“We all Come Together to Learn About Music”**: A Qualitative Analysis of a 5-Year Music Program in a Juvenile Detention Facility

Maud Hickey

Abstract
The purpose of this long-term qualitative study was to uncover evidence that might support components of positive youth development (PYD) in a music composition program at an urban youth detention center. The constructs of PYD come from self-determination theory—competence, autonomy, and relatedness—and formed the theoretical lens from which the data were analyzed. Over a period of 5 years, more than 700 youth participated in the program and created primarily rap music compositions. Comments from their feedback, as well as interviews, were analyzed using qualitative content analysis. Findings point to the emergence of two main categories as reasons for enjoying the program: competence and positive feelings. Creativity also emerged as linked to competence and autonomy as well as the “Good Lives Model” of detainee development. Further research on using culturally relevant and creative music programming as a tool in PYD is discussed.

Keywords
positive youth development, juvenile detention, arts in detention, music in detention, youth music

Introduction
In 2010, I began a music composition program for adolescent male and female residents in a large detention center in Chicago. Five years, approximately 300 sessions and
over 700 participants and their original compositions later, the experience has strengthened my conviction that culturally relevant music creation can provide a powerful and desperately needed tool for the positive development of young men and women in detention.

The goal of this study was to untangle the reasons for the overwhelmingly positive responses I received from the participants in the program. Was it the sheer relief to get “off the pod” for 90 min a week? Was it the content of the familiar hip-hop genre we explored? Or was it something inherent in music making that motivated the detained youth to engage so enthusiastically in the weekly activity? Clouding the potential simple answers to the basic question of “what makes music composition effective for troubled youth?” are issues inherent in hip-hop culture (and the prejudices toward it), race and inequality, social justice, and the “school-to-prison-pipeline” problem that plagues the American juvenile justice system.

On any given day, approximately 54,000 youth are detained in public and private facilities in the United States (Campaign for Youth Justice, 2016). Although detained youth receive general education while in detention, little is known about the potential for arts or music education in these facilities. There is a growing number of studies that examine the positive power of arts in prison contexts (e.g., Gardner, Hager, & Hillman, 2014; Hickey, 2016), but none have honed in specifically on the power of music creating for incarcerated youth. The purpose of this study was to intentionally examine the effectiveness of a long-term music composition project for incarcerated youth in an urban detention center.

**Theoretical Framework**

To unravel reasons that might underlie the success (or failure) of a music project in a detention facility for youth, it is important to anchor the possibilities within a theoretical framework. Although there is no question that music is inherently enjoyable to all humans, the unique particularities of the structures—both physical and mental—that detained juveniles face forces more nuanced questions about music pedagogy and activities with these youths. In the following paragraphs I highlight the theoretical literature and research related to recent movements in positive criminology as well as findings related to arts- and music-based programs in detention settings.

**Strengths-Based Approach**

“Positive criminology” has recently entered the landscape of prison reform, spurred on by the desperate growing prison population in the United States (Kewley, 2017; Ronel & Elisha, 2011; Ronel, Frid, & Timor, 2013). Crime “desistance,” as opposed to the prevention of reoffending, is the basis of this framework (Day, 2015; Kewley, 2017; Ronel & Segev, 2014; Ward, Fox, & Garber, 2014). The positive criminology movement in youth rehabilitation has been recommended to strengthen the sense of identity of youth as positive beings rather than focus on the negative behaviors that resulted in incarceration (Brown, 2008; Osher et al., 2012; Travis & Leech, 2014; Ward & Marshall, 2007; Ward & Stewart, 2003). This emphasis on the positive strengths of
youth, rather than on their negative profile, offers hope for shaping constructive identi-
ties for their future growth postdetention, and is often referred to as “positive youth
development” (PYD) or “positive youth justice” (Butts, Mayer, & Ruth, 2005; Butts,

Central to PYD is Ryan and Deci’s (2000) “self-determination theory” (SDT),
which posits that autonomy, relatedness, and competence are basic human needs,
derived from, and intimately related to, intrinsic motivation, positive growth and per-
sonal well-being. For those working within the construct of PYD,

public safety will be achieved not by attempting to suppress a handful of statistically
derived risk factors . . . but by assisting offenders to solve problems that have blocked or
frustrated their attempts to secure the basic human goods of autonomy, relatedness and
competence. (Brown, 2008, p. 62)

Autonomy is the perceived belief of control over a task or situation, competence is
the need to seek learning and mastery over a task, and relatedness means having a
sense of security and trust with those in the immediate environment (Deci & Ryan,
2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

SDT is rooted in several similar models or theories that have emerged from under
the umbrella of positive criminology and PYD. Ward and colleagues (Ward & Brown,
2004; Ward & Gannon, 2006; Ward & Marshall, 2007; Willis, Yates, Gannon, & Ward,
2013) have proposed a Good Lives Model (GLM) as essential to offender rehabilita-
tion. The GLM suggests there are at least 11 “primary goods” necessary for helping
offenders succeed (the bold words represent SDT constructs): a healthy and function-
ing life, excellence (including mastery in play and work), excellence in agency (e.g.,
autonomy), inner peace, friendship (including family relationship), community, spiri-
tuality, happiness, and creativity.

A “Five Cs Model” of PYD (Bowers, Li, Kiely, Brittian, Lerner, & Lerner, 2010;
Lerner, Phelps, Forman, & Bowers, 2009) suggests the attributes of competence, con-
fidence, character, caring, and connection are crucial for the growth of a flourishing
and healthy young person. One can see the clear alignment between the Five Cs Model
and the constructs of SDT in competence, confidence (autonomy), and caring and con-
nection (relatedness). Travis and Leech (2014) extend the Five Cs model and PYD
specifically to African American youth as they recommend embedding these frame-
works within a culturally responsive pedagogy.

It would seem that the arts, and music specifically, have the potential to provide a
culture of PYD because of the agency one has in creative music and art making. An
exploration of research on arts and music in detention settings, and then specifically
arts with youth in detention follows.

Literature Review

Arts and Music in Detention

Couched in a variety of terms (e.g., self-esteem, positive identity, better choices), most
results of arts programs in detention settings align with principles of positive criminology
(Ronel & Elisha, 2011; Ronel et al., 2013). Hughes (2005) provides an extensive review of literature that examines studies linking arts and prevention of offending, arts and interventions, and arts for reintegration. From the evaluation of a variety of over 190 sources (e.g., books, articles, evaluation reports, annual reports, press reports, etc.), 76 involved research or evaluation of arts intervention with pre-, current, or postoffending youth to generate a model of best practices. Of these, music or music therapy projects represented only 8%, whereas theater, drama, or multi-arts projects constituted 58% of the studies. Hughes admits to the complexity of showing how arts in detention settings might directly affect the behavior of postdetainees, but offers several findings from the extensive review that point to the potential positive impact of arts for incarcerated individuals. Here are just a few findings:

- Arts education changes individuals’ personal, internal responses to impulses that lead to offending.
- Arts education equips prisoners with improved personal and social skills, and
- Arts education improves the prison culture and working practices.

A quantitative study by Brewster (2014) of poetry, writing, theater, and visual arts at three northern California state prisons and one southern California prison found “. . . a very strong correlation between arts education and self-confidence, motivation to pursue other educational and vocational programs, and self-discipline to manage time more efficiently and effectively” (p. 23). In a recent review of 27 research studies that focused primarily on music programs in detention settings, Hickey (2016) finds in most of these programs that the facilitator style was democratic, and participatory music making paired with the creation of original products was often the focus.

**Arts and Detained Youth**

Studies and reviews of studies on arts in juvenile detention centers, or in settings for at-risk youth, point to the positive effects such activities have on the incarcerated as well as the institutions and wider communities (Daykin, Moriarty, de Viggiani, & Pilkington, 2011; Hickey, 2015; Hillman, 2004; Urban Institute, 2015). Overall high arts involvement has shown to correlate with positive outcomes for “at-risk” (often defined as low Socioeconomic Status) youth.

Gardner et al. (2014) provide an annotated bibliography and summary of findings of 48 evidence-based studies evaluating the impact of arts programs in U.S. correctional settings. In their review of 19 “evidence-based studies and evaluations” of Juvenile Offender arts programs between 1980 and 2013 in particular, they describe a wide variety of results that were mostly positive. The arts activities ranged from poetry and visual art to music, theater, and dance. Among findings from the mix of qualitative and quantitative studies were increase in self-esteem and self-efficacy; improved communication skills; improved cooperation and relationships with adults; and a decrease in delinquent behavior and in mental health symptoms. However, recidivism results were mixed (improved in one study and no-change in another).
A synthesis of music and arts intervention with youth in detention settings found positive outcomes in four categories: musical, psychological, nonmusical skills, and behavior (Hickey, 2015). Of most interest to the present study was that the majority of these studies found positive extra-musical psychological outcomes related to SDT, specifically improved confidence and self-esteem (e.g., Anderson & Overy, 2010; Bittman, Dickson, & Coddington, 2009; Ezell & Levy, 2003; Kennedy, 1998; Tett, Anderson, McNeill, Overy, & Sparks, 2012; Tyson, 2002; Wolf & Holochwost, 2016; Wolf & Wolf, 2012; Woodward, Sloth-Nielsen, & Mathiti, 2008).

In my own previous research with at-risk teens, I discovered the positive power of music making on the confidence and self-identity of youth through a music program I conducted in a residential home (Hickey, 2008). The findings aligned with a literature review of music making with youth offenders and “those at risk of offending” by Daykin, de Viggiani, Pilkington, and Moriarty (2012) and Daykin, et al. (2011). Those publications point to the power of music for the health and well-being of youth. Among other findings, personal growth, “including increased confidence and improved attitudes” (Daykin, et al., 2011, p. 18) and positive experiences, “including enjoyment and fun were outcomes in many of the programs” (Daykin, et al., 2011, p. 18).

The aforementioned studies point to the positive power of the arts for detained youth. No study, however, has looked in-depth as to the specifics of the potential positive effects of music for youth, and specifically in light of the PYD movement. This long-term study sought to discern the reasons that the music experience was so positive for youth detained in an urban detention center.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to uncover evidence that might support components of PYD in a music composition program at an urban youth detention center. The focus was on the music experience itself and to learn from the youth about their experience. What did they learn? What challenged them? If they enjoyed it, what were the reasons? And then, how do the findings align with the self-determination and PYD constructs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness? The specific questions for this study were as follows: (a) What reasons and evidence emerge that support positive aspects of the music program at an urban youth detention center, and how do these align with self-determination theory? (b) What characteristics from the program might help to inform practices of programming in juvenile detention?

**Method**

*Participants and Setting*

The research period for this project took place over 5 years (2010-2015) in the Cook County Juvenile Temporary Juvenile Detention Center (JTDC). The work was funded by a grant from the Chicago Community Trust, with the purpose of delivering a weekly after-school music composition curriculum to young men and women detained in JTDC. A secondary purpose of the grant was to investigate the impact and effectiveness of this work on the participants.
The JTDC provides temporary housing and education for court-detained juveniles between 12 and 17 years old who have legal action pending in the Chicago criminal court system or are being temporarily held for minor offenses. In a report providing data for the population of JTDC during Fiscal Year 2012, the population of JTDC averaged just over 250 residents, with 84% Black, 12% Latino, and 3% White; males comprised 91% of the population (Kaba, 2014). There are two classifications of residents in the JTDC: “juveniles,” and “automatic transfers” (ATs). Juveniles comprise 73% of the population and are the young men and women who are in JTDC for a temporary period (1 day-3 months). They have been detained for suspicion of a misdemeanor or petty offense and are either awaiting legal paperwork, bail, or a court decision to be released. The ATs, on the contrary, have been charged with an “adult crime” (likely a serious felony) and are awaiting transfer from juvenile court jurisdiction to adult criminal courts upon turning 18. An AT resident may be incarcerated for as long as 3 years at JTDC (depending on the age at which they enter).

The decision for which pod could participate was based on relatively random factors: for example, the availabilities of pods on the particular day the program was being offered, as well as suitability given the pod’s “personality.” We worked with both AT and juvenile pods, though preferred AT pods because of less transience in population over the course of our program.

The number of lessons per session varied from three (out of five) to 10 (out of 10), with the majority of sessions lasting for 10 weekly lessons. This variability was due to unforeseen circumstances and last-minute cancellations—an inherent by-product of working in a large detention facility. The ages of the participants ranged from 13 to 18 years, with the average age being 15.8 years. The total number of participants we worked with over the 5 years was 717, each attending an average of 7.5 sessions, with an average of 8.8 participants in each session.

Each session lasted 1.5 hr and took place in the computer lab of the school facility, which was housed within the JTDC. The lab was equipped with 16 iMac computers connected to 88-key M-Audio MIDI keyboards. We used Garage band extensively as the music creation tool as the residents did not have access to any other programs nor access to the Internet. The typical session began with a short introduction to the goals for the session, some teaching on the technical skills to be learned, and sometimes listening to music examples to enhance the lesson. This was followed by the majority of time for the participants to work on their projects, as we monitored and assisted where needed. At the end of each session, if time allowed, the participants shared their work.

The curriculum was developed by myself and evolved from earlier research of music composition with at-risk youth (Hickey, 2008). It essentially followed a five-step sequence (exploration, technique, words as music, inspiration and identity, and music as message) with the goal of the creation of at least one original composition by the end of the session. On average, the residents created more than two projects by the end of their program. The curriculum is not genre-specific but is based on participants’ interest in music (which, for this project, was mostly rap). The original music that participants created was published on a CD (in the first years), and eventually published to SoundCloud. At the end of each 10-week session, we held “listening parties”
and invited staff and family members to hear the original music and enjoy refreshments.

**Data Collection and Analyses**

At every lesson, we handed out a “goals sheet,” which listed the goals of the lesson as well as helpful hints for working on the project. On this sheet the participants listed their name, behavior level,5 and at the end of the lesson, responded to three prompts about their experience:

1. What did you do well today AND/OR what challenged you?
2. How was today? (checked “Positive, Neutral,” or “Negative”)
3. Why? (Explain your response to Question 2)

The answers to these prompts were organized on summary “feedback sheets” for every participant and for every session. I also interviewed three different focus groups of participants each year after the first year, as well as four individual participants over the 5 years. Additional artifacts included interview transcripts with three staff members, field notes, and my own reflective journaling during the experience. I analyzed the data from the comment sheets and interview transcripts using a qualitative content analysis procedure.

I utilized MaxQDA software to collate, organize, and then code the comments from the feedback sheets and participant interview transcripts. The initial coding method was deductive (Kuckartz, 2014), framed by the lens of self-determination theory—specifically, the components of competence, autonomy, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000). This was followed by an open and in vivo coding process, and then a final round of axial coding to reveal themes and concepts that related to the music experiences of the participants (Saldaña, 2013).

Large categories and subcategories emerged that related to the music experiences of the participants. After exhaustive coding and all categories emerged, I used the MaxQDA software to look for code relations, both to help eliminate unnecessary repetition, as well as look for confirmation among categories. Descriptions of the a priori (AP), in vivo, and emergent codes are provided in Table 1.

To assess the trustworthiness of the data coding, I asked two independent reviewers to code a portion of the feedback sheets as well as interview documents, first with the AP categories in mind, and then to comment on any other aspects they felt emerged. The reviewers were chosen because of their expertise with qualitative methodology, as well as their familiarity with music and music education. Agreement was evident for the “competence” and “autonomy” AP codes, and, as in my own analysis, only a few instances of “relatedness.” In addition, the independent reviewers found and commented upon the overwhelming sentiments expressed about “fun” and “joy” in the experience, which aligned with the categories in my findings. I used the additional artifacts such as my detailed field notes and reflective journaling to confirm and triangulate my findings.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coding description</th>
<th>Category name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Examples (come from feedback sheets unless otherwise indicated)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A priori</td>
<td>Competence (parent category)</td>
<td>Perception of competence to achieve a task or wanting to achieve a task, sense of success</td>
<td>“Because I love learning new things”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Competence/learned or learning</td>
<td>Learning was reason for enjoyment</td>
<td>“made my own beat”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Competence/created something new</td>
<td>“Made” something original</td>
<td>“I worked on and accomplished today . . . how to make my own beats and voices”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Competence/accomplishment/met goal</td>
<td>Accomplished a task or met a goal</td>
<td>“I made some really good beats”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Competence/did well</td>
<td>Sense of doing well on a task or getting better on a task</td>
<td>“Well I think I’m kinda good at it.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Competence/has skill-identity as rapper</td>
<td>Has rapped (or created music) before, affirmation of ability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Autonomy (parent)</td>
<td>Sense of freedom in learning and ability to make choices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Autonomy/“got to”</td>
<td>“I got to” or did something by themselves, ownership</td>
<td>“I did a good song by myself”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Autonomy/effort—tried</td>
<td>Tried to do something</td>
<td>“Because I tried and it was enjoyable”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Autonomy/just listened</td>
<td>Enjoyed the choice to simply listen</td>
<td>“I got to listen to music”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relatedness (parent)</td>
<td>Sense of community trust</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relatedness/peers</td>
<td>Collaborate with peers in class</td>
<td>“Worked on a hit song with one of the guys”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relatedness/teachers and mentors</td>
<td>Mention of mentor or teacher</td>
<td>“Me and Donna made a beat”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergent</td>
<td>Positive feeling (parent)</td>
<td>Enjoyment of the activity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive/liked the experience</td>
<td>Expressed enjoyment of the experience</td>
<td>“I liked every second of it and I love music”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive/fun (in vivo)</td>
<td>Use of the word “fun”</td>
<td>“Because it was very fun and I got into my song”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive/love (in vivo)</td>
<td>Use of the word “love”</td>
<td>“I love this class and it teach me a lot”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Challenge</td>
<td>Enjoyment came from the “challenge” that was faced</td>
<td>“Because this got me out of my comfort zone”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)
### Table 1. (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coding description</th>
<th>Category name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Examples (come from feedback sheets unless otherwise indicated)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emergent</td>
<td><strong>Diversions</strong> from other issues</td>
<td>The experience helped them forget other problems</td>
<td>“Because I got to leave the pod”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Music</strong></td>
<td>The music itself was mentioned as reason</td>
<td>“Because I like rapping”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Music/message</strong></td>
<td>The ability to send a message through music</td>
<td>“I feel like we should come together and make something good. So like the world can hear why we in here.” (interview)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novelty</td>
<td></td>
<td>This experience was new to them</td>
<td>“I’m doing things I’ve never been done before and its very interesting”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expression</td>
<td></td>
<td>Able to express</td>
<td>“Me coming to music class got some anger off my chest”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Expression/Ideas</strong></td>
<td>Where ideas come from</td>
<td>“My ideas came from my experience”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future orientation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Want to become . . .</td>
<td>“It inspires me, like one day it could be part of my career, I could be an artist or a producer” (interview)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative (parent)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Emotion took away from focus</td>
<td>“I was mad”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative/bad mood or feeling</td>
<td></td>
<td>Did not finish or not feeling competent</td>
<td>“I didn’t accomplish nothing”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative/lack of accomplishment</td>
<td></td>
<td>Technical issues prevented work</td>
<td>“because my computer be tweakin’”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative/technology</td>
<td></td>
<td>Wanted more time to work</td>
<td>“I didn’t really get enough time”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative/time</td>
<td></td>
<td>Too challenging or not challenging enough</td>
<td>“cuz I didn’t really get it.” “It was kind of boring.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Findings

Overall, there were 1807 coded segments in the entirety of feedback sheets and interview transcripts. Table 2 shows the category frequencies from all of the coded comment documents and interviews. As can be seen in Table 2, the three AP codes of competence, autonomy, and relatedness fall at different points in frequency among the categories, however, competence clearly was the most common. The top two most frequently coded categories were competence and positive feeling, which combined for over 70% of the coded responses.
In the following section, I provide evidence from the top three most frequently coded categories, as well as from the categories of “autonomy” and “relatedness” as they formed the AP codes based on the theoretical framework of SDT. In addition, I provide analysis of the “negative” category and “music” and conclude the findings with descriptions of the overlap of some categories.

### Competence

The competence category covered 50% of the coded segments, and of those, the most common sentiment (over 25% of the total) was the subcategory of “learned/learning.” In other words, the experience was positive for the residents because they were given

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>% coded segments of all documents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AP-competence—Learned/learning</td>
<td>26.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP-competence—Created something new</td>
<td>12.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive feeling—Fun (in vivo)</td>
<td>12.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive feeling—Liked the experience (enjoyed themselves)</td>
<td>7.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge</td>
<td>5.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP-competence—Accomplishment/met goal</td>
<td>4.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP-competence—Did well</td>
<td>3.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversion from other issues</td>
<td>3.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>3.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP-autonomy—“Got to”</td>
<td>2.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive feeling—“Love”</td>
<td>2.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP-competence—Has skill-identity</td>
<td>1.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP-relatedness—Teachers/mentors</td>
<td>1.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expression</td>
<td>1.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novelty</td>
<td>1.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative—Challenge</td>
<td>1.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expression—Ideas</td>
<td>1.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP-autonomy—Effort—Tried</td>
<td>1.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP-relatedness—Peers</td>
<td>1.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative—Technology</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative—Time</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP-autonomy—Just listened</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative—Bad mood/feeling</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative—Lack of accomplishment</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future orientation</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music—Message</td>
<td>0.39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. AP = a priori category.*
the opportunity to learn and/or that they learned something new. Following is a small sampling of some of the 474 segments from the daily feedback sheets that were coded in this category, based on the prompt of “why” they rated the experience as they did:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Segment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It opens up something new for me to learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was good because I learned how to make some beat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because I learned new things to do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because I got to learn how to do more things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I learned how to record and it was fun hearing my own voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because every week I learn something new and something different</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

And from interviews with two different participants, the enjoyment of learning was also articulated: “I’m learning how to make beats. I still haven’t learned how to make them yet. I’m still learning. That’s the best thing about it. To learn.” And from another: “The thing I like the most is just finding out new ways to make music . . . and make myself sound better.”

**Created something new.** Within the competence category was the concept that the participants actually created something original. This subcategory, which encompassed nearly 13% of the coded responses, emerged after I noticed the phrase “because I made” repeatedly in the responses. The sense of making one’s own creation relates both to autonomy as well as competence. Coming from different individuals as well as different focus group interviews, after being asked what they liked the most about the program was confirmation of the opportunity to make something new, music that was of their own creation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Segment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I mean like it is the best program because we get to learn how to like make our own beats and put it together and learn different ways how to change the rhythm. (From interview)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ah, yeah the best thing about the class was that we get to make our own music rap and a lot of stuff. (From interview)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Following is a sample of phrases from the feedback sheets that were coded in this category:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Segment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I tried to make a beat I’ve never made before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because we make are [sic] own beats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning how to make own beats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had fun making my song</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Met goal.** While the enjoyment of creating something original stood out, so did the idea of finishing and/or meeting a goal. This sentiment, titled “Accomplishment/Met
Goal” as a subcategory of competence, was 4.82% of total responses. Sample comments in this subcategory include,

- I can actually record my song
- I made 3 songs for today, and now I’m happy with myself
- Because I finish my rap
- I accomplished a beat of my life
- Today I have accomplished more than what I useuly [sic] would on the outside. I am having a lot of fun

**Positive Feeling**

Of the parent categories, “positive feelings” emerged as second most coded in frequency to “competence” with 21% of the coded segments. The overall joy and fun that residents expressed about the program was palpable in the responses coded in this category. Although there is no doubt that some of the positive feelings may have had to do with the alternative option (not being in a computer lab and making music), the intensity of the positive feelings from the comments and interviews felt authentic.

**Fun.** Upon noticing multiple recurrences of the word “fun,” I did a search for the word and then coded it in vivo, where appropriate. These sample comments from the feedback sheets not only speak about fun, but how this feeling intertwined with ideas of competence, autonomy, and creativity:

- I had fun making my song/I don’t no [sic] what to say but making my song was fun [sic]/It was good like every time I came down hear/positive like every time/grate [sic] like always
- I had fun I learn how to make my beat
- It was fun and interesting because I learn how to do something new
- It was fun and I created some good beats

**Love.** During the first round of coding, I noticed the use of the word “love” in the participants’ feedback sheet comments. This struck me not only because of its recurrence, but how intense this word is, especially in light of the circumstances and space these participants inhabited. I did a search for the word “love” and found 37 segments. Here is a sample list of them:

- I love being in the lab
- Love learning new things
- Love making beats
- I love this class and it teach me a lot
The feelings of fun, joy, and love were repeated not only from the participants, but confirmed by the staff as the reason the program was successful. One “team leader,” while acknowledging the hassle of moving residents from their pod to the computer classroom (on a different floor), also recognized how important it was to the residents: “So it affects them emotionally and mentally . . . and you know they’re in a better mood when they know the music program is coming that day and then afterwards, immediately afterwards” (staff interview).

**Challenge**

Challenge was the third most coded category of reasons the participants enjoyed the experience (5.32% of all coded categories). Although “challenge” is not one of the three prongs in the SDT model (Deci & Ryan, 2000), it is related to competence. When describing competence, Deci and Ryan (2000) suggest that a fundamental need for humans is “to engage optimal challenges and experience mastery or effectance in the physical and social worlds” (p. 252). Challenge also clearly aligns with theories of motivation achievement, which posits that a challenge must be novel and optimal to keep intrinsic motivation high (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Learners enjoy a challenge in an environment that is trusting and free of perceived negative evaluation, and at an optimal level that is not too difficult, nor too easy (Ames & Archer, 1988; Dweck, 1985, 1986). Comments from an interview with one of the participants point to this appreciation of a challenge:

Yeah, it was. It’s like everything was kind of challenging cause when ya’ll first came I’m like, “Man, I don’t know how to make no beat! I ain’t even . . . gonna try it,” but once I tried it I started liking it. (Interview)

A sample of segments from the comment sheets that were coded for challenge is listed here:

- It was a challenge to make the beats but I had fun also I really enjoyed it
- What challenged me was I couldn’t keep my beats on track. But it’s cool, I like challenges ’cause it helps me learn better
- Me not knowing that I could come up with these wonderful things so that was really challenging to me
- It was good because [teacher] pushed me write a rap and I didn’t want to
- It was all challenging but in the long run it was fun and positive something that I needed

**Autonomy and Relatedness**

The SDT concepts of autonomy and relatedness did not emerge nearly as frequently as competence. Autonomy was the fourth in coding frequency overall (4.98% of the coded segments). The idea that the participants “got to” (a common phrase in this category) make choices and create music on their own were signs of autonomy.
A sample of comment segments that were coded for autonomy includes the following:

- I did a good song by myself
- It’s good to make stuff on your own
- I got to do a song and remix it
- Got to make what I needed

Also coded as “autonomy” were 15 instances where participants noted they “got to” just listen to music—an option we offered and that likely also led to a sense of autonomous choice in the situation.

The third component of SDT, relatedness, did not emerge as a major factor for enjoying the music program. This could be because the participants worked mostly individually, or simply because it was not an explicit goal of the curriculum. The 48 segments (2.69% of total) that were coded in this category were nearly evenly divided between appreciation of the teachers (e.g., “I got a good vibe from you guys and made me feel comfortable”) and the enjoyment from working with a peer or peers (e.g., “Worked on a hit song with one of the guys”).

**Negative**

Although it only comprised 4.7% of coded segments in both feedback and interview comments, the “negative” category is worth a brief discussion. For some, if it was too boring, or not challenging enough, they would say so (which provides a negative confirmation for the positive category of challenge). For others if the task was “too hard” or if they were unable to finish a task they vented negative comments (e.g., “Because I couldn’t quite actually make the beat that I wanted to”). Frustration when the technology did not work emerged, as well as simply being in a bad mood that particular day. Finally, the plea for more time to work came through in some of the interviews. When asked “what was the worst thing about the program?” a common answer was related to the lack of time: “The worst thing about it is we not have enough time in the program” (participant interview). Of the 1807 coded segments, remarkably only two comments strongly expressed hate toward the experience: “because I hate it” and “I hate people.”

**Music**

Certainly worth presenting in a study about music is analysis of the segments coded for “music.” Segments were categorized as “music” if they largely attributed music to the reason for enjoyment, and/or they related to being able to create a message through music. Only 3.19% of the total coded segments were clearly related to music and of these, the majority of them were co-coded with the parent categories of “competence” (15 segments) and “positive feeling” (19 segments).
Combinations

Using a code-relations analysis in MaxQDA, I found that the two most strongly associated (co-occurring categories) were the subcategories of “fun” with “learned/learning” (75 segments) and “fun” with “created something new” (31 segments). No other subcategories came close to that frequency of co-occurring with other categories. The following excerpts contain these combinations and point to connections between competence, autonomy, creating something new, and positive enjoyment:

Because I like to learn new stuff/I get to do what I love/I finished my beat/ I tried to make a beat I’ve never made before

It was challenging to me but fun

It was fun and interesting because I learn how to do something new. And when I get better I can write a track to it

Because I learned new things to do/because I got to learn how to do more things/because it was fun while I learned/because I made a song

’Cause I learn new things/I really had fun I let my feelings come out/’cause had my own freedom about my beats/I learn how to make a end on my song

Why it’s important to me is, just ’cause, I get to laugh, and I like that I made that myself. I don’t want to be famous or something. I just want to look back and be like, I made that myself! (Interview)

Discussion

The three SDT constructs of competence, autonomy, and relatedness are essential for the positive development of juveniles whose rights to these “basic human goods” are often blocked due to the inherent structure of most detention centers. In this study, two of the SDT elements emerged as centrally connected to a music-making program in JTDC. Competence, which included the subcategories of “learned/learning,” “created something new,” “accomplishment,” and “did well,” was by far the most frequently coded category. This outcome aligns with the classic and widely cited theory of achievement motivation put forth by Ames and Archer (1988) where effort, learning, and learning something new are reasons for success and enjoyment over “doing better than others” or learning in a competitive and high anxiety environment. This was a predominant finding in the current study.

Although autonomy emerged as fourth in category frequency, it might be viewed less as a single construct as much as being tied to the opportunity to create something new, which was coded in this study as competence. Deci and Ryan (2000) suggest that a solid foundation of all three “nutriments” of competence, autonomy, and relatedness are required for creativity. I would suggest the opposite; that the nutriment of creativity is required for competence and autonomy, especially in a space such as a detention center where there is little to no room to be creative. The sense of ownership that
comes with making one’s own music is not only related to a combination of competence and autonomy but stems from the power inherent in creativity. Findings from literature reviews of music programs for youth (Hickey, 2015), and in detention settings in general (Gardner et al., 2014; Hickey, 2016) note that the majority of these programs use creative music activities such as composition and improvisation as well as popular music genres (rap or rock music).

Both the opportunity to create, along with the ability to be autonomous with one’s creation is in short supply while in detention. Creativity is specifically mentioned as a component in the GLM (Ward & Brown, 2004; Ward & Gannon, 2006; Ward & Marshall, 2007; Willis et al., 2013), but has not been explored as a construct or tool in PYD work. Offering activities that support creativity should be further examined in programs that hope to promote strengths-based growth of youth in detention.

The connections between the SDT prongs of competence and autonomy seem natural and several comments showed these combinations along with “positive experience.” Many comments from the participants combined the spirit of joy, learning, and accomplishment that are related to psychological health, need satisfaction, enjoyment, and intrinsic motivation (Ames & Archer, 1988; Dweck, 1985, 1986). These also align with the components of the GLM (Ward & Brown, 2004; Ward & Gannon, 2006; Ward & Marshall, 2007; Willis et al., 2013), which includes happiness and creativity specifically.

In the current study, “positive feeling” emerged as the second most coded category but was not explicitly tied to the music itself. In fact, the category of “music” did not emerge as a prominent category in the analyses. In general, the powerful psychological functions of music for adolescents has been documented, and the connection between positivity and the vital role that music plays in the lives of adolescents has been firmly established (Laiho, 2004; North, Hargreaves, & O’Neill, 2000; Saarikallio & Erkkilä, 2007). In a synthesis and analysis of previous research linking music and adolescents, Laiho compiled a theoretical model by grouping the themes found in the literature into four main categories: identity, agency, interpersonal relationships, and emotional field (which includes joy, entertainment, and mood management, among other characteristics). These clearly overlap with the SDT from Deci and Ryan (2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000) as well as from the findings in this study. Music as a category perhaps did not emerge prominently because of its centrality to the program.

In my initial wonderment about the reasons for the positive reaction by the youth to this program in the detention center, I raised the possibility that it might be related to the genre of rap music that we used. Researchers have shown that rap is constructive not only for PYD (Travis, 2013; Travis & Leech, 2014), but for constructive therapeutic outcomes specifically for detained or court-involved youth as well (e.g., Abdul-Adil, 2014; Dang, Vigon, & Abdul-Adil, 2014; Hadley & Yancy, 2012; Travis, 2013; Tyson, 2002). Based on the findings in this particular study, however, I cannot say if the JTDC music program was successful because of the genre, or if it would have been equally successful if we had focused on learning about, or just performing (as
opposed to composing) Western classical music. The largest two categories that emerged, “competence” and “positive feeling,” did not implicate any specific genre, and in fact, “music” as a coded category is barely existent. The strong co-occurrence of the sub categories of “fun” with “learned/learning” and “fun” with “created something new” hints at the power of creating music (as opposed to performing), but still none of the youths explicitly mentioned hip-hop and rap genre as a key feature. In a synthesis of 27 music programs in detention settings, Hickey (2016) finds the vast majority were related to music production, composition, and hip-hop or popular music creation. However, the next largest category were programs that were choral performance based (e.g. Cohen, 2007, 2009, 2012; Menning, 2010; Roma, 2010; Silber, 2007). So, while many detention programs are successfully using culturally relevant genres, there is a need for further research to investigate the differences in impact depending on the type of music genre used.

What Next?

The purpose of this study was to uncover reasons for the success of a music program for youth in a detention center. The results point to the strong potential of creative music making for youth, hopefully leading to better self-image and then more options for successful rehabilitation. This finding is supported by studies and reviews of the positive possibilities for music and other arts in youth detention settings (Daykin et al., 2012; Daykin et al., 2011; Hickey, 2015). Creative and culturally relevant music making may offer tools to provide the “protective factors” (Shepherd, Luebbers, & Ogloff, 2016) necessary to guide youth in positive development, but there is more work to be done to systematize such a practice in detention settings, as well as to substantiate the impact of any specific genre.

The second purpose of this study was to consider how positive outcomes from the music program might inform practices of programming in juvenile detention. The now growing evidence of music’s positive potential for youth development needs continued study for “best practices” that might inform and guide staff decisions in youth detention facilities. There is an especially great need for rigorous quantitative studies linking music creation with PYD and, ultimately, greater crime desistance and successful reentry back into communities.

It also seems imperative to provide a bridge of continued programming for youth upon leaving the detention system so they may continue to experience positive engagement with arts. Reentry is complicated by many factors (Steinberg, Chung, & Little, 2004), and there is a need to help youth in this process through community-based integration and support—much less the simple fact that they need something positive to do once they leave detention. A productive music program might offer this constructive first step. There is an abundance of community arts programs for youth in urban areas, but there are only few (if any) that link directly to youth detention center release programs. Making this connection would be a crucial first step as we continue to learn more about the power of music for youth in detention.
Acknowledgment
This research was made possible through the generous support of multiyear grants from the Chicago Community Trust).

Declaration of Conflicting Interests
The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding
The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Notes
1. Quote from juvenile participant.
2. The young men and women of JTDC are grouped into “pods” of approximately 15 who live in the same area (“pod”) together. They are grouped according to age, physical stature, gang affiliation, and behavior.
3. Research by Kougiali, Einat, and Liebling (2017) and a literature review of music programs in detention centers by Hickey (2015) show explicitly positive outcomes from employing music programs for detained individuals, but none have yet tied these directly to Positive Youth Development.
4. Not named for purposes of blind review.
5. All residents of JTDC receive a “behavior” rating at the beginning of each week. The rating level determines certain privileges within the facility.
6. For the most part, the comments are as written (“sic”) by the participants; some were cleaned up slightly if they were difficult to discern. Multiple comments that are separated with a “/” come from the same participant on different days. In addition, it is worth noting that that most of the responses from participants are typically very brief.
7. Team leaders are in charge of entire units that consist of four pods.

References
Anderson, K., & Overy, K. (2010). Engaging Scottish young offenders in education through music and art. *International Journal of Community Music, 3*, 47-64. doi:10.1386/ ijcm.3.1.47/1


Woodford (Eds.), Oxford handbook of social justice and music education (pp. 598-613). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.


