Info about this Document

This document provides resources for teachers and students to facilitate engagement and learning around beginning DJing. The current state of this document as a google doc is meant for teachers to use as they like. We are working on making a more streamlined student-facing version.

In response to conversations with grantees we've started with listening and setting cue-points to perform with cue-points as an entry point for students. We've also provided a somewhat structured "stations" approach. We are happy to expand and adapt to a more exploratory and discovery-based approach as well. Let us know what other directions would work well for you and students! We suggest using the "show document outline" view so you can skip to whatever section is most useful.

DJing: Context and Background

History and Context of Djing

Video Resource
[What does a DJ actually do? | What is Music](#)
(In a "documentary" style)

[0:00 - 0:39] - What people think DJing is.
[0:39 - 2:26] - History of DJing. Who Coined the phrase? What were the influences? Where is it going now?
[1:58] - WARNING! Contains Mature and potentially inappropriate visual Content
[2:26 - 3:13] - DJs talking about different styles. Features different artists.
[3:13 - 3:50] - History. Where did the iconic "Scratch" came from?
[3:50 - 5:28] - How does a DJ prepare for a gig with professional DJ Nina Las Vegas.
[5:28 - 6:25] - How to DJ. Different techniques involving mixer vs fader to mix tracks. Using the EQ to mix tracks and sounds.
[6:25 - 7:29] - Techniques to DJing live. Song selection and Beat matching. Understanding BPM.
[7:29 - 7:47] - Spin back function. Using the virtual discs. Difference between CDJ and Vinyl modes.
[7:47 - 8:20] - A DJ's relationship with music. How to discover new music and work with music requested with you.
[8:20 - 9:07] Live mix done by Nina Las Vegas. Uses both CDJ and Vinyl modes. Example of using EQ knobs.

[9:07 - 9:50] - Another mix using familiar sounds to an Audience done by the Co-Star
[9:50 - 10:30] - DJing tips. Song selection, making copies of your set list.

Examples of People DJing

DJ Teams

What is it like when several people are DJing together?

Daft Punk - [Around the World and Harder Better Faster Stronger](#)

Thugli 'Listen up' [Routine with Serato DJ](#)

Video Includes: Use of crossfader and volume faders to create beats and mix between tracks. Use of Cue Points, Scratch DJing.

DJing in Bands

[X-ECUTIONERS LINKIN PARK -IT'S GOIN DOWN](#)

Collaboration between Linkin Park and X-Ecutioners

Projects And Activities

Setting the Context

Generative Question:

How do DJs select parts of music to use for DJing?

Context

- Start off with giving students a context for DJs do and how cue points are useful for knowing exactly where to go in any particular recording used for DJing.

- See the videos in the [Examples of using Cue Points section](#)
- The following activities are organized in "stations" to have students work towards setting cue points. The end goal here is for students to be able to make music with cue points and understand musical aspects of DJing and setting cue points.

Alternatively a much more open project could be facilitated where students work individually, collaboratively, and with a teacher to discover aspects of DJing and using cue points in a less structured manner. We can help with developing the more open and exploratory approach.

We actually suggest having students engage in each of these activities with the laptops and Serato or DJay and a controller or iPad and DJay when that is possible as it is a more organic process and more authentic to how people engage outside of learning settings.

We are outlining a more structured approach here:

Digging Crates and Listening to Tracks

Context

Include this in a "station" for mobile devices or chrome books. This does not require any specific software. Spotify could be helpful. Remember that you have access to the tracks from beatport. If students want to work with their own music, you may have copyright issues to address when it comes to figuring out how to have the music available in Serato or Djay. One way to address this is by using Spotify with DJay. Use your own judgement in terms of "appropriateness" of music for your classroom.

NOTE: There can be an advantage to having students engage from the beginning with Djay and Serato to listen to tracks as the apps provide an authentic environment for listening to tracks and experimenting with cue points and moving through the tracks in an organic and engaging manner. However, there may also be a learning curve to using the apps and the technology can possibly get in the way. It's up to you and the students to determine what makes the most sense in your context. The more sequenced station approach addresses the issue of having all students engaged regardless of whether they have access to Serato or Djay and the turntables/ DJ controllers.

Generative Questions

- What goes into choosing music to DJ with?

Activities

1. Students listen to a wide variety of music (you can use the tracks provided by Beatport)
2. Students choose music they might want to work with for DJing (including creating new music from the music they are listening to). Think 4 - 6 recordings.
3. Students articulate the decisions they made and any criteria they used to choose the music
4. Optional - Create a table or some other visual mechanism for students to use as a "worksheet" that details 1) what music they listened to 2) what music they choose to include 3) examples of some music they chose not to include 4) Short descriptions of their decisions of why they chose to include or exclude music
5. Optional: Students could share their decisions with each other
6. Optional: You could create a shared class "playlist" for students can listen to each other's music that they selected
7. Teacher - Work to help students be intentional about the music they are choosing
8. Teacher - Help the students articulate their decisions and criteria that they used
9. Optional: Have students create a class or shared "rubric" or other visualization of criteria that they think is important for choosing music to DJ with [this is not necessarily authentic to DJing but could be an interesting learning approach that gets conversation going] This can also be done in small groups.

Identifying Interesting Samples and Moments in the Music

Context

Include this in a second "station" for mobile devices. You can have students use the same apps for listening to music as they did with station 1 or they could start using Djay on iPad/laptops or Serato with Laptop. This station does not require DJay or Serato since they are focusing on making decisions about what parts of the music they would set cue points for.

If students want to work with their own music, you may have copyright issues to address when it comes to figuring out how to have the music available in Serato or Djay. One way to address this is by using Spotify with DJay. Use your own judgement in terms of "appropriateness" of music for your classroom.

Generative Questions

- What goes into choosing samples or moments in the music to use while DJing?

Activities

- Students listen intentionally to the music they selected to identify moments in the music that could be interesting or useful to use as a cue point
- Think 4 - 8 cue points per recording
- Have students identify the exact moments in the music that they want to use as a cue point
- Optional: Have students fill out a visualization of some type that articulates the specific cue points and decisions they are making:

For example:
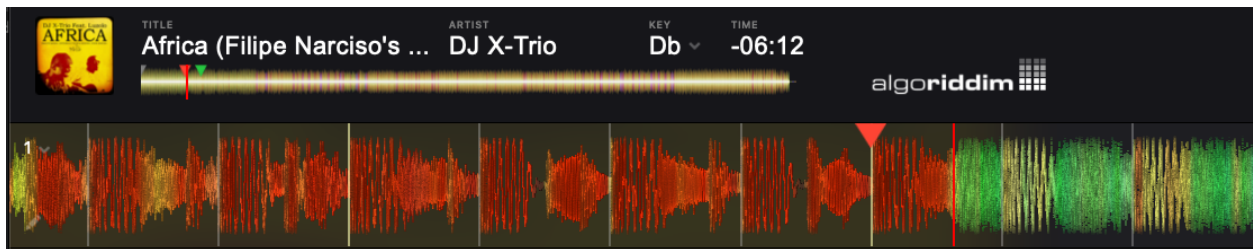
Recording	Cue Point #	Cue Point Location	Description of the Cue Point	Reason for using this cuepoint
Africa (Filipe Narciso's	1	-06:12	Vocals entering on "ahh" with drum loop and hi hat hits entering after a couple of beats.	I like the groove set up with the drums and how the voice comes in right at the start of the cue point. I also like that the hi hat comes in after a couple of beats.

NOTE: There's also and advantage to having students do this in a more organic and less structured approach by simply exploring how to listen to and engage with the music with the apps. Consider giving them some time to explore without any expectations in terms of the cue points and then

Setting Cue Points

Context

Include this in a third "station" for mobile devices and/or laptops with Serato or Djay Pro. This station requires DJay or Serato since the focus is now setting cue points in the app.

You might want to have students explore how to set cue points through an exploratory approach, through watching tutorial videos themselves, or through direct instruction to the entire class or small groups, or some combination above. We've curated and created some resources for you in the [Setting Cue Points resource](#) part of this doc.

Generative Questions

- How can I set cue points with DJ apps?

Activities

- Students use the DJing apps and controller to set their cue points.
- Alternatively: Students can listen to their tracks and set cue points directly in the app and/or with the DJ controller Hot Cue options while listening to the music with a more exploratory approach.
- Have students experiment with setting the cues via the app and via the controller. They can also experiment with timing and accuracy of setting cue points if they are using the hot cue pads while listening.
  - This can lead to some discussions about timing, accuracy, and how the placement of the cue factors into what people hear and feel when the cue is triggered.
- Optional: Have students share their cue points with each other for feedback.
- Optional: For assessment or other purposes consider having students take screen shots or screen recordings of their cue points

Creating Music Creatively with Cue Points

Generative Questions

- How can I create and perform music with cue points?

Activities

This can happen very organically with students dragging the different tracks they set up with cue points into Serato or DJay and exploring how they can create interesting sounding music by triggering the cue points. They might also want to experiment with playing two tracks simultaneously, including some that they did not work with when setting up cue points. When two tracks are playing, they will probably experiment with the cross fader and volume faders, and things can get messy. Once they understand how cue points work, they might also want to set up cue points on the fly as they engage with music with the apps and DJ controllers. So, if you/they need more structure you can use any of the following activities.

- Have students drag just one track they've set up with cue points into one of the decks.
- Have them play and listen through the music and explore triggering different cue points for interesting combinations, patterns.
- Now have the students drag a different track they worked with and explore triggering cue points with this track. Continue with each of the tracks they worked with to set up cue points.
- Invite the students to notice any patterns or specific times that certain cue points work really well.
- Have the students find a track that can play for a while, loop, or continue playing perpetually by triggering a cue point. Have them try this out.
- Then, have students add one of the tracks that they set up with cue points to the other deck and experiment with:
  - Adding parts of the second track with cue points so they hear both tracks simultaneously
  - Switching between the two tracks using the cross fader (syncing one track to the other track will help with scaffolding this process)
  - NOTE: This introduces interesting performance issues such as timing with the crossfader, potential issues with two tracks being in different keys, the timing/alignment of the two tracks even if they are in the same BPM, etc. (all of which are part of the DJing process)

Goal: Have students create and perform music live by DJing in front of their peers

Assessment:

- For this initial entry point into DJing, consider some self and peer assessment
- We suggest having students explain their decisions throughout the process as a type of formative assessment.
- Video footage and/or screen capture of brief excerpts of students' work can be included if you are looking for a "portfolio" approach to assessment and tracking growth over time.
- A final public DJ performance can serve as a culmination
  - For a summative assessment, consider video recording each student DJing for a couple of minutes and then having them explain what they did and how they did it.

Alignment with Core Arts Standards

We believe you can make a case that this unit/set of activities addresses each of the overarching core arts standards.

Setting Cue Points

How To Set Cue Points with Serato

Serato DJ Tutorial - Cue Points & Loops

Keywords: Cue Points, Loop Points

[0:00 - 0 :26] On Screen layout of cue points and loops
[0:26 - 0:57] How to set cue points using on screen controls
[0:57 - 1:37] How to create loop points using on screen controls
[1:37 - 2:08] How to create Manual Cue points with on Screen and Keyboard instructions

[2:08 - 2:39] When creating loops how to change the length of loops in respect to the BPM of the tracks. The software will line-up loop points with beat of the track.

[2:39 - 3:24] Offline Mode allows you to edit and analyze music outside of performance to help prepare Cue and loop points for performance. Shows where to find the analyze tool to show BPM and other song elements.
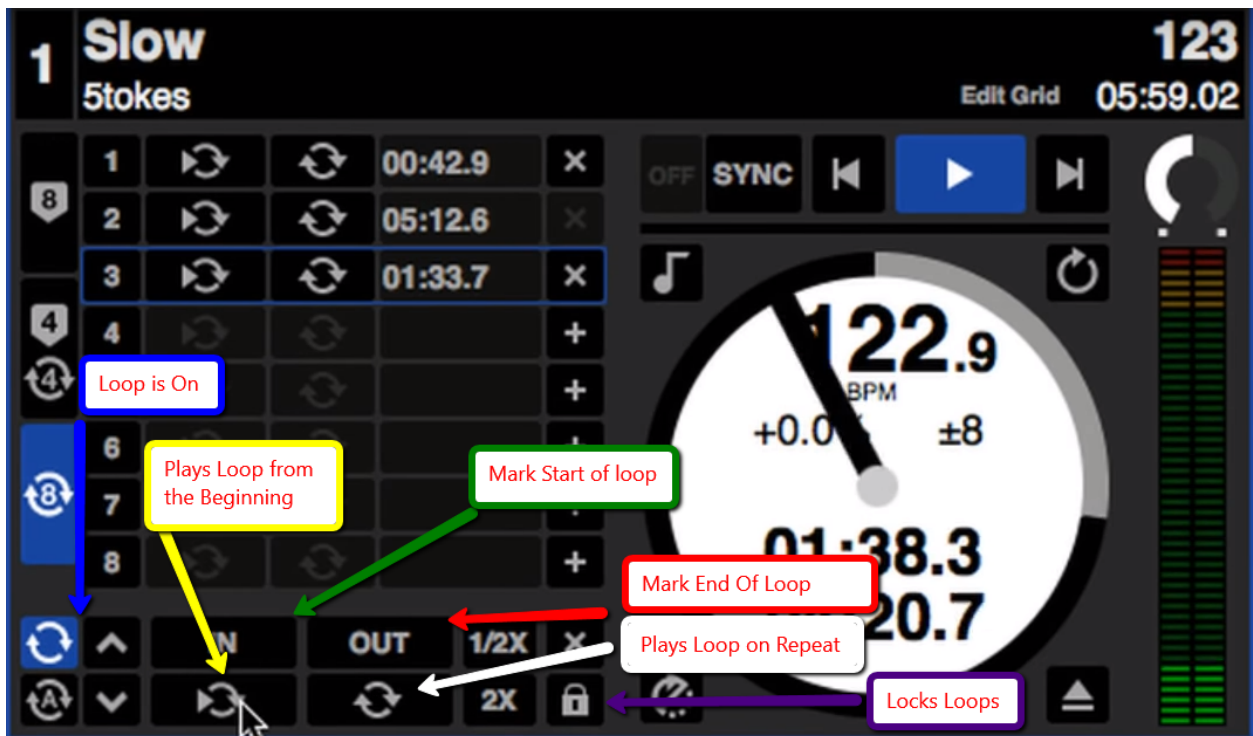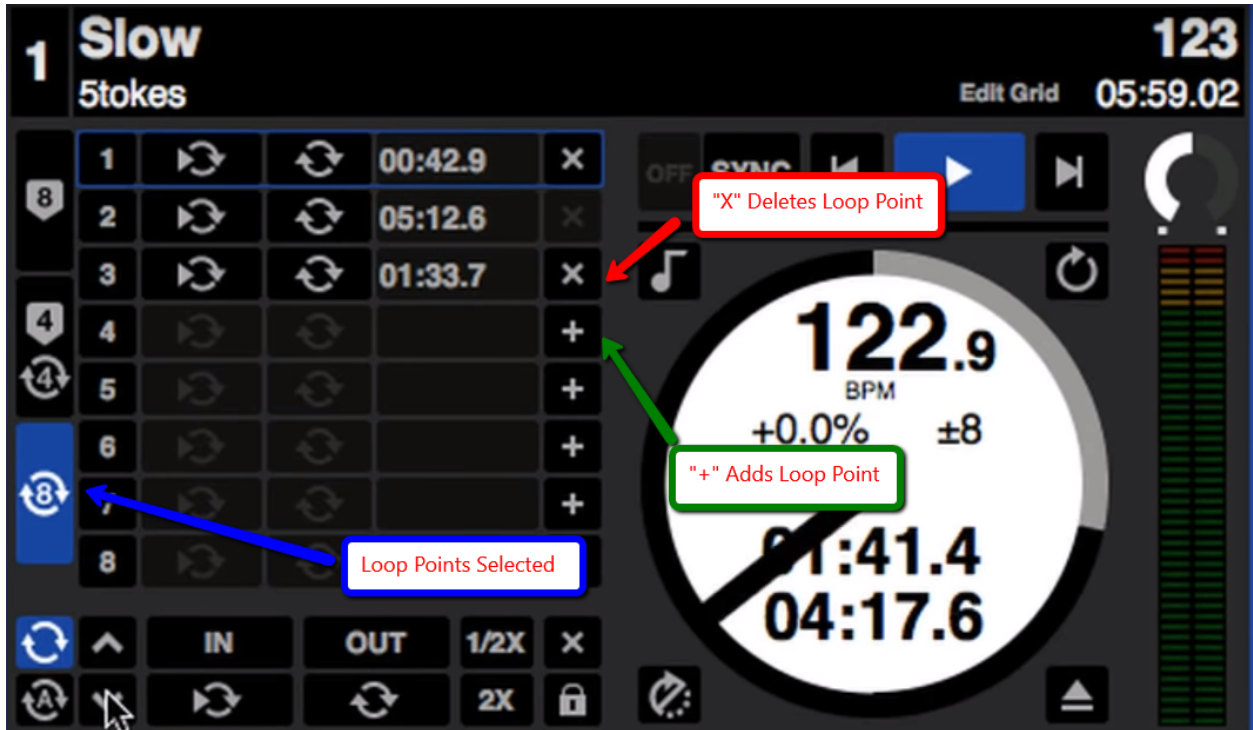
Turns on Auto Loop

Selects length of loop in respect to BPM of the song. (1 = 1 Beat)

Cue and Loop point contols

Analyze File Decodes a tracks BPM

How To Set Cue Points with DJay

[Djay video 4. Cue points](#)

[0:00 - 0:21] Setting button to access Track effects

[0:22 - 1:33] How to Set and Use Cue Points
[1:33 - 3:48] Step by Step Explaining of how cue points are set and played

Examples of Using Cue Points

[5 Mixing Ideas for DJs - Transition Techniques](#) @ **10:14 - 10:30**

[Sinden, "Hands" rework with Serato DJ](#)

Uses Cue Points for sound effects, Drum machine, and pitched instrument
[WARNING] Uses Guns as sound effects.
Note- Direct students' attention to how the person is using the "drum"pads (used to trigger cue points) and the relationship between what the person is doing with the pads and the "hey" in the music.
Note - you may need to explain what the person is doing with the knobs (eq) but the focus here is on the cue points

[Cue Loop Tricks - Serato DJ Pro Mixing Techniques](#)

[0:00 - 0:30] - Intro

[0:30 - 1:06] - Setting two different tracks; Vocal and Instrumental. Talks briefly about textures (timbre)

[1:07 - 1:17] - Beat Matching

[1:17 - 2:13] - Uses Cue loops to set short loops on the vocal track (Sets cue points at specific words and a bar before the drop) Uses the Parameters controls to change the length of the vocal loops to make them shorter and sharper. Switching between your vocal loops rapidly is a great technique to keep your track interesting. Use EQ filters for effects while loops play.

[2:14 - 2:34] - Outro