Core Skills & Learning Outcomes
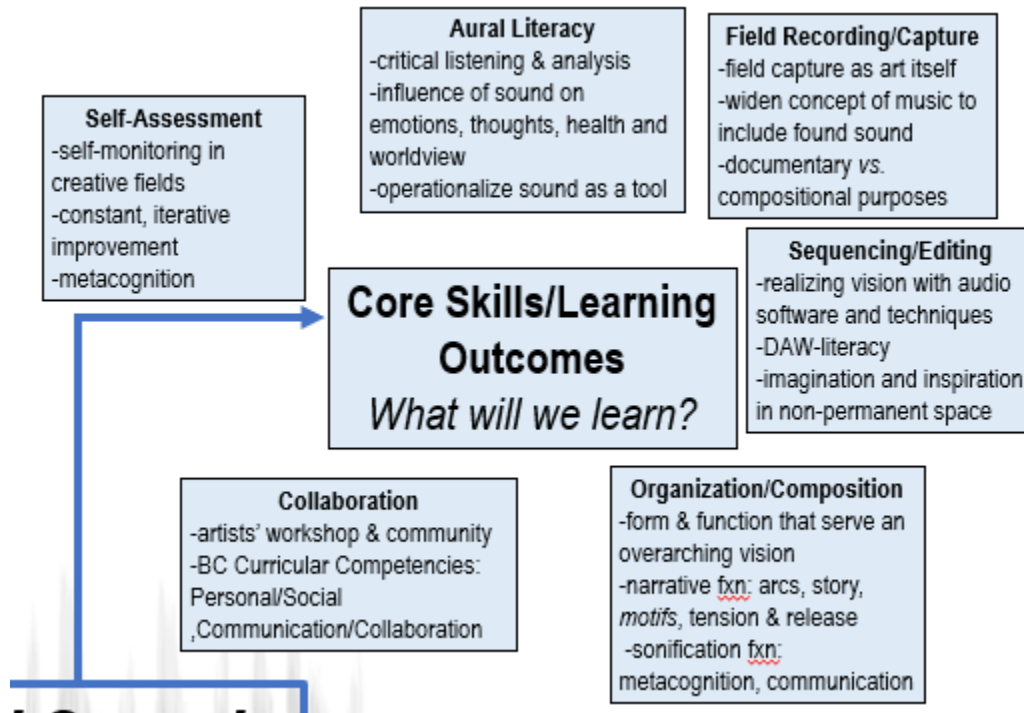

This section will present some of the specific skills and learning outcomes for the Found Sound Project (FSP). This answers: "What will the participants be learning?" These learning outcomes are informed by the Meaning-Making section, are developed with material from the Tools & Techniques and applied in the Example Activities from Project section. Each sub-category will briefly describe the value of the skill before providing observable learning outcomes.

Self-Assessment

Feedback is such a crucial component in the growth of musicians and composers. While a teacher is a fantastic source of feedback, the ability to self-monitor and self-assess is absolutely critical to musicians and creatives of all types (Valle, 2016). Music learning and writing is largely a solitary act where the only individual present to critique and monitor progress is the performer themselves. This process is fundamentally formative, with students assessing their progress to guide their own development.

Used properly, self-monitoring is critical to development of one's unique artistic voice (Nielsen, 2014). The process of constant, iterative improvement will recruit and develop key metacognitive skills. In my opinion, this is perhaps the principle benefit of participation in the creative arts: it forces you to think very hard about how you think and how you learn.

Through participation in the FSP, learners will…
1. *develop the habit of consistently self-assessing their work in terms of rhythm, tempo, texture, timbre, composition and form*
2. *apply metacognitive lenses to their music, considering how they are learning and the relative effectiveness of particular methods*

3. *consider their work as if hearing it from an outside point of view*
4. *develop a repertoire of self-assessment prompts/cues to use when developing their work*

Aural Literacy

> *"Notice how you feel. There's already a conversation happening between your senses and where you are. So, no matter where you are, notice how you feel. There is this connection going on. Stand on a downtown street corner for just a few minutes and notice how you feel. And then, make the journey sometime to a true wilderness area – and notice how you feel."*
>
> *-Gordon Hempton, sound recordist (Taylor, 2019)*

Aural literacy refers to "critical listening skills and the analysis of sounds as well as their impact on our emotions and actions" (Shaw, 2015). Just as learners are encouraged to develop literacy for written and visual modalities, sound objects can be considered "texts" as well which are amenable to forms of analysis including critique, deconstruction and rhetorical study. The act of becoming aurally literate involves learners asking how sound influences our emotions, our thoughts, our physical and mental health and our worldview. Learners will have likely encountered this process in the context of Western music, when considering how styles, timbre and certain sonorities can induce feelings. However, the purpose of this camp is to broaden their perspective to include 'non-musical' tones in the category of affective sound.

Practically, I wish for learners to begin to understand how composers and sound designers operationalize sound and use it as a tool. Evidence suggests that sound, both in our direct consciousness and background, deeply influences emotions and modulates our physiological, psychological, cognitive and behavioural states (Treasure, 2009). Furthermore, a growing body of medical research has linked our daily soundscapes to health (Aletta, 2018; Geroymlatou *et al.,* 2019). It is my hope that students will come to better understand how sound is influencing them in their day-to-day life, so that they can control and curate their personal soundscape to promote health, curiousity and creativity.

Through participation in the FSP, learners will…
1. *map direct relationships between features of sound (pitch, timbre, loudness,* etc.*) and their emotional and physiological state*
2. *assess a sound environment at many layers of depth*
3. *employ sound to evoke desired states in their musical compositions*

Field Recording/Capture

Most learners who enroll in the camp will be familiar with traditional forms of music-making from their exposure to the Western musical tradition. Students of the South Island Music School all receive private instruction in an instrument (*e.g.* piano, guitar, drums) or voice. However, I expect very few students in the target age range from the camp (10-13) will have experience in field recording, or any audio recording for that matter. A major objective of this camp is to provide students with an introductory skillset in capturing environmental and found sound.

Field recording refers to the process of capturing sound outside the controlled confines of a studio. Increasingly, it has become a form of art in itself, with recordists going to greater and more creative

lengths to capture and catalogue unheard sound. The advent of portable, affordable music hardware has made the recording process more accessible while developments in software have made the editing and manipulation of samples easy even to absolute beginners.

Using portable recorders and digital audio workstations, students will think critically about how to capture sound. They will leverage technology for documentary purposes (*i.e.* to capture high fidelity representations of a sonic event) and for compositional purposes (*i.e.* to express an aesthetic). Finally, they will learn to consider how to manipulate the environment or their recorder to isolate desired sonic features and minimize noise or contamination.

> Through participation in the FSP, learners will…
> 1. *utilize Zoom recorders and supercardioid microphones for capturing environmental sound*
> 2. *adjust recording settings and environmental features in pursuit of specific recording outcomes such as clarity, sound isolation or reverberance*
> 3. *employ field recording for documentary and compositional purposes*
> 3. *explore sonic spaces with curiousity and the intention to sample compelling sound objects*

Organization/Composition

Sound design, like other forms of media, has a variety of functions. The way that we organize and compose sound – its form – should suit its function. Composition is a challenging and iterative process. Therefore, organization and planning play a huge role in creating effective compositions.

Sometimes sound is used to tell stories, as in the case of radio plays or podcasts. These share features with written forms of storytelling such as story arcs (*i.e.* intro – action – conclusion), characters, *motifs* and the interplay of tension and release. If students elect to produce a narrative piece, it is important for them to consider how they can convey story and introduce meaning through devices like instrumentation, effects, timing, melody and harmony. Students will learn about the distinction between different layers of sonic stories including ambience, foley, dialogue and emotional effects. Finally, the sonic storyteller must organize their thinking and combine their various considerations to deliver a coherent narrative.

Other times, sound design is used to convey information through a process known as sonification. An example may be the tone of an EKG monitor or the sounds provided at crosswalks for those who are blind. If a student elects to design with a sonification function in mind, a great emphasis is placed on metacognition. Students must consider how we hear in order to find meaningful and efficient avenues of communication. For instance, if a student wishes to document a space in the greatest possible clarity, they must consider how to convey features and aspects of this space non-visually. This involves identifying key features of what you are trying to convey, and mapping these features onto particular auditory parameters in a coherent way.

> Through participation in the FSP, learners will…
> 1. *identify the purpose of their sound design*
> 2. *use tools and techniques (e.g. sound maps, graphic organizers, story arcs) to organize their composition*
> 3. *employ their organizational framework to develop clear, modular tasks to complete*
> 4. *monitor the progress of their composition*
> 5. *critically reflect on the extent to which their purpose was realized*

Sequencing/Editing

If organization/composition helps to frame the story or subject that you wish to explore, sequencing and editing is the process through which that vision is realized. These skills involve using audio software to organize your content for coherence, clarity and impact.

In the context of this camp, editing and sequencing will be performed on a Digital Audio Workstation (DAW, *e.g.* Audacity, Ableton Live). These software suites allow learners to graphically arrange their sound samples, apply and experiment with audio FX and export final projects. Their digital nature makes them ideal for supporting imagination and experimentation. Work in a DAW is always non-permanent and reversible, providing space for improvisation, tweaking and adaptation. This aligns with key concepts of Design Thinking in that the learner workflow occurs as an iterative process of improvement through experience and complex problem solving (Scheer, 2012)

Editing and sequencing is a craft that comes with practice. This week-long camp will give learners a primer in these skills through workshops, guided practice and 1:1 support. For more information on the specific effects covered in camp, please see **Tools & Techniques.**

Through participation in the FSP, learners will…
1. *Employ the sequencing functions of Digital Audio Workstations including loading samples, arranging content and cropping clips in order to create an original composition.*
2. *Apply audio FX from a core suite to enhance their compositions. These FX include delay, reverb, panning, stretching and EQ.*
3. *Use technology to reinforce, enhance and realize artistic and aesthetic choices.*
4. *Reflect on sequencing/editing situation through self-, peer- and mentor-led assessment.*

Collaboration

It is my intention to frame the camp as a workshop of artists. In alignment with constructivism, I will encourage each learner to acknowledge that all members of the camp arrive with a unique set of skills and an artistic voice. Collaboration is a fundamental skill in the arts. It's very rare for individuals in sound or music to work alone, and, therefore it is imperative to gain experience working with others on shared or individual projects.

In framing my vision for the Collaboration outcomes, I chose to ground my goals in the BC Curriculum Core Competencies. The Personal/Social domain emphasizes social awareness and responsibility for the well-being of others. This camp will empathize patience, attention, inclusion, safety and belonging. The Curriculum's Communication & Collaborations stream expects learners to develop dispositions and strategies to pursue common goals, recognize collaborators and interact in a supportive way. It is my hope that each camp cohort develops a sense of shared purpose and develops into a unit of artists experimenting in new terrain and navigating challenge. Through group music-making, rituals like the Composer's Circle and the frequent sharing of advice, space and equipment, I hope that students gain a better understanding of themselves as artistic collaborators. I hope this empowers them to pursue more projects with others in the future.

Through participation in the FSP, learners will…
1. *Gain opportunities to demonstrate teamwork, leadership, empathy and social responsibility.*
2. *Navigate shared resources and spaces with other artists.*
3. *Improve their understanding of themselves as artistic collaborators.*
4. *Demonstrate respect for individual differences in ability, culture, aesthetic preferences, attitudes and feelings.*
5. *Learn models of collaboration and team-building that can be applied in future projects.*

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