

Mini Sound Map Project: Lessons & Student's Work

Lesson 1 (20th of April 2023)

The project began in Sapporo on the 20th of April 2023, with members of Sapporo's Cultural Promotion Department heading to Motomachi Junior High School to present the project. The group of 3rd year participants listened intently as they discovered more about the collaborative project, the city of Braga, and the UNESCO Creative Cities Network.



As soon as they understood the gist of Mini Sound Map, Motomachi's students set off hard at work brainstorming their ideal sounds from within the school and the city. Thoughtful ideas flitted around the room, such as iconic jingles from Japanese convenience stores and the symbolic sound of the school chime in Japan.

The next stage of the project will begin in mid-May once Motomachi's pupils send off their recordings and gather to listen to what they have received from Braga. Stay tuned to find out what sounds they chose and what they think of the far away Portuguese sounds they take in!

Lesson 2 (18th of May 2023)

Participants were kept active researching, deliberating over, and recording the ten sounds of Sapporo to send to Braga. They opted for some truly meaningful sounds that represented the school, the city, the region of Hokkaido, and Japan as a whole. Notable sounds included games played by the students played during lunchtimes, the chiming bells of the Sapporo Clock Tower, the mysterious tones of the traditional Ainu musical instrument, the mukhuri, and the quintessentially Japanese radio calisthenics broadcast programme.



There were in fact some other recordings that unfortunately, could ultimately not be used due to copyright issues given that the finalised sound maps will be published online. However, this proved to be a valuable opportunity for pupils to touch upon the subjects of intellectual property and copyrights, and the importance of respecting other people's hard work.

The most exciting part of the lesson was surely listening to the fresh soundscape received from Braga. None of the participants had ever travelled as far as Europe before, so listening to the sounds of the Portuguese tongue, reverberating church bells, and lively cavaquinhos (string instruments much like ukuleles) whilst taking in colourful photographs allowed them to visit freely using their imagination.

Lastly, students readied their exchange video for the André Soares pupils. Usually, the schools would meet over an online video call which provides the opportunity to converse directly, but due to a difficult time difference of eight hours, participants opted for a pre-filmed exchange video instead. As such, Motomachi's pupils were recorded playfully greeting their Portuguese counterparts, presenting information on Sapporo and its history, and describing their cheerful thoughts and feelings on taking part.

They brushed up on their English and even leant some basic Portuguese phrases like “Eu tenho catorze anos” (I am 14 years old). Now, the students will move onto the next phase of the project – creating images based on Braga’s audio files. Check back in June to discover what creative methods students employ to express ideas inspired by Braga’s soundscape and the various tools they use to do so!

Lesson 3 – Final Lesson (22nd of June 2023)

Every sound and picture had at last been sent off to the professionals and the sound maps were finalised. All that was left now was for them to be revealed to the students!



The final session started with Motomachi's pupils watching their own edited exchange video

to Braga. They had made every effort to explain local quirks such as heavy snowfall and the Sapporo Snow Festival, as well as their favourite things about their own school, from school lunches and sports days to their beloved mascot Miono-kun. All in all, they had created a vibrant video that was not only informative but showed the fun they'd had throughout the project and their class comradery.

Next, they eagerly watched the exchange video sent by Braga, in which Circuito's professional artist duo showed the sound maps drawing by drawing with their respective sounds, and the Portuguese students talked about their motivations for recording certain sounds and how they drew the various pictures. It must have been a novel experience for the Japanese students to hear an entire video in the Portuguese language, and Braga's pupils even challenged themselves to speak some Japanese, too. Overall, the videos truly demonstrated the essence of international exchange and youthful creativity. Hopefully, one day their paths will cross, and they can share these experiences face to face.

As for the drawings themselves, such high quality was sincerely unexpected given the short turnaround time. Some pictures went as far as to take into account dimensions, angles, and shadows, primarily utilising the basic tools of colouring pencils and watercolour paints. One creation innovatively made use of magazine clippings to mimic a conversation between two figures based on Braga's São João marketplace. The pupils surely felt pride as they saw the fruits of their labour dispersed across the world.

To conclude the Mini Sound Map activities, the lesson ended with students looking back on the project and the skills and knowledge they'd developed over the exchange. Sapporo City looks forward to more opportunities for international exchange and creativity.

The two completed sound maps can be found at the following pages:

<https://www.minimaponoro.com/Sapporo-Braga>

<https://www.minimaponoro.com/Braga-Sapporo>