

# PRE-READING PRACTICES AND VISUAL LITERACY WITH DEAF CHILDREN: WORKING WITH MUSEUM INSTITUTIONS

PRÁTICAS PRÉ-LEITORAS E O LETRAMENTO VISUAL COM CRIANÇAS SURDAS: TRABALHANDO COM AS INSTITUIÇÕES MUSEOLÓGICAS

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#### ABSTRACT

Deaf children in the pre-reading stage can benefit from different visual literacy practices, including the relation with museum cultural objects using sign language communication. Museums are multisemiotic tools that enable qualified mediation with a focus on visual literacy. Considering these premises, the aim of this paper is to report on a set of experiences with visual literacy for deaf learners using the Brazilian Sign Language in museum spaces. Experience shows us that meaningful strategies for mediating cultural goods enhance the use of sign language, broaden deaf children's worldview, and contribute to their literacy process.

**Keywords:** Deaf. Sign language. Visual literacy. Pre-reading practices. Museum.

### **RESUMO**

Crianças surdas na etapa pré-leitora podem ser beneficiadas com diferentes práticas de letramento visual, dentre elas, a relação com os bens culturais museais com o uso da comunicação em língua de sinais. As instituições museológicas constituem-se ferramentas multisemióticas que possibilitam mediações qualificadas com foco no letramento visual. Considerando tais premissas, este trabalho tem por objetivo relatar um conjunto de experiências com o letramento visual de aprendizes surdos usuários da Língua de Sinais Brasileira em vivências nos espaços museológicos. A experiência nos indica que as estratégias significadas de mediação dos bens culturais potencializam o uso da língua de sinais, ampliam a cosmovisão e colaboram para o processo da alfabetização da criança surda.

Palavras-chave: Surdo. Língua de Sinais. Letramento visual. Práticas pré-leitoras. Museu.

## Introduction

The report on the experiences of deaf learners' pre-reading practices and visual literacy, the subject of this study, is intertwined with the historical process of communicational accessibility in Brazilian Sign Language (Libras) in museum spaces, in the city of Recife. The activities relating to visual literacy practices with deaf learners are narrated.



Firstly, we discuss some principles concerning visual literacy and its relationship with learning, with a particular focus on deaf learners. It is understood that the period from 0 to 6 years comprises the ideal phase for language development (ARAÚJO et al., 2015) and this is classically referred to as the pre-literacy period (MERTZANI, 2022). However, when considering deaf people's communication profiles, studies show that significant delays in the natural acquisition of language are common, i.e. typical acquisition established by age group.

Deaf people enter the education system without a real language. This phenomenon is justified by the fact that family members are people who use the oral language modality exclusively. According to research, between 5 to 10 per cent of the deaf children's parents are also deaf people. In an environment where the linguistic conditions are favourable to the use of sign languages, the child's language acquisition occurs naturally without delay (VIANA; TOMASI, 2020).

Thus, in the Brazilian reality, not only children are present in the pre-reading stages, but this age spectrum widens, as many deaf people are in an age/school year distortion. Therefore, there are deaf young people enrolled in more advanced years with school performance still in the pre-reading stage. For this reason, the term "apprentices" will be used.

Based on deaf students' reality, there is a need for differentiated educational mechanisms to meet their demands without losing sight of the social function of education, which is to critically instruct the learner in historically accumulated knowledge. Education has a transformative power for societies, enabling the potentialisation of knowledge, as it is a modifier of reality. This school knowledge is fundamentally developed through reading. The concept of the social act of reading implies understanding beyond knowledge of notational rules, as it is related to knowledge of multiple and diverse texts, available in the most different spaces and contexts. The act of intertextualising discourses gives the reader the ability to flow over the code (CONCEIÇÃO; LEAL, 2020).

The complexity of this process extends from the individual sphere to the body considering the biological, which exists in interactions with its space-time and among the many other times-spaces, in the collective. In this way, Rojo (2009) reflects on these multiple processes between the act of reading and the dimensions of reading comprehension (re)elaborated with each stimulus present in the texts/discourses, stating that prediction, hypothesis, inference, comparison of information, generalisation are present, requiring the ability to interpret critically, as well as dialogue with the text. These skills need to be worked on with deaf students, although they have cultural traits that differentiate them from the hearing community and one of these that directly interferes with their development is the visual experience.

Most people, whether deaf or hearing, perceive the world through sight, and visual or audio images are part of people's daily lives. From the cultural historical context of the deaf community and specifically the visual image, we have representations of various expressions: painting, cinema, photography, graphic arts, signalling and digital media, among others. From the historical cultural context of the deaf community and specifically the visual image, we have representations of different expressions: painting, cinema, photography, graphic arts, signing and digital media, among others. These expressions can often be found in the same physical space, considering the models of contemporary installations, as in the case of museum spaces (LEÃO; SOFIATO; OLIVEIRA, 2017).

This justifies the demand for an education that takes visuality into account, particularly in the case of deaf learners. This demand is emphasised since their way of interacting with the world, including linguistically, is particularly through sight. Leão, Sofiato and Oliveira (2017, p. 53), in a study on visuality in the experiences of deaf education in and out of school state that "in addition to the relevance of the empirical experience with the image, it can also be considered as a potential sign of historical and



social representation that man uses as a source of recognition of his being and being in the world".

The experience reported in this paper contributes to broadening our vision of the possibilities of working with deaf literacy through visuality. Museum spaces can be educational tools that provide students with meaningful experiences and learning, different from the content-based perspective adopted by the educational system, giving learners a broader worldview and contact with cultural artefacts different from their own culture, thus developing critical thinking and enabling them to re-signify being and being in society.

# **Deaf Education and Visual Literacy**

The complexity of the reading process ranges from the individual factor, considering a biological body, to this body that exists in interactions with others in different social contexts and spaces. Thus, according to Rojo (2009), the ability to interpret texts critically (for example, to state what to predict, raise hypotheses, make inferences, compare information, generalise) requires a dialogue with the text(s).

There is, then, a triad that intertwines to make up the process of learning to read. The first object is language, with its language systems and multifaceted social uses; secondly, who acts on the object, the learner; and finally, who mediates formal knowledge, the professional who mediates knowledge(s). In order for children to achieve reading competence, some cognitive skills must be developed. Minervino and Dias (2017, p. 416) indicate some skills that are considered predictors of reading, stating that

International studies refer to five elements to be present in pre-school children for learning to read efficiently: phonological awareness, knowledge of phonemes, verbal fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. In addition to the influence of phonological and visual memory throughout the reading acquisition process (MINERVINO; DIAS, 2017, p. 416).

The cognitive skills that precede reading are strongly based on perceiving, analysing and processing the graphophonic relationship of the language, although there is a relationship with visual memory. The methodological strategies adopted in schools for pre-reading skills are geared towards the development of oral language, which non-deaf children already have acquired from their social environment. Pondering the linguistic reality of most deaf pre-school children, they are excluded from the cognitive development processes that precede reading, because the only language modality offered to them in the education system is the oral one. On the other hand, they do not have their own structured language (CRUZ, PRADO, 2019; MIRANDA, 2020).

These learning windows are extremely important for children's satisfactory development. These are the so-called critical periods, developmental phases, in which most neural systems are more susceptible to plasticity. There is a specific duration and onset for each system depending on age and exposure to experience. Without neural activation, the system is in a waiting state with inadequate development (ARAÚJO et al., 2015).

On the other hand, having visual linguistic cognitive processes stimulated, geared towards literacy visuality, means reducing inequalities of opportunity in the face of the gap in methods, strategies and curricula in deaf children's education (CAPOVILLA, 2020; MERTZANI, 2022).

Thinking about education based on the learner's reality requires the educator to take a stand on their specificities. In the case of deaf students, one of their specificities is their ability to visually read and represent the world. This argument is based on the fact that deaf people are essentially visual, so they perceive and apprehend the world through this sense in a unique way.



Visual literacy is a theory that contemplates pedagogical work centred on visuality, given that subjects read images on a daily basis, apprehending meanings, and producing senses through them. The image is a constituent of the human psyche and this factor must be taken into account in pedagogical work. Considering that literacy is the activity of training to read at its full level, we advocate that the literacy of the deaf begins by promoting the ability to read visually. To this end, we rely on Miranda (2020) when he states that

to be literate is to develop a set of social practices linked to reading and writing in the most diverse social contexts; it is to give the learner the opportunity to experience various writing situations, knowledge and interaction with different types of genres of written material. (MIRANDA, 2020), p. 197)

Reading is an activity that precedes written production, so the ability to read is fundamental to acquiring it, as well as to understanding the world and broadening one's worldview. In this work, we consider reading to be the ability to interpret/understand a statement, be it imagery, verbal, or verbal-visual. However, we will focus on visual reading, which is the focus of this paper.

Following this point, we adopt the concept of Bamford (2003) when he states that visual literacy is the interpretation of the image that communicates something to an audience, it is what is seen with the eyes and with the mind, it is the ability to read and write in visual language and it is decoding and composing meaning in visual communication. Complementing this point, Miranda (2020) states that visual literacy is related to the processes of visual perception, and that reading an image requires knowledge of the context to which it belongs. Therefore, didactic work with images needs to promote the student's ability to perceive, decode, and read the image in a contextualised way.

Teaching visual literacy is necessary because, according to Matusiak et al. (2019), being surrounded by visual media does not guarantee an understanding of its meaning and cultural context, nor does using it academically. The authors also point out that being literate requires the ability to assess need and find, interpret, and use images. When working with visual literacy, Miranda (2020) addresses the need for practices to stimulate image understanding. In line with this, Bezerra and Leão (2020) indicate that students should be encouraged in the school context to hypothesise through questions that lead them to see what is said and what is not said until they are able to infer the meaning of the imagery. To this end, these authors suggest mobilising prior knowledge. Complementing this idea, Bamford (2003) states that visual literacy requires a set of skills needed to interpret images, such as: examining their social impact and discussing their purpose, audience and ownership and ideological implications; judging the validity, accuracy and value of images; discriminating and making sense of images; creating images; understanding and appreciating the creativity of others, and visualising objects in their minds.

Stimulating these abilities in deaf learners to read images critically allows them to develop critical thinking and enables them to deal with the written code and develop their full literacy. According to Morais, Souza and Silva (2019, p. 132), reading "is considered to be the act of interpreting a set of information". As with semiotics, these authors consider text to be any statement that produces meaning. In this way, we can understand that there is the possibility of visual literacy and that it needs to be worked on in the most diverse educational activities.



# Literacy and the deaf apprentice

There are various positions when dealing with deaf people. Here, we treat him/her as a multicultural aspect, which considers him/her as a subject belonging to a linguistic minority. Based on this position, the understanding turns to the cultural aspects in which this subject is inserted. As such, we can conceptualise the Deaf as visual subjects participating in a linguistic community, whose language is sign language, and who have their own culture.

The deaf community is made up of sign language users who are mostly deaf, family members, friends or professionals who use sign language and work with deaf people. Frutuoso (2023) states that the deaf community is made up of deaf and hearing people from the same locality and who use sign language.

Deaf communities are made up of people who use sign language, each local deaf community has a shared experience in associations, schools, churches and others, and the linguistic community has deep affinities mediated by language and visual experience (PEIXOTO, 2016; 2020). In this way, the central axis of the deaf community and culture is the visual experience, and from this emerges sign language. This is an important factor in understanding why social and educational interactions with deaf people will always be mediated by visuality.

Understanding and adopting the importance of deaf visuality in the educational context implies working with the visual image as the central object of work. It is important to consider the empirical experience with the image and this as a sign of socio-historical representation that becomes a means of belonging in the world (LEÃO; SOFIATO; OLIVEIRA, 2017). In search of this belonging, deaf people appropriate images in their multiple relations of meaning and create their own language to be in the world. Thus, an autonomous spatial-visual language was created (ROSADO; TAVEIRA 2019), that is, without the parameters of reproducing the structure of the oral language.

The similarities between the structure of oral language and sign language that exist are merely motivated by the natural way of linguistically representing the world. Sign language is the natural language of the deaf and visual space (MIRANDA, 2020) and constitutes deaf culture (CRUZ; PRADO 2019). According to Frutuoso (2023), sign language is the hallmark of deaf culture, in such a way that language and image are elements that make up deaf cultural expressions, carrying within them the socio-historical and ideological contexts of the deaf community.

Faced with questions of this kind, some studies suggest that for an effective education, there are some premises and among them we find: support in visual resources; access to sign language as early as possible, to information, comprehension, understanding and interpretation of the events involved in reading and writing; and that the literacy of the deaf should not be linked to oral phonetic methods, but relate the imagetic text to the written text (CRUZ; PRADO, 2019; MACEDO, 2020; MIRANDA, 2020).

To this end, Miranda (2020, p. 209) states that "visual literacy for deaf children is a resource that should be implemented in teaching practices, and can be used as pre-reading strategies". The author (2020) states that sign language is the natural language of the deaf, which is a spatial-visual modality and provides the subject with the same learning conditions as oral language. Studies on the universe of deaf people and reports from deaf people point to the mark of the visual experience. However, according to Miranda (2020), it is not privileged by the school, nor by the family. Complementing this point, Cruz and Prado (2019) note that it is constituted in the culture of the deaf.

It is emphasised here that the literacy of the deaf must take place in two ways: in Portuguese and in sign language. However, sign writing must be the code used for the literacy of the deaf (CAPOVILLA, 2020). In the process of developing reading skills, deaf people should be offered teaching that enables them to read in both languages, since Decree 5.626/05 (BRASIL, 2005) requires them to be bilingual.



Cruz and Prado (2019, p. 189) state that "Brazilian inclusive schools are not yet structured enough to guarantee bilingual education for the deaf. Faced with this scenario, we understand that deaf education cannot be thought of without imagery resources that are worked on in a meaningful way. As such, visual literacy is extremely relevant to their education.

# Literacy practices in museums with deaf apprentices

Museum spaces are social facilities that can have specific objectives. Their emergence in Brazil can be traced back to the installation of the Fribourg Palace by the Dutch in Pernambuco (17th century), where the works of Frans Post and Albert Eckhout were exhibited, with the first records of the region's inhabitants and the landscape and town planning of the time. In 1818, the Royal Museum, now the National Museum, was founded, making it the first Brazilian museum (IBRAM, 2016).

Over the years, Brazilian society has come closer and closer to cultural facilities such as museums and other spaces. Languages have become closer and more modernised, and entrance fees have become more accessible or have been taken over by the state. The ways in which people relate to art and culture are changing and transforming the subject in a two-way street.

In order to legitimise the use of these spaces, specific public policies and legal instruments have been introduced to encourage their occupation, particularly those aimed at accessibility for people with disabilities (BRASIL, 2005; 2015; 2021; IBRAM, 2016). As a thermometer of the relevance of this agenda, the International Congress on Education and Accessibility in Museums and Heritage held its 6th edition in 2021 (CIEAMP, 2019), with the participation of representatives from various Brazilian states, Latin American countries, and Europe. In the proceedings of the congress (CIEAMP, 2019), the term "Libras" has 80 occurrences, and the term "deaf" 127, indicating that the topic of communicational accessibility for deaf signing people is the focus of discussions. However, the issue is still treated as a challenge and there is need for breaking existing barriers.

One of the first experiences of accessibility services in Libras for deaf signers in museums took place at the Auguste Rodin exhibition at the Aluísio Magalhães Museum of Modern Art (MAMAM) in Recife, an institution belonging to the Government of Pernambuco (PINACOTECA, 2000). At the time, the museum received caravans of deaf children and young students from public and private schools in various cities in Pernambuco, including those from neighbouring states. There was a cultural and artistic effervescence in the deaf community. It was something unusual to have quality access to cultural goods and with mediation exclusively for the deaf public.

With the communication accessibility of the Rodin exhibition at MAMAM, the teachers of a public school in the capital were considered a reference point by the local deaf community - possibly because there is specialised bilingual assistance in Libras/Portuguese and because it is a space for exchanges between their peers - observed a different interest in cultural spaces among deaf students.

The influx of new deaf students was constant and their literacy profiles varied greatly. Most of them came from public schools, with significant age/school year distortions and various diagnoses, perhaps in an attempt to respond to the educational failure of the oralist model and the educational integration model (SANTOS, SANTOS, DAMASO, 2019). In addition to these young people enrolled in the initial years of primary school (using the nomenclature of the current education system), there were deaf students who attended special non-serialised classes, also with age/school year distortions. What both groups had in common was no or little knowledge of sign language, and no knowledge of written Portuguese. Often, they did not even know how to write their own names.

<sup>1</sup> At the time, this educational service was called itinerant care and worked exclusively with deaf or hearing-impaired students.

<sup>2</sup> The educational model for special education was the integration model.



In order to cater for such diverse profiles, the teachers created the Cultural Space for the Deaf Project for the school. The project's planning included periodic visits to the city's cultural facilities. Mediation was carried out in Libras and the negotiation of meanings was discussed by the students. The object worked on was visual literacy with a focus on identity and cultural aspects. To this end, the project invited members of the state's deaf association to take part in the visual literacy activities.

As Libras was consolidated, Portuguese also came to be understood as a possible register. In that historical period, linguistic studies in sign languages were still being consolidated in the country and at different stages in the Brazilian regions.

One of the most impactful actions was the workshop given by a deaf artist. The deaf representative was present, engaging in a dialogue in a place of social power, within the school, with all the authority on the visuality of art and its multiple meanings. He was the lecturer, a deaf man! Possibly, those experiences with deaf peers received within an educational institution from which many young people had been excluded, at the time, applauded the deaf protagonist's knowledge. In line with this understanding, Martin (2016) found that deaf representation had an impact on groups of deaf visitors to a museum when the visit was led by a deaf professional.

The activities were carried out bilingually. Work on each language was organised at different times. The linguistic studies in Libras took the form of games and play in groups, without being separated by formal seriation. Miranda (2020, p.199) states that "oral language and sign language must be in a relationship of discursive exchanges and established in multiple relationships and different types of language use".

This is justified by the heterogeneity of the group in terms of schooling, but most of them were in the pre-reader stage. The aim was to study Libras grammar, which was new content for the students, using phonological analysis strategies, the Hand Configuration deck and other materials produced by the teachers. The morphosyntactic aspects of Libras were also emphasised. The suprasegmental elements of sign language, such as the use of facial and body expressions and the direction of the gaze, were discussed in the context of retrieving the images worked on and the different ways of expressing them.

Some hearing teachers started taking part in the Libras activities as apprentices, with the aim of improving their Libras skills. New teachers became involved in the activities, broadening the scope of the project within the school.

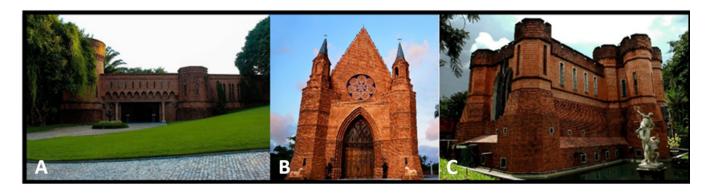
More and more deaf students wanted to take part in visits to museum spaces, photography exhibitions, painting exhibitions, fashion shows in the city's shopping centres, always followed by discussions about impressions, agreement, strangeness, in short, the living use of sign language. Students from other educational units began to ask to be transferred to the "school that teaches art in Libras". Non-formal spaces also contribute to the learning processes of deaf children and young people, as the study by García-Terceño et al. (2023) corroborates.

By the end of 2001, all those enrolled in the special non-serialised classrooms who took part in the project had been integrated into the initial years (1st and 2nd grade). The responses obtained from the project were recognised by the unit responsible for Special Education in the state. The teachers became part of the management's team of continuing education trainers.

The Ricardo Brennand Institute (IRB), also in Recife, was created in 2001 and opened in 2002 with the Albert Eckhout exhibition. The IRB is a non-profit private institution, a tourist and cultural centre of national importance (MARANHÃO, 2002). For its inauguration, the same Libras monitoring team from MAMAM was invited to provide communication accessibility for the exhibitions of Dutch artists Albert Eckhout in 2002 and Frans Post in 2003.



**Figura 1:** Complexo de edificações do Instituto Ricardo Brennand, sendo A - Pinacoteca, Biblioteca; B - Capela Nossa Senhora das Graças; C- Museu Castelo São João.



Fonte: Link: <a href="https://www.institutoricardobrennand.org.br/index.php/exposicoes">https://www.institutoricardobrennand.org.br/index.php/exposicoes</a>>. Foto montagem das autoras.

The opening of the IRB brought the school and the project's students together. As the museum monitors were teachers at the school, a window of opportunity opened up. In order to carry out a monitoring programme of this size, various training courses are held with specialists and this knowledge has led to a new stage, the "Cultural Project for the Deaf Pernambuco for Dutch People to See". The museums became part of the school's study routine.

The actions planning was discussed democratically and collectively, with the participation of all the deaf students and the teachers of various subjects. The culmination of the action was the production of a video in a retelling with poetic freedom that they already knew how to elaborate, based on their experiences of visual literacy. The video narrated the arrival of the Dutch in the 17th century Pernambuco, and Eckhout's records of "the flora, fauna, people and culture of our state", in the words of Maranhão (2002, p. 31).

**Figura 2:** Tela da exposição de Eckhout, em 2003, no Instituto Ricardo Brennand, chamada Dança Tarairiu (Tapuia) e imagem capturada do vídeo "Projeto Cultural para Surdos: Pernambuco para Holandês Ver", com a releitura da obra por artistas surdos.



Fonte: Link: <a href="https://enciclopedia.itaucultural.org.br/obra14525/danca-dos-tarairiu-tapuias">https://enciclopedia.itaucultural.org.br/obra14525/danca-dos-tarairiu-tapuias</a>.

Foto montagem de acervo pessoal das autoras.

The script was discussed and constructed collectively, with the signed texts rehearsed for three months. Costumes and props were produced in workshops with the art teacher. The choreography for the Tarairiu (Tapuia) dance was based on studies of movements, analysed through visual recording and experienced by deaf bodies. The teams were organised by choice of profiles. The artists chose their characters and studied them, building a living narrative to give shape to a canvas.



Gomes (2015) refers to Waldisa Rússio Camargo Guarnieri's thinking on the concept of "museum fact" or "museological fact", defined as a state of profound relationship between the knowing subject and the object, which is constituted as part of reality, and in which the subject can act and act on the various layers of consciousness, through sight, hearing, and other sensory forms. The author emphasises in Waldisa Rússio's (as she was known) postulates that the quality of the human being's interaction with the object was one of admiration.

Undergraduate students reporting their perceptions of an extension programme of bilingual speech therapy in the language area with deaf people in museums, assert that "the richness of visual elements in the composition of the museum collection, containing historical and cultural elements that added social and subjective value to the participants' productions" (SILVA, OLIVEIRA, OLIVEIRA et al., 2020, w.p.).

**Figura 3:** Tela da exposição de Eckhout, em 2003, no Instituto Ricardo Brennand, chamada Mameluca e imagem capturada do vídeo "Projeto Cultural para Surdos: Pernambuco para Holandês Ver", com a releitura da obra por artista surda.



Fonte: Link: <a href="https://enciclopedia.itaucultural.org.br/obra14529/mulher-mameluca">https://enciclopedia.itaucultural.org.br/obra14529/mulher-mameluca</a>.

Foto montagem de acervo pessoal das autoras.

The movement to recognise themselves as a linguistic minority, because they use a sign language, and to see the similarities with indigenous peoples was a topic that was discussed a lot among the group. Macedo (2020, p. 364) corroborates this perception by stating that "in order for deaf people to be able to recognise themselves as social actors, their culture and identity must be taken into account in various contexts".

Two factors should be highlighted concerning the participants during the project period: school attendance and performance. The first refers to the increase and stability of school attendance. Secondly, the teachers reported a change in the profile of several students, who were more interested and participative, with an increase in their grades in general. Unfortunately, there were no professional sign language translators and interpreters in the schools. Cruz and Prado (2019, p.187) argue that "it is true that deaf children need access to their first language (L1) in order to develop their thinking, formulate hypotheses, assimilate concepts and relate to them", so that access to knowledge is natural for the apprendices. Finally, we will mention the words of a young participant, which sum up the learning processes experienced in that collective of forces. At one of the group's last meetings, he signalled in Libras: "now, I've learnt how to learn".



## Final considerations

This academic selection of a set of experiences in deaf education with museum spaces and their visuality, illustrated some of the possibilities of carrying out practices that respect the apprendice, their language, their identity, their culture, without losing sight of the primary objective, which is to give access to the literate world and its developments.

In order to work in museum spaces, the mediator needs to have knowledge of the installation, its principles, its languages and its works. It is not simply a matter of interpreting the content into Libras or signing in the first person; this is what is seen. It is a negotiation of meanings where it is possible to point in one direction but the interlocutor of the work is the one who makes their own signature through their visual experiences, as does the deaf subject.

Moreover, in order for professionals to work in a bilingual Libras/Portuguese practice, it is a *sine qua non* condition to have a mastery of the pertinent content of sign languages and the ways of appropriating the oral modality as a second language.

Visual access to art spaces for deaf pre-readers can be a viable didactic-methodological choice, with the aim of fostering visual thinking. The dimension of literacy processes based on museum experiences gives power to the interlocutor, because access to reading means having power over the world around you (CONCEIÇÃO; LEAL, 2020).

We can conclude that any educational work with the deaf must involve sign language and imagery. With this understanding, pre-reading work must be mediated by imagery, but not only that. It must be work that fulfils the conditions to promote critical awareness and make sense to the deaf apprendice. Thus, using the museum as a teaching tool enables meaningful learning. Museum objects make it possible for deaf people to have a meaningful encounter with cultural expressions because they have a language that can be understood due to its visual nature, which creates a state of wonder.

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