

# **Creativity and Musicality through Digital Soundscape Composing**

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The Irish Primary School Music Curriculum encourages the exploration of environmental sounds in order to deepen children's awareness of the musical qualities of the sound world they inhabit. By imitating and composing with 'real-world' sounds, children learn to recognise concepts such as timbre, texture, dynamics and structure. For teachers who are not music specialists, however, it can be a daunting task to organise such sounds into musical entities in the classroom. The aim of this study is to give student teachers individual control over sound material through the composing of soundscapes in an audio editor. Set in a social constructivist framework, this paper posits that soundscape is more than simply a sacred medium for acoustic ecologists; it can also be an imaginative resource for teachers. An overarching research question frames the investigation: 'How might digital soundscape stimulate creativity and musical learning among student teachers and their pupils?' A scoping stage was initiated to discover how five student teachers, with little or no tutoring, would mould 'found' sounds into soundscapes. To do so, they would record, transform and position sounds in an audio editor. Triangulated findings derived from this initial phase are presented, including observation, semi-structured interviews and an analysis of the pieces themselves. Compositional techniques such as motivic development, structural cohesion, layering, unity and contrast are noted. In anticipation of the imminent main study and supported by audio and visual examples, the discussion addresses modelling, sound exploration, freedom, constraints, aesthetic concerns, listening activities for children and confidence-building for student teachers.

**Keywords:** soundscape, creativity, musical concepts, modelling