CONTINUING THE QUEST FOR LEGITIMACY:
THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF HIP-HOP DJING EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Megan Ross: Continuing the Quest for Legitimacy: The Institutionalization of Hip-Hop DJing
Education
(Under the direction of Mark Katz)

Since the early 2000s, many hip-hop DJs have taken on teaching roles in educational
institutions, whether in secondary schools, universities, or for-profit ventures. This thesis
explores this development as part of an ongoing quest for legitimacy within hip-hop and the
broader world and also as a response to the increasing dominance of digital technologies.
Teaching offers DJs the opportunity to preserve their foundational values of innovation,
experimentation, and personalization. Their approach tends to be fundamentally multimodal,
emphasizing the use of sight, sound, and touch to demonstrate the artistry necessary to becoming
a DJ.

There are many benefits to formal education, such as bringing about gender equality in
the field, as well as concerns related to standardization and authenticity of pedagogical methods
based on informal learning traditions. My study is more broadly relevant to popular music
institutionalization, authenticity debates in hip-hop education, and informal and formal
approaches to learning music.

To all the DJ educators I know

ACKNOWLDGEMENTS

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AACM   Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians

ADC   Analog to digital converter

ASU   Arizona State University

CDJ   CD Turntable

DJ   Disk Jockey

DVS   Digital vinyl emulation system

EDM   Electronic dance music

IRCAM   Institute for Research and Coordination in Acoustics/Music

TA   Teaching assistant

TTM   Turntablist Transcription Methodology

UNC-CH   University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

BPM   Beats per minute

INTRODUCTION

"I wouldn't be here as a DJ sitting in front of you doing this interview, if someone didn't teach me," internationally acclaimed battle DJ Rob Swift explained to me when I asked him why he teaches hip-hop DJing at the New School in Manhattan, NY, "so I think it's important for pioneers of the art form, people that understand what this whole DJing culture is about, to pass on their knowledge …and ensure that the essence of what DJing is continues."[1] Swift's comment is representative of the sense of urgency hip-hop DJs known as turntablists, who utilize turntables as musical instruments, currently feel about preserving the traditional values of their craft.[2] This is because the commercialization of hip-hop and the emergence of digital DJ technologies during the 1990s and early 2000s have challenged the values of artistry, innovation, and dedication that they feel legitimatize their art form.[3] Many hip-hop DJs see their practice as an art form worthy of broader respect, and resent the common view they do little more than play records or press buttons. Although some DJs have tried to counter misconceptions about their craft in the past, for example, regarding turntable notation based upon Western art music traditions, institutionalization is the most recent and influential attempt by hip-hop DJs to support

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[1] DJ Rob Swift, interview with the author, Queens, NY, 31 January 2015.

[2] "Performative" hip-hop DJs who manipulate records in real-time are different from other types of hip-hop DJs today such as radio or party DJs or DJs who produce. See Mark Katz *Groove Music: The Art and Culture of the Hip-Hop DJ* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 5.

[3] Tricia Rose and Petchauer discuss the impact of the commercialization of hip-hop through the perspective of mainstream rap. See Emery Petchauer, *Hip-Hop Culture In College Student's Lives: Elements, Embodiement, and Higher Edutainment* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 3; and also Tricia Rose, *The Hip-Hop Wars: What We Talk about When We Talk About Hip-Hop and Why it Matters* (New York: BasicCivitas, 2008), 1 – 30; For further information regarding the impact of digital DJing technology from the perspective of hip-hop practitioners who battle and perform, see Katz, *Groove Music*, 214 – 30.

the artistry of their craft within hip-hop and the broader world.[4] Current approaches to teaching

at institutions such as secondary schools, universities, or for-profit ventures offer DJs the

opportunity to preserve multimodal methods that emphasize the use of sight, sound, and touch to

demonstrate the artistry needed to become a DJ. These are similar to those found in informal

education of the craft that began in the 1970s and typically involved learning from a mentor in

the field, within groups of family and friends, or as a self-taught musician.

This thesis explores institutionalization as part of an ongoing quest for legitimacy by hip-

hop DJs. My research is significant because it captures the perspectives of pioneer hip-hop DJs

who were informally trained and now are the first generation of DJs to formally teach. In order

to situate my research I will explain my methodology and root my study in larger questions of

popular music institutionalization, authenticity debates in hip-hop education, and informal and

formal approaches to learning music. In Chapter 1, I define the field of hip-hop DJing education

and demonstrate how each of the institutions I researched fits into the larger physical and virtual

landscape of the field. In Chapter 2, I discuss the multimodal approaches to teaching DJing that

help to preserve the informal ways that DJs traditionally learned the craft. Some DJs are

concerned with how institutionalization may bring standardization of topics and pedagogies that

threaten the development of their craft, as I discuss in Chapter 3. Formal education has also

brought about positive changes in the field by promoting more women DJs who are students,

teachers and professionals of the craft as I demonstrate in Chapter 4. Teaching hip-hop DJing

formally allows practitioners the opportunity to legitimize and preserve foundational values of

their craft, learn new things about DJing, and promote gender equality in the field.

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[4] Between the years of 1996 and 2002, Katz describes in further detail the hip-hop DJ's quest for legitimacy through
the emergence of the DJ album, the resurgence of avant-garde turntablism in the 1980s, and DJ Radar's turntable
concerto in Carnegie Hall in 2005. See Katz, *Groove Music*, 179 – 213; Felicia Miyakawa specifically discusses the
creation and utilization of turntable notation as it relates to legitimacy. See Felicia M. Miyakawa, "Turntablature:
Notation, Legitimization, and the Art of the Hip-hop DJ," *American Music 25* (Spring 2007): 81 – 105; For an
example of how DJs are currently dealing with issues of legitimacy see DJ Craze's "New Slave Routine" video
available at David Klemoc, "DJ Craze sends a pointed message with 'New Slaves Routine'" *Dancing Astronaut*, 28
October 2014, http://www.dancingastronaut.com/2014/10/dj-craze-sends-pointed-message-new-slaves-routine/.

Methodology

My research in DJ education began as a graduate student in the University of North

Carolina at Chapel Hill's department of music with a seminar project in David Garcia's local

music scenes seminar in the Fall of 2013. I investigated the intersection of the local hip-hop DJ

scene in Chapel Hill and two of the courses offered at UNC-CH including "The Art and Culture

of the DJ," and the "Beat Making Lab." My research revealed how undergraduate students

enrolled in these courses served as "cultural intermediaries."[5] This term was initially defined by

sociologist Pierre Bourdieu to describe individuals who actively shape the reception of goods

and services and was later adapted by Adam Krims to describe those who legitimate popular

music production and consumption in an urban music scene.[6] I interviewed four local hip-hop

DJs who participated in the courses as TAs or guests, UNC Department of Music faculty

member Mark Katz, who was the instructor of record for these courses, and two local Electronic

Dance Music DJs.[7] I also created a short film documentary capturing office hours and in-person

interviews.[8]

As a member of the institution I studied, I often felt as though I had a "double nature"

that impacted my interviews, as music sociologist Georgina Born describes her position as a

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[5] Megan Ross, "The Intersection of Academics and Hip-Hop Culture in Chapel Hill," Unpublished conference paper, IASPM, 13 – 16 March 2014, Chapel Hill, NC.

[6] See Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* (London, 1994); and also Adam Krims, "Studying Reception and Scenes," In *The Ashgate Research Companion to Popular Music Studies,* ed. by Derek B. Scott (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2009), 400; For a further discussion of urban music scenes see Will Straw, "Scenes and Sensibilities," *Public* 22-23 (2002): 245 – 57.

[7] EDM DJs are characterized by their choice of music when they perform including the dance genres of techno, house music, garage, drum 'n' bass, and dubstep. See *DJ Culture in the Mix: Power, Technology, and Social Change in Electronic Dance Music*, ed. Beanardo Alexander Attias, Anna Gavanas, and Hillegonda C. Rietveld (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 1 – 3; See DJ Kid Cola and DJ Twilight, interview with the author, Raleigh, NC, 5 October 2013.

[8] Megan Ross, "The Intersection of Academic and DJ Culture in Chapel Hill," unpublished documentary, 2014.

student at and ethnographer of the French computer music research institute, IRCAM.[9] For

example, I sometimes tried to distance myself from UNC-CH by critiquing the placement of this

program in the American south teaching an art form that grew out of the Bronx, New York.[10]

Other times I worried that during my interviews with the teaching assistants and students, my

position as a graduate student and TA would make them uncomfortable in terms of my authority

in the department and my connection to Katz as my advisor. As a way to counter these concerns,

I often found myself drawing upon my experiences outside of UNC-CH, such as my

undergraduate training as a music major and flute performer, and my personal experiences off-

campus in the local music community.

 The DJs I interviewed came from a variety of institutions, ranging from private schools to

non-profit organizations. Geography was less of a concern because I chose to define the field of

hip-hop DJing education through institutions that are both physical and virtual.[11] My advisor,

Mark Katz, provided contact information for several DJs and one scholar; I mentioned my status

as his student in my first e-mails to set up interviews.[12] I contacted additional DJs that I had

heard about during my interviews or researched separately online through Facebook, Skype, and

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[9] Georgina Born, *Rationalizing Culture: IRCAM, Boulez, and the Institutionalization of the Musical Avant-Garde* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 1; 8 – 9.

[10] My desire to create critical distance from UNC-CH resonates with Bruno Nettl's approach to studying his own culture in music schools in the heartland of America and George Lewis's approach to studying the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM) as a member. See Bruno Nettl, *Heartland Excursions: Ethnomusicological Reflections on Schools of Music* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995), xii; and George E. Lewis, *A Power Stronger Than Itself: The AACM and American Experimental Music* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2008), xxxv – xxxvi.

[11] Much of the literature about digital spaces and fieldwork demonstrates that the spatial metaphors that socially construct the digital spaces are experienced as real places and thus constitute a real field. Therefore my use of the term "field" is based upon my research of physical and virtual institutions. Ethnomusicologist Nasir Syed discusses how digital learning for students of Hindustani music can be experienced similarly as those in the supporting physical institution –the Sangeet Research Academy in Calcutta, India. See Timothy J. Cooley, Katherine Meizel, and Nasir Syed, "Virtual Fieldwork: Three Case Studies," In *Shadows in the Field: New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology*, ed. by Gregory Barz and Timothy J. Cooley (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 102 – 7.

[12] Katz recommended DJs and scholars he worked with or came across over the course of his own research in the field including Felicia Miyakawa, DJ 2-Tone Jones, DJ Killa-Jewel, DJ Marc Bayangos, DJ Rob Swift, DJ Rob Wegner, and DJ Shortee.

e-mail.[13] Additionally, I had the unexpected opportunity to interview a student from a hip-hop course offered at Arizona State University when he visited UNC-CH's campus in the spring of 2015. In total, I interviewed and had follow-up conversations with an additional seven DJ teachers, five students, and one hip-hop music scholar over the course of approximately one year. Each of these interviews typically lasted 60 – 90 minutes, occurred either in person or over the phone, and covered a range of topics including why they teach, how they maintain authenticity of the culture of their craft in classrooms, and how gender plays a role in formal DJ education.

My position as a musicologist within the academy has informed my understanding of formalized educational settings as important sites of musical learning. My "home" for the last eight years were three East Coast institutions—the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, MA, Boston University in Boston, MA and UNC-CH in Chapel Hill, NC.[14] I tried to separate myself from these experiences as a way to gain critical distance; however, my desire to see the positive outcomes of formal education sometimes made it difficult for me to acknowledge potential negative outcomes in formal hip-hop DJing education. For example, my positive experience finding a mentor as an undergraduate music major continues to shape my idea about how formal education can provide useful support to music students during and after coursework. This type of mentorship is a possibility for other music students, including hip-hop DJing students, but is not a guarantee.

As a trained classical and jazz flute musician, I acknowledge the benefits of formal education in shaping the development of an artist's musicality, technical performance, and

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[13] For example, I reached out to DJ Shines on Facebook for an e-mail interview after Swift mentioned her during our interview, and I reached out to Mama Cutsworth for a Skype interview on Facebook after I researched her school online.

[14] My use of the word "home" here is similar to how Nettl describes his "home" in his study of music schools in the heartland of America. See Nettl, *Heartland Excursions*, 3.

connection to the art form through history. When I started researching formal hip-hop DJing education, I was able to draw upon positive experiences that I was familiar with such as one-on-one lessons, discussion of the history of the music I performed, and the ability to experiment with styles of music I enjoyed during improvisational components of instruction. I was therefore excited when A-Minor and Swift allowed me the opportunity to experience these connections and learn how to play the turntables during our interviews in 2013 and 2015, respectively. Although A-Minor and Swift did not intimidate me as men instructors during our one-on-one lessons, I also acknowledge the negative connections I drew to my status as a woman in formal music education spaces, such as jazz ensemble rehearsals, where I was not encouraged in the same way as my men peers. On the other hand, my training in flute performance did not always resonate with hip-hop DJing education. For example, many DJs place less value on using notation because they believe it does not leave enough room for interpretation during performance. This made it difficult for me to sympathize with the concerns DJs such as Swift have over notation in formal education, because I learned that creativity could still exist with notation.

Given my background, I am not wholly an ethnographic insider or outsider of any of the institutions or cultures I studied.[15] I have more experiences within institutions of formal music education as a student and TA and less experience as a DJ student in hip-hop classrooms. My position resembles a "hermeneutic arc," a term discussed by Paul Ricoeur that describes the fluid movement of the ethnographer across insider and outsider status or between "method and

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[15] Similar to DJ scholar Rebekah Farrugia I am not a "true insider" because I am not a practicing or performing DJ. However, I did participate in the bodily engagement with hip-hop DJing that Joe Schloss suggests is important for hip-hop scholars to understand culture because "physical movement underlies virtually every element of its expression." This idea resonates with Mantle Hood's 1960 idea of "bi-musicality" that one should become musically fluent in the culture one is studying; See Rebekah Farrugia, *Beyond the Dance Floor: Female DJs, Technology, and Electronic Dance Music Culture* (Bristol: Intellect, 2012), 13; and Joseph Schloss, *Foundation: B-boys, B-girls and Hip-Hop Culture in New York* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 9; and also Mantle Hood, "The Challenge of Bi-Musicality," *Ethnomusicology* 5 (1960): 55 – 59.

experience and…explanation and understanding."[16] In other words, my experiences during this

project moved across two hermeneutic arcs—one traveling further towards insider status as a DJ

student learning the techniques through a bodily engagement with hip-hop culture, and the other

bringing me outward from the culture of formal music education and UNC-CH specifically, to a

more objective position as a researcher.[17]

Institutionalization of Hip-Hop DJing Education

In order to discuss the process of institutionalization, one must first understand the

difference between informal and formal learning methods for hip-hop DJing education, and what

institutions are. According to music education scholar Lucy Green, informal learning practices

for popular music genres are those in which "young musicians largely teach themselves or 'pick

up' skills and knowledge, usually with the help or encouragement of their family and peers, by

watching and imitating musicians around them and by making reference to recordings or

performances … involving their chosen music."[18] This definition describes informal learning

traditions of hip-hop DJing in many ways, including the creation of the "scratch" in the mid-

1970s.[19] The story begins with DJ pioneer GrandWizzard Theodore who was recording a

mixtape in his bedroom to be played in his high school during lunchtime. While he was

preparing to transition between two songs from his left turntable to his right, his mother

interrupted him. Instead of letting go of the record he had just cued up, he moved it back and

forth until his mother left. Afterwards, he was intrigued by the sound that he coaxed out of the

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[16] Paul Ricoeur quoted in Timothy Rice, "Toward a Mediation of Field Methods and Field Experience in Ethnomusicology" In *Shadows in the Field: New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology*, ed. by Gregory Barz and Timothy J. Cooley (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 56.

[17] Ibid, 61.

[18] Lucy Green, *How Popular Musicians Learn: A Way Ahead for Music Education* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2001), 5.

[19] The terminology of informal and formal learning methods came after the institutionalization of the craft coalescing in the early 2000s.

turntables and "practiced it with different records, and it became the scratch."[20] In comparison to

formal learning environments where students learn from "simple to complex," with perhaps a

syllabus guiding them, Theodore learned more haphazardly, experimenting with sounds he

liked—albeit with a goal in mind—in his own time and according to his own musical taste.[21]

As these pioneers began to develop their technique into an art form, they also inspired

and taught a new generation of hip-hop DJs. These new informal networks of DJs emerged in

New York, Philadelphia, and elsewhere in the early 1980s. DJs would get together to exchange

ideas about techniques, listen to their friends perform, ask questions about technology, and watch

videos or listen to recordings of other DJs or DJ competitions (known as battles).[22]

Apprenticeships became a popular way for DJs to learn directly under a senior member in these

informal groups.[23] What made these learning experiences informal was that they did not have a

specific class time to meet and none of them had a contractual job to teach. However, they did

sometimes have specific goals for their gathering. For example, when the X-Ecutioners would

practice they would teach each other techniques, and record themselves in order to learn.[24] I

believe these informal learning experiences helped to prepare the first generation of formal

educators to teach based on their own personal experiences.

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[20] GrandWizzard Theodore, quoted in Katz, *Groove Music*, 59.

[21] See Lucy Green, "Popular Music Education in and For Itself, and For "Other" Music: Current Research in the Classroom," *International Journal of Music Education*, 24 (2006): 106.

[22] This compares to other informal hip-hop education traditions such as b-boying where the foundations of the art form that rested "not only upon a series of physical movements, but also on attitude, rhythm, style, character, strategy, tradition, and philosophy," were taught informally and helped to keep the art form developing. See Schloss, *Foundation,* 51.

[23] For an example of apprenticeship in DJ history refer to DJ X and his mentor DJ Velvel in Katz, *Groove Music*, 170; Although "apprenticeship" has changed meaning over time in music education it is still a useful term to describe learning relationships in formal and informal education. For a discussion of the different meanings ascribed to "apprentice" see Kim Burwell, "Apprenticeship in Music: A Contextual Study for Instrumental Teaching and Learning," *International Journal of Music Education* 31 (2012): 276 – 291.

[24] The X-Ecutioners were a group of battle turntablists from New York popular during the 1990s including DJ Rob Swift, Mister Sinister, and Roc Raida. See, *As The Tables Turn*, directed by Rob Swift and John Carluccio (The Ablist Productions in Association With PRKR Productions, 2007), DVD.

In 1993 some of the first global hip-hop DJing schools created for the purpose of teaching the craft —such as the United DJ Mixing School in Melbourne, Australia—formally emerged.[25] By the early 2000s, formalized hip-hop DJ education reached American audiences and started to appear in other established institutions as the topic of instruction. To borrow from sociologist Geoffrey Hodgson, I use the term "institutions" to describe "systems of established and embedded social rules that structure social interactions."[26] In the history of music, the term has been applied to various types of social structures ranging from recording studios and music publishers to opera companies. In the field of music education, institutions teach music as a topic of performance, history, or a combination of both, and are characterized as having:

> …instrumental and vocal teaching programmes running either within or alongside these institutions; written curricula, syllabuses or explicit teaching traditions; professional teachers, lecturers or 'master musicians' who in most cases possess some form of relevant qualifications; systematic assessment mechanisms such as grade exams…; a variety of qualifications such as diplomas and degrees; music notation, which is sometimes regarded as peripheral, but usually, central; and, finally, a body of literature, including texts on music, pedagogical texts and teaching materials.[27]

In the 1990s, hip-hop was taught in these types of institutions from a historical perspective with a focus on the aesthetic aspects of mainstream rap. In the 2000s, this focus shifted towards the artistry involved in the creation of hip-hop such as DJ instruction.[28] The institutions that I

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[25] See Appendix A for a more complete list of institutions.

[26] Geoffrey M. Hodgson, "What Are Institutions?" *Journal of Economic Issues* XL (2006): 18; For more information about "institutions" see Raymond Williams, "Institution," In *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society, revised ed.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 168 – 9.

[27] Lucy Green explains that these characteristics are based in many ways upon Western models of education. See Green, *How Popular Musicians Learn*, 3 – 4; Rodney Miller further contextualizes the history of institutionalizing music in higher education tracing the phenomenon back to medieval universities, see Rodney E. Miller, "The History of Music in American Higher Education," In *Institutionalizing Music: The Administration of Music Programs in Higher Education* (Springfield, IL: Charles C Thomas, 1993), 27 – 50.

[28] For a further discussion of the evolution of hip-hop studies in academia see Felicia M. Miyakawa and Richard Mook, "Avoiding the 'culture vulture' Paradigm: Constructing an Ethical Hip-Hop Curriculum," *Journal of Music History Pedagogy* 5 (2014): 44 – 5; and Petchauer, *Hip-Hop Culture in College Students' Lives*, 3 – 6; and also Murray Forman, "Introduction," In *That's The Joint: The Hip-Hop Studies Reader*, ed. Murray Forman and Marc Anthony Neal (New York: Routledge, 2004), 1 – 8.

discuss in my thesis regarding formalized hip-hop DJ education include private and public

institutions of higher education, private academies, DJ Clubs at private secondary education

schools, non-profit community organizations, federally-funded projects, and online schools.

Private lessons and instructional materials such as DVDs and notation manuals, though not

institutions in themselves, may create socially constructed spaces of formal learning around their

usage.[29]

   Art forms such as folk, jazz, rock and Javanese gamelan were institutionalized in

American music schools long before hip-hop DJing. According to DJ 2-Tone Jones, a

Washington, D.C. based DJ and educator, jazz was especially helpful in paving the way for the

acceptance of hip-hop in academia in terms of countering negativity towards popular music as

aesthetically inferior to Western art music, and therefore not worthy of institutionalized study.[30]

The process of institutionalization for these genres and many others continue to raise questions

among scholars and practitioners concerning the development of a genre that is institutionalized.

For example, in Sumarsam's study of Javanese Gamelan, he questions how instructors in the

West could appropriately teach performance ensemble institutions of non-Western music due to

their cultural differences.[31] Bruno Nettl questions how music communities form within schools

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[29] This is similar to how jazz scholar Paul Berliner describes private lessons during the institutionalization process of jazz as "formalizing the dissemination of information acquired … though traditional learning practices." See Paul Berliner, *Thinking in Jazz: The Infinite Art of Improvisation* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1994), 57.

[30] DJ 2-Tone Jones, telephone interview with the author, 14 January 2015; Jere T. Humphreys discusses some of the difficulties popular music encountered when entering academia such as differences in taste among music educators and American culture, association with youth culture, social class distinctions and structure of music schools. See Jere T. Humphreys, "Popular Music In the American Schools: What History Tells us about the Present and the Future," In *Bridging the Gap: Popular Music and Music Education*, ed. Carlos Xavier Rodriguez (Rushton, VA: MENC: The National Association for Music Education, 2004), 91-106. Rock had a similar trajectory to jazz in terms of gaining acceptance in academia, See Charles Fowler, "The Case Against Rock: A reply," *Music Educators Journal* 57 (1970), 38-42; and also David G. Hebert and Patricia Shehan Campbell, "Rock Music in American Schools: Positions and Practices Since the 1960s," *International Journal of Music Education* 36 (2000): 14-22.

[31] See Sumarsam, *Javanese Gamelan and the West* (New York: University of Rochester Press, 2013), 111; and Ted Solís, "Teaching What Cannot Be Taught," In *Performing Ethnomusicology: Teaching and Representation in World Music Ensembles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 1 – 2.

of music and suggests that these interactions and tensions are reflective of American society.[32]

In Ken Prouty's study of jazz pedagogy, he broadens the discussion of internal communities to question their collective interactions with members of the outside local jazz community.[33] He also discusses concerns regarding the assessment of jazz improvisation in higher education.[34] In Charles Beale's study of jazz education, he discusses the difficulties jazz educators encounter in creating ways to teach jazz that "reflect the richness, variety, immediacy, and dynamic growth of the style without codifying it, putting it in an educational box and suffocating it."[35] Given the importance of these questions and how well they resonate with my project, I will address many of them directly, such as authenticity in hip-hip DJing education based on informal learning methods.

According to Montreal-based battle DJ Killa-Jewel, "keeping it real" in formal hip-hop DJing education is "really about keeping a culture alive, even through all of the modern adaptations we have at our fingertips today."[36] Killa-Jewel's aim to teach her students what it means to be a "real DJ" through multimodal DJing is similar to the aims of many of the DJs I interviewed. The ability of DJs to preserve foundational values of the field through formal education is complicated when non-hip-hop practitioners who have limited experiences in hip-hop culture and thus perhaps different goals for education, attempt to teach students how to

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[32] Nettl, *Heartland Excursions,* 43-81.

[33] Ken Prouty, *Knowing Jazz: Community, Pedagogy, and the Canon in the Information Age* (Jackson: University of Mississippi, 2012), 57-60.

[34] Ibid, 60-68.

[35] See Charles Beale, "Jazz Education," In *The Oxford Companion to Jazz*, edited by Bill Kirchner (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 765; and James Lincoln Collier, *Jazz: The American Theme Song* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 155; and also Stuart Nicholson, *Is Jazz Dead (Or Has It Moved to a New Address)?* (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2005), 106.

[36] DJ Killa-Jewel, e-mail exchange with the author, 30 March 2015; "Keeping it real" is also, and commonly, used to refer black urban street life discussed in rap lyrics. For further discussion of this aspect of "realness" in hip-hop, see Bell Hooks, "The Coolness of Being Real," In *The Hip-Hop Reader* (New York: Pearson Education, Inc., 2008), 147 – 53; Rose, *The Hip-Hop Wars*, 134; and Todd Boyd, *The New H.N.I.C.: The Death of Civil Rights and the Reign of Hip Hop* (New York: New York University Press, 2003), 11.

"keep it real."[37] Additionally, the various institutions in which DJs teach have financial concerns and certain criteria for their students and educators that may impact the degree to which they can authentically approach teaching in formal education based on informal methods and related equipment.[38] Although there is not one "authentic" method of teaching, several approaches help to ensure the foundational elements of the craft for years to come, such as an emphasis on multimodal teaching that I discuss in Chapter 2.

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In this thesis I demonstrate how the hip-hop DJ's ongoing quest for legitimacy is realized through the process of institutionalization that coalesced in the early 2000s. By bringing the informal learning methods of the craft into formal music education, DJs hope to preserve the foundational values of their art form that are threatened by digital DJ technology that water down the artistry of their craft. In the following chapter I will start to define the field of hip-hop DJing education as a way to introduce more specific issues within the field such as multimodal learning, standardization of topics and pedagogies, and women DJs in formal education.

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[37] See Murray Forman, "Introduction," 4 – 5; Miyakawa and Mook characterized the phenomenon where academics profit from studying, teaching, and publishing on hip-hop culture as the "culture vulture" paradigm. See, Miyakawa and Mook, "Avoiding the 'Culture Vulture' Paradigm," 42.

[38] Scholarship that more broadly addresses the impact of institutionalization on popular music also suggests that formal education may threaten the authenticity of popular music traditions in terms of the student's perspective, music-making practices and outside communities. See Randall Everett Allsup, Heidi Westerlund, and Eric Shieh, "Youth Culture and Secondary Education," In *The Oxford Handbook of Music Education, Volume 1* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 465 – 9; Some of these concerns are also relevant to classical music traditions entering into musical education institutions that remove the craft from its natural environment that is typically more informal. See Green, "Popular Music in and for Itself," 114.

CHAPTER 1: DEFINING THE FIELD OF HIP-HOP DJING EDUCATION

The aim of this chapter is to define the field of hip-hop DJing education.[39] I will discuss seven types of institutions that teach formal hip-hop DJing education: public and private institutions of higher education, private academies, DJ clubs in private secondary education schools, non-profit community organizations, federally-funded projects, and online schools. Additionally, I discuss other elements of formalized hip-hop DJing education such as private lessons and instructional books and DVDs. By introducing the institutions through their members, history, methods, and goals, I am able to make broader claims about the field of hip-hop DJ education in the following chapters.[40]

Private and Public Institutions of Higher Education

The three institutions of higher education that feature prominently in my thesis are Scottsdale Community College in Arizona, UNC-CH, and The New School. Each of these institutions have courses that are taught by a faculty of all men and represent, to my knowledge, all of the current opportunities for undergraduate students to learn the craft of hip-hop DJing as a course topic in America. Starting with the oldest and most extensive, Scottsdale's DJ program began in 2001 with a course titled "Club DJ" taught by Rob Wegner, an experienced nightclub DJ.[41] In the fall of 2004, "Live-Performance Disc Jockey Techniques" became the first DJ techniques class to offer two undergraduate college credits at a government-funded college or

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[39] To my knowledge only four other musicology texts refer to the field of hip-hop DJing education yet do not explore it as the main topic of study including Katz, *Groove Music*; Miyakawa, "Turntablature,"; Miyakawa and Mook, "Avoiding the 'Culture Vulture' Paradigm"; and Karen Sneil and Johan Söderman, *Hip-Hop Within and Without the Academy* (London: Lexington Books, 2014).

[40] This basis could be expanded with additional research on the institutions in Appendix A.

[41] https://www.scottsdalecc.edu/academics/faculty/robert-h-wegner, accessed 1 April 2015.

university.[42] In 2011, these courses grew to become the only credited DJ courses to lead to a

Certificate of Completion.[43] In 2012, Wegner was able to create the option for his students to

receive an Associates Degree in Disk Jockey Techniques as part of a 36-credit hour DJ

curriculum approved by the U.S. Department of Education.[44] This program now includes five

adjunct faculty members, including Wegner, as well as an advisory committee of well-known

DJs in the state who provide students with mentorship and job opportunities. Although Wegner

claims that the goals of his courses are to teach students to become professional DJs, it is

interesting that he has dedicated time to establish a terminal degree for a field that does not

currently value a diploma from the academy. Perhaps, among many other reasons, Wegner

decided to create this degree so that his students would be able to transfer over their credits

towards a minor in hip-hop at Arizona State University.

In comparison to Scottsdale's DJ program, The New School and UNC-CH offer

individual undergraduate courses for credit. The New School started offering "DJ Skills &

Styles" in the Spring of 2012 under the direction of Swift for two credits through the Arts

department at the Eugene Lang College at The New School for Liberal Arts.[45] The actual class

takes place off-campus at the Scratch DJ Academy where Swift previously taught—a fifteen-

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[42] The Maricopa County Community College District approved the "Club DJ" techniques class in May 2004. See https://www.scottsdalecc.edu/academics/faculty/robert-h-wegner, accessed 1 April 2015.

[43] Certificates of Completion are awarded to students who earn credits in a series of DJ courses, See "Scottsdale Community College DJ Program Offers Students Classroom Cred, Certificate of Completion," Maricopa Community Colleges Press Releases, 14 November 2012, Maricopa Community Colleges website, https://www2.maricopa.edu/press/scottsdale-community-college-dj-program-offers.

[44] The importance placed on a connection to the real world application of a skilled learned in a classroom of higher education was one the Maricopa County Community College District evaluated when Wegner proposed his Certificate program in Disk Jockey Techniques to them. Wegner was able to support his program by appointing an advisory committee and forming a network of approximately 30 DJs who help to mentor and hire students who come out of his program; Rob Wegner, telephone interview with the author, 25 March 2015.

[45] Katz, *Groove Music*, 30.

minute walk from The New School campus.[46] Swift teaches approximately 15 students twice a

week for an hour and a half each week with special guests such as the pioneer DJs

GrandWizzard Theodore and DJ Cash Money.[47] While the focus of this course is on "the

fundamentals of mixing, scratching, and beat juggling, using turntables and vinyl," Swift also

emphasizes the "history and cultural context of DJing techniques."[48] One of Swift's main

teaching goals is to have his students understand the importance of personalization in their craft.

Since 2007 UNC-CH has offered the three-credit course "The Art and Culture of the DJ"

under the direction of music professor Mark Katz. Out of the three institutions of higher

education, Katz's course offers the largest amount of course credit and also has the greatest

emphasis on the history and culture of the craft.[49] This course is not part of a larger hip-hop

conservatory or terminal degree program such as Wegner's, but rather it is part of a collection of

other hip-hop courses in what Katz refers to as the Carolina Beat Academy, which includes

"Beat Making Lab," (Fall 2011; Spring 2012; Summer 2013; Spring 2015) and "Rap Lab" (Fall

2013; Fall 2014).[50] In 2012 and 2013, Katz hired local DJ TAs A-Minor and SK who helped co-

teach his course; in 2013, DJ Rang and DJ Gray Area joined as regular TAs and held office

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[46] In the course of drafting this thesis, Swift explained to me excitedly that the next time his class is it will take place The New School's campus in a studio that offers similar resources as the one at Scratch.

[47] "DJ Skills & Styles" is based on a fifteen-week semester schedule. See http://www.newschool.edu/ucc/courseDetail.aspx?id=LMUS2020&CourseKey=LMUS2020&CourseOpenTo=NMO%2cNMR%2cNMN&PageIndex=0, accessed 1 April 2015; "GW Theodore discusses how he invented Scratching," 17 September 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZEhZpWAr_To; "Table Talk with DJ Cash Money," 27 February 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TLetAiKm7lc.

[48] Rob Swift, LMUS 2020: DJ Skills & Styles. Unpublished Course Syllabus, Spring 2015; See Appendix C.

[49] While there might be other reasons for why this course offers three credits instead of two such as their institutional status, structure, and funding, it is interesting to think about how the emphasis on history plays a role in the recognition it has as part of the academy.

[50] Mark Katz, interview with the author, Chapel Hill, NC, 11 November 2013.

hours on a separate day.[51] The aforementioned DJs are all men; three women DJs, Ali Neff, Play Play, and Queen Plz also visit the class at various times and helped to carry on a discussion related to gender and DJing.[52] During the lecture component, students are exposed to Katz's knowledge of the history of the art form as well as the DJs unique perspectives as musicians, supplemented by their classroom performances of techniques on the turntables. The voluntary office hour portion of the course, where most of the hands-on experiences take place, occurs across the street in Katz's office space.[53] In addition to these on-campus activities, the students are required to observe a DJ at one of the local venues and create a mix as part of their coursework.

Private Academies

I discuss three for-profit private academies of DJing in my thesis—two located in America—Scratch and Dubspot—and one in Canada—Mama Cutsworth's DJ Academy. Scratch and Dubspot offer multiple courses and opportunities related to DJing, whereas Cutsworth's academy only offers one course that is a part of her individually owned and operated school. The Scratch DJ Academy was one of the first major private schools in America to teach DJing beginning in 2002. Rob Principe, founder & CEO of Scratch, came up with the idea for a DJ school in 2001 and pitched the idea to hip-hop legend Jam Master Jay of Run-

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[51] This course was been taught four times including 2007, 2010, 2012 and 2013, and it was only during the later two offerings that Katz hired local DJs as TAs that acted as co-instructors. SK and A-Minor are part of the DJ crew based out of North Carolina known as the Jukebox Heroes, see http://weareyourheroes.com/meet-crew/, accessed 1 April 2015; DJ Rang is a wedding DJ in Raleigh, see http://www.djrang.com/; and DJ Gray Area was a previous student of the course in 2012 and later took on a role as a TA and now DJs professionally.

[52] Ali Colleen Neff is an alumna of UNC-CH and a media anthropologist also interested in gender issues in hip-hop studies. See http://www.alicolleenneff.com/about/; Play Play and Queen Plz primarily work in the underground DJ scenes in Durham, NC.

[53] Katz's office space doubled as a mini studio with two sets of turntables available for student use. This studio has since relocated to a more permanent home—the Carolina Beat Academy—a classroom on the ground floor of the same building. According to the three student participants I interviewed, most of the 35 – 40 students enrolled in their class attended at least one office hour, however there was a group of about five students each term who attended regularly to learn from the DJs during office hours.

D.M.C. that spring.[54] In 2002 the school opened its first branch in New York and over the past

thirteen years, the Academy has grown and established locations in Los Angeles (2004), Miami

(2005), Chicago (2013) and Atlanta (2014). In addition to their DJ course offerings, they also

teach music production courses, private lessons, and have other opportunities for youth to

learn.[55] I had the opportunity to interview two of Scratch's previous instructors—Swift and DJ

Shortee, an internationally acclaimed DJ based in Los Angeles, California.[56] To get a sense for

how large and influential Scratch is, the Scratch Music Group, as of March 2015, publicized

teaching 500,000 musicians and entertaining 27 million guests.[57] Shortee also taught at Dubspot,

a smaller school than Scratch with branches in New York (2006) and Los Angeles (2014), and an

online school for DJing and music production.[58]

In 2012 an "all woman" DJ school was created by Mama Cutsworth, a hip-hop DJ and

educator based in Winnipeg, Canada. This school's goal is the promotion of gender equality in

the field of DJing.[59] Since the establishment of her school, Cutsworth has seen "40 graduates

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[54] Principe is not a hip-hop DJ but he worked closely with Jay to discover the potential of hip-hop DJing in academia. See Rob Principe, "Preface," In *On the Record: The Scratch DJ Academy Guide*, by Phil White and Luke Crisell (New York: St. Martin Griffin, 2009), xiii.

[55] Their individual DJ course offerings are divided at three skill levels—Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced—as well as programs designed for more intensive study including the Certification Track and the Professional Track. See http://academy.scratch.com/courses/#/courses/beginner/dj101/, accesse 1 April 2015.

[56] Shortee was recognized as the "world's premier female DJ," by the Grammy Foundation; See http://www.djshortee.com/, accessed 1 April 2015.

[57] http://www.scratch.com/, accessed 1 April 2015.

[58] Some sample programs related to DJing include DJ Extensive program, DJing with Traktor Program, Turntablism Extensive program, and DJ / Producer Programs. Turntablism as a topic is taken up separately from the other DJing programs at Dubspot. See http://www.dubspot.com/, accessed 1 April 2015.

[59] "All Women" is a purposefully broad title that Cutsworth designed to include anyone who identifies as a woman or female. For an explanation of this terminology see Anastasia Chipelski, "Making changes in the mic: DJ Academy sparks conversations about gender, music, and representation," *The Manitoban: Arts & Culture*, 7 April 2014, http://www.themanitoban.com/2014/04/making-changes-mix/19874/.

successfully pass through her academy with 15 new grads this year [2015] alone."[60] Her course

runs for several weeks each winter and ends with a graduation dance party, which has taken

place for the last four years during International Women's Weekend.[61] Many of her students

continue on in the career and form communities around her courses.[62] While Cutsworth has the

added benefit of freedom to conduct the courses as she wishes, she does not have the support of

an institutional structure or funding that is available at private academies such as Scratch or

Dubspot. However, Cutsworth is perhaps better able to carry on the informal learning practices

of the art form that are more difficult for larger institutions to preserve with bureaucratic and

interpersonal problems that arise with more teachers, students, and locations.

DJ Clubs in Private Secondary Education Schools

There are two afterschool DJ Clubs at private secondary education schools I researched

in California that offer students opportunities to learn about DJing—The Galileo Academy of

Science and Technology in San Francisco led by DJ Marc Bayangos and the Marlborough High

School for all girls in Los Angeles led by Shortee. The DJ Club at Galileo Academy began in

the early 2000s with employee Lee Thomas, and in 2010 Bayangos, a popular west coast DJ,

took over the club while also working full-time in the school's Futurama program.[63] Although

the club is organized under the Futurama program for "enrichment purposes," Bayangos's goals

as a DJ educator are more substantial. In fact, Bayangos explained to me that the education that

students of his club receive deserves a more prominent position within the actual course

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[60] Tony Hinds, "Spinning the Road to Equality: Mama Cutsworth inspires confidence, careers for local female DJs," *The Uniter: Winnipeg's Weekly Urban Journal*, 4 March 2015, http://uniter.ca/view/spinning-the-road-to-equality.

[61] Mama Cutsworth, Skype interview with the author, 23 March 2015.

[62] Ibid.

[63] The Futurama program offers student at Galileo "a variety of free on-campus academic and enrichment activities," see http://galileoweb.org/futurama/, accessed 1 April 2015; For more information about the DJ Club at the Galileo Academy see, http://galileoweb.org/futurama/clubs/beat-makers/, accessed 1 April 2015.

offerings of the school because learning DJing can help students pursue the craft as a viable career, help students gain valuable skills working with technology, and promote development of social skills by teaching others and performing.[64]

In comparison to Bayangos, who is an employee of the school where he leads the DJ Club, Shortee is an outside guest instructor at the Marlborough High School DJ Club. In 2013, the Club asked her to speak at an assembly featuring professional women from various career paths. She was happy to connect and inspire an audience of all women students and, following her appearance, was asked back to work with the DJ Club on a more regular basis. She often attends these meetings with her husband DJ Faust, and teaches students basic techniques on turntables such as scratching.[65] While both of the examples I have highlighted here are private secondary schools with DJ Clubs, there are also DJs who work with public secondary schools.[66] To my knowledge, these interactions are restricted to one-time appearances or workshops rather than year-long programs. Perhaps this occurrence has to do with funding and availability of DJs who want to teach at public secondary education schools.

Non-Profit Community Organizations

Words Beats & Life (WBL) is the primary non-profit organization that I researched that teaches hip-hop DJing. The program began in 2003 as part of the Saturday Arts Academy and later became the Words Beats & Life Academy – "a pre-vocational after-school Hip-Hop

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[64] Marc Bayangos, Skype interview with the author, 15 October 2014; Bayangos has his students gig events and dances on-campus for Galileo Academy to gain valuable experience as performers. The transferable skills he promotes as part of his education compare to entrepreneurial skills Katz emphasizes in his courses at UNC.

[65] Shortee explained that the club members fundraise money for the equipment, and always donate half of the money to charity; DJ Shortee, telephone interview with the author, 11 January 2015; scratching is a technique utilized by hip-hop DJs when they move the vinyl back and forth underneath their fingertips to create an unique sound.

[66] For example, A-Minor, SK and Katz led a presentation/workshop for local middle school students visiting UNC in the Fall of 2014.

program for youth ages 13 – 23 in Washington, D.C."[67] In comparison to the DJ clubs affiliated with private schools, these courses are free to youth in the area on the topics of DJing/Beat Production, Emceeing, B-boying, Graffiti, and knowledge of self.[68] 2-Tone began his DJ teaching career through WBL in 2005, beginning as a volunteer and eventually becoming a teacher for the Academy's DJ classes that focused on the history and techniques of the craft.[69] He explained to me that one of the benefits of this program is that it can teach students the value of working hard to achieve their goals, a lesson he feels many students today do not grasp.[70] Similar to Bayangos, 2-Tone believes that the education he provides for youth can help to position them on the path to becoming a DJ.

Federally-Funded Projects

While there have been previous state funded projects for hip-hop diplomacy like Rhythm Road that sent American hip-hop artists to promote cultural diplomacy abroad, my focus here is on a recent program titled Next Level, an initiative of the U.S. Department of State and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill under the direction of Mark Katz. Cultural diplomacy carries out the goals of the state department to foster connections and understanding between the US and people across the globe creating a "neutral platform for people-to-people contact."[71] The inaugural 2014 – 2015 session of Next Level sent groups of hip-hop artists to carry out such goals using hip-hop in Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, India, Montenegro, Senegal, Serbia, and Zimbabwe. Each team was comprised of a DJ, beat maker/producer, hip-

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[67] http://www.wblinc.org/about_wbl/, accessed 1 April 2015.

[68] Ibid.

[69] 2-Tone, interview, 14 January 2015.

[70] Ibid.

[71] For more information regarding cultural diplomacy see U.S. Department of State, "Cultural Diplomacy The Linchpin of Public Diplomacy: Report of the Advisory Committee on Cultural Diplomacy," (September 2005): 2.

hop dancer and an MC. While the goals the State Department had for Next Level were to promote "cultural exchange and conflict resolution through hip-hop music and dance," formal education was also used to implement the state's diplomatic goals.[72] For example, in India 2-Tone worked with students to create public service announcements that used hip-hop to promote social change.[73] Therefore, although institutionalization was not a listed goal, it was a welcomed outcome for those DJs who participated in the program including A-Minor, Bayangos, and 2-Tone. Their teaching experiences abroad continue to inform their experiences in America in terms of the technology and historical topics they teach, and the approaches they take to adapt to certain classrooms.

Online Schools

One of the first successful online schools to teach DJing was TurntableU.com.[74] The emergence of this school in 2005 stems from what I believe to be a positive response to instructional DVDs.[75] This popular option appealed to both men and women students in the early 2000s who wanted to circumvent traditional ways of learning in public.[76] In comparison to institutions of higher education, TurntableU.com offers students the option to learn regularly from women DJs such as Shortee.[77] Students can interact with the site in different ways such as viewing the seven free lessons that are redeemable after signing up, purchasing credits to watch

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[72] http://www.nextlevel-usa.org/, accessed 1 April 2015.

[73] DJ 2-Tone Jones, telephone interview with the author, 20 March 2015; For example, Next Level Academy in Patna, India created a public service announcement concerning environmental issues. See "Preserving India PSA," 20 June 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JdUZvzOZkkE.

[74] http://turntableu.com/, accessed 1 April 2015.

[75] For example, we might consider Qbert's instructional DVD series. For example, see DJ Qbert's Complete Do-It-Yourself, Vol. 1 Skratching. Thud Rumble DVD, DIY001DVD.

[76] For more information regarding how DVDs and videos have been beneficial for women DJs in particular, see Katz, *Groove Music*, 241 – 44.

[77] Out of the 42 faculty members listed, only three of them are women, and only one of them is listed under the featured faculty with more videos—Shortee.

individual videos, or by purchasing an all access package.[78] Another way students may choose

to participate with TurntableU.com is by purchasing "courses" that include a series of videos

correlating to the students' skill level and desired DJ teacher.

In comparison to in-person classes such as Wegner's or Swift's that meet weekly to

discuss a topic designated on a syllabus, these courses allow students to learn at their own pace,

in their own time, and with the option to repeat any segment of the lesson.[79] The largest

educational flaw that I believe these courses exhibit is that they lack the opportunity for students

to communicate with their teacher verbally or even via videos as some online schools such as

Dubspot and the Qbert Scratch University provide.[80] As a result, students of TurntableU.com are

at a disadvantage if they want to continue on with the craft in the field because they have no

outside resources for in-person mentorship, discussion, community, or job opportunities. While

it is possible that students could e-mail the professors they learn from online, or use

TurntableU.com as a supplemental source of instruction, it is perhaps the institution that least

successfully preserves the informal aspects of learning how to DJ.[81]

Contributing Factors to Formal Hip-Hop DJing Education: Private Lessons and Notation

Private lessons and written notation contribute to the overall process of the formalization

of the hip-hop DJing education. For example, private lessons may spark a student's interest in

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[78] As of May 2015, all of the course packages cost under $20 and the all access package is $85.99. Given that students can access instructional videos for free on sites such as YouTube, the price of the all access package may be a deterrent for students based upon their finances. For a full pricing list, see "Packages" at http://turntableu.com/dj_lessons.aspx, accessed 1 April 2015.

[79] Kiri Miller discusses how online music lessons for drumming and guitar in particular demonstrate aspects of convenience and repeatability that are characteristic of "pedagogical qualities of prerecorded video lessons." See Kiri Miller, "Music Lessons 2.0" *In Playing Along: Digital Games, YouTube, and Virtual Performance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 164 – 7.

[80] In addition to an online interface that allows students and teachers to communicate through instant messaging on the "Online Common Area," students of Dubspot are also required and encouraged to submit videos of their work for individualized feedback, similar to Qbert's Scratch University, in the form of video commentary. UK based DJ Emma Shorte-E's online turntable school also allows students the ability to connect with online chat and video communities. See http://schoolofscratch.com/, accessed 1 April 2015.

[81] This is perhaps exacerbated by the fact that these courses online do not teach history as topic.

pursuing formal DJ education at an institution, they may serve as a way to continue formal education after a course ends, and/or allow mentorship to occur outside of a student's geographic locale. For example, Ohio-based DJ Shines was able to seek lessons via Skype with Swift after watching his teaching at Scratch on YouTube.[82] A new phenomenon associated with online lessons is posting video segments of lessons on social media sites for a wider audience of DJ students and practitioners to learn from. For example, Swift sometimes posts clips of his lessons online via Facebook. These videos make the lessons less "private," however they promote his students as well as teach other students for free and help to preserve the foundational elements of the craft as demonstrated and discussed in his videos. It also allows for a community of DJs to contribute to the success of his students by posting helpful advice or encouragement.

Print sources have also contributed to the formalization of DJing education including instructional DJ books, historical texts, and scratch notation materials. My thesis focuses on the latter, turntable notation, a system created by several DJs and other individuals including Canadian turntablist and now producer, A-Trak.[83] His system "takes into account the shape, temporal positioning, pitch differential … and articulated nuances of individual scratches" and was used by A-Trak as a memory aid for his intricate scratch patterns.[84] The idea was later developed in 1997 by John Carluccio, a hip-hop filmmaker, with a goal of promoting a sense of legitimacy for the art form of turntablism.[85] In 2000, Carluccio published the Turntable Transcription Methodology manual with the help of Ethan Imboden and Raymond Pirtle.[86] This booklet included notation that was more prescriptive than A-Trak's, representing not only

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[82] DJ Shines, e-mail conversation with the author, 17 March 2015.

[83] Katz, *Groove Music*, 208.

[84] Miyakawa, "Turntablature," 83.

[85] Katz, *Groove Music*, 209 –10.

[86] John Carluccio, Ethan Imboden, Raymond Pirtle, *Turntablist Transcription Methodology*, 2000.

scratches and crossfader movement with lines over a horizontal axis, but also "the sample being used, whether the record is sounding or not, the direction of record rotation, and the use and placement of certain percussion sounds" (see Figure 1.1 below).[87] The actual implementation of this instructional material has not become a mainstream educational tool, yet I believe it acts as an important example in hip-hop DJ's ongoing quest for legitimacy.

Figure 1.1: Screenshot of Swift's TTM "Skratchin"[88]
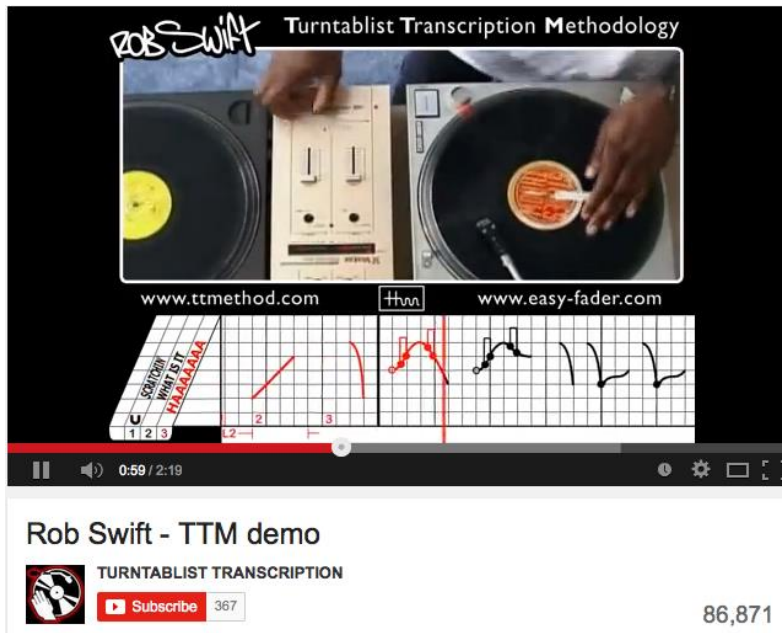
Used with the permission of Rob Swift.

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This preliminary discussion of the seven types of institutions I discuss in my thesis provides the reader with knowledge of the spaces, people, and goals of the burgeoning field of hip-hop DJ education. As the reader moves through my discussion of multimodal teaching, and standardization and gender issues in formalized education, this information will substantiate the claims I make throughout.

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[87] Katz, *Groove Music*, 209 – 10.

[88] "Rob Swift - TTM demo," 10 August 2009, www.youtube.com/watch?v=wsKpqJ-g388.

CHAPTER 2: MULTIMODAL APPROCHES TO TEACHING IN FORMAL DJ

EDUCATION

"You can learn the concepts, you can learn ideas, you can learn theories, but unless your hands are on the equipment, you can't know how it feels," A-Minor explained to me. He went on to explain that "there is no way to learn DJing without putting your hands on something."[89] Although music is, of course, largely a sonic phenomenon, DJing is a multimodal experience, requiring close engagement with the equipment used through the senses of touch and sight as well.[90] The emergence of new digital DJ equipment in the early 2000s—including CDJs, digital vinyl emulation systems (DVS) and controllers—challenged the legitimacy of the artistry involved in hip-hop DJing by shifting the educational and performative emphasis towards visual learning.[91] In this chapter I will demonstrate how vinyl, videos, and notation are contributing factors in the preservation of multimodal learning in different educational settings.

Sensational Learning Experiences with Vinyl

"Vinyl…[is] the most authentic physical piece about being a DJ" according to Killa-Jewel.[92] However, new approaches to DJing that emerged in 2001 distance current DJ students from the lifestyles and learning experiences of traditionally trained hip-hop DJs who used analog records. For example, one can now use DVS by placing two digitally encoded vinyl records on turntables that connect to a laptop with cables from an analog to digital converter (ADC); the

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[89] DJ A-Minor, interview with the author, Chapel Hill, NC, 18 February 2015.

[90] For more information on what multimodal learning means, see Dr. Dominic W. Massaro, "Multimodal Learning" In *Encyclopedia of the Sciences of Learning* (2012): 2375 – 2378.

[91] A controller is a piece of equipment that imitates the traditional mixer and turntable set-up. It is smaller than either the turntable or CDJ set-up, but uses the same computer software to function.

[92] Killa-Jewel, e-mail exchange with the author, 30 March 2015.

music to be played from the turntables is then chosen through a computer software interface such as Serato Scratch Live.[93] Alternatively, with CDJs (and some controllers such as the Reloop Terminal Mix 4) DJs can perform in "vinyl mode," although *real* vinyl is absent.[94] Vinyl is important to hip-hop DJs because they believe it is laced with information about the history and lifestyle associated with their art form. Therefore, many educators today aim to incorporate a preliminary discussion of it and performance with it during their lessons even if they include newer technologies later in their course.[95] For example, while most of the hands-on experiences with DJ equipment take place during the optional office hour component of Katz's DJ course at UNC-CH, all of the students are encouraged to feel vinyl albums and to place them on a turntable platter during one lecture. "There is nothing else like touching a record and having that immediate effect on music," DJ SK explained. In this way, his students "have the foundation of touching records and manipulating music through hand, the way its always been done."[96] These types of experiences open the door to other multimodal experiences associated with vinyl that educators can bring into formal education either as outside assignments, through in-class discussion, or through ear training exercises.

Looking for new vinyl at a record store, also known as "digging in the crates," is a multimodal experience Killa-Jewel encourages her students to participate in outside of her

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[93] Serato Scratch Live is a DVS software that operates exclusively with Rane hardware. See http://serato.com/scratchlive, accessed 1 April 2015.

[94] The Reloop Terminal Mix 4 MIDI USB DJ Controller allows DJs to perform in "vinyl scratch mode" with an aluminum jog platter with "vinyl grips," see http://www.reloop.com/reloop-terminal-mix-4, accessed 1 April 2015.

[95] Katz, *Groove Music*, 218.

[96] DJ SK, interview with the author, Chapel Hill, NC, 3 February 2014.

formal instruction, as it "appeals to every sense imaginable."[97] She recalled her meaningful

experiences as a DJ looking for vinyl by:

> Going to a record store, digging for records, pulling the vinyl out of its paper casing, placing it on the turntable, placing the needle on the record, putting your headphones on in anticipation, discovering songs and sounds that made your heart beat faster and your palms sweat, your adrenaline rush, and fingers dirty.[98]

Similar to Killa-Jewel, Swift also encourages his students to experience digging in the crates in

New York City.[99] Whereas in formal education, as Lucy Green notes, "teachers usually select

music with the intent to introduce learners to areas with which they are not already familiar,"

Swift and others emulate informal learning practices by requiring students to select some of their

own materials.[100] For many other new DJ students, digging is not a possibility because record

stores are shutting down across the U.S. and are difficult to find abroad, as many of the Next

Level DJs acknowledged.[101] When these opportunities are not available, some educators try to

bring the value of these experiences into their classrooms in different ways.

For example, in Swift's 2014 class at Scratch, he shared the cover to the 1988 album,

"Where's The Party At?" by DJ Cash Money—an award winning DMC battle DJ from

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[97] Killa-Jewel, e-mail exchange; For a further discussion of digging in the crates see Joseph G. Schloss, "Materials and Inspiration: Digging in the Crates," In *Music Culture: Making Beats: The Art of Sample-Based Hip-Hop* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2004), 79 – 100.

[98] Killa-Jewel, e-mail exchange.

[99] Swift requires his students at The New School to go to a record store and buy $30 worth of vinyl. See Swift's syllabus in Appendix C; For more information about the scene-formation surrounding vinyl at record stores see, Dominik Bartmanski and Ian Woodwar, "Totem: Scene-Making in Urban Spaces," In *Vinyl: The Analogue Record in the Digital Age* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 137 – 164; The closure of record stores and their internal communities is not a new phenomenon. For example consider the record store scene in New York, see Ben Sisario, "Record Stores Fight to Be Long-Playing," *New York Times*, April 18, 2008, accessed 2 May 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/18/arts/music/18reco.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

[100] It is difficult to imagine the art of DJing existing without the ability for DJs to chose their own music; See, Lucy Green, *Music, Informal Learning and the School: A New Classroom Pedagogy* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2008), 106.

[101] 2-Tone Jones, telephone interview with the author, 20 March 2015.

Philadelphia.[102] The goal was to "put a face to a name" as Swift's technical topic for class that

day was the transform scratch, which Cash credits himself with developing.[103] Not only did

Swift pass around an image of the cover as he spoke about and demonstrated the scratch, he also

called Cash on his cell phone and aired the conversation over the speakers in the classroom as a

way to have the students contextualize the scratch. "When you do it," Swift told his students in

regards to performing this scratch, I want you to "understand what you're doing and why you're

doing it, so you can find a voice for yourself within this technique."[104]

The cultural knowledge this album cover provides in formal education would otherwise

be lost without the record store or informal learning practices of the craft. Specifically, the

image on the album reveals Cash surrounded by battle awards Swift discussed during the phone

call, including the 1987 New Music Seminar Battle for World Supremacy and 1988 DMC World

Championship. These awards help to bolster the prominence of Cash, who is positioned behind

his turntables in the middle of the cover, with MC Marvelous, a Philadelphia-based rapper,

behind him.[105] According to Katz, this album cover "points to his real legacy, not as any MC's

DJ…but as one of the greatest turntablists … who inspired generations to come."[106]

Perhaps the most important aspect that vinyl provides for DJs in formal education is the

art of mixing. This multimodal activity necessitates aural training for DJs to match the beats of

the two songs they want to mix together by syncing their tempos through what they hear rather

than what they see on DVS. According to Swift, "technology has almost forced a lot of us to

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[102] "Table Talk with DJ Cash Money."

[103] Ibid; The transform scratch is when the DJ drags the record slowly back and forth to extend the sound, while using the crossfader to cut the sound in and out with quick repetitive motions of the wrist. For a more thorough history of the origins of the transform scratch see Katz, *Groove Music*, 114-21.
[104] "Table Talk with DJ Cash Money."

[105] For more information about battling as a part of DJ culture see, Katz, *Groove Music*, 153-178.

[106] Katz, *Groove Music*, 105.

teach, because you could learn how to DJ on a controller [but would] lose a lot of the meaning behind DJing" based upon a DJs use of hearing.[107] For Killa-Jewel, even when she teaches students using a controller, she emphasizes the need for them to learn "how to mix without using the sync button" in order for them to take part in the musicality needed to become a "real DJ."[108] Mixing by ear is a multimodal activity that helps to legitimize DJs as artists and offers new students the opportunity to continue the foundational traditions and culture of hip-hop DJing.

Learning with Videos

"You can learn [DJing] from a book," Shortee explained to me in reference to her most recent publication, *Spin Now!*, "as long as you have a video to go with it… you have to see it and hear it."[109] The use of videos as an important pedagogical tool for the DJ can be traced to the early 1980s when DJs would study videocassette tapes of battles and make homemade videos of themselves practicing or performing. Professional DVDs such as Shortee's and DJ Qbert's were popular ways for DJs to learn their craft in the early 2000s.[110] With the emergence of TurntableU.com in 2009 and other contemporary online schools, instructional videos are now accessed primarily through websites. I suggest that while professional videos are helpful, those made non-professionally during informal or formal training are better able to promote multimodal DJing experiences because they require students to perform rather than watch.

DJ educators today aim to preserve the tradition of making videos to learn from because they value the usefulness of videos from their own informal learning experiences. For example,

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[107] Swift, interview.

[108] DJ Killa-Jewel, telephone interview with the author, 22 November 2014; Teaching mixing by hearing becomes complicated when by the goals of the institutions such as appealing to students with limited musical knowledge conflict with ear training.

[109] Shortee, interview.

[110] See *DJ Qbert's Complete Do-It-Yourslef, Vol. 1 Skratching*; and also *DJ Qbert's Scratchlopedia Breaktannica: 100 Secret Skratches*, Thud Rumble DVD, DIY001DVD, 2013; This usage of videos as educational music tools carries over into other types of popular and classical music instruction such as YouTube videos for rock guitar and drum. See Miller, "Music Lessons 2.0," 156 – 82.

Swift preserves this tradition by recording his "Question and Answer" sessions with his students because he was able to grow as a solo and DJ battle artist by recording himself. Specifically, he found that during performances he was often so caught up in his every movement that he was unable to appreciate what he sounded and looked like until after he viewed his recorded videos.[111] During his sessions with the students at the New School, he asks them to perform short sets of four-bars on their turntables riffing off of his own performance while utilizing learned or invented techniques. These recorded performances are uploaded to YouTube, embedded on Swift's personal website, and annotated with a prose commentary for each student organized by their names and the time of their performance entrance.[112] Visually, Swift comments upon their "ambidexterity," "hand control," "posture," and the way they "hold" or "tap" the fader.[113] Aurally, he comments upon their "phrasing," "balance," "punctuation," and "delivery."[114] These textual responses accompany conversations in class on the topic of students' personal development as performers, and emphasize the importance of DJing as a multimodal activity.

Other newer types of videos such as Shortee's DVD present both visual and aural stimuli that help one become a DJ with an emphasis on learning visually.[115] For example, there are more segments on *doing*, such as assembling equipment and performing certain scratches rather than *listening*, such as exercises that train your ears to mix. In comparison to homemade videos where DJ students are involved in the activity of DJing, professional videos allow students to

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[111] Swift, interview.

[112] For an example of Swift's video commentary from The New School, see Rob Swift, "Scratch Like Miles Cut Like Coltrane: Q&A Part II," DJ Rob Swift website, 24 October 2013 http://www.djrobswift.com/2013/10/24/scratch-like-miles-cut-like-coltrane/.

[113] Ibid.

[114] Ibid.

[115] To my knowledge there are no audio recordings that have been sold to teach DJs how to develop their aural skills such as counting beats and mixing.

watch first, and then imitate without required performance times. A-Minor suggests that if students are too concerned with what they are watching when they learn techniques, they may miss opportunities to develop new sounds altogether by letting their sense of hearing direct their hand movements.[116] He explained to me that when he first heard a two-click flare scratch he learned how to perform the technique by imitating the sound he heard rather than trying to find a video of the performance to copy the physical moves required performing the technique.[117] This valuable experience allowed him to experiment with the sounds he was able to coax out of the turntable—an important value of hip-hop DJing that often leads to innovation. When he later learned while watching other DJs perform this technique that his hand movement was different than the "standard" way, he expressed joy over the fact that the art form of DJing is flexible and there are multiple ways to achieve the same goal.[118] His concern over the potential negative impact of students taking the visual aspects of learning DJing too literally with professional videos supports my argument that videos made non-professionally during informal or formal training have a better chance of preserving multimodal DJing experiences that emphasize the traditional values of the craft.

Turntable Notation

In comparison to vinyl and videos, turntable notation is a relatively new phenomenon in the history of hip-hop DJing education. One of the first DJs to use notation in formal education was DJ Excess as part of his instruction at the Norcal DJ and Music Production Academy.[119] Specifically, Excess used Carluccio's TTM booklet, which is "unmistakably pedagogical"

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[116] A-Minor, interview, 18 February 2015.

[117] Ibid; A double click flare scratch is performed when a DJ drags the record back and forth underneath their fingertips while taping the crossfader twice during the span of the drag.

[118] Ibid.

[119] Miyakawa, "Turntablature," 90.

according to Miyakawa, and includes a "blank score with six staves…[with] six pages of explanations and directions."[120] While other DJs such as Killa-Jewel use turntable notation in some approaches to education, many DJ educators dismiss the value of this tool in formal hip-hop DJing education. Some of the DJs I spoke to believe that it has not become more widely accepted in hip-hop culture because it does not capture all of the aspects of a DJ's performance. As a visual aid it does not reveal the actual movements of an artist, and as an aural guide, it does not have the ability to capture the nuances of a DJ's soulful performance.[121] For example, Swift explained to me that Cash's scratching to a record called "Pump Me Up" by Trouble Funk could not be notated because it is "all spirit…soul and heart… It's not … looking at piece of paper, thinking alright, here at this bar I have to open the fader three times."[122] Swift fears that scratch notation has the potential for students of the craft to get "lost in the technique" through visual motions rather than doing what comes naturally to them as an artists in terms of what they hear and how they express their emotions.[123]

Perhaps notation has not become a standardized approach to teaching over the last decade because its value is "less in what it can teach turntablists than in what it can teach others about turntablism" as Katz and Swift explain.[124] Many of the DJs I spoke to believe that formal education allows them to preserve *and* learn new things about their craft from their students and

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[120] Miyakawa, "Turntablature," 86.

[121] This critique of the limitations of music notation is one that began in the early 20th century with classical music part of western art culture. For more information regarding the history of notation and the historical debates regarding its limitations see John Butt, "Negotiating between work, composer and performer: rewriting the story of notational progress," In *Playing with History: The Historical Approach to Musical Performance* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 96-122.

[122] Swift, interview.

[123] Ibid.

[124] Katz, *Groove Music*, 211.

the act of teaching.[125] For example, Swift learned new techniques from his students, A-Minor

learned why his students might request top-ten dance hits early in the night, and SK learned how

valuable conversation in classrooms can be for artists like himself who would otherwise be

constricted to performance in nightclubs behind turntables.[126] Taking on the role as a teacher in

formal education has helped DJs who were first skeptical of institutionalization, such as

Bayangos, quickly realize its potential.[127]

I believe formal education that emphasizes multimodal teaching offers hip-hop DJs a

better chance to gain legitimacy for their craft in comparison to creating and teaching from

turntablature either informally or formally. This is because formal education emphasizes

informal teaching methods authentic to hip-hop culture rather than notation, which is authentic to

Western "art" music traditions.[128] This is why I believe institutional education continues to grow

in 2015, while turntable notation continues to be a "fringe activity," as Miyakawa wisely

suggests.[129]

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Over the past several years, formal hip-hop DJing education has transformed the ways in

which the senses are utilized during the training process. Through an exploration of the

mediums of vinyl, videos, and turntable notation I demonstrate how informal learning traditions

that emphasize the balance of senses when teaching the craft are actively being preserved in

formal education. I would agree with Jeremy Kleiman, one of Katz's DJ students, that these new

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[125] See Ross, "Academics, DJ Culture, and the New Cultural Intermediary in Chapel Hill"; and A-Minor, interview; SK, interview; Swift, interview; 2-Tone, interview; DJ Apple Juice Kid, telephone interview with the author, 17 October 2013; DJ Apple Juice Kid, interview with the author, Chapel Hill, NC, 15 February 2014.

[126] SK, interview.

[127] Bayangos now invites DJs from the local community to his DJ Club to foster an understanding of the values of formal education for students as well as current practitioners. See, Bayangos, interview.

[128] Miyakawa, "Turntablature," 82.

[129] Miyawaka, telephone interview with the author, 28 January 2015.

ways of learning in formal DJ education are not "bad…just different" because they are able to remain relatively authentic to the traditional ways the craft was learned.[130]

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[130] Jeremy Kleiman, interview with the author, Chapel Hill, NC, 21 November 2014.

CHAPTER 3: CONCERNS OVER THE STANDARDIZATION OF TOPICS AND

PEDAGOGIES

"Going legit," Mark Katz explained with regard to hip-hop entering into academia, "can have positive and negative resonances."[131] For example, DJ schools advertise accessibility and community-forming aspects as positive outcomes of formalized education. On the other hand, formalization of an art form can negatively impact its artistic freedom and creativity. This attitude is especially prevalent in conservatory culture, where the standardization of pedagogy has been criticized for teaching all students the same way and therefore producing musicians who all sound the same.[132] Although hip-hop DJing is currently not part of any conservatory curriculum and has only recently become formalized, practitioners are concerned with the possible negative ramifications of institutionalization. Specifically, DJ educators expressed three concerns:

1) Students sounding the same

2) Having teachers with little professional experience

3) Evaluating DJing for a grade

Each of these concerns stems from the fact that formal education has the potential to separate out new DJ communities from local hip-hop communities and thus the foundational elements of the craft. The majority of formal pedagogical approaches to hip-hop DJing, however, aim to preserve the traditional philosophies of the craft as was discussed in Chapter 2. Although some negative outcomes of standardization have already occurred, institutionalization has great

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[131] Katz, interview.

[132] Ibid.

potential to provide a positive outcome for DJs who wish to legitimize their craft.

Standardization of Technical and Historical Topics

Topics in DJ education have expanded over the course of the last forty years. Names of scratches, famous artists, philosophies, or other techniques have become part of informal education. These topics are now becoming further standardized through formalized education that has historically relied upon ideas that are written down and then disseminated aurally or textually in a classroom following a syllabus of planned learning activities.[133] The overarching trend towards a larger number of technical and historical topics reflect negotiations among DJs in formal education as to what is most useful for becoming a "real DJ." To my knowledge, these negotiations have occurred internally within institutions and informally among DJs through advertisements, course syllabi, and publications of instructional material.

The TurntableU.com website demonstrates how discussions of topics have occurred over time and have shaped the tools available for their students to learn from. On their homepage they list DJ technique topics according to three skill levels—beginner, intermediate and advanced.[134] In comparison to the list of topics from 2005 when TurntableU.com began, the current list has a larger number of identifiable techniques DJs can learn. For example, topics such as "Smart Playlists in iTunes" and "Serato Scratch Live Cuepoints" have been added to accommodate developments in the field and the growth of digital DJing technologies in the field (see Table 2.2 on p. 37). Topics such as beat matching have been further broken down from two parts to three parts over the last ten years. Additionally, mixing was moved from an intermediate to a beginner skill level (see Table 2.1 and 2.2 on p. 37). I believe these changes reflect an institutional desire to keep students in their school who may need extra time to perfect a technique with the help of more manageable segments of video material. In comparison to DJ

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[133] Green, "Popular Music in and for Itself," 106.

[134] www.TurntableU.com.

pioneers who committed their lives to the craft, students today are largely interested in it as a

hobby or as a second job. Therefore, institutions profit most from having more options for

students with busy schedules to learn.

Table 2.1: Selective List of Courses Offered by TurntableU.com in 2009[135]

Beginner	BPM Counting Pts. 1-2; Marking Records; Baby Scratch; Beginner Lesson Wrap-Up
Intermediate	Blending; Dropping on the Chorus; Looping; Stab Scratch; Crab Scratch; Programming for the Radio; Mixing Songs, How to Bring In Records
Advanced	Battle Set Intro; Battle Set Outro; Primetime Radio Mix; Primetime Club Mix; Club Set with Scratching

Table 2.2 Adapted List of Lesson Topics on TurntableU (as of 4/1/2015)[136]

Beginner	Beat Matching Pts. 1-3; Mixing Basics-Baby Scratch; Mixing; Counting Beats and Bars-music theory; Scratch Live Auto Loop; Smart Playlists in iTunes
Intermediate	Clean Blending; Looping; Stab Scratch; Crab Scratch; Programming for the Radio; Mixing Songs, How to Bring In Records; Serato Scratch Live Cuepoints
Advanced	Reading the Crowd and ScratchLive; Battle Scratch Routines; Battle Set Outro; Primetime Radio Mix; Primetime Club Mix; Club Set with Scratching; Juggling

Historical topics have also become increasingly present in syllabi and have been further

organized in formal education. For example, in 2005 the "DJ 101" classrooms at Scratch listed

their objectives as follows: "Equipment set-up and break down, Basic hand to record/hand to

fader DJ technique, Basic mixing and blending, [and] Basic scratching."[137] Currently, this

course offers students a similar set of knowledge including "DJ history, Basic music theory &

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[135] This table provides a selective list of courses offered by TurntableU.com in 2005. This information was acquired by "Turntable Univ" Facebook Page, post on 7 November 2009, https://www.facebook.com/turntableu/photos/a.2028415917299350.1073741839.2028415710632704/20284160739 66001/?type=1&theater.

[136] This table provides a selective list of courses offered by TurntableU.com as of 1 April 2015. See www.TurntableU.com.

[137] Scratch DJ Academy: DJ 101 Course Pack, unpublished course pack, 2005; Mixing consoles are pieces of equipment that allow DJs the ability to blend audio between one turntable or CDJ and another.

song structure, Ins & outs of equipment (turntables, mixers, speakers, etc.), Basic scratching & timing, Basic mixing, [and] Exposure to new technology (Serato Live, Traktor Scratch Pro, CDJs, mixing consoles, etc.)"[138] While there is significant overlap between the objectives for these two courses, there is shift towards more history as well as the inclusion of newer technologies, as we saw with TurnatbleU.com. One reason for this change may be the increase in pioneer DJs becoming involved in formal DJ education who are personally invested in preserving their contributions and memories of the craft. While this can be problematic in terms of reliability, it gives DJs agency in teaching their craft outside of scholars and artists who may have other motives. In fact, many DJs have become authors of their own DJ history by authoring books and producing DVDs.[139]

Standardization of Pedagogies

"Standardizing as far as techniques that you have to cover in order for people to learn how to do it? Yes," Shortee explained to me when I asked about the implications of standardization on the craft of hip-hop DJing, "Standardizing as far as a factory, where you were going to crap out DJs that sound the same? No." For Shortee, teaching at Scratch and Dubspot involved coverage of the same topics including beat matching, counting beats per minute (bpm), and blending.[140] She was able to cover these topics differently according to the time allotted for

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[138] http://academy.scratch.com/courses/#/courses/beginner/dj101/, accessed 1 April 2015.

[139] For example, consider Stephen Webber's *Turntable Technique*: *The Art of the DJ,* which emphasizes techniques such as beat matching, scratching, and cueing records within the context of history with and interviews of pioneers such as DJ Qbert, and DJ A-Trak. By including more of the historical background, and giving a voice to the pioneers, Webber's intentions reflect a more comprehensive view of teaching the art of DJing, similar to the more recent Scratch academy curricula as well as Swift's; Most recently, DJ Shortee's *Spin Now! The DJ Starter Handbook*, includes a list of techniques within a holistic approach to DJing, similar to Brewster and Broughton with sections such as "Practice! Practice! Practice!" and "Build Your Fan Base." Although Shortee's does not emphasize the historical background, by giving room to some of the more real-world applications of becoming a DJ such recording yourself practicing and choosing a DJ name that represents who you are as an artist, she helps to honor the culture surrounding the history of the hip-hop DJ; DJ Shortee, *Spin Now!: The DJ Starter Handbook* (Miwaukee: Hal Leonard Books, 2012).

[140] Shortee, interview.

each course, her own style as it developed, and as the types of students in her class changed.[141]

Standardization of pedagogies, however, is still a concern and is a reality in some schools where

the pressures to meet learning outcomes challenge the adequacy of informal learning methods.

All Sounding the Same

When I asked Swift if he thought DJing would ever get to the point where the art was

standardized in a way that created DJ students who all started to sound the same, he explained

that this phenomenon is "happening already" in some private academies.[142] He credited this

negative outcome of formalized education to DJ teachers who focus too heavily on the "steps

involved in DJing" instead of emphasizing the aspects of innovation.[143] What he is referring to

here is a standardization of pedagogy that usually happens in conservatories, as I mentioned

earlier. Surprisingly, many of the DJs I spoke to referenced conservatory culture as a

particularly vibrant source of innovation.[144] For example, A-Minor believes that innovation is

still alive in art forms that are typically thought of as "stricter," such as classical music that is

taught through years of standardized pedagogy.[145] Similarly, Miyakawa explained to me that for

the classical piano there is a "canon of things that people play," however, "there is always new

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[141] Shortee, interview; Beat matching is a technique where DJs adjust the tempo of two pieces either by using their sense of hearing through headphones, or sight with wave forms displayed on their laptop screen through a digital DJing software interface; Counting beats per minute allows a DJ to know how fast or slow a song is depending upon how many beats there are for an individual piece in one minute. As a result, DJs are better able to determine what songs can be beatmatched together; Blending is a technique where DJs fade a new song into the one currently being played, and then fade the previous one out.

[142] Swift, interview.

[143] Ibid.

[144] 2-Tone, interview, 14 January; A-Minor, interview, 18 February; Felicia Miyakawa, interview; Shortee, interview.

[145] A-Minor, interview, 18 February 2015; For more of a discussion of how classical music is still relevant in today's society and can take on new meanings with each performance see, Lawrence Kramer, "Score and Performance, Performance and Film: Classical Music as Liberating Energy," In *Why Classical Music Still Matters* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007), 71 – 109.

literature" and "occasionally… someone who comes along and blows us away with … [an] individual voice."[146]

One way that Swift and Killa-Jewel try to offset these negative outcomes of formalized education is through teaching the importance of innovation that continues to progress the art form forward.[147] They accomplish this by having their students immediately start to experiment with the techniques they learn. I was able to experience this first-hand during my impromptu lesson with Swift in January 2015 when he taught me how to perform the baby scratch and the transformer scratch.[148] After having only a few chances to practice this technique, Swift informed me we were going to have a "Question and Answer" session where he would freestyle (i.e., improvise) for eight bars, and then I would do the same, riffing off of his performance. What was most interesting to me was how this change in mindset from learning a specified technique to performing, helped me to feel creative, and surprisingly took the pressure off of perfecting one scratch. By the time our session had ended, I was performing scratches that I did not know the name of and was eager to continue learning. My previous musical knowledge of flute improvisation helped me experiment with the sounds and rhythms I wanted to coax out of the turntables. This experience boosted my confidence and helped me to believe in the potential of my own voice in the field. It also allowed me to experience firsthand the importance of having space to experiment early on in the learning process.

One problem Swift has encountered with this approach is that students sometimes take everything he does during demonstrations literally during the experimentation portion of his class. In this regard, having a designated time to be innovative as a way to prevent students who

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[146] Miyakawa, interview.

[147] Swift, interview; Killa-Jewel, interview.

[148] A baby scratch is performed by moving the vinyl back and forth underneath your fingertips with the crossfader in the open position. The transformer scratch is performed by moving the record over a long sample of music while repeatedly moving the crossfader back and forth.

are a "carbon copy of [his] technique," does not always work. [149] DJs such as Swift cannot teach

someone to be innovative but rather can only emphasize its importance, and thus there is a

certain element of chance involved in transitioning between imitation and innovation as an

artist.[150] While imitation and lack of artistry was also present prior to the institutionalization of

hip-hop DJing education (hence the use of the word "biting" as an insult for imitation in the

1980s) formalized education highlights some of the problems Swift and others experience due to

the lack of organic development of style present in informal learning environments during the

formative stages of learning. [151]

Another way Swift believes that he can further promote innovation in his courses is by

spending time talking about and interpreting techniques and styles. In our interview, he recalled

the valuable experiences he had with his mentor Andrew Venable—also known as Dr. Butcher—

in terms of this element of interpretation:

> …Back in 1990, he helped me understand that I could learn about DJing through
> conversation, that I didn't just have to sit there and have him break down techniques to
> me … there were days where I would go over [to] his house and we would just…vibe out
> … about DJs we liked, and why we liked the DJs and scratches on records... [this is] why
> I take a lot of time to just talk to the students. It's not just "alright get on your turntables
> and learn this scratch," it's "let's talk about this scratch, how does this scratch make you
> feel, are you nervous, do you like the way it sounds," and stuff like that.[152]

For Swift, the experience of "vibing out" is crucial to developing both one's personality as a DJ

and "spiritual" relationship with the art form.[153] Swift's inclusion of these conversations in his

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[149] Swift, interview.

[150] This is similar to the jazz tradition where the transition from imitation to innovation happens for artists with
varying degrees of success with a minority of individuals who produce "compelling visions with major ramifications
for other players and for their field," see Berliner, *Thinking in Jazz*, 276.

[151] "Biting" was a term used in the 1980s, according to Swift, that was used when an artist would copy another DJ's
performances or signatures moves. See "Origins of Ahh and Fresh," YouTube video, 13:30, posted by "Rob Swift,"
21 February 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gfMCinh-yI4.

[152] "Origins of Ahh and Fresh."

[153] Ibid.

classes encourages students to articulate what they like or dislike about particular styles of DJing, helping them to make more informed decisions about their own style and sound outside of the classroom as real-world DJ performers.

Lack of Real World Experience

A growing concern among DJs today is that institutionalization gives rise to inexperienced music educators who are either graduates of DJ programs or Ph.D. music professors who cannot offer students their experiences from the "real-world." While these two types of educational criteria can be helpful in having a link to current educational practices and creating syllabi respectively, they are seen as detrimental in some ways when it comes to legitimizing the artistry of the craft. The DJs I spoke to did not agree specifically on what real world experience meant, however, they offered suggestions including years of developing and personalizing your craft, practicing and performing in venues across the world, having moments of artistic or financial troubles, and building a network of DJ friends, mentors, and business contacts.[154] By keeping the meaning of "experience" nebulous, DJ educators are able to protect their elite status by using their own individual experiences to define "real-world" for younger generations of students and teachers.[155] Perhaps their concerns over inexperienced teachers are just as much about these new teachers' ability to legitimize their craft as well as take their jobs.

Many of the DJs I spoke to would agree with ethnomusicologist Roger Vetter that the "artificial learning environment" of the academy does not allow for "total immersion in … music

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[154] We might compare this "real world" experience to that of "artist-educators" in jazz education in the 1960s that possessed legitimacy as performers, teachers, and had a connection to the jazz community. See, Prouty, *Knowing Jazz*, 57; For a discussion of the struggles western academics face while teaching non-western art forms without certain "real-world" experiences see, *Performing Ethnomusicology*.

[155] "Experience" is a similar cultural construction, as "talent," and "genius," that are sensed not measured in academic or more broadly cultural contexts. Peter Kivy discusses the nebulous meaning of "genius" similar to that of "experience" in Peter Kivy, "Greatness of Mind," In *The Possessor and the Possessed: Handel, Mozart, Beethoven, and the Idea of Musical Genius* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 13 – 21.

that would make the acquisition of that foreign system of communication most efficient."[156]

This is because students can go back to their lives outside of the culture they are trying to learn.[157] For example, Shortee is critical of the new teachers at TurntableU.com that only recently took the courses online that exclude historical content, and are already teaching by making videos without dedicating themselves to the career first.[158] Similarly, Swift is concerned that students of institutions who lack real-world DJ experience may focus too much on the steps involved in DJing rather than the foundational elements taught informally.[159] For Wegner, even if his students want to take his classes in order to teach, he emphasizes the importance of continued education in the real world as a way for new DJs to gain valuable performance skills, links to the community, and sympathy for artists who do not have the comfort of a salaried teaching career.[160] In all of these examples, DJ educators who learned informally try to promote formal education as a positive learning tool to legitimize and develop the craft; however, they do not value the formal education they provide in terms of real-world applicability. DJ pioneers may want students to have greater access to learning, but this formal education cannot lead to real world success unless you exit the academy and "pay dues" in a way similar to how DJs would have learned informally. DJs are protective of their informal training when it comes to other new DJs teaching *their* craft.

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[156] Roger Vetter, "A Square Peg in a Round Hole: Teaching Javanese Gamelan in the Ensemble Paradigm of the Academy," In *Performing Ethnomusicology: Teaching and Representation in World Music Ensembles*, ed. Ted Solís (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 119.

[157] Wegner, interview.

[158] Shortee, interview; As I mentioned in my introduction, the students of TurntableU.com are unable to learn specifically about the culture and history of the craft or connect with the mentors they learn from in videos, which ultimately isolates them from the "real-world" of DJing.

[159] Swift, interview.

[160] Wegner explained to me that although one of his students from "Intro to DJ Techniques" wanted to use his courses to become a DJ educator, he now gigs regularly in addition to his position as one of five adjunct faculty members of the DJ Techniques program at Scottsdale; Wegner, interview.

In comparison to private schools where real-world experience can remain elusive in the eyes of the institution, music courses offered at institutions of higher education require educators that hold terminal degrees. This type of experience is not dependent upon DJ coursework, degrees, or *real* DJing experience. Currently, there is what I refer to as a "spectrum of experience" that hip-hop DJ educators have to offer in higher education today. This spectrum begins with two DJ educators who hold terminal degrees and have years of real world DJ experience, namely Wegner and Swift. In the middle of the spectrum there is Katz who holds a Ph.D. in musicology and is an amateur turntablist. He employs DJ TAs from the local area who are more experienced artists. Katz's class offers students a unique opportunity to learn from a "combination of expertise" that Katz believes is "often preferable to having a single person cover all aspects of teaching."[161] On the other hand, the official titles and differing responsibilities of the teachers could undermine the authority of the DJs in the classroom. On the opposite side of the spectrum is Richard Mook who teaches a more general hip-hop based course at Arizona State University with a section on DJing techniques that he teaches by himself.[162] Although real-world hip-hop DJing experiences may remain a difficult concept to define, the ways in which current educators discuss their own experiences helps to demonstrate the value that continues to be placed on informal education throughout the process of institutionalization.

Performance Assessments

When I asked DJs how they evaluate the students in their class, none of them mentioned letter grades, rubrics, point deductions, or transcripts. Their overall avoidance of these kinds of

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[161] Mark Katz, conversation with the author, Chapel Hill, NC, 24 March 2015; This call-and-response dialogue between both types of educators promotes balance of power roles in the mediation and transmission of a living tradition in "collaborative process." See, Kay Kaufman Shelemay, "The Ethnomusicologist, Ethnographic Method, and the Transmission of Tradition," In *Shadows in the Field: New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology*, Second Edition edited by Gregory Barz & Timothy J. Cooley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 153.

[162] Mook was involved in bringing in local practitioners and also his Urban Sol collaboration, see Miyakawa and Mook, "Culture Vultures," and for more information about Urban Sol, see http://herbergerinstitute.asu.edu/institute/initiatives/urbansol/; Tanner Greene, e-mail conversation with the author, 28 April 2015.

assessments suggests to me that DJ teachers in general do not want to conform to formal music education practices.[163] Formal assessments may impinge upon their ability to teach informal methods and may also force students to learn the "right" and "wrong" ways to perform. In an effort to get around these bureaucratic issues, DJs have created other types of evaluations that satisfy institutional requirements while, at the same time, attempt to achieve similar goals of development that informal learning allows for more organically.[164]

One type of in-class evaluation that occurs in DJ schools consist of short performances in front of the class that resemble informal performances in front of peers and mentors without rubrics or letter grades. While Shortee was teaching at Scratch in L.A., her students performed a six-song set live, in front of the class during the last session of the course. In comparison to the lesson component of the course, students were asked to perform their sets continuously without stopping, starting over, or asking for assistance.[165] In essence, the classroom would turn into a club that simulated a real-world application of the skills they learned in the class.[166] At Cutsworth's school the final set students perform in front of their peers is their first, live gig where there is an actual transition from the classroom to the club.[167] In addition to the final ten-minute set, Swift has his students practice DJing throughout the semester with various challenges such as during the "Question and Answer" sessions. These performances resemble the larger final performance evaluations because they are based upon a similar goal of having students take

[163] Green defines formal music education with the inclusion of such performance assessments. See Green, *How Popular Musicians Learn*, 3 – 4.

[164] While private schools such as Scratch are not required to give letter grades by higher administration and do not by choice, they *do* award diplomas to recognize completion of coursework at their school. According to Katz, this helps to legitimize their presence as "real" schools that teach "real" art, in the absence of the institutional structure of higher education that would already assume this level of seriousness in the eyes of society; See Katz, *Groove Music*, 234.

[165] Shortee, interview.

[166] Ibid.

[167] Cutsworth, interview.

risks and challenge themselves in the moment to create unique and interesting sounds as a DJ. Although Swift attaches 30% of the final course grade to the final set, and another more ambiguous 30% for various in-class "challenges" including the question and answer sessions, there are no further specifications or rubrics provided to the students as to how Swift will determine their letter grade from these performances (see Figure 2.1 on p. 47). His philosophy for grading is less about the actual grade and more about the experience, as he wants everyone to leave his classes "with As, and …a good grasp of what it is they took on for three months at the New School."[168] This grading can be viewed as more for show than as an educational tool. Instead, the actual education happens with the multimodal engagement with DJing during these performances, as they would occur in an informal setting.[169]

Although Swift does not attach rubrics or act concerned with the actual letter grades, this does not mean that some students may not view these informal challenges the same way they view tests in other classes with "right" and "wrong" responses. Similar to the counterargument I provided in the section on innovation earlier in this chapter, taking away pressures students may have over grading does not necessarily guarantee an absence of standardization. However, as Bayangos explained to me, these types of evaluations are present in the real world of hip-hop DJing where DJs are continually critiqued based upon their song selection, techniques, and skill level at performances and more directly in battle competitions.[170] It is possible that a standardization of pedagogies could arise informally in this light, given that students may want to impress their mentors either in formal or informal performance assessments by imitating tricks

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[168] Swift, interview.

[169] Killa-Jewel, interview; Swift, interview.

[170] Bayangos, interview.

they performed or by acing a scratch, instead of being concerned with the creative aspects in the moment.

Figure 2.1: Excerpt of Rob Swift's Syllabus for "DJ Skills & Styles" at The New School

Reproduced with the permission of Rob Swift.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS and GRADING

(1) Attend and participate in each session, including in-class discussions of music: 30%

(2) Assignments (reading, analysis of youtube clips...): 10%

(3) Challenges (There will be DJ competitions in varying categories such as mixing, scratching & beat juggling battles...): 30%

(5) Final project (Student's must perform a 10 minute set in front of class): 30%

Given that DJ educators are less concerned about the inclusion of performance assessments rather than the inclusion of grades, it is important to consider how the improvisational elements of DJing may add to this concern. Improvisation may be understood as a type of performance whereby musicians draw upon practiced techniques and combinations of techniques to create unique live performances.[171] DJ sets are improvised in that they are performances of practiced skills such as scratching and beat juggles, as well as combinations of these skills that DJs know work well such as Chirp/Flare scratch combinations. While it would be possible for DJ teachers to evaluate students on these definable building blocks of the art form that have already become standardized as topics for learning, attaching a letter grade to these techniques may further the standardization of pedagogies that focuses on the step by step process of learning.

If we compare these potential negative outcomes of standardization in graded DJing courses to the actual outcomes of those experienced in jazz at institutions of higher education, we can better assess the impact of these courses on the development of the craft. The first step in

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[171] For a discussion of how we can understand "improvisation" as both prepared and spontaneous music See Berliner, *Thinking in Jazz*, 229 – 30.

teaching jazz improvisation at the university level tends to be quizzing students on vocabulary patterns, or prepared lines of music in a variety of keys, rhythms, modes, and arpeggios.[172] These building blocks add to what some jazz musicians refer to as their "bag of tricks," a set of skills that they unpack in new ways during each improvisational solo.[173] According to Paul Berliner, this type of imitation is part of the process that "all players go through in their formative years," and it is the "direction they take from there [that] marks [their] varying levels of achievement along the continuum from imitation to innovation."[174] Given that jazz is a living tradition that is rich in personal expression and creativity, it is possible to see how artists trained in improvisation can extend the practices of their vocabulary patterns into a unique language. It is difficult to have this level of sophistication as an artist in any field, as I noted previously. However, formal education is not necessarily a limiting factor in the development of an art form.

The institutionalization of jazz has been critiqued in terms of the presence of performance evaluations that cause a standardization of pedagogies and students who all sound the same. For example, juries of student performances that are designed to evaluate jazz improvisational skills are a good example of how these negative outcomes play out. "In demonstrating the complexity of the language of jazz," Prouty explains, "educators have made great strides toward demythologizing the music" of jazz improvisation as a mix of prepared and spontaneous performance.[175] However, in teaching the prepared and definable aspects of improvisation, educators have been accused of emphasizing the technical aspects over the creative aspects in the

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[172] Berliner, *Thinking In Jazz,* 229 – 30.

[173] For example, jazz trumpeter Red Rodney is quoted using the term "bag of tricks" in Berliner, *Thinking In Jazz*, 299.

[174] Ibid, 274.

[175] Prouty, *Knowing Jazz*, 68.

evaluation of their craft.[176] Striking a balance between evaluation of technical mastery and

innovation remains difficult for students to grasp and professors to explain. This is perhaps

because "talent" can be viewed as a socially constructed term to evaluate musicians that is

largely influenced by older and more experienced musicians who are revered in their musical

community.[177] Given the lack of hip-hop DJing conservatories and graded courses, the negative

outcomes jazz experienced as a result of performance-based evaluations may not play as

significant of a role in the current development of hip-hop DJing.

Aside from performance-based evaluations, there was one example I came across in my

research of a DJ teacher adapting formal written evaluations as a way to imitate informal

learning practices of learning the history of DJ culture. Swift administers quizzes in his classes

at The New School because he wants his students "to not only know the techniques behind the

art of DJing, but the various contexts in which these techniques can be applied as well as the

history which precedes those techniques."[178] In these exams Swift tests students on areas of

knowledge such as the standard placement for a DJs hand and the number of variations a DJ can

perform the forward scratch.[179] While this knowledge may have traditionally been passed down

from mentor to student, Swift's quiz enables a similar exchange of information that is

foundational for a student's artistic development. One way in which these quizzes resonate with

informal learning practices is the way in which students study for them. For example, DJ Qbert

and Mix Master Mike would learn from "bootlegged videos of DMC and New Music Seminar

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[176] Prouty, *Knowing Jazz*, 68.

[177] This relates to my discussion of "genius" and "experience." See Henry Kingsbury, *Music, Talent, and Performance: A Conservatory Cultural System* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988), 60 – 75.

[178] Rob Swift Facebook page, post on 26 February 2015, https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10153084148825396&set=pcb.10153084152170396&type=1&theater; See Appendix B for full quiz.

[179] See Appendix B for full quiz.

battles, dissecting the routines of East Coast DJs" to develop their artistic skills as well as knowledge of who is who in the hip-hop scene of DJing.[180] Similarly, Swift sends his students YouTube video links as their homework to help them study techniques as well as to acquaint themselves with pioneer artists who created them, such as Grand Master Flash.[181] While students of the art form today cannot have the same accessibility to the pioneers and culture of the time they were living through, watching videos is one way they can connect back to the past. Similar to how historical topics have been standardized on syllabi, Swift's quizzes may also standardize topics that can influence a student's artistic development. Whereas informal learning may also have included a series of standardized historical topics, written exams are more powerful as permanent ways of preserving history for generations to come.

<p style="text-align:center">*****</p>

Concerns over the impact of topical and pedagogical standardization in formal hip-hop DJing education are present among current DJ educators. The most prominent concern is that standardization will promote students and teachers without real-world experience who focus on the steps of DJing rather than the creativity needed to develop the art form. Despite the reality of some negative impacts of institutionalization, DJ educators are consciously considering ways to counter these outcomes by emphasizing informal methods of teaching. Whether this development is a result of the fact that teachers are still part of the first generation of educators who care about the continuation of the craft and are driven by a goal of legitimacy, or because of the success with which these educators are transferring over the informal practices into formal settings, it is possible to imagine a future where formal education does not result in the demise of an art form.

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[180] Katz, *Groove Music*, 139.

[181] DJ Rob Swift, e-mail exchange with the author, 7 March 2015; One of the videos Swift sent his students was "How to do a break mix grand master flash 1983 HD" 12 February 2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kk99DmV5uLk.

CHAPTER 4: WOMEN DJS, LEGITIMACY AND FORMAL EDUCATION

Introduction

The journey towards legitimacy for hip-hop DJing through formal education is different for women according to Killa-Jewel, Shortee, and Cutsworth. Not only do they have to prove the legitimacy of their craft, they also have to prove the legitimacy of their gender in the history of the craft. While there have been previous efforts to help support women DJs such as the all-female DJ battle and the production of DVDs to help women learn independently of male-dominated informal networks, gender discrimination and inequality still remains in the field. The emergence of formal education has more prominently positioned women DJs in the field as teachers and students that were, as women, largely absent in informal education. With a greater voice in the history and transmission of the art form, there is also discrimination towards women who are involved with formal education. However, formal education allows women a platform for the first time to garner respect and recognition for their gender in the craft in front of large audiences. My research suggests that formal education has already started to make changes in the field by promoting more women DJs who are students, teachers, and professionals of the craft.

In order to discuss women and hip-hop DJing education, a brief history of women and turntables, and informal learning practices are necessary. The phonograph was invented in 1877 and has been linked to masculine identity, despite the fact that women were part of the early history of sound recordings.[182] Perhaps this push to declare masculine control over sound recording technology was in part because "music is always in danger of being perceived as

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[182] Mark Katz, *Capturing Sound: How Technology Has Changed Music,* rev. ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press), 31; Mark Katz, "Men, Women, and Turntables: Gender and the DJ Battle," *Musical Quarterly* 89 (2006): 584.

feminine (or effeminate)."[183]   According to Katz, these concerns about the "effeminacy of

music," were "alleviated" by gendering the phonograph "because it allowed the art to be enjoyed

in combination with the traditionally male pursuits of tinkering and 'shop talk.'"[184] This

phenomenon of gendering music technology as masculine is familiar to other forms of hip-hop,

particularly rapping and beat making.[185]

Outside of hip-hop culture, popular music traditions have also contributed to the trope of

women and technology as incompatible. For example, when American experimental

performance artist Laurie Anderson performs using technology such as vocoders, it is off-putting

for some members of the audience because it is "supposed to be *Man* who gives birth to and who

tames the Machine," rather than the woman who is "incompatible" with machines.[186] Although

men DJs today may not be consciously thinking about the gendered history of sound recording

when they perform on turntables, the strong link that has been socially constructed between men

and technology within the frame of music as feminine may in fact play a role in the exclusion of

women that sometimes takes place in informal DJ networks. [187]

Many of the women DJs I spoke with explained that informal learning environments

dominated by men are actively discriminatory towards women and are not, as Katz suggests,

simply women's discomfort with "spending time alone with groups of male DJs."[188] Many men

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[183] Susan McClary, "Living To Tell: Madonna's Resurrection of the Fleshy," In *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 151.

[184] Katz, *Capturing Sound*, 144.

[185] See Tricia Rose quoted in Katz, *Capturing Sound*, 144.

[186] Susan McClary, "This is Not a Story My People Tell: Musical Time and Space According to Laurie Anderson," In *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 138.

[187] One way that men have consciously been able in the past to declare masculine control over a medium of music is by "denying the very possibility of participation by women, see McClary, "Living to Tell," 151.

[188] Italics are mine, see Katz, *Capturing Sound*, 144; Cutsworth, interview; Shortee, interview; DJ PlayPlay, interview with the author, Durham, NC, 29 September 2013.

try to keep the art form to themselves by choosing not to teach women and by criticizing women who are DJs as a way to send a message to future women entering the craft. For example, in a Facebook post from male DJ Scratcher Moritz Onthekut, over twenty men "liked" a status where women DJs such as Shortee, Killa-Jewel and Tyra from Saigon were categorized for having "lady style," or one based largely on their outward appearance, "promiscuous" attitude, and inability to improve or have authentic skills.[189] According to Onthekut, these women make him "wanna slap [their] face" or "scratch [his] nutz."[190] This post is quite vulgar and does not represent the ideas of all men DJs, yet it is not an unusual example of how men exclude women in the field. The emphasis on women DJ's sexuality over their skills is one that has been present from the start, and one that has contributed to discrimination in informal learning settings.[191]

The focus on sexuality of women performers in DJing is based upon a larger narrative in music history of women being viewed as "sexual commodities regardless of their appearance or seriousness."[192] According to McClary, whether or not a woman music performer emphasizes or denies her "physical presence, it is always read back onto her."[193] While some performers such as Anderson de-emphasize their gender through "audio masks" in order to "avoid the expectations of what it means to be a woman on a stage," other such as Shortee choose to "embrace it and promote it" as a way to represent their identity in a personal way.[194] Due to the

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[189] Many of the women DJ's names were spelled incorrectly. The hashtag for this post was #slutonthecut. See especially Swift's useful comments at, https://www.facebook.com/moe.nobodi/posts/818434291539900?comment_id=818587464857916&notif_t=like&__mref=message_bubble.

[190] Ibid.

[191] For more information regarding how gender plays a role in the experience of DJing for women see Katz, *Groove Music*, 246.

[192] McClary, "Living to Tell," 151.

[193] McClary, "This is Not a Story My People Tell," 139; See also, Lucy Green, *Music, Gender, Education* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 80.
[194] McClary, "This is Not a Story My People Tell," 139; Shortee, interview.

historical discrimination against women performers based upon their physical appearance and their use of technology, women DJs are at a heightened disadvantage even before they decide to enter into an informal network of DJs to learn from. Although the actual learning methods such as performing in front of peers, practicing in bedrooms, or digging in the crates are not intrinsically masculine, social constructions of masculinity and the turntable have as a result impeded the opportunities for women to learn informally, perform publically, have opportunities to teach informally, and become successful in the field of DJing.

Although formalized education is not an antidote for gender discrimination in the field, my research suggests that it has the potential to promote gender equality in a productive way as DJs aim to legitimize their craft. While Katz has already discussed briefly how education at schools and with instructional DVDs lowered the barriers for women to gain access to education during the early 2000s, my research focuses on the extent to which these barriers of discrimination have been lowered. Specifically, I discuss how education has promoted women DJ students and created opportunities for women DJ educators. I also address the challenges ahead for women in formalized DJ education.[195] My interviews with not only women DJ educators and students, but also with men DJ educators and students helps to create a compelling argument that despite inevitable acts of discrimination in the field, formal education is to date the most positive approach to both helping the art form preserve its artistry and also helping to legitimize the position of women within the history of the craft.

Formal Education Gives Rise to More Women DJs

The success of formalized education in bringing about gender equality can be measured by the number of women students entering the field after institutionalization began. Since Wegner's courses was offered in the early 2000s, he has noticed the numbers of women students increase to approximately one third of his class, and reported that in some semesters there is even

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[195] See Katz, *Groove Music*, 235; 241 – 3.

a majority of women.[196] Most recently, his Spring 2015 introductory course had five women and

ten men.[197] Wegner welcomes this change, and believes it is caused in part by the emergence of

classes like his own that send the message that DJing is "something that not just guys do."[198]

Similarly, Swift explained to me that his classes at The New School draw about an equal number

of men and women students.[199] Since 2012, Mama Cutsworth has graduated 40 students from

her all-women academy, and there is already a waitlist for the 2016 session.[200]

 In addition to the increase in women students, it is significant that women have also

continued on in the field after their formal education has ended. According to Swift, out of the

handful of his students from The New School that continue on in the field, half of them are

women.[201] Additionally, Cutsworth explained to me that the majority of the forty women she

graduated continue to perform and practice after her course.[202] It is worth considering how the

number of DJs has increased overall, and to what extent this increase brings about different ratios

of men to women, in comparison to only more women.[203] Additionally, there are perhaps other

reasons for why more women have entered the art form such as a renewed interest in the craft

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[196] Wegner, interview.

[197] Ibid.

[198] Ibid.

[199] Swift, interview.

[200] In order to make her academy more sustainable for a larger group of women, she plans to create more opportunities for her graduates to hold leadership roles in the Academy, either teaching or helping with the business aspects; Cutsworth, interview.

[201] DJ Rob Swift, e-mail conversation with the author, 27 March 2015.

[202] Cutsworth, interview.

[203] For example we might consider other male-dominated fields such as science and engineering in higher education that have witnessed an absolute increase in the number of women while women's relative representation is still lower. For further consideration of these issues see, Francisco O. Ramirez and Christine Min Wotipka, "Slowly but Surely? The Global Expansion of Women's Participation in Science and Engineering Fields of Study, 1972-92," *Sociology of Education* 74 (2001): 231 – 51; Maria Charles and Karen Bradley, "Equal but Separate? A Cross-National Study of Sex Segregation in Higher Education," *American Sociological Review* 67 (2002), 573-599; and Karen Bradley, "The Incorporation of Women into Higher Education: Paradoxical Outcomes?" *Sociology of Education* 73 (2000), 1-18.

nearly forty years after its inception. However, the fact that more women at all have been able to enter the field and stay in the field is perhaps a reflection of the mentorship, community-forming aspects, and more visible presence of women educators in formal education in comparison to informal education.

In a recent DJ challenge Swift posted to Facebook his advocacy for one of his women students—DJ Shines—that helps to demonstrate the potential for how his mentorship during formal education continues on in the real world. The specific challenge was for his students and any other members of the DJ community on Facebook to post a video of themselves scratching doubles of "Pump Me Up," a Go Go song by Trouble Funk, an American R&B and funk band from Washington, D.C. popular in the 1980s.[204] Swift reposted the video submissions on his Facebook page with comments and support, forming an online community around the challenge where his students and others could learn new approaches and connect with one another. There were only two submissions by female DJs out of nearly twenty for this challenge, and the first was his student DJ Shines. His post of her video submission was a manifesto of sorts for gender equality in the field, alarming readers, "If you're a woman, STOP and read this post! If you're a man, STOP and read this post!"[205] Swift acknowledged the courage and resistance that women encounter just to say "I can hang with the boys."[206] While it is possible that this post may have served to further single Shines out as a woman and reinforce narratives of women and turntablism, Swift's intention was to help bring awareness to the harsh realities of discrimination to make changes to benefit women today. This perspective is supported by Swift's public disapproval on social media for gender discrimination in the field in addition to supporting his

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[204] Doubles are when DJs perform with two of the same record.

[205] Rob Swift's Facebook page, post 12 March 2015, https://www.facebook.com/rob.swift.961/posts/10153114591460396?pnref=story.

[206] Ibid.

women students regularly online for other reasons other than their courage such as battle careers, awards, and mastery of techniques.[207]

Similar to mentorship, community forming aspects help students to find gigs, further develop their skills with feedback, and create support for new artists. One example of community formation that has been especially helpful for women is a group of alumnae from Cutsworth's school that have a private Facebook page where they "nerd out about vinyl," and share information related to equipment for sale.[208] They gig together and began a new monthly DJ night called "Casual Friday" in April 2015 where five of them take turns performing.[209] By forming mentorships with only women, Cutsworth and her students risk "confirming views" that their community is "located primarily within [a] women's culture," rather than within the larger culture of hip-hop DJing.[210] As a result, Cutsworth's all-women academy may cause a further gender gap between men and women, similar to how hip-hop pioneer Kuttin Kandi's all women collective, Anomolies, or all-female DJ battles were critiqued in the early 2000s.[211]

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[207] See Swift's comments in Onthekut's status discussed earlier at, https://www.facebook.com/moe.nobodi/posts/818434291539900?comment_id=818587464857916&notif_t=like&__mref=message_bubble, and also his praise for Shines after she won the 2015 "Best of the Midwest DJ Battle," see, Rob Swift, Facebook page, post on 14 March 2015, https://www.facebook.com/rob.swift.961/posts/10153163787175396?pnref=story.

[208]https://www.facebook.com/moe.nobodi/posts/818434291539900?comment_id=818587464857916&notif_t=like&__mref=message_bubble.

[209] Casual Friday Facebook event page, https://www.facebook.com/events/359436314264597/, accessed 1 April 2015.

[210] Joyce Stalker, "Athene in Academe: Women Mentoring Women in the Academy," *International Journal of Lifelong Education* 13 (1994): 369.

[211] For more information about Kuttin Kandi and the Anomolies and the all-female DJ battle see Katz, *Groove Music*, 241– 46.

While all of the DJs I spoke to agreed with Shines that "skill is …not gender-specific," some women DJs believe that mentorship by and for women is especially valuable.[212] For Cutsworth, having women educators visible in formal education settings is important because while one can claim that classrooms are open to women, if a woman does not see her gender represented, she may not feel welcome.[213] Additionally, Cutsworth and Killa-Jewel believe that formal education allows them the opportunity to reach out to a larger population of women regarding gender-specific issues such as professional development, body image, and sexual objectification.[214] For example, one of Killa-Jewel's young female students asked during a lesson recently if she needed to lose weight to be successful as a DJ.[215] "It's questions like that," Killa-Jewel explained, "only a fellow woman can … answer and… coach because … it comes from personal experience."[216] These issues of sexual objectification were present when Killa-Jewel was a new DJ and continue to disturb her today. She has therefore found it meaningful as a female DJ mentor to help other women combat these negative comments so they can have the confidence to continue on in the field and focus on their skills and passion for the art.

Garnering Respect for Women Educators and Students in Formal Education

When I asked Shortee why it was meaningful to her to emphasize the fact that she was a *female* DJ in her teaching materials and biography, she replied, "Because it's *rare* still."[217] Formalized education may have helped to bring more women into the field, but there are still

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[212] According to Casie Millhouse, women DJs are more likely to seek out other women mentors rather than men mentors, see Casie Millhouse, "4 Unspoken Reasons Why Female DJs Are Unequal (And How To Conquer Them)," *Digital DJ Tips*, 3 January 2014, http://www.digitaldjtips.com/2014/01/female-djs-arent-equal/; DJ Shines, e-mail conversation.

[213] Cutsworth, interview.

[214] Cutsworth interview; Killa-Jewel, interview.

[215] Killa-Jewel, interview.

[216] Ibid.

[217] Shortee, interview.

concerns regarding respect for women educators and students in the classroom. I believe the issue of respect for women is grounded in the fact that men have been the "real" DJ educators for so long in informal learning traditions. Women may be "inside" institutions and can teach the *same* topics as men and possess the *same* technical and qualifications as men but, according to sociologist Joyce Stalker, "they are simultaneously, inevitably and irrefutably '*other*.'"[218] Their "otherness" stems from their traditionally different experiences learning the craft and assertive attitude when using technology, which contradicts stereotypical constructions of women and technology.[219]

Although Shortee claims that her fears of not being taken seriously in a classroom setting may "just be in [her] head," her fears were justified when she taught at Scratch with her husband, DJ Faust. For example, sometimes when she presented a technique, the students would nod with acceptance or start trying it out only after Faust backed her up verbally or through demonstration.[220] This is particularly disturbing because Shortee, the "world's premier female DJ," is one of the most experienced hip-hop DJ educators I came across in my research.[221] It appears that formal education gives women the platform to garner respect for their craft;

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[218] Italics are mine, see Stalker, "Athene in Academe," 367.

[219] See, Stalker, "Athene in Academe," 367-9.

[220] Furthermore, when Shortee traveled to Dubai and South Africa for a Rane/Serato seminar in 2006, she picked up on similar doubts from men that she attributed to the fact that these courses were designed for teaching DJ technology rather than the actual art form. Shortee explained that it wasn't until after her presentation that men began to take her seriously, and in turn, the women locally who came to the seminar; Shortee, interview.

[221] Shortee is hailed by the Grammy Foundation as the "world's premier female DJ." See http://www.djshortee.com/; Shortee published the only instructional DJ book by a woman—"Spin Now!"(2012)— along with her DVD series, and has a variety of teaching experiences on-line and in person. She is in the process now of compiling all of her teaching experiences to design a curricula with Hal Leonard Publishing and Groove3 for what might "prove to be the most extensive & comprehensive DJ instructional program available anywhere to date." According to Shortee the initial curriculum will consist of 36 instructional video titles each approximately 60-90 minutes long with 3-4 companion workbooks; DJ Shortee, e-mail exchange with the author, 7 March 2015.

however, the process is a slow one in reversing socially constructed ideas about women as DJ educators.[222]

Some of the only criticism I heard from DJ students in regards to women educators were from women students. For example, when I asked Anand, one of the students from Katz's DJ class, if she would have taken the class as seriously if she showed up the first day and the two women DJs who were guests of the class were the TAs instead of the two men DJs, A-Minor and SK, she answered that she would not because they were not as "professional."[223] While there may be other reasons for why she responded this way, such as the way Katz introduced them as guests, or their style, demeanor, or geographic associations, Anand's explanation for her comment was that she was not used to seeing women who were successful as DJs.[224] "I think it…proves the point," Killa Jewel explained in response to this story, "that there is a double standard in people's mind, not only men's minds, but women's minds as well."[225] This is perhaps why Swift's "gender manifesto" that he posted on Facebook in relation to Shines' challenge was aimed at both men and women DJs.

Along with the challenges in being taken seriously as a woman DJ in formal education settings, women students are also struggling to take themselves seriously. As Farrugia explains, when "music-making technology is introduced into the classroom, old social patterns are reproduced."[226] While Shines believes that "male-dominated careers are intimidating for females to enter simply because they are looking at it in that way," there are other women who cannot

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[222] Both Cutsworth and Shortee expressed hope to me that their women students would not have to face these same issues related to authenticity and as hip-hop DJ educators, see Cutsworth, interview; and Shortee, interview.

[223] Ayesha Anand, interview with the author, Chapel Hill, NC, 19 November 2014.

[224] Ibid.

[225] Killa-Jewel, interview.

[226] Farrugia, *Beyond the Dance Floor,* 133.

avoid feeling intimidated due to the socially constructed ideas of women and DJing that Farrugia points out.[227] Swift has picked up on these differences between men and women learning in his classrooms at The New School:

> Not to sound sexist …but something that I've learned … [is that] male students are a lot more brave when it comes to making mistakes … doing stuff in front of an audience… female students are introverted, hesitant about operating turntable, dominating it, coaxing sounds, even if they sound weird, they are more self-conscious…that doesn't happen when I'm in a one-on-one situation with female students as much as it does when I'm in a situation where there is a group of us and there are females there. Females tend to learn better when they are by themselves or in an environment that is not so intimidating, where you are surrounded by all these people and all these pieces of equipment.[228]

Swift's pedagogical approach to these issues is to make himself available to women students in *less intimidating* environments "on a one-on-one basis as much as [he] can," either through Skype, after class, or even at his home studio in his free time.[229] One of the main benefits he sees for one-on-one instruction with women DJs is that he can use this time to "re-emphasize things they learned in class and let them practice and make the mistakes in front of [him, as]…opposed to making… mistakes in front of [him] and their classmates."[230] This idea resonates with what Anand told me about how her level of nervousness came not so much from the fact that her instructors A-Minor and SK were men, but that she had to learn with other men peers watching her during office hours.[231]

Swift's goals of making his formal instruction more comfortable for women as a way to help them become more successful in the field are respectable. However, as he confessed to me, these approaches may not be the best way to promote gender equality. This is likely because they may cause women to be singled out for needing extra help, even if they are requesting it, re-

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[227] DJ Shines, e-mail conversation.

[228] Swift, interview.

[229] Ibid.

[230] Ibid.

[231] Ibid.

enforcing gender stereotypes about women and technology. It is difficult to know whether to ignore gender inequalities in a classroom or be proactive about them. Just as it will take years for Shortee to garner respect in classrooms due to old stereotypes about men DJ educators, it will take time for women students to reverse ideas about their role with technology. In order for formal education to actually promote gender equality, women *and* men must to work to counter these old stereotypes.

<div align="center">*****</div>

If formal education is better *for women* then men in comparison to informal learning, how will this rhetoric impact the future of women gaining equality in the field and legitimacy of the craft? It is possible that by gendering spaces of formal learning as feminine, the quest for legitimacy for hip-hop DJing may be taken less seriously. On the other hand, given the strong sense of commitment women and men DJs have for using formalized education as a way to counter misconceptions about their art form, I believe that gender equality can become a positive effect of institutionalization. While concerns regarding discrimination exist currently in formal education, gender equality has already started to emerge, slowly but surely, through the process of institutionalization.

CONCLUSION

The institutionalization of hip-hop DJing education is part of hip-hop DJs' ongoing quest to find legitimacy for their craft. The field of formal education for this art form has expanded over the last fifteen years from DVDs and instructional books to actual courses in institutions including public universities, private academies, and cultural diplomacy programs abroad. Hip-hop DJs aim to preserve the foundational elements of their craft through informal learning practices cloaked in formal education rhetoric and environments. Particularly, they emphasize the multimodal aspects of DJing including the senses of sight, sound, and touch as a way to preserve the artistry of their craft and its future developments.

Institutionalization has not been a seamless transition from informal to formal education practices. For example, goals of the institutions, such as appealing to students who do not have musical training, do not always align with the goals of the teachers who want to train students musically by ear so they can mix by what they hear rather than what they see. Institutionalization also brings up concerns of standardization in terms of topics and pedagogies that may cause students to learn the art form in one way, thus neglecting the importance of innovation that DJs want to preserve. In addition, formal education both highlights issues of gender discrimination in the field and offers solutions to counter stereotypes about women, technology, and hip-hop DJing.

At this point, there are many additional routes my project could take, such as researching more schools outside of the U.S., observing additional classes, interviewing international students and teachers, and perhaps having the opportunity to observe full semester courses in order to understand the formal learning experience more comprehensively. Additionally, I

would have enjoyed the opportunity to learn more about informal learning either through watching videos where DJs recorded themselves learning, or perhaps having access to a mentor who could teach me the art form informally. However, my research provides an initial view of formal hip-hop DJing education, bringing together the voices of hip-hop DJ pioneers that constitute the first generation of formal educators, new DJ students, and hip-hop scholars for the first time in scholarship.

I hope that my thesis will serve as a way for hip-hop educators to continue to discuss the issues I have explored, albeit now together in conversation. It would be great to see the DJs I spoke with write about their own experiences so that future educators can understand the potential of formal education from their authentic points of view. I hope that new DJ educators will read my prose as a way to engage with positive and negative aspects of teaching the craft formally to prevent further standardization. This is not to argue that DJs should form a union or hold national (or international) conferences on hip-hop DJing education, because there needs to be some organic growth of ideas in order to keep some of the informal aspects of the craft alive in formal education. However, I do think it is important that a discussion happens informally as to the future of hip-hop DJing education in institutions of higher education where criteria determine who can teach the craft. Even though DJ education is a burgeoning field, it is nevertheless important that DJ educators find ways together to sustain teaching given that support from private academies could wane over time. Although there are risks and negative outcomes to institutionalizing hip-hop DJing, the current pedagogical approaches provide possibilities for the continuation of creativity, innovation, gender equality, and personalization in the art of hip-hop DJing.

APPENDIX A: SELECTED LIST OF DJ ACADEMIES AND PROGRAMS

Year(s) in Operation	Location	Name of Institution
1993 – Present	Melbourne, Australia	United DJ Mixing School
1993 – Present	Mumbai & Kalyan, India	Splinters DJ School
1993 – Present	Mexico City, Mexico	DJ's School Mexico
1999 – Present	Santiago, Chile	DJ School Chile
1999 – Present	Dublin, Ireland	The DJ School, Dublin
1999 – Present	Dublin, Ireland	Star DJ's School
2001 – 2004	Scottsdale, AZ	Scottsdale Community College: "Club DJ" undergraduate course
2002 – Present	New York, NY	Scratch DJ Academy
2002 – Present	Germany	Vibra School of DJing
2002 – Present	Cleveland, OH	Progressive Arts Alliance / RHAPSODY Kids Camp
2002 – Present	Stoke-on-Trent, UK	DJ School
2002 – Present	Rome, Italy	DJ School
2004 – Present	Los Angeles, CA	Scratch DJ Academy
2003 – Present	Moscow, Russia	Action DJ Academy (A.D.A.)
2003 – Present	Singapore, Asia	E-TracX DJ Skool
c. 2004	Berkeley, CA	Norcal DJ Academy
2004 – Present	Scottsdale, AZ	Scottsdale Community College—Live-Performance Disc Jockey Techniques undergraduate course
2005 – Present	Honolulu, HI; Montreal, Canada	Soul Mechanic DJ School
2005 – Present	Toronto, Canada	Off Centre DJ School
2005 – Present	Luton, UK	DJ Academy
c. 2005 – Present	Cincinnati, OH	Elementz
2005 – Present	New Delhi, India	Spin Gurus DJ & Music Production Academy
c. 2005 – Present	Global	Rane/Serato Seminars
c. 2006 – Present	Global	Grammy Foundation DJ / Remix courses
2006 – Present	New York, NY	Dubspot
2007 – Present	Chapel Hill, NC	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill / Carolina Beat Academy
2007 – Present	Philadelphia, PA	More Than Music DJ Institute
2007 – Present	Polhengoda, Sri Lanka	The DJ Academy
2007 – Present	Chesterfield, UK	The DJ School
2006 – Present	Toronto, Canada	Scratch Lab DJ Institute
2008 – Present	Online (Bridgwater, UK)	Studio Scratches
2008 – Present	London, Canada	School of Spin
2008 – Present	New York, NY	Rock and Soul DJ Classes & Private Lessons
2008 – Present	Banglore, India	Scratchz DJ Academy
2008 – Present	Holsworthy, UK	DJ Academy

2009 – Present	Online	Qbert Skratch University
2009 – Present	Dubai, UAE	DJ-Academy UAE
2009 – Present	New Delhi, India	ILM Academy
2009 – Present	Beirut, Lebanon	DJ School-Lebanon
2009 – Present	Online	TurntableU.com
2010 – Present	Austin, TX	Dub Academy
2010 – Present	Amsterdam, Netherlands	Pioneer DJ School
2010 – Present	Utrecht, Netherlands	DJ School Utrecht
2010 – Present	Oslo, Norway	Studio Two DJ Academy
2010 – c. 2011	San Francisco, CA	DJ Quest's School of DJ Arts
2010 – Present	London, UK	Subbass DJ Academy
2010 – Present	Madeley, Australia	Blended Beats DJ School
2010 – Present	Johannesburg, South Africa	Missred's DJ School
2010 – Present	Raleigh, NC	Triangle DJ Academy
2010 – Present	Bethesda, MD	Beat Refinery
2010 –Present	Montreal, Canada	DJ School Montreal
2011 – Present	British Columbia, Canada	School of Remix
2011 – Present	New Delhi, India	Electronyk Academy
2011 – Present	Brussels, Belgium	Academix DJ School
2011 – Present	Toronto, Canada	The Noize Factory
2011 – Present	Skokie, Il	The DJ School/Skokie
2011 – Present	Izmir, Turkey	Pioneer Pro DJ Academy
2011 – Present	San Diego, CA	Fundamentals DJ Academy
2011 – Present	San Francisco, CA	Galileo Academy of Science and Technology—DJ Club
2012 – Present	British Columbia, Canada	VOXBOX Studios DJ School
2012 – Present	New York, NY	Eugene Lang College: The New School for Liberal Arts—DJ Skills & Styles undergraduate course
2012 – Present	Manitoba, Canada	Mama Cutsworth DJ Academy
2012 – Present	Maidstone, UK	Kent DJ Academy
2012 – Present	Worldwide	Global DJ Academy
2013 – Present	Brooklyn, NY	Baby DJ School
2014 – Present	Worldwide	DJ4LIFE Academy
2014 – Present	U.S. State Department / UNC-Chapel Hill	NextLevel
c. 2013 – Present	Los Angeles, LA	Marlborough School—DJ Club
2014 – Present	Los Angeles, CA	Dubspot
2014 – Present	Centurion, South Africa	Fabulush DJ Academy

APPENDIX B: ROB SWIFT'S LMUS 2002 QUIZ WITH ANSWERS IN BOLD

LMUS 2020 A

Name _____   Date _____

1. Who is considered "The Father" of Hip Hop culture?
a) Afrika Bambaataa
b) Afrika Islam
c) Kool DJ Herc
d) DJ Hollywood

2. Scratching was created by _____.
a) Grand Master Flash
b) Grand Wizard Theodore
c) Q - Bert
d) Charlie Chase

3. Dropping on "the one" allows you as a DJ to:
a) line up the 4/4 time signature of 2 songs if they're both playing at the same speed.
b) transition from one song to the next without disrupting a dance floor.
c) a & b
d) none of the above

4. There are basically _____ a scratcher can perform the "Forward Scratch".
a) 5 variations
b) 2 variations
c) 3 variations
d) none of the above because there's only one way standard way.

5. _____ is commonly considered the first Turntablist.
a) Kool Herc
b) Grand Mixer D.ST
c) Grand Master Flowers
d) Tony Tone

6. The origins of the "Ahhh" and "Fresh" sound come from a French Hip Hop song titled:
a) Big Beat
b) Change The Beat
c) King of the Beat
d) Can You Feel The Beat

7. The best sound a DJ can isolate when mixing is:
a) the snare
b) the high hat
c) the kick
d) a vocal

8. The standard placement for a DJs hand when performing a drop or scratch is:
a) 12 o'clock
b) 3 o'clock
c) 9 o'clock
d) it doesn't matter as long as the drop is executed right

9. As a scratcher your goal when coaxing sound out of a turntable is to:
a) move your hands as fast as you possibly can
b) utilize sounds that allow the listener to make out what you're saying
c) serve the music your scratching to
d) b & c

10. If you make a mistake while performing a scratch what's the best thing to do?
a) stop scratching because your audience wants a perfect performance
b) ignore the mistake and keep going
c) fall back on the baby scratch as a way to avoid future mistakes
d) a & c

(used with permission of Rob Swift)

Course Syllabus

Lang at Scratch DJ Academy

Spring 2015 / LMUS 2020 A (2 cr.)

Instructor: DJ Rob Swift

Class time and room T/R 3:50-5:20pm. Scratch DJ Academy 32 Cooper Square, 2nd Floor

[…]

In this age of technology, newcomers to the art of DJing rely less on their ears and more on a computer screen to guide them while mixing a selection of music. In an attempt to reverse this trend, DJ Rob Swift has developed a comprehensive course which will teach Lang students how to trust their inner beat and confidently navigate through a program of songs without being a slave to a laptop. We will focus on 3 fundamental DJ techniques:

(1) Mixing - the ability to transition between multiple songs of varying speeds.

(2) Scratching - an act of coaxing sound from a turntable or CDJ through the back and forth movement of a vinyl record or disc.

(3) Beat Juggling - enhancing or changing the drum pattern within a song by isolating kicks, snares or high hats.

As each technique is examined students will also learn the history and cultural context of these styles of DJing. The ultimate goal is to teach students how to hear music, deconstruct it and put it all back together to reflect their own distinct personalities.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

(1) Students must purchase "As The Technics Spin" ($10), a DVD which explains and reinforces the techniques, theories students will be learning in class.

(2) Students must visit a record store and purchase AT LEAST $30 worth of vinyl of their choosing. A list of stores located in the NYC area will be provided. *At the beginning of the semester students will be provided with FREE vinyl to get started.

(3) Required readings will be posted throughout the semester at DJROBSWIFT.COM.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

With technology being what it is today, anyone can walk into a Guitar Center, buy DJ software and become a make shift DJ in a matter of one day. Because of this, the aspiring DJ must realize there's a lot of competition out there. Not only are you competing to etch your name among established DJs

like myself, you also must figure out ways to stand out amongst the hundreds of up and comers that exist with every new day. In order to achieve this, together we're going to figure out ways to eject more of your personality out of the music you play. You're going to learn how to brand yourself through your DJ sets.

One of the main reasons why I've gone on to form a career as a DJ is because I successfully developed a signature style. NO ONE OUT THERE SOUNDS LIKE ME! Therefore, promoters know when they book me to DJ an event, they're getting DJ Rob Swift, someone who's unique and different from the rest. The same goes for my audience.

This course will also emphasize the importance of understanding your equipment. We'll examine how turntables actually work, the purpose of a stereo mixer, how to connect your equipment, etc.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS and GRADING
(1) Attend and participate in each session, including in-class discussions of music: 30%
(2) Assignments (reading, analysis of youtube clips...): 10%
(3) Challenges (There will be DJ competitions in varying categories such as mixing, scratching & beat juggling battles...): 30%
(5) Final project (Student's must perform a 10 minute set in front of class): 30%

[…]

CALENDAR

[…]

Week 1 (Jan. 27th & Jan. 29th)
- Course introduction
a) Explain the back round of Djing as it relates to Hip Hop.
b) Outline the 3 basic DJing techniques (mixing, scratching & beat juggling) and how they've evolved.
c) Examine how each of these techniques can be applied to other genres of DJing (House, Techno, Dubstep, etc.)
d) Talk about how to create your own identity as a DJ.
e) Discuss transforming your DJing skills into a career.
- Familiarizing ourselves with the tools of the trade
a) How to operate the turntable.
b) Functions of the mixer.
c) Use of headphones.
d) Record manipulation.
- Dropping on the one
a) Counting and understanding bar structure within a song.

b) Practice `how to transition between 2 different songs aka "dropping on the one".
c) Introduction to mixing.

Week 2 (Feb. 3rd & Feb. 5th)
- Mixing part 1
a) Understanding how to mix together two songs of varying speeds (tapping, pushing and the "Connor Method").
b) Discuss and practice when is the appropriate time to start a mix.
c) Experiment with EQ mixing (manipulating the bass or treble of a song to establish a cleaner mix).
d) Identifying when is the right time to end a mix.

Week 3 (Feb. 10th & Feb. 12th)
- Review and master week 2 lesson plan

Week 4 (Feb. 17th & Feb. 19th)
- Introduce Mixing part 2
a) Mixing with an acapella track
b) Learning how to mix/transition between songs with live music.

Week 5 (Feb. 24h & Feb. 26th)
- Review and master week 4 lesson plan

Week 6 (Mar. 3rd & Mar. 5th)
- Introduce Scratching
a) Explain the concept behind Grand Wizard Theodore's "Scratching".
b) Outline different scratching techniques (baby scratch, chops, stabs, transformers, etc.)
c) Practice hearing a scratch and replicating it without the use of the mixer's fader.
c) Explain how to incorporate the mixers fader to widen your scratch vocabulary.
d) Practice hearing a scratch and replicating it with the use of the mixer's fader.

Week 7 (Mar. 10th & Mar. 12th)
- Review and master week 6 lesson plan

Week 8 (Mar. 17th & Mar. 19th)
- Introduce Looping
a) Examine how to repeat a section of song using 2 identical copies of vinyl.
b) Discuss Grand Master Flash's "Quick Mix Theory".
c) Apply the "Quick Mix Theory" to a variety of songs.

e) Dropping on the "2" "3" or "4"

Week 9 (Mar. 31st & Apr. 2nd)
- Review and master week 8 lesson plan

Week 10 (Apr. 7th & Apr. 9th)
- Introduce Beat Juggling (if the class is ready)
a) Talk about the concept behind Grand Master Flash's "Clock Theory" and how it evolves into beat juggling.
b) Discuss the appropriate way to mark your records.
c) Apply the Beat Juggling to a variety of songs.

Week 11 (Apr. 14th & Apr. 16th)
- Review week 2 through week 11
- Discuss how to create a DJ set by applying all of the techniques learned in the previous 11 weeks.
- Encourage students to bring in music in order to help them create their own sets.
- Practice for finals

Week 12 (Apr. 21st & Apr. 23rd)
- Practice time for student finals.

Week 13 (Apr. 28th & Apr. 30th)
- Your identity
a) Assess each individual students tastes and help him/her develop their identity behind the turntables.
- Practice time for student finals.

Week 14 (May 5th & May 7th)
- Practice time for student finals.
- Spend one one time with students in preparation for class final.
a) Give students feedback on their strengths and weaknesses of their class final sets.

Week 15th (May 12th & May 14th)
a) Finals week. Students get in front of class and display the skills they've learned.

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