

Post-production

8 Editing Sound

Class level

From third class upwards

Learning Objectives

The child will be enabled to

- Understand what soundtrack is
- Understand the elements of soundtrack and how they can influence story
- Understand how to record different elements of soundtrack
- Use sound elements of editing software
- Level and balance sound

Methodologies

Individual and group work

Resources

Sample film projected for analysis of soundtrack
 Editing software such as *Windows Movie Maker* or *iMovie*
 Simple ingredients for creating foley sound effects
 (see <http://www.fisfilmproject.ie>)

Time

One to two class sessions

Curriculum links

English—Responding to text

Science—Sound

Music—Exploring sounds

Drama—Reflecting on drama, exploring the elements of drama

Film portfolio

Completed film or film scenes



Introduction

- What do you think sound is?
- What sounds can you hear on films? What are they?
- Why do you think films have sound effects?



Exercise

Play a scene from a film of your choice. Ask the children to listen carefully for all the different sounds they can hear.

- Describe the sounds you hear. In what way does the music add to this film?
- Can you tell how the characters are feeling by listening carefully to how they are speaking?
- Name the other sounds you hear, for example, a door opening, water gushing, teeth chattering, etc.
- What do you think of the music that was composed for this film? Does it create the right mood for the audience?

Development

List different types of films (see film activity sheet in Lesson 2, *Elements of a Film*); westerns, horror, comedies, adventure, etc. What kind of music or sound effects would you expect to hear in these films?

Discuss

How do the voices add to your impression of the speaker in the film?

- The sound, pitch (high or low) and tone of voices will affect the way you imagine the character.
- You create an image of what the character looks like: old or young, happy or sad, excited or frightened.
- Practice putting on different voices; of a young person, an elderly man, a frightened girl, a baby.



Activity

Show the children another scene from a film, but this time cover the screen. Ask the children to imagine what is happening from listening to the sounds only. After the listening activity in groups, the children discuss what they think was happening. They give feedback, and watch the sequence afterwards.

Alternatively, the children can watch a sequence of a film with no sound. In groups, they make a list of the sound effects they would need if they were the sound mixer on this film.



Sound Effects

Many sound effects are available from sound libraries, but others—like a door slamming, or a body falling to the floor—are made by a person called a Foley artist. Foley artists are named after Jack Foley, who invented many tricks for sound effects. For example, the sound of crackling fires was recorded by crinkling cellophane; a knife going into a body was created with a knife going into a head of cabbage.

See Tutorials on FÍS website: <http://www.fisfilmproject.ie>

Types of Sound Effects

- Sound effects can be either on-screen or off-screen.
- On-screen sound effects are those when we see the event, for example, the footsteps of an actor walking down the street.
- Off-screen sound effects are the sounds of activities that the audience may never see, for example, the sound of a car arriving outside the door while we are looking at the actor eating his dinner, a passing siren, birds or crickets, etc.

Adding Ambience

As mentioned in Lesson 6, recording ambience and environmental atmosphere is incredibly important and helpful, particularly reaching this stage of film-making. Although there are dialogue tracks and audio attached to your video clips, adding more audio tracks is almost always a good idea. Putting the recorded ambience under the dialogue track will add to the sound design and will help people enjoy the film as it will seem more natural.

For example, if two people are walking in the park, and all you can hear is them talking, the viewer will find it strange and distracting. Adding sound effects of wind, leaves blowing and footsteps will help sell the scene to the viewer.

Discuss

- What do you think sound is?
- What sounds can you hear on films? What are they?
- Why do you think films have sound effects?



Sound Design

Sound is remarkably important in film. When it comes to editing sound, the ideal result is perfectly clean and balanced audio in your film.

Editing sound focuses on:

- Leveling out the sound so it is balanced
- Adding environmental (ambient) sounds for atmosphere
- Adding sound effects to punctuate actions i.e. a punch

Leveling & Balancing

Any movie editing software you use for editing your footage will also facilitate sound editing. When editing footage, there is generally an audio file attached to it. This can be trimmed and cut, just like the video file. More importantly, though, the volume of the clip can be edited and adjusted to your liking.



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