

**Facilitating Approaches for Understanding Musique Concrète Classroom  
Composing In Secondary Schools In Ireland: Towards A Pedagogy**

**ABSTRACT**

This study arose from the difficulties faced by secondary school teachers in understanding musique concrète classroom composing. Musique concrète is made from timbres that have been created from pre-recorded sounds. It is not built around instruments, a beat, a melodic line or harmonic support; it is not ‘written down’ and the distinction between innovation and authentic practice is not clear.

The main aim of the study was to identify the pedagogical processes that support musique concrète classroom composing at secondary school. A constructivist grounded theory approach was used to address the research question. Composing workshops of between four and fourteen hours duration were organised in fourteen schools in Ireland, over a period of twenty nine months. Fifty students aged between fifteen and eighteen participated, using an audio editor and sounds recorded by themselves or downloaded from the internet. They worked in groups, in pairs or alone. Data were gathered in many forms from the participants, external teachers, music examiners and established electroacoustic composers.

The main finding is that ‘soundscape’ and ‘soundtrack’ composing are strong scaffolds for musique concrète classroom composing. Through them, students acquire skills and experience gradually, by learning structural and sound processes, as they move from literal to abstract meanings in a sort of ear re-training.

The contribution of the study to knowledge is the model for musique concrète classroom composing which consists of three gradated stages as well as guidelines for implementation and assessment. From this facilitating framework emerges the possibility of devising similar support systems for teaching other types of digital composing at secondary school. This has implications for teacher education, continual professional development, curriculum development, policy-making and higher education.