speak up!

Learning Pack

a resource for schools

www.auneheadarts.org.uk

www.soundartradio.org.uk

www.dbbc.org.uk

speak up! learning pack

Speak Up! is a project developing speaking and listening skills using radio with young people in Devon and in Bolton. Aune Head Arts has been working with two fantastic radio projects: Soundart Radio 102.5fm, the licensed community radio station for Totnes and surrounding villages; and Diversity in Barrier Breaking Communications in Bolton, the radio training organisation for young people and people of all ages.

During the Speak Up! project, young people have spent two years involved in every aspect of making radio: developing ideas, interviewing on location, live and pre-recorded production, studio management, research, marketing and the rest...

We've found in both strands of the project that working with radio is great for developing skills in speaking and listening, for enabling communication between young people and the wider community, for building confidence and literacy skills and for making sure all voices are heard.

Visit the Speak Up! webpage!

This learning pack contains a number of ideas for workshops and activities for young people both inside and outside the classroom. The pack is designed to be a starting point for creative radio activity, and we hope it will lead to many more ideas being developed by teachers and young people to use sound as a great way to explore the world around us.

You'll find ideas for lessons, extension activities, technical information and links to examples of work our young people have made. The pack can be worked through, or you can pick and choose activities that fit with your learning aims. You can use shiny, up to the minute, high tech equipment, or make cheap and cheerful recordings on phones, or be ultra low tech - with hairbrush microphones and cardboard box speakers!

The activities are primarily aimed at young people between the ages of 11 and 14, but are adaptable to all ages and abilities.

The materials can be used here online, along with the underlined internet links on these pages, or printed off for students to work from.

We hope you enjoy working with this pack and we'll be happy to receive any feedback.

Story

Once upon a time, before the internet, before radio, before newspapers, before books... we learned about the world from the stories we heard and told.

All of life can be expressed through stories... from Cinderella to the news, from Shakespeare to gossip. What happens if we value all of these stories equally? Broadcast the story of buying some shoes as though it is a grand fable, or tell an ancient epic as though it happened to you yesterday.

Today's online communication mirrors the traditions of village gossiping, only now the village is much bigger.

Sound recording encourages students to use their voices with confidence, listen critically and allows those who find writing a challenge to participate with ease.

Create stories from our environment and imagination...

Activity

Go for a walk, or just explore the room you're in, and find one thing each to start the story off... pebbles... small plastic sheep... a spoon... a fir cone... a key... a brass bell... a dolls' house table... a lemon... or anything at all that you can fit in your hand.

Everybody sit in a circle. If you're planning to record, place the equipment in the centre and start it now... you can always edit it later on.

Tell a story based on the objects...

What is new about this story? What is familiar? How does it relate to other stories we have heard?

How do professional storytellers tell stories? Is it the same every time?

Activity

Tell a simple story of something from your own life, or a fairy tale, or the local paper. Can someone tell the whole story again? Can they make it sound more exciting? More tragic? More funny? How about elaborating... what were they wearing? What did they say?

Can you find sound effects for your story, just from things around the room or nearby?

What are other good starting points for storytelling?

What do we know about each other? We have a history... history happened 10 minutes ago, last year, when we were born, in our great grandparents time...

The things in our lives tell our stories too. Why are different things special to different people?

Activity

Find an object that means a lot to you. Tell us its story, how you came to own it, how it makes you feel. Interview one another in pairs. Focus your listening on the person you're interviewing, really try to picture everything they are saying and don't interrupt them.

Take photos of the objects in their hands.

Talk with parents or grandparents: what is special to them? How does it make them feel? How did they come to own it?

Story

speakup! session plan: 3D drama

aims

To develop enthusiasm for radio production … speaking and listening... creativity... understanding of how recordings work effectively... ability to evaluate and modify work... teamwork... ICT skills

outcomes

Each group will produce a sound file (MP3/WAV) of a scenario for listening to on headphones, to upload onto a website or share on mobile phones etc.

curriculum links

This lesson could form part of a scheme of work or project within Drama, English, ICT, Art, Design Technology, Media, History or Science

you will need

access to the internet; headphones; recording equipment; paper and pens; blindfold

Starter

- **Listen** to the well-known piece 'Virtual Barber Shop' online - it must be heard through headphones. Or try any of the 'Binaural Dramas' on the Speak Up! site. It's best to listen with your eyes closed.

- **Talk about:** What makes the piece so effective? Who was the main character? How was it made? What technology would you need? How do we know where different sounds are placed? In this recording? In real life? How many microphones would you need? How many ears do you have?

- **If there's time** one student sits blindfold in the middle of the room. Someone else has a small bell and sounds it at different places. Can the person in the middle point to where they are? What about trying a different sound, like scrunching up paper. Which one was easier? Can you think why?

Main Activity

- **Devise** in small groups a scenario where the main character is sitting silent in the middle, and the others move around them. Ideally each group should have a seperate space to work in.

- Don't worry about writing a script, but make sure everyone knows the situation and what will happen in it. You could draw a map, or diagram, or write down a brief running order.

Main Activity (cont.)

- **The aim** is to produce a short piece (up to 3 minutes works well) in a one-take recording.

- **Talk about:** Where is your drama set? What sound effects do you need?

- What will the listener experience? Explore your voice... whispering close up? Shouting far away? Moving around in circles?

- **Record** your drama using stereo microphones placed in the centre of the action. Like the creators of the virtual barber shop, we used Binaural microphones, and our sound recordist wore them in their ears, but otherwise a good quality stereo recorder should give a similar effect.

Plenary

- Listen back to your recording on headphones. What works well? What could you change?

- Record your drama again if there is time.

- Share each recording with the whole group, listening on headphones.

- Make notes about each other's work.

- Discuss what worked well and evaluate the activities.

Story

You can hear some of the work we made on the theme of Story, by clicking here.

To start making simple recordings all you'll need is a computer with a built-in microphone and some sound editing software.

You can also use other equipment you might have in school: mobile phones, headset mics with laptops, dictaphones or recordable mp3 players.

If you want to develop the quality of your students' work and make full use of editing software, you'll need to invest in some equipment, but it needn't cost the earth. See our *technical info* page at the end of this pack!

Sound check: always check the sound levels and quality, before you start recording, through headphones if possible. You can pick up all sorts of noises you wouldn't otherwise hear, especially humming compuers or air conditioners!

Student task! Do some internet research and find out what stereo and binaural mean...does it make you listen differently?

See our *technical info* page for information on different types of sound file.

Sound Effects = SFX!

Drama
- create a drawing board of a scene with dialogue and sound effects (sfx)
- develop personality profiles of characters
- write a descriptive piece on the setting

English
- write a first person empathy piece from the listener's point of view

ICT
- develop/scan an image to accompany an audio piece for the web
- evaluate each others' work on the school's makewav.es site

Science
- undertake an enquiry into understanding how radiowaves and ears work

Art
- draw a curved lens image of drama to accompany your piece

Media
- enquire into viral content on social media websites
- investigate further techniques using multi-tracking

History
- produce binaural recordings based in different historic periods
- record "imagined" or real oral history testimonies from relatives/witnesses

Design and Technology
- produce 'crash boxes' and other sfx classics for future use

Music
- develop compositions using recorded sfx and digital editing
- make percussion instruments

Place

Spend time in a familiar place - your classroom, a shop, a narrow alleyway or wide football field.

Imagine you have never been there before and listen to its unique soundscape.

Record sound instead of taking photographs... friends chatting, a walk by the river, a busy market stall, Christmas morning...

Listen back to your recordings, imagining you have never heard these things before.

What is interesting about the sounds? How could you reinterpret them?

What is unusual about your community? Are you in an urban or rural area? Where do you spend weekends, could you review the skate park, the youth club, the cinema?

Activity

Gather many different sounds and interviews to make a community trail that someone could listen to whilst walking round your local streets.

What would they like to know?

Can you include poems, histories, comments from local people?

Play and experiment with the sounds around you!

Does everyday life ever sound musical to you? Are there melodies in a road drill, rhythms in the rain?

Activity

Listen to a well known piece of music. Choose something from it to copy, such as the form or rhythm.

Compose from the sounds of everyday life. Can you create a piece of music using only sounds of water? Or kitchen appliances?

Choose a familiar sound a few seconds long. Record and re-record till you've got it the best quality you can. Edit into a one-minute piece using only that sound.

Think about different types of microphones. What is a parabolic mic and when would you use one? Could you construct one yourself? (There are some online tutorials!)

Fluffy mic covers are essential outdoors... try making your own...

Activity

Take your ears (and technology) out for a walk.

Use sound recording to document a school trip... set up interviews in advance. Record experiences and reviews of things in the moment.

Capture natural language and heartfelt responses, listen back later to help with writing activities. Or report like a newsreader from outside locations. Think about how reporters use language to make people feel like they're there too.

Place

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session plan: school map

aims

To develop an understanding of how to create a radio feature...a sense of ownership of school... ability to work in teams... ICT skills including interviewing and digital editing

outcomes

Students will produce a short radio feature on a location within their school's grounds, creating an audio map of the school which can be uploaded on a school website.

curriculum links

This lesson could form part of a scheme of work or project within Citizenship, Media Studies, ICT, English, Geography or Music

you will need

headphones;
recording equipment;
paper and pens

Starter

- Group discussion: what is distinctive about your school? What were the first things you noticed when you started there? What would someone new to your school want to know about it? Brainstorm good locations in the school for recording.

- Learn about and practice interview techniques: use body language, active listening, hold microphones steady. Plan 'open questions' (beginning with what, where, why, who or how etc) that encourage storytelling, rather than invite yes or no answers.

Main Activity

- Working in pairs, choose a location in the school to make an audio feature about. You will need to record an interview there, some ambient sounds, and sounds of interesting footsteps, for example on gravel, or walking through an echoey hallway.

- Interview someone who works in your school. Start by asking them their name and what they do at the school. Have questions planned in advance so you are able to keep the interview flowing. But listen carefully so you can respond to anything unexpected your interviewee says. Your interview should be no more than three minutes long.

Main Activity (cont.)

- Record some ambient sound. Stand still and unobtrusively in a busy place. Listen to the sounds of the place. Record for a minute, without speaking or moving. You may want to capture individual sound events close up, eg a splash, a squeak, a rustle. Record some footsteps from one room to another.

- Back up recordings onto computers, listen through and rename them clearly, deleting any unwanted tracks.

- Edit in Audacity software (or similar) a piece that begins with footsteps, includes the interview and weaves in some other sounds of the place you chose. Be creative, but keep the finished piece clear and easy for listeners to understand. See techinical page for information on Audacity.

Plenary

- Once the pieces have been edited separately, they can all be put together to create a sound map of the school. What should come first? Has anyone recorded the front door opening, or a welcome message from the Headteacher? What would be the best way to end the piece?

- The finished map can be saved as an MP3 file and uploaded to the school website for people to enjoy.

Place

You can hear some of the work we made on the theme of **Place**, by clicking here.

speak**up!** sound advice

Some interview tips...

- Hold the sound recorder quite close to the person you are interviewing.

- Try to hold the recorder on a tripod and keep it still to avoid hand rustling noises!

- Try to avoid closed questions that have a yes or no answer, such as, 'Do you like your job?' Instead, use open questions such as, 'What do you like about your job?'

- Don't forget to thank the person for their time at the end of the interview.

Recording footsteps...

- An interesting effect is to walk between different soundworlds, eg from outside, through a door, down a corridor, past a noisy music lesson and then back outside.

- What surfaces sound interesting to walk on? Which spaces sound different and why? Walking? Running? Stamping? Shuffling?

- Hold the sound recorder close to the footsteps. Hold it steady!

English
- analyse recordings with a focus on 'knowledge about language' including how radio demonstrates differences between spoken and written forms
- edit interviews to show bias and differences between fact and opinion

Media
- analyse different styles of interviews on different channels/genres of programme

Music
- use sfx as loops and create an original composition

ICT
- create a web image to incorporate audio
- design a map app for mobile phone use

Geography
- create a topographic or topological map with coordinates and key symbols. Analyse the difference

Art
- create a map or photo-collage to accompany your audio

Science
- analyse the quality of different acoustics in different spaces

P.E.
- create a live commentary on a sporting event

Voice

Use your voice with confidence with different people and in different situations.

Always be yourself, but adapt the language you use according to the situation.

A radio studio is a great place to let who you are really shine.

Present a show with your friends, play the music you love, talk about the things that matter to you, speak informally... but at all times remain polite and aware of the needs of your listeners.

What kind of radio programmes do you listen to? Does where you are and what you are doing have an effect?

Activity

Think about the different genres of radio... music shows, talk radio, news, dramas, documentaries... Could you listen to examples of each?

Conduct a survey about people's radio habits, try to find a broad cross section of people to ask.

What times of day do they listen? What do they do at the same time? Think about how the survey results could inform your own radio broadcasts.

What is radio for? What else could it be?

Activity

Imagine you have never listened to a radio station before, but knew that it was a continuous, broadcast sound.

What could it be like?

Could you design a schedule for an imaginary radio station, not based on anything you've ever heard before?

Where can you get on the radio?

Community radio? School radio? Internet radio? or mock up a studio in the classroom...

How do you use the phone? Do you use it differently to communicate with parents? Friends? Who else? How about a radio phone-in?

Activity

Create a mock up radio studio in the classroom... get creative with cardboard boxes and build it like a stage set.

Two presenters often work best, but they each need to be clear what their role is.

Come up with radio names... what would you call yourself on air? Set a topic, then stage a phone in. Try blindfolding your presenter and ask students to pop in and out of the classroom to call in with their opinions.

Try to keep the debate fair and balanced mixing fact with opinion.

Voice

aims

To develop speaking and listening skills, planning and execution, ability to work in teams, technical skills, knowledge of language, research skills.

outcomes

Each group will produce a live radio show to be aired on local community station or "as live" in a classroom simulation.

curriculum links

This lesson could form part of a scheme of work within Citizenship, Media Studies, English, ICT, Modern Foreign Languages or Music.

you will need

access to the internet; headphones; recording equipment; mock or real studio; large paper and pens or whiteboard

Plan your show

- Working in small groups, plan a half hour radio broadcast. Give your show a strong title: picture your listeners, who they are and why they would tune in? Do they want information? Entertainment?

- It's good to have an overall theme for your show. Choose two pieces of music that fit the theme, and a few features, discussion topics or interviews.

- Research music that fits your theme and try to find surprising or unusual tracks. Make sure it contains no swearing or other offensive language. A quick way to be sure is to search for the lyrics online, and skim through.

- Email or phone guests, or set up phone interviews for specific times.

- Think how long each section will take and make a running order with timeline. You don't have to stick to it precisely, but it's better to prepare too much than too little. Beginnings and endings are important: who is starting things off? How will you end the show? It's worth rehearsing these moments a few times.

- Script the links between features: again, you don't have to read every word, but you will be glad you have them written down if you suddenly freeze.

- Get familiar with the studio or mock studio you are using before you broadcast. If you can, watch someone experienced present a show beforehand, and make your own notes about using the equipment.

During the Show

- You can do your show live or 'as live' - record it but keep to time as if you are live on air.

- Not everyone has to speak: it can be helpful to have someone whose role it is to get the music on at the right time, or take phone calls, or be responsible for 'producing' - making sure everyone keeps to the timeline and moving things on when needed.

- Record your show and then you can evaluate it and decide what you need to work on next time.

- Most importantly, keep in communication with the whole team as you do the show: eye contact and mutual support will help make the show sound organised and well put together!

Plenary

- Did you present your issues, music and ideas clearly and in a way that made the listener want to keep listening? Did you summarise others' opinions and synthesise them with previous "callers"?

Voice

You can hear some of the work we made on the theme of **Voice**, by clicking here.

See our Listen Up! page for information on how you might broadcast your work!

Try to build your studio in a small space rather than an echoey hall, and cushions or soft furnishings can help absorb the sound and make the recording richer.

Your 'team' can be made up of different roles: presenter(s), interviewer, producer, director, music manager, sound engineer etc. Swap roles around so you can experience all the tasks involved.

Put your timeline or running order on a large whiteboard or sheet of paper so everyone can work from it.

Don't forget to do a sound check with headphones!

Try to listen to as much radio as you can. Can you hear how programmes are constructed? How long is the average interview or feature? What makes a programme interesting for you? What makes a programme flow well? Can you notice when things go wrong?! Can you tell what might have caused the problem now you have some experience of radio?

extension

A radio show can enhance any subject as an outcome for students. For example, in Modern Foreign Languages students could write and perform an "as live" show in French to present to the class.

Citizenship /PSHE
- develop talk/debate shows on a current topic including real guests and local stakeholders

Drama
- create original live improvised radio

ICT
- develop web content to accompany live radio shows

Media
- investigate the differences between community media, commercial and public output/ownership

History
- imagine talk shows from different times, for example, the Second World War
- create news bulletins produced from different perspectives at key historical moments

Music
- create music features to include interviews with artists or teachers/students who play instruments

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Sound files

Your sound recording is likely to start off as a WAV file.

Both WAV and AIFF files are high quality uncompressed files.

You can convert to MP3 format to play on different equipment or to post on a website. MP3 files are compressed, therefore smaller, taking up less storage space, but aren't such good quality.

When you edit in Audacity, you'll create an AUP file which can only be opened in Audacity. When you're ready, you can export this file to WAV, AIFF or MP3. If you keep your AUP file, you can always return to this file for further editing.

Always edit using high quality files, if you can, and only convert to MP3 when you need to distribute.

Equipment

You can use mobile phones, computer mics etc., but for high quality recordings you might need to invest in some kit. Here's what we use for recording and editing.

Portable sound recorders

These little machines are high quality, easy to use and the files are stored on micro SD cards, just like digital cameras. They plug straight into a computer via a USB lead to transfer sound material for editing.

Try the Zoom portable sound recorder – the H2 (around £125, or the H4 for around £215). Or the Tascam DR07 for around £155 (or the DR05 for around £80). All prices approximate and plus vat (at December 2012).

You'll need a small mic stand, a windscreen to prevent wind noise if you're recording outside, batteries, USB cable and micro SD cards. Look out for bundles which might include some of these plus a carry case etc.

Technical info

Headphones

Headphones are essential for listening back to work (especially binaural) but also for testing sound levels and encouraging students to really listen to their recordings.

If you want several people to listen to a piece of sound at the same time, you'll need a splitter – a little box that connects to your computer and allows several sets of headphones to be plugged in at the same time. You should be able to buy sturdy 'phones that cover the ears for about £12.

Binaural microphones

These record 3D sound and look like headphones. These are not at all essential but are a wonderful resource for making work like the podcasts featured on our 'Story' page. Try the Roland CS-10EM Binaural Mics/Earphones – about £65 plus vat.

Editing software

There's excellent free open source editing software called Audacity. It will work on apple mac or pc and is sophisticated enough for most projects. It also has excellent tutorials and technical notes.

Your local community radio station

There are community radio stations all over the UK, and many of them will have education programmes or ways in which young people can become involved in local broadcast.

You might even be able to do an 'outside broadcast' from your school, played through your local community radio station.

You can find a list of community radio stations at:
Community Media Association

If you don't have a radio station close by, there's a lot you can do in school.

speak up!

Local school broadcasts

Some of the best and most relevant ways to share your work is within your own school and wider community. Work made can be played out through an MP3 player or laptop plugged into speakers during assembly, in the lunch hall, at parent's evenings or local community events.

Sound can be broadcast via a computer on the school's public address system if you have one. Students can share the work they've made with each other on their mobile phones or MP3 players. You can make your sound work into a podcast and link it to your school website or produce CDs for parents.

There are lots of opportunities to make links with other schools both nationally and internationally through radio. Once you get up and running, you'll find lots of opportunities in school to use sound creatively and educationally, and your students will find lots more!

Makewav.es

The educational social learning environment, Makewav.es, offers a safe and easy way for schools to share their sound work with other schools and the wider community

Listen up!

through blogs, video and podcasting. Makewav.es is specially designed for schools, has teacher resources, and you can sign up for a basic membership for free. Membership provides access to tutorials on all aspects of radio production including editing and recording techniques.

BBC school news report is a great way to get started too. It gives 11-16 year-old students in the UK the chance to make their own news reports for a real audience. There's lots of tips and technical information on the BBC Academy College of Production.

Podcasting

A simple way to publish sound on the internet. There are lots of podcasting websites out there but Podium is a podcasting site especially for schools. And the Hertfordshire Grid for Learning has good instructions about how to make a podcast.

How about a school radio station?

If you're inspired to set up your own radio station in school, there's lots of helpful advice and information at the following websites:

Hertfordshire Grid for Learning
Community Media Association
Create Media
School Radio Solutions

speak up!

There's lots of exciting sound work and resources on the internet.

You can listen to community radio stations from all over the UK at the Community Radio Toolkit

The Communication Trust is a campaigning voice for children with speech, language and communication needs.

Project partners

Aune Head Arts is a contemporary arts organisation based in south west England, working with people and place.

Soundart Radio 102.5fm is the licensed community radio station for Totnes and surrounding villages.

DBBC uses radio broadcasting techniques to enable people of all ages, all disabilities and all abilities to learn and work together.

Sound Communities is a Community Interest Company who run radio projects to enhance community cohesion and increase employablity.

Links and Credits