

ABSTRACT
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**Magic Behind the Cams:
Teaching SignWriting in an Online Course**

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SignWriting is a system developed to write Sign Languages. It was created in 1974, and it has been already used in more than 40 countries around the world (BUTLER, 2012). In 1996, through the work of Costa, Stumpf & Borba, the SignWriting (also known in Brazil as “Escrita de Sinais”) came to Brazil. They showed that Brazilian Sign Language (LIBRAS) is not unwritten, but it can also be written (BARRETO & BARRETO, 2012). Then, many papers and researches were published *in or about* SignWriting and its functionality.

In 2013, the Brazilian 'Libras Escrita' publisher launches the "*Escrita de Sinais 2.0*" (BARRETO, 2013), which is an online Distance Education course with a class load of 70 hours. This course teaches the SignWriting system step by step with more than 800 LIBRAS' signs for example. Actually, more than 50 hearing students from 16 of the 26 Brazilian states plus 1 student from Portugal have attended the course. This course has a Website, in which only the students subscribed can access the lessons. These lessons have been organized in five modules. We have different types of classes. Most of them is recorded on videos in a studio equipped with a fixed whiteBoard onto the wall. Each class has between 10 and 25 minutes. The teacher always prepares previously the topics, examples and methodology before each class. The recording is made using two cams, one is for a frontal recording and the other is for a 45° angular recording (used for capturing details of the writing on the whiteboard). All recordings are recorded into HD format in order to enable the video editing. Four fluorescent lamps were used: two for the whiteboard and two for the teacher. Each lamp was located at a side. The teacher used three different colors (blue, black and red markers) to write the examples and tips on the whiteboard. To record the audio, it is used a lapel microphone connected with a Handy Recorder Zoom™ for capturing the voice better. Sometimes, the video of a class is not a unique and long video, but it is made up of short videos from 2 to 5 minutes, in which a lot of videos has not been used.

In a paper sheet, the camera operator takes notes about the videos, the number of the classes and other editing notes. Resuming those notes during the editing process is a very important job to the editor. Once a lot of videos are recorded in one day, recognising the notations in terms of the time when the mistakes were made and the proper class for each video and the audio file can help making the editing process much easier and

faster. Thus later, the video editor chooses the correct videos and the respective audio recordings to edit the video on Adobe Premiere™. The editing process itself has several particularities and techniques, in which we can highlight among them: organizing and renaming the files in a proper and simple way will save a lot of time in the future. Another software used quite often is Adobe Audition™, because most of the times the audio files need some correction.

Even though most of the lessons were taught in Portuguese, considering that this first experience of an online course was oriented to hearing people, there were lots of examples in Sign Language. In the specific context of shooting something that is about to be signalled, there are lots of concerns that must be observed by the camera operator. Testing the signaling space before starting to shoot is very important. As the teacher is aware of the size and of the details that are necessary to be seen on that specific lesson, he must inform to the operator the space that he will actually need. Zooming the camera too far away from the object can cause a huge loss of details, and zooming too close can result in cutting off from the camera frame a significant part of the sign. Doublecheck the camera's focus will also avoid losing and redoing lots of days of work.

Sometimes, we can't see a mistake on the small sized camera screen, and we will only find out the problems in the end of the day when we see the archive on the computer screen. This is the technical part. But the really magic behind the cams is the course's methodology step by step (BARRETO & BARRETO, 2012; BARRETO, 2013) associate with topics from LIBRAS' linguistics (FERREIRA-BRITO, 1995; QUADROS & KARNOPP, 2004) added to many examples from the LIBRAS, the tips using techniques of teaching and learning from the Cognitive Neuroscience (DRIDEN & VOS, 1999; ALVES, 2005; KELLEY, 2008; KELLEY & WHATSON,

2013), the methodology of the exercises for copying, reading, writing, transcribing, translating and analyzing the reading and the writing of the signs, phrases and texts in LIBRAS associated with the individual feedback from the teacher for each student and besides that: the interaction among students in a Secret Group on the social network (FaceBook), where the students can ask and answer questions, interact and construct the learning together. If it wasn't this methodology, it wouldn't be enough all the technique and technology.

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