because, the student supposes he or she does not yet know how to read or write, then realizes that writing is not drawing. Thus, the pre-syllabic level is characterized by walking along two parallel paths: realizing that alphabetic letters play a role in writing and an understanding of the link between the speech and the written text.

Having dealt with this transition, the pre-syllabic2, child may be able to represent each sound with any particular letter, so a syllable becomes a letter. The relation of similarity between the sound and the specific letter occurs later.

The frustration of knowing how to write and not being able to read what other people write occurs moving from the pre-syllabic level to the syllabic level. This issue inhibits the socialization of writing: the incapacity to read what other people write syllabically, and the incapacity to read what the literate people have written. The transition between the pre-syllabic and the syllabic levels is realizing that a word is always written the same way - with the same letters, in the same order.

At the alphabetic level, the student discovers that each syllable does not correspond to a letter and focuses on discovering how the syllables are written. What defines the syllabic level is the quantitative segmentation of the words both in graphic signs and in oral-lip movements when the mouth pronounces it<sup>16</sup>. For the student to master reading and writing, he or she must conquer the stage of seeing the syllables separately and visualize the word as a one. Only the comprehension of the syllable gives meaning to the word as an element of a triad: from the letter to the syllable to the word and in the opposite direction. Therefore working these three elements simultaneously is fundamental for any level in teaching and learning how to read and write.

These stages of learning require technical skill, described above, accompanied by knowledge of the meaning of words and the broadening or expansion of the student's vocabulary. Vocabulary of related words, referred to in texts, music and poems. Consistency in writing is achieved by studying many words, and not a repetitive vocabulary. Reading is not just deciphering symbols. Reading is extracting from the written text, the author's thoughts. A word is not an agglomerate of sounds, it

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<sup>15</sup> Signifiers are elements, generally words, which represent a meaning. This can be a notion, a relation, a concept or an algorithm.

<sup>16</sup> If you pay attention when you speak, each time your mouth opens a syllable is pronounced.

represents an idea. It is important to observe that the acquisition of reading and writing is not simultaneous, neither is it linear.

Therefore, what matters in educational discipline is not the mechanical repetition of the gesture, but the understanding of the value of feelings, emotions, hopes and expectations, certainties and uncertainties; fear to err, that with education, will be transformed into courage and certainty and assertiveness. For example, when a student chooses the vocabulary, his or her assurance and confidence is strengthened: the student exists as an individual<sup>17</sup>. For this reason the material chosen for this study is very important. It must be of the student's interest, the content must have a meaning that touches the student's life. Hence we chose music, poems and topics of everyday life as didactic material.

The Joy of Reading project should last approximately three years, consisting of twelve themes and four revisions. Each theme is subdivided in various videos. I present half the course in this thesis, because the set up explains points for improving the elaboration of the second half. The themes for the lessons are:

1. Poem "Velocidade"
2. Proverb "Água mole, pedra dura, bate bate, até que fura"
3. Recipe for "pudim de leite" (recipe for "flan" pudding)

Revision 1

4. Music "Asa Branca"
5. Music "O Pato"
6. música "Brasília Amarela"

Revision 2

7. Estória em Quadrinhos - cartoons
8. News article from paper
9. Instructions from a manual

Revision 3

10. Fable
11. Internacional Tale

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<sup>17</sup> The word that writes the name of the student holds a very special place. This word distinguishes the student from the collective sphere, to the individual.

## 12. Prayer "Our Father"<sup>18</sup>

### Conclusion

In short: the goals of Joy of Reading, are:

- . teaching reading and writing or supporting school learning,
- . refine perception of reality regarding the world of writing,
- . relate written word to meaning, battling high rate of functional illiterates in Brazil,
- . stimulate creativity,
- . enable learning with no trauma, enable each student to discover his or her talents and ways he or she can extend his or her personal possibilities, according to their needs.
- . encourage and nurture freedom, independence and motility,
- . increase self assurance, self confidence of the students,
- . encourage appreciation of local culture with music and poems,
- . enable deaf to learn to read by learning to lip read,
- . perfect word pronunciation, speaking correctly
- . constitute a space that is neither of separation, nor of competition, but of construction, transformation and relation to construct a better world,
- . utilize more popular and lower cost technology to permit access of target public.

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<sup>18</sup> The last edition of the study "Retratos de Leitura no Brasil", (Pictures of Reading in Brazil) done by the Instituto Pró-Livro in 2007, shows that the Bible is the most widely read genre in Brazil ahead of the textbooks, that come in second place, and of novels that come in third place, having sold more than 5 million copies that year or the research.

# Devices

In order to reach our goals, in the idealized modes above, we dispose of cellular phones and videos as central pedagogic instruments or devices. Our project does not restrict itself to these modes of communication, and is open to new ones such as computers and others.



# Mobile Phones

Mobile phones are devices. "Device is an abstract machine, defined by means of functions and shapeless material, it ignores all distinction between content and an expression, between a discursive development and a non discursive one. Though it is practically deaf and dumb, it is a device that makes us see and talk " (Deleuze; 1990, 153).

A device may be a means communication. The mobile phone is the most important, most popular, and most numerous device of mass media<sup>19</sup>, today, throughout the world<sup>20</sup>. The mobile phone reaches most inhabited areas of the planet and the numbers of users increase daily at breakneck speed. Hence it is the mass media with most powerful social penetration. It reaches all social classes and all age groups.

The cell phone language, videos, SMSs, e-mails, photos, is familiar to all its users. Young people are the ones who most use the communication of mobile phones' resources. According to Tapscott:" Today's kids are so batled in bits that they think it's all part of the natural landscape." (Tapscott; 1997, 1). Mobile phones are such a big part of today's living that it is nearly impossible to be without one. Whilst Internet is also available through mobile phones, it is the major device for accessing current knowledge, principally among young people. "Time spent on the internet is not passive. It is active time. It is reading time. It is investigation time. It is time for developing abilities and systems to solve problems. It is time of analysis and evaluation. It is time to compose thoughts. It is writing time." (Tapscott: 1997, 8). The mobile phone user considers access to information and personal expression as a fundamental right. This is essential for those who wish to learn.

On the other hand, acquiring knowledge via a mobile phone / internet is crucial when we refer to more popular classes, where there is a lack of experience with reading material within the family setting, which hinders the alphabet learning by traditional means.

So this is a proposal of teaching and learning how to read and write via the mobile phone has all the chances or reaching its goals both in quality and range. A final observation: the beginning of this system is the hearing of the young people, the future users. "People, companies and nations that

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<sup>19</sup> "In a great moment of the history of telecommunications, the mobile phones made a significant change in the life of the people, much faster than any prior technology. They were a blowout and were much easier and cheaper to embrace. The long process of connecting everyone on Earth through a global telecommunication network, started with the invention of the telegraph in 1791, is about to be concluded. Mobile phones will have contributed more than any other technology to the advance in democratization".(The Economist, 7 October, 2009).

<sup>20</sup> How long will it take before everyone on Earth has a mobile phone? "It seems like that mobile phone global teledensity will surpass 100% next decade" says Hamadoun Touré, secretary-general of União Internacional das Telecomunicações, established in 1965 to control international telecommunications(The Economist, 7 October, 2009).

will reap economic success are those who listen to their. Listen to their view of the world. We can learn how they can mysteriously use the new devices with least effort. Listening and answering to their frustrations, we can project devices and attitudes for a new era." (Tapscott: 1997, 20). And the new era is the era of the mobile phones and other mobile devices.

# Video

Video is supported by images. Images in the broad sense of the term are described: "images signify two closely related things. We have images when we use the sense of vision. We physically see objects, as objets d'art, sculptures, paintings. And we also talk about images in a universal sense. Our thoughts, inventions and fantasies are sensory images, that come without the physical presence of the image. Images can as well be still, like stones or they can be action full like living bodies." (Arnheim: 2000; 167).

Based on this concept of image, in Joy of Reading, learning through videos is complete. It transmits the visual image of the study object, how to read it and how to pronounce it (the mouth saying the name of the image), its spelling and the final result of the written word. It reaches the object and its meaning. It is dynamic and appealing. It is challenging and captivating. It speaks the language of the young people of our society.

The words are chosen according to their appearing in the music, poems or other topics being studied at that time. This way we establish a rich meaning connected to the students personal life, cultural origin, and his or her emotions. The association between the object and its name is a very enriching activity used in teaching and learning to read and write. It must not be repetitive and limited to just a few objects. Repetition does not produce learning. It is the establishing of multiple relations that generate knowledge in learning to read and in life.

The video, as made by us, tries to establish a conversation<sup>21</sup> with the student, then supplemented by our site. For this, the finalizing and the presentation of the images is homely, fostering our approximation with the student and a familiar tone in the teaching learning process.

Important: deaf people also can learn from lip-reading all the material to be studied.

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<sup>21</sup> The roots of the verb "converse" are two latin words: "cum" that means "with" and "versare" which means "bind, wrap around". This indicates the involvement of those who converse, not only with speech but actions and emotions.

# Testimonies

Looking around, those who don't know how to read are limited. Currently, working with construction workers as an architect, I witness on a daily basis that not knowing how to read the instructions of a product or of a machine jeopardizes their life, and can put the workers health on the line. And I notice that only knowing how to read and understand that what is read, they can overcome this situation and even progress professionally.

We also learn much from those who don't know how to read. Many times they know some natural secrets, for example, about herbal cures - and they die without passing this knowledge on. Much of the popular culture is lost with the event of migrants, especially younger generations heading to the great urban centers. They leave behind their elders and sages, and are no longer exposed to the valuable information and culture, and, in their new urban surroundings, they dismiss the "folk" knowledge as if it were worthless. They quickly pick up on the local big city consuming habits, easily forgetting the traditional folk remedies. An example with medications, they take pharmacy prescription medications and disregard the natural remedies efficacy. They suffer more, we all lose, and the native culture is lost.

To consolidate the lecto-writing project for learning reading and writing, - Joy of Reading - Eleonora Sampaio Caselato, a friend and professional woman who was invited to participate wrote: "Collaborating with Analívia in this teaching learning to read and write project gives me the opportunity to complement my twenty year work with children in public and in private schools. The greatest challenge has been to prepare lessons for people I don't know, of different ages, and with an array of interests. The students must be given the certainty that learning to read and write is an individual process which depends on their effort, under good guidance. The expectation of reaching out to these people, to interact with them, to give them that certainty, encourages me to invest more and more time, disposition and experience in to Joy of Reading project."

# Renovation

We consider at present, that a renovation in the way of teaching is legitimate; and an updated analysis is necessary. The teachers' role is not to supply instant answers, but to foster the atmosphere where the structuring of knowledge comes as a result of the students' own actions.

To offer these conditions, one should know something about how the human body works. The body interacts intensely with the brain, and both interact with the surroundings. The relation body/mind is mediated by the movements of the body and by the activity of its perception senses. Internal or external movement of the body is perceived when positions of parts of the body are changed in relation to space. This change results in muscular activity which happens when conscious effort is directed<sup>22</sup> to that movement, being that whatever movement done alters not only the part of the body that moved, but the body's entire complete organization.

Without awareness, a baby would not develop and stand upright and would perhaps not survive. The organization of standing upright and walking are considered as the most complex activities the brain executes in a lifetime. Learning to read and write also demands a complete mobilization of the body, requires integration between the conscious and unconscious mind.

Integration, coordination, interconnection are interrelations that require a non-linear form of thinking, analyzing and understanding<sup>23</sup>. The memory is one of the results of these interrelations indispensable in learning to read and write. No one really knows how the memory works, but we all know that if a fact can be described is because it was experienced. Experience is constituted of the integration, coordination, interconnection of sensory (sight, hearing, taste, smell, touch, and kinesthetic) perception of space, of body movement, of surrounding objects, amongst other elements. The result one can say, is in the memory. The memory works through images, in the ample sense of the term. Bachelard, puts it best when he describes a type of image: "The poetic image is not subject of an internal truth. It is not an echo of the past. Through the brilliance of an image, the distant past resounds, and it is hard to know how deep these echoes will reverberate and die. Due to its novelty and action, the poetic image has its own dynamics." (Bachelard: 1994, 17). When one remembers, one relives the experience in the mind and in the body, adding to it. Memorizing is not a passive process of saving or storing, but an active process or re-categorizing and valuating founded on previous categories, in which thoughts, images, emotions and stored

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<sup>22</sup> The concept of consciousness or awareness is very ample, and is defined by several authors with different approaches. In this case we will use the definition by , Damasio (1999: 147): Awareness is the rite that allows an organism able to regulate its own metabolism, with its innate reflexes, and a way of learning called conditioning, to become a mentalized organism, a type of organism whose answers are carefully formatted by the interest of its life.

<sup>23</sup> This concern is fundamental for organizing.

sensations are related and connected. We intuitively know the importance of the memory for teaching and learning.

The memory is the combination of several elements, among which emotion. Morphologically, emotion signifies “outward movement”. The essence of emotion is the body changes induced by the chemical and nervous system, under the control of the brain, which corresponds to the content of a thought regarding an event or particular entity; which should be taken into consideration in any educational project.

The complexity of our organism must be considered as teaching takes place, when the teacher is supplying material to structure the students' learning. Using mobile phones as the device, the content is assimilated by hearing and by seeing, thus Joy of Reading will cast knowledge in visual and audio images.

Sight occupies such a large part of intelligence, it takes up nearly half of our cortex. Our visual intelligence interacts profusely with our rational and emotional intelligence, and in some cases it even precedes or directs the intelligence. Understanding our intelligence is understanding our selves. Hoffman says, “Sight<sup>24</sup> is not a passive perception, it is a process of active construction... the main difference is that scientific construction is conscious, where as that of the visual intelligence, is by at large, unconscious.” (Hoffman: 1998, 12)

Active construction, active perceiving of the surroundings, is adjusting the body willingly to assimilate signals. The body actively changes: perceiving is in the domain of activity over surroundings, it is more than just receiving these signals passively. It is in this realm that learning, in its broader meaning, has its significance. In other words, our development from early days, the *design* our cerebral circuits that represent our body and its interaction with the environment, depend on the activities we perform and of action of the innate bioregulatory circuits and how they react to these activities. This is why it is important in learning, that what matters is **how one does it**, and not what one does.

This is how we can conceptualize learning: complex organisms put in complex surroundings require a great repertoire of knowledge, the multitude of choices for answers, the ability to construct complex combinations of answers, and the ability to plan in advance to avoid situations that are disadvantageous and to promote favorable situations, including for survival.

Summarizing using an Asian saying:

I listen and I forget

I see and I remember

I do and I understand.

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<sup>24</sup> **Sight** starts its process with its sense of perception, that is, through the eyes, vision.

Complementarily, I replicate this piece of FAPESP news published in November 2009: “Learning to read is not a difficult task, and it is not for nothing that adults have more difficulty than children, whose brains are still developing. Researchers from Spain, Columbia and England recently unveiled what happens in the brain when learning to read. The contend of this study is intriguing: it is the exam of images of 20 Columbian guerrillas, who were trained to read when leaving their arms, and reintegrating in society. According to Nature article, as these guerrillas had never received any form of education, their brains were intact in terms of any training process and ideal for the study. Compared to other 22 illiterate individuals, the literate adults have more grey matter in areas associated to visual, speech and semantic processing; they also have more white matter in a region associated to reading. It is not only the structure that differs: reading increases the connections between the right and the left side of the brain. And while reading aloud, the o gyro angular modulates the functional interactions between processing images and discourse. Now it will be possible to re evaluate the image of people with dyslexia: until then, it was impossible to know whether the alterations observed were cause or consequence of the difficulty in reading.”

# Conclusion

“In pondering our future we are tempted to limit our attention to the curiosity about inventions and discoveries awaiting us. This, however, would be narrow-minded. What we need is a wider view encompassing the coming rewards in the context of the treasures left by the past experiences, possessions and insights’ (Arnheim: 2000, 168). This way, despite utilizing new inventions, we respect all the teaching tradition. And to think properly is not to be overly certain or our certainties. We are between the existing knowledge and the knowledge yet to be constructed. For example, one of the questions not yet answered, is the system which we will use to evaluate the knowledge assimilated by the students who will utilize Joy of Reading.

To finalize: “Love is our biological foundation and only base for conserving our human quality as well as our well being.”(Maturana: 1999, 127)



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