Learning to Sing
From Car to Chorus
Nicholas Tierney – Health Studies

Introduction
Singing alone in the car was okay because no one was there to listen. I wanted to see if I could learn to sing, and do it successfully, with a group of people. By joining URI’s University Chorus this semester, I hoped to learn techniques for successful choral singing. Through a guided self-analysis I set out to chronicle my journey from the first rehearsal to the final concerts.

Objectives
• To determine the range, and quality, of my voice
• Learn to read choral music
• Sing in a group; to know my part amongst others
• To perform! April 25th and May 1st

*a note*
It is important that I disclose my previous involvement with music. In high school I played brass instruments (trumpet, trombone, euphonium), which gave me a basic exposure to some of the technicalities of performance (reading sheet music, developing skills through practice, playing in and ensemble). My goal in this project, however, was to refine an instrument I had never spent time developing: my voice.

Methods
Can I sing?
• Voice test
• Range
Can I read music?
• Learning solfege
• Bass clef
• Dissecting choral music
From band to chorus
• My part vs. the ensemble
• Importance of listening
• Predicting notes
• Vocal techniques

Refining the “Talent”
• Attending weekly rehearsals
• Personal practice
• YouTube songs
• Collaborative journal with sponsor
• Phonetics of the four languages
• Adding instrumentalists
• Adding soloists
• Singing with another chorus

The Works
Our choral repertoire included four distinct pieces in four different languages, Latin, Spanish, English, and Portuguese.

The feature: “Misa Criolla,” a 5 piece mass influenced by Hispanic folk music by Ariel Ramirez,

Plus:
“Ubi Caritas” by Dale Sakamoto, an arrangement of a Latin chant,
“Music Down in My Soul,” a gospel song arranged by Moses Hogan
“Todo o Meu Ser,” a Portuguese samba by Joan Szymko

Discussion
The due date for this poster fell before both concert dates, but highlighting my growth as a singer to this point is still possible. A tenant to success that popped up over and over again was the importance of good practice and good technique. What continually separated the better singers from myself was their habits. As a first time tenor learning the limits of my range, proper breathing and posture made all the difference. Experientially, joining chorus was an amazing opportunity. The joys of comradery, from a sports team to a family reunion, were not exempt from my time in chorus, and using nothing but the voice to convey and influence emotions through different pieces and different cultures was an effect I hope to recreate again and again.

Acknowledgements
I would like to thank my sponsor Dr. Audrey Cardany, URI Dept. of Music, for her help and guidance through this project, and the entire Honors Program staff, including Carolyn Hames and Dr. Cheryl Foster, for helping me get this research project off the ground. Also my sister, Katrina, for coming to my concert and taking pictures.