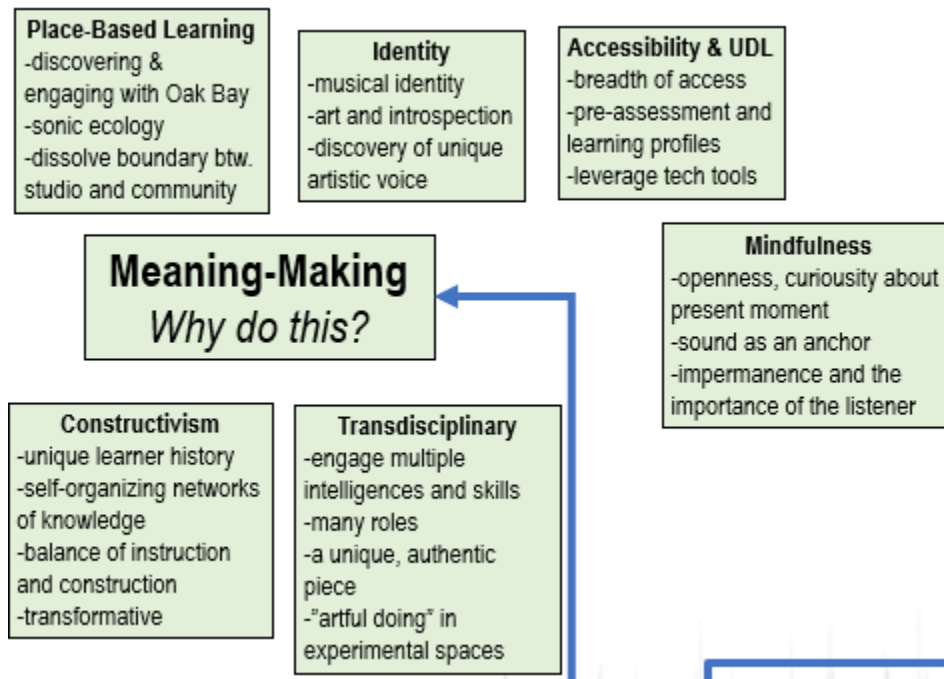


## Found Sound Project Document #1

### Meaning-Making



*This section will present some of the theoretical and pedagogical underpinnings of the Found Sound Project (FSP). I think it is important to begin a project by asking, "Why do this?" Here, I consider how this camp will promote connection to self, others and place. Not every student will connect to everything presented in this section, but it is my hope that at least a few of the aspects resonate.*

### **Accessibility & UDL**

The FSP has been conceived to be accessible and welcoming to as broad a cross-section of music learners as possible. As McKenzie explains in *Dive Into Inquiry*, open-ended, inquiry-based learning has the capacity to accommodate students with varying levels of proficiency and give them a path to success (McKenzie, 2016). This project would fall under the category of Controlled Inquiry in which students perform a common task (*i.e.* building a sound composition) based on a set of curated activities that employ a set of taught resources, tools and techniques. This approach strikes a balance between freedom and support, enabling more students to succeed.

Success will depend on the intentional use of pre-assessment and consideration of students' particular learner profiles (LP). Some camp attendees I have taught before, while others will be new to me. I intend to send out a survey beforehand for students and parents to complete. Using this diagnostic tool that communicates strengths, needs, prior experience and learning preferences, I can better follow the advice of educators like Shelley Moore who advocate 'designing for the margins' to ensure we are inclusive and supportive to the most learners (Moore, 2016).

Finally, in line with the CAST model of UDL, technology will be leveraged to enhance access (CAST, 2020). Each student will have a designated computer for editing, sequencing, sampling and online sourcing. At the end of each day, their work will be saved in Google Drive so that I can review it that evening, monitor progress and prepare provocations for the next day. Students will be given access

to vetted videos on YouTube which explain particular techniques and can be used in a self-paced manner.

## **Identity**

A major goal of the FSP is to promote students' understanding of their identity as musicians and sound artists. This aligns with the FNEC First People's Principle that "learning involves exploration of one's identity" (FNEC, 2008) Making art can be a deeply personal and introspective process, and the FSP will likely reveal new avenues of creativity to the student. Working within a supportive framework, learners will choose their path to produce an individual, unique piece that only they could conceive.

Learners will also come to understand themselves better as content and knowledge creators. Writing music and reflecting on this process lays bare our strengths and weaknesses. As the camp facilitator, I intend to use daily rituals like the Composer's Circle and other methods of self/peer assessment that will promote self-examination. Although all students will be engaging with 'soundscaping', within this domain they will be granted wide latitude in their means of expression and action. I will encourage students to use their own voice and expect that some will lean towards traditional composing, while others will exploit found sound and voice-over. I see this differentiation of product to be a strength of the model which will enhance learners' personal stake. Research suggests that achievement, learning, work ethic and resilience all increase with relevance and personal interest (Hidi & Renninger, 2006; Linvill, 2014).

## **Place-Based Learning**

This camp will take place in the neighbourhood of Oak Bay, where our studio is located and where many of our learners live. It is my hope that the significant time spent outside exploring various locales in the neighbourhood will promote place-based learning. John Dewey noted the lamentable disconnection between school and the wider world even early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Dewey, 1959 in Smith, 2002, p.3). This "isolation of school from life" can be remedied by place-based learning (PBL) which gives students an opportunity to engage their inborn curiosity about their physical world in a way that the music studio cannot. It is my intention to re-frame the environment as a living sound laboratory and art studio.

Advocates of PBL emphasize its ability to make learning experiential, multidisciplinary and grounded within the local community. In PBL, we strive "to make the boundaries between schools [studios] and their environs more permeable by directing at least part of the students' school experiences to local phenomena ranging from culture and politics to environmental concerns and the economy" (Smith 2002, p. 190).

Finally, BC's re-designed curriculum stresses the importance of PBL. The goals/rationale for K-12 science learning involve "a place based approach... [where] students will develop PBL about the area in which they live, learning about and building on First People's knowledge and other traditional ecological knowledge of the area. This provides a basis for an intuitive relationship with and respect for the natural world, connections within ecosystems and community and a sense of relatedness that encourages lifelong harmony with nature." (BC Ministry of Education, 2020). Through the lens of soundscaping, it is my hope that students gain a better sense of the sonic ecology of their home – its beauty, its fragility and its capacity to move and inspire.

## **Mindfulness**

An aspect of the hidden curriculum of the FSP is a desire to introduce students to some of the basic tenets of mindfulness practice. UCLA's Mindful Awareness Research Centre defines mindfulness as "paying attention to present moment experiences with openness, curiosity and a willingness to be with what is" (Winston, 2017) It is a practice where you invite yourself back into the present.

My experience in COVID has been significantly shaped by a daily mindful meditation practice. I've discovered that one of the best 'anchors' for being present and embodied in a space is to surrender myself to the sounds there. Outdoors, hearing the interaction between birds, trees, wind and the anthropogenic sounds demands an attention to the moment. Daily activities (*e.g.* Blindfolded Partner Walk) will hopefully promote an appreciation for the soundscape that is constantly unfolding around.

In fact, many of the sound artists I researched for this project make references to mindfulness concepts in terms of their field recording process. Professional recordists describe how "sound happens only in that moment and never again", requiring patience and presence to be captured. Félicia Atkinson, sound artist, explained "[soundscaping] is a very good practise to be more in peace or curiosity with daily life. For me the bigger goal of field recording is being an active listener." (Campbell, 2018). I hope these habits of mind can develop in some of the FSP participants.

## **Transdisciplinary**

The FSP aligns with a number of concepts in transdisciplinary education. In creating their soundscape, learners will combine multiple intelligences and diverse skills – formal musicianship, storytelling, audio recording and engineering and active listening to name a few. Furthermore, learners will perform an array of roles including recordist, musician, editor and composer and, therefore, be forced to think and act in ways that each role demands. Integrating all these roles within themselves allow students to create something that is truly unique to them. It is my hope that FSP attendees understand that their piece is something only they could create and that it is a vehicle to better self-understanding.

Dieleman has written on the application of transdisciplinary theory to art practice. He notes that "our reality requires that knowledge will be created through the conjunction of various points of view that together create the scope for transdisciplinary activities" through the "hybridization of what used to be separated spheres of art, science, engineering, design... education" (Dieleman 2013, p.67 & 75). By operating between, across and beyond disciplines, students move beyond the purely cognitive realm to include intelligences such as feeling, sense of place and kinesthetic sense. Furthermore, creation is an act or "artful doing" where a creator works iteratively to produce a piece of art. The process action-reaction pairs involves adding components to a piece, stepping back and then using one's own response as a guide to the next creative choice. These ideas will find form in the camp through the fact that students will alternate constantly between capture and arrangement, allowing the discoveries in each to guide their next steps. The field and studio operate as interacting spaces of experimentation, with one informing and empowering the other.

## **Constructivism**

Music education is a domain of learning where constructivism is particularly visible. Every student arrives with a personal history of engagement with music, bringing ideas, concepts, skills and tastes they have acquired through their personal history as a musician. A constructivist model sees learning as a process of individually self-organising knowledge that is constantly altered through new insights and experiences (Scheer *et al.*, 2012).

As each student will arrive at the FSP with unique perspectives and capabilities, the onus is on the facilitator to be tolerant, patient and open-minded. Rather than having a pre-conceived idea of the end product (*e.g.* a soundscape about ducks), the facilitator must actively listen to each learner and help them to realize a self-formed vision. As Scheer describes it, constructive learning design requires a “balance of instruction and construction” (Scheer *et al.* 2012, p.10) Through this process, students will blend the things they brought with them with the new tools, techniques and lenses they have been exposed to through activities like Sound Hound, the Found Instrument Jam and Poetic Soundscapes.

Rather than focussing on producing a coherent end product, the FSP will focus on this process of personal transformation in how we hear, make and experience sound. The FSP is designed to challenge some of the conceptions that students may arrive with in terms of what could be considered music or artful sound. As music history has progressed and become more integrated with technology, the prescriptive modes of Western music defined by the canonical figures like Bach and Mozart have been challenged. Most students in the camp will have only been exposed to more traditional modes of music, and the facilitator must be prepared for confusion, resistance and uncertainty. Integrating new ideas about yourself as an artist can foster change in one’s musical identity, which is a slow and demanding process.

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