

## **School inclusion and audio description: informing teachers**

When we talk about school inclusion, of inclusive schools, the schools that receive the students and offer them opportunities to learn, some questions are still asked, such as, for example on the subject of school activities: how can we prepare activities that meet the needs of all students? How can we arouse curiosity; expand their world knowledge; allow all students access to information? Many are the resources that could be used in the classroom to answer these questions. One such resource is audio description.

Audio description is an accessibility resource that broadens the understanding of the visually impaired in cultural events (plays, TV programs, exhibitions, shows in general, musicals, operas, fashion shows and dance performances), touristic events (sightseeing tours, visits), sports events (games, fights, competitions), academic events (talks, seminars, conferences, lectures, science fairs, science experiments, history explanations) among other possibilities, all of which take place by means of sound information. It changes the visual into verbal, opening up new and greater possibilities of access to culture and information, thus contributing to social, cultural and school inclusion. Besides helping people who are visually impaired, the technique of audio description also broadens the understanding of the elderly, people who are dyslexic and those with intellectual impairment.

The same equipment employed for conference interpreting is used to carry out audio descriptions – i.e., earphones and receptors. Sound information is transmitted by the audio describers from a booth, where they sit and follow a previously prepared script, with study about the theme and terminology – all of which is preferably inserted between the character's speeches. On television, audio description was supposed to have been implemented in June 2008, with the inclusion of two hours of audibly described programs per day. These would have been transmitted through the SAP key (secondary audio channel). However, the resource was suspended by the Ministry of Communications, and was later placed under public consultation, and new Orders were approved and launched. A true saga, culminated with the publication of Order number 188, in March 2010, approving the transmission of 2 hours per week of audio described programs as of July 2011, on digital TV, which considerably lowers the possibilities of access to culture and information. Today, this number of hours increased to 4 hours per week, still not enough considering the number of visually impaired people who live in Brazil.

At school, the teachers themselves can describe the imagistic universe that is present in the classroom, including coursebook and history book illustrations, graphs, maps, videos, photographs, scientific experiments, drawings, theatre plays, sightseeing tours, science fairs, cultural visits, etc., without any need for special equipment for this to take place. However, there is a need for the teacher to be aware of the importance to verbalize whatever is visual in nature - which certainly will contribute to the learning of all students regardless of their visual ability. Everyone benefits from this resource – those who listen and those who audibly describe because, besides an enhancement in their sense of observation, their repertoire is also broadened as well as their verbal

fluency. Therefore, use of audio description at school allows for an equity of opportunities, the access to the world of images and the elimination of communicational barriers.

\***Lívia Maria Villela de Mello Motta** holds a doctorate degree in Applied Linguistics and Language Studies from the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo (PUC-SP) and works both in the area of teacher education for inclusion, and in the area of cultural inclusion for people that are visually impaired, especially focusing on the education of audio describers for the theatre, the cinema, the TV and other performances, social and pedagogical events. She created the site: [www.vercompalavras.com.br](http://www.vercompalavras.com.br) and the blog: [www.vercompalavras.com.br/blog](http://www.vercompalavras.com.br/blog), a virtual space to generate and disseminate knowledge about audio description. She is the academic coordinator of the first Brazilian Post Graduation Course on Audio Description.



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