of Chorus
POSITIONING A CO-CURRICULAR CHOIR
WITHIN A FACULTY OF EDUCATION

SUBMITTED BY KATRYN HURST
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IN FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
MASTER OF EDUCATION PROGRAM

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In loving memory of Steven Andrew Hurst
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CURRICULAR OBJECTIVES</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MANDATE AND MISSION</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MISSION STATEMENT</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXPLICIT CURRICULUM</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WELL-BEING</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INCLUSIVITY</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMPLICIT CURRICULUM</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEACHING AND LEARNING</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIAL JUSTICE</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RECRUITMENT</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMAIL INVITATION</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POSTERS AND HANDBILLS</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FACE-TO-FACE RECRUITMENT</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOSTERING COMMUNITY WITHIN CHORUS</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MENTORSHIP</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FINDING A MENTOR</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEER-TO-PEER MENTORSHIP</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUSTAINABILITY</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SINGING AT DUNCAN McARTHUR</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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I would first like to thank my supervisor Dr. Benjamin Bolden. Thank you for your kindness and patience. Thank you most of all for encouraging me to learn and grow using a medium that truly speaks to me: making music.

To Dr. John Freeman, thank you for always being honest, for your words of encouragement, and for always challenging me.

Andy Rush, you are an exceptional human and a wonderful teacher. You made this project sing.

I am so grateful to have had the support and encouragement of my parents. I love you both. You are the most courageous, kind, and generous people I know. When I grow up, I want to be just like you.
A few weeks after the teacher-candidates returned from their first practicum, we decided it was finally time to give the choir a name. I announced our branding at our next rehearsal, hoping to no avail that someone from the group would, in their frequent moments of brilliance, come up with something killer…and of course a little bit nerdy. After no one made any suggestions during rehearsal, I asked people to email me if a name came to them.

The following week, I had taken up quarters in the graduate student conference room in the basement at Duncan McArthurs. I was up to my elbows in Crayola Markers updating the sandwich board with announcements about our next rehearsal, when a colleague popped his head in the door. “Whatcha up to?” be said. “Just getting the sandwich board ready,” I said. “Of course you are,” he said. Of course, those weren’t the words I heard when he spoke.

“Of course! ofChorus!” I exclaimed.

In September 2014 I began an un-auditioned co-curricular choir at the Faculty of Education at Queen’s University. We met twice per week during a 40-minute lunch break. The majority of our music learning was done by ear. For the most part the repertoire we sang consisted of new independent Canadian pop music that was arranged by myself as well as with the choir.

The demands of the school year can produce a significant amount of stress in students and teachers alike. It is important for all of us to engage in activities in which we can exercise self-care, especially for teachers, as they spend much of their time caring for others. Recognizing
singing positively impacts my own well-being, I sought to provide those at the Faculty of Education with opportunities to experience positive well-being through singing with others. Certainly there is no one correct path to self-care, and both physical activity and artistic experiences play critical roles in developing and maintaining positive well-being. of Chorus provided the community of teachers and learners at the Faculty of Education with an opportunity to engage in an aesthetic means of self-care, demonstrating an alternative to physical activity.

This document describes the process of creating of Chorus. It is divided into three sections: 1) curricular objectives; 2) community development; and 3) of Chorus comes to life. Although of Chorus was co-curricular in nature, it remained an agent of disseminating curriculum. Therefore, it was necessary to examine what exactly the curriculum was. The community development section describes the manner in which of Chorus activated community within the choir as well as the Faculty of Education community. of Chorus comes to life is an in-depth examination of the daily routines and structure of of Chorus including scheduling, repertoire and arrangements, performances, and recordings. This document provides teachers, choral directors, and even potential future leaders of of Chorus with an example of how to run a co-curricular or community choir.


curricular objectives

of Chorus had not yet come to be; it existed only as an idea or a dream. As I dreamed of it, I imagined what it might sound like as voices filled the corridors of Duncan McArthur Hall. In imagining what it might look like, almost as if to wish it, I hoped that all kinds of people would come together and share in a meaningful aesthetic experience. I dreamed of diversity, not just in terms of the participants themselves, but also in our repertoire, and in the types of conversations and engagement that could occur. I imagined of Chorus as a space in which anyone would feel comfortable being themselves, one where people could make mistakes without consequences, and one where people could experience success. In my dreams we celebrated our humanness. In my dreams we had the kind of fun that is so great that it should be deemed illegal. I imagined us singing our hearts out, releasing the tension that can live there.

When it came time to realize the of Chorus dream, I was not disappointed. Our first rehearsal saw over 60 participants, all with varying musical abilities, ages, cultural and
Mission statements put everyone on the same page; they should be reviewed on a regular basis.

socioeconomic backgrounds, and physical abilities. Together we sang loud and hard. Each rehearsal thereafter continued to bring my dream to life. While participation dwindled to between 20 and 30 people, we remained a diverse group of individuals, and we made beautiful music together. What was it about of Chorus that kept participants coming back for more? What was it about of Chorus that consistently attracted new participants?

MANDATE AND MISSION

Co-curricular activities, while not being bound by a set of standards, are still agents of curriculum, disseminating both explicit and implicit curricula. Therefore, it is important to consider what the aims of the activity may be, and how they can be achieved. Additionally, having a codified set of goals provides the group of individuals involved in an activity with a map that can lead them towards their shared destination. A mandate and mission can act as that road map (Mills, 1989; Rademaker, 2003).

An alternative setting for learning and personal growth, of Chorus was co-curricular in nature, and therefore a platform for delivery of curriculum. The design of the curriculum for of Chorus was considered through the development of a mission statement; how and what we learned would then be grounded in a shared set of goals and ideas. I began by considering the ways that of Chorus might affect the participants themselves, and how of Chorus could impact the environment at Duncan McArthur. I wanted of Chorus to be a place where everyone felt welcome. I wanted it to be a place that celebrated and recognized humanness. I wanted it to be a place where people could come and have relief from stress. I wanted it to be a place to experience a supportive and nurturing community. I wanted it to be a place where we could learn together and make mistakes together, without having the fear of high stakes consequences. Grounded in the idea that singing is for
everyone, the explicit curriculum for ofChorus was centred on engaging with concepts of well-being, inclusivity, and equity; the hidden curriculum would be teaching and learning about issues of social justice. The mandate and mission statement reads:

ofChorus’ mission is to empower and celebrate the diversity of the Faculty of Education, to enable critical self-reflection, and to have fun through singing and collaborating musically with others.

Although I wrote the first draft of the mission statement for ofChorus, I sought input from its membership. I felt it was important to include participants in shaping a statement from which we would draw our purpose, as well as important to provide participants with the opportunity to take ownership of their shared project. Mandates and mission statements are living documents, meaning they should be revisited and updated on a regular basis in order to best reflect the evolving aspirations of the group that they represent (Rademaker, 2003). ofChorus comprised of two different groups of singers over the span of two years. At the beginning of its second year ofChorus’ mission statement was revised in consultation with those singers present. The nature of the membership of ofChorus, a group situated in a school setting, is that its membership changes

MISSION STATMENT

ofChorus is a co-curricular choir established in September 2014, at the Queen’s University Faculty of Education in which anyone can participate. In order to ensure the opportunity to sing with others is made available to as many Faculty of Education community members as possible, no previous musical training or singing experience or auditions are required. Membership in ofChorus does not hinge on attending each and every rehearsal, as the academic demands of the pre-service teaching and graduate programs do not permit much leisure time; members may attend as many or as few rehearsals as they wish in order to maintain a healthy work-life balance. To promote the notion that singing and making music truly is for everyone, the repertoire with which we engage reflects the diversity of Canadian society, focusing mainly on new arrangements of Canadian content.

The mandate for ofChorus is to provide the Faculty of Education community with opportunities to collaborate musically with others, to enable the development and/or refinement of musical and collaborative skills, and to challenge and enrich the academic and cultural life of the Faculty of Education.
Sharing in the experience of singing with others is special; there is nothing quite like singing beautiful harmonies with others.

from year-to-year as people move on after graduation. With a new school year come new voices. Therefore it was important to revisit the mission and mandate at least once per year, ideally at the outset of the school year, to allow the director(s) the ability to plan programming for the year with a cohesive set of goals and values in mind (Schlossberg, 1989; Sullivan, 1993).

EXPLICIT CURRICULUM

WELL-BEING.

There is a growing body of literature that suggests a connection between singing with others and positive well-being. Singing with others has been known to reduce stress, aid in the development of increased feelings of self-worth, and promote feelings of happiness and joy (Clift & Hancox, 2001; Glick, 2011; Judd & Pooley, 2014; Kenny & Faunce, 2004). When participating with of Chorus, people engaged in exactly that: singing with others. I sought to further support well-being through operationalizing a meta-theory of Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 2000), which views humans as active participants in their personal growth and well-being. The meta-theory, an organismic dialectical approach to SDT, begins with the idea that humans are active organisms that are growth and challenge oriented, and that we are motivated by three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. This theory is grounded in Basic Psychological Needs Theory (BPNT), which proposes that humans are more likely to experience positive well-being if all three of the basic needs have been met (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Autonomy, competence, and relatedness were considered throughout the process of planning and running rehearsals, selecting repertoire, engaging in performances and recordings, and arranging social gatherings for of Chorus. Accounting for these needs aided in of Chorus’ membership retention (Fredricks, Hackett, & Bregman, 2010). Engaging in this organismic dialectic approach to self-determination created an environment in which positive well-being could be actualized.

Autonomy. As of Chorus is an optional co-curricular activity, participation in of Chorus immediately is autonomous in nature. Additionally, as regular attendance was not a requirement of membership, this further supported the need for autonomy. By providing participants with some choice in repertoire and vocal placements, and
by regularly seeking participant input in arrangements (i.e., add your own harmony if you want!), autonomy was also supported.

**Competence.** Although participants had varied levels of musical ability, *of Chorus* provided several opportunities for students to experience feelings of competence. In order for students to experience growth, it was important to provide them with a challenge to take on a leadership role within the choir; they were consulted and collaborated with on repertoire and arrangements, and encouraged to bring in instruments and to lead the group in learning a song.

**Relatedness.** Relatedness can require cultivation; however, *of Chorus* was ripe with opportunities to develop interpersonal and professional relationships, and build community. Sharing in the experience of singing with others is special; there is nothing quite like singing beautiful harmonies with others. Resonating our bodies at the same frequency and working towards a common musical goal, can create a unique bond between people (Bailey & Davidson, 2002, 2005; Baslnes, 2012). As one of the primary goals for *of Chorus* was to develop community, although organic to the process, it was important to take time to foster the development of community and personal relationships within the choir.

Programming itself needed to be relatable to participants. Although it is never possible to please everyone, they will be more likely to fully engage with the process if they like the music they are singing. In providing a diverse range of musical opportunities and seeking group input on repertoire selection, participation in *of Chorus* further supported relatedness.

Encouraging participants to share their ideas and opinions, and reminding them to treat each other with respect and dignity and to value one another’s differences, helped to stimulate authentic group learning experiences, and also provided everyone with the opportunity to participate in creating an authentically inclusive community.

"whilst also supporting the need for competence (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Fredricks, Hackett, & Bregman, 2010). Those with developing musical abilities may feel more challenged while engaged in learning repertoire. Therefore, repertoire selection needed to be such that the level of difficulty was not so burdensome that participants were not able to do it, providing a challenge and the opportunity to experience competence. Those with more established musical abilities were given the opportunity to take on a leadership role within the choir; they were consulted and collaborated with on repertoire and arrangements, and encouraged to bring in instruments and to lead the group in learning a song."

"..."
INCLUSIVITY.

Issues of accessibility and equity are essential components of inclusivity, and inclusivity is central to community development. *Chorus* began with the idea that singing is for everyone. In order to ensure that *Chorus* is a fully inclusive environment so that the goal of community development could be achieved, it was important to consider potential barriers (Ringgenberg, 1989) with respect to accessibility and equity.

All rehearsals, performances, recordings, and social events were held in accessible venues. Any and all repertoire materials (i.e., lyric sheets and musical arrangements) were made available for participants in multiple formats, including large printed lyric posters, personal music binders, and audio prompts. Providing multiple formats is essential to an equitable and accessible learning environment (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009).

It was important to consider the costs associated with creating these learning tools, as there were no fees associated with participation in *Chorus*; it operated on a minimal budget. By printing only a limited number of music books and requesting their use be dedicated to those who most needed them, through creating audio prompts during the arrangement process or opting to make audio prompts for more challenging pieces only, and through offering additional prompts as requested, time and money were spared.

As the mandate and mission for *Chorus* was truly grounded in the idea that singing is for everyone, *everyone* was welcome. Establishing early on that *Chorus* be a safe place for participants was imperative. Encouraging participants to share their ideas and opinions, and reminding them to treat each other with respect and dignity and to value one another’s differences, helped to stimulate authentic group learning experiences, and also provided everyone with the opportunity to participate in creating an authentically inclusive community (Knobloch, 2003; Riggenberg, 1989; Schlossberg, 1989; Sullivan, 1993).

“Be conscious of your budget. You can save money (and the environment) by teaching from chart paper lyric sheets, and creating a limited number of music books.”
IMPLICIT CURRICULUM

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Being situated at a Faculty of Education, an implicit curriculum centred on teaching and learning organically arose. Although this was not the purpose of Chorus, it was more than appropriate to discuss aspects of teaching and learning throughout the process, to further support learning and knowledge gained from the various educational programs in which participants were enrolled. On a regular basis, I would highlight specific aspects of my own teaching, providing the group with a rationale as to why I chose those particular teaching avenues. Most often, I discussed the various ways I had accounted for inclusivity in rehearsal and performance planning.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Issues of social justice were infused throughout the explicit curriculum of Chorus. With the goal of creating a supportive learning community, the explicit curriculum asks participants to carefully consider the needs of those around them – to think critically about inclusivity and equity (Carr, 2008; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009; Ringgenberg, 1989). Occasionally I would highlight the social justice element of the hidden curriculum by bringing in content that specifically engaged with social justice. This was not only a means of modeling an alternative method for tackling social justice in the classroom, but simultaneously promoted the consideration of social justice for Chorus as well.
A key purpose of *Chorus* was to foster positive well-being through a sense of community. This section explores the process of building the *Chorus* community. Included are a description of the recruitment process, a discussion of strategies used to cultivate community within the choir, an analysis of mentorship within the community, and a discussion of the community *Chorus* position in the greater community of Duncan McArthur Hall.

RECRUITMENT

Opening day is always an exciting time at the Faculty of Education; by 8:00 am Student Street bustles with all kinds of people eager to orient themselves with the place that will become their home-away-from-home for the coming months. That September was no different. The hallways were bursting with young people filled with energy and enthusiasm, all there for the same purpose: to become teachers. As the newly minted Teacher-Candidates collected their swag packages filled with pens, schedules, timelines, and to-dos, I hurriedly finished putting up posters and readied myself to do some aggressive outreach during the annual barbeque. I could hardly contain my own excitement as I waited for the opening ceremonies to come to a close and for the students to descend upon the hamburgers, hotdogs, and coleslaw. With flyers in hand and a rehearsed speech in my back pocket, I was ready for them.

Recognizing that utilizing only one method of recruitment could result in poor turnout, I approached the task of recruitment using three different avenues: 1) email invitations; 2) posters and handbills; and 3)
face-to-face discussion. Given that the goal of Chorus was to reach as many people at the Faculty as possible, I chose to engage in a recruitment strategy that I hoped would connect with the community - faculty, staff, students, and teacher alike.

**EMAIL INVITATION.**

Before the school year began, I penned an email invitation that was sent to all faculty, staff, and students at the Faculty. I considered the goals of Chorus in composing the email. As a key aim of Chorus was community development, the tone of the email needed to reflect the welcoming, safe, and fun environment that would resonate throughout the year. I also considered the needs of my target audience (i.e., busy faculty, staff, and students) when writing the email. I chose to highlight the key information so that, if people only glanced at the email, they would be able to get as much information in as short amount of time as possible. With the subject heading stating: “Singing is for everyone! Choir at Duncan McArthur,” the email read:

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**Singing is for everyone!**

Beginning September 4th at 12:50 PM in Student Street (across from B180), myself and I/S Music Instructor Andy Rush will be starting a **Choir at the Faculty of Education.** This choir is open to any and all who wish to join! No experience is necessary!

We will be singing a lot of cool and lesser known Canadian and independent music, spanning all sorts of genres. We’ve got something for everyone!

**Rehearsals will run on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:50PM to 1:30PM.** You’ll find us in Student Street beginning **Thursday September 4th!** You’re always welcome to come to both rehearsal times, but if you can’t commit to two rehearsals we’d love to see you at one!

Whether you’re an experienced singer and chorister or you’ve never sung a note before in your life, this is the choir for you! (Instrumentalists are welcome too!!) So come one come all and join in on the fun!

Feel free to contact me with any questions you may have (or suggestions for repertoire): katryn.hurst@queensu.ca.

Hope to see you there!

All the very best in the coming school year,

*Katie Hurst*
Don’t make posters too busy. Use a limited number of fonts, and any key information (i.e., dates, times, and locations of rehearsals) should be visible from a distance.

Utilizing a list-serv can be a great way to reach people en masse. However, there comes a point when email is not an effective outreach strategy, and that is when your target audience is bombarded with a barrage of messages. At the beginning of the school year, our inboxes are often mired with notifications, requests, and messages all demanding our attention; this can become overwhelming with important information sometimes overlooked. For this reason, I chose to supplement email invitations with posters and face-to-face recruiting.

**POSTERS AND HANDBILLS.**

A handful of well-placed posters can serve as advertisements as well as reminders for potential participants, and when used in conjunction with handbills, can be very effective recruitment tools. Just as our inboxes can become overstuffed with messages, so can our bulletin boards; they become walls of colourful papers, each poster with its own agenda, overwhelming our senses. In recruiting for Chorus, the handbill acted as a portable extension of the poster, as an object that could be physically engaged with by potential participants, hopefully capturing their interest. In designing a poster or handbill, one must consider how to get a poster to stand out in the crowd, whilst also representing the needs and goals of a group or event.

Many community organizations or groups are faced with the challenge of a minimal budget. Chorus was no different, and as such I chose to design the poster and handbill (Appendix A) myself and print it at the campus print shop rather than hire a graphic designer and pay for the more expensive costs of a larger printing shop. As my design skills are rudimentary at best, I chose to work with an online design generator: canva.com. Canva.com allows the user to adapt pre-existing designs or to create their own with the assistance of pre-fab modern clip art and graphics. Choosing the latter, I created a poster and handbill, again considering the aims and goals of Chorus. Chorus was to be an inclusive, safe, fun, musical space for everyone and the visuals needed to be a reflection of that. Thus I purposefully sought out graphics that represented as many people and groups as possible.

When presented with the opportunity to work with Chorus for a second year, I made some changes to the recruitment poster and handbills. In its early stages, as Chorus did not yet have its name, or logo – which was also created using canva.com, accurately
Do not be afraid to go out and speak to people; face-to-face recruitment works.

representing the brand was paramount. Feeling as though the black background was too heavy, I made the switch to a white one. I also simplified the message by reducing the amount of text and graphics, in order for onlookers to absorb the key information as quickly as possible.

FACE-TO-FACE RECRUITMENT.

Inviting people to participate in an activity via email or poster is all very well and good, but much like designing an effective research plan, it is important to triangulate a recruitment strategy. Therefore, as a key goal of Chorus was to build and strengthen community at the Faculty of Education, it seemed only natural to go out and speak to people face-to-face about trying out for Chorus. Additionally, I am always more likely to attend an event or try something new when someone introduces the idea to me in person. Given that this strategy works on me, I tried it out on others. It seemed as though the best time to reach as many students, staff, and professors as possible would be the opening day barbeque. Hundreds of people would be gathered in smaller groups eating their free lunches, becoming in a sense, dozens of captive audiences ready for me to sell them on the idea of developing community by singing together. I waited until they had begun gathering at tables and in circles of friends on the lawn at Duncan McArthur and then I went for it. Armed with the handbills I had made, I approached each group, politely interrupted their conversations, introduced myself, and shared my prepared 1-minute speech:

My name is Katie, I'm a graduate student here at the Faculty of Education. I'm a Music educator, and my work is centred on singing and well-being. I'm starting a choir. We will meet Tuesdays and Thursdays during shared lunch (12:50pm to 1:30pm). If you've never sung before, and you've always wanted to, this is the choir for you! It's completely un-auditioned. It's going to be a drop-in style choir, so you can attend, as often or as little as you like. We will be using some notated music and doing some learning by ear. So if you don't read music, don't worry! Our repertoire is going to consist of songs you might hear on the radio; largely independent and Canadian pop music. It's going to be so much fun! You'll be able to make friends outside your subject areas and build your resume. If you have any questions my name and email address are on the handbill! Please come out and try it! Tuesdays and Thursdays in Student Street starting at 12:50. Hope to see you there!
I faced some apprehension, but for the most part students were polite with most entertaining the idea. Some were even thrilled about the idea of singing in choir.

After carrying out this aggressive recruitment strategy, we developed a core group of students that ranged from 20 to 30 students (graduate and undergraduate), staff and faculty. Attendance for our first rehearsal was upwards of 60 people; this response lead me to believe that a three-pronged approach to recruitment can be very effective.

FOSTERING COMMUNITY WITHIN OF CHORUS

Lunchtime on Tuesdays and Thursdays determinedly arrived with enthusiasm and excitement. Those whose schedule permitted it would arrive early to rehearsal, eager to find out what new song we would be learning or what trouble spots we would be tackling that day. Tuesday rehearsals were especially energizing. As I readied myself for the day’s rehearsal, I observed students as they caught each other up on their weekends, helped each other with assignments and homework, and encouraged and consoled each other as they persevered through the demands of their programs. Rehearsals rarely began on time, which hardly seemed to bother anyone, myself included; this was the time for fellowship, this was our community time.

With the aim of supporting the development of well-being beyond those benefits implicit in participating in singing with others (Bailey & Davidson, 2005, 2002; Balnes, 2012; Clift & Hancox, 2001; Glick, 2014; Judd & Pooley, 2014; Kenny & Faunce, 2004), I endeavoured to engage the choir in a meta self-determination process (Deci & Ryan, 2000). This process is centred on the belief that humans are growth-oriented and motivated to live well; if humans’ basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness are attended to, they will be more likely to achieve positive well-being.

With the understanding that relatedness is basic to optimal psychological functioning, community development would play a critical role in realizing the well-being goals of CHORUS. Furthermore, a commonly reported motivation for participating in co-curricular programming is making friends and seeking...
community (Fredricks, Hackett, & Bregman, 2010; Mills, 1989; Roberts, 2011), giving further significance to the consideration of community development in the program design for *chorus*.

### INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS.

Making participation in *chorus* available to all students, faculty, and staff resulted in a diverse community of singers with participants from varied program tracks. With participants being from varied program tracks and subsequently having varied school schedules, it became clear that, for some participants, the time they spent with *chorus* was the only opportunity they had to engage with one another. Evidently, in order to foster the potential development of interpersonal relationships, community time needed to be included in all rehearsal schedules, performance, and recording plans.

*chorus community time*. As many students had classes immediately following rehearsal, I chose to situate community time at the beginning of rehearsals. Not only did this provide me with a clearer understanding of how much teaching time I actually had during rehearsals, I also was confident that cultivating community from the outset of rehearsals could positively effect the co-creative process (Smithrim & Upitis, 2002; Upitis, 2001). I included community time before and after performances. The time before was meant to facilitate anticipation and excitement, as well as to provide additional positive emotional supports for those who experience performance anxiety. Community time after performances provided the opportunity to further cultivate the relationships that can form when sharing in a musical performance (Bailey & Davidson, 2003, 2005; Clift & Hancox, 2001; Judd & Pooley, 2014). As time management during recording is critical, community time took place during our dinner break. As we ate with one another, some even brought food and goodies to share. We also shared in the victories and defeats of our days, and excitedly discussed ideas about what we should record next.

*Friendships arose*. Although I recognized that friendships would develop between members, I did not realise what that really meant. I noticed groups of people from *chorus* communing and sometimes even doing homework in the Duncan McArthur hallways throughout the week. And I was always excited when I would see members of *chorus* supporting one another by attending each other’s various class presentations, as well as artistic and performance events.

### MENTORSHIP

*We’d met only a few weeks earlier at a Rabble Singing event. A group of people, most were of retirement age, were gathered in the foyer of Kingston’s Grand Theatre. Together we were going to learn a song and*
then we were going to video tape it and put it on YouTube. One of the songs we learned, written by Canadian music duo Tegan and Sara, was one I had never heard. Needless to say, I thoroughly enjoyed singing the lyrics “Here comes the rush before we touch Come a little closer” (Quin, Quin, & Kurstin, 2012) with this raucous crowd. It was a particularly lovely day outside that day, so I decided to walk over to Andy’s house, where we were to have our first official meeting. When I arrived, I nervously knocked on the front door. Excited to see me, he guided me to his well-trafficked and welcoming home studio. We sat down and I shared my vision for a choir at Duncan McArthur. I don’t think it was five minutes before we started brainstorming potential repertoire. Andy was actually going to happen.

Mentor-mentee relationships have been shown to be of value in teacher-education settings, specifically with respect to developing teachers’ capacities for engaging with the arts (Cherian, 2007; Kane, 2014; Pence, 2014). Co-curricular activities like Chorus are environments that can organically support the development of mentorship (Pence, 2014; Roberts, 2011; Upitis, Smithrim, Garbariti & Ogden, 2001). A good mentor helps you to facilitate your own growth, and this was most certainly the case with my mentor Andy Rush. He gave me plenty of support without too much interference. As my lexicon of choral arrangements was still developing, it was incredibly helpful to have a mentor who was willing to share his music with me. As Andy was keen to bring in different written arrangements, I was then able to explore collaborative group arrangements that would be developed by ear. These collaborative arrangements would become the setting to many fruitful learning opportunities for developing teachers. Participants with less musical experience would be provided with an accessible model for engaging with music, while participants with more musical experience would be provided with an alternative method for engaging with music as a group. The first time I facilitated Chorus in co-arranging a piece of music, Andy was there acting as a participant, wholly engaged in the process. His active participation encouraged other participants to buy in to the process. I knew that, if things were not working out, he was there to back me up. Being able to lean on an experienced teacher for that kind of support, gave me the freedom and confidence to try things even when I was unsure of their outcome.

FINDING A MENTOR.

Finding a mentor, or group of mentors, is equally as important as recruiting singers for the choir. Simply put, it wouldn’t be much fun without either of them. I was fortunate to have had a mentor who was situated within Duncan McArthur, who was recommended to me by my supervisor and who made himself available for
nearly every rehearsal and performance. Should one person who fulfills all of these exact qualities not be available, do not dismay as mentorship can take many forms. Considering that a mentor-mentee relationship can exist with more than one person, consulting multiple people as mentors could provide a rich and diverse body of experience to draw from. It is also important to consider what you are looking for in a mentor prior to seeking out these relationships, as this set of criteria allows potential mentors to understand their role in helping you facilitate your vision. Begin the search for a mentor by contacting the directors of community choirs in your area, speak to former teachers and choir directors, and reach out to colleagues and friends. If you are unable to establish a weekly mentor-mentee relationship with one individual, do not hesitate to ask for help in other ways. A conversation about suggestions for repertoire over a cup of coffee, having a second set of eyes review your notated arrangement, or talking through rehearsal plans with a colleague can be extremely helpful and does not require an unreasonable amount of another person’s time.

PEER-TO-PEER MENTORSHIP.

Some of the ways in which mentorship and community were exemplified in the program can be found in the story of an unlikely partnership.

*It was just before the winter break when two members of *of Chorus* approached me,* as *they were interested in getting together on the weekend to work on some winter holiday-themed music for *of Chorus* to sing. I had noticed the two of them had become close since the beginning of the year, but I assumed that they had established their friendship elsewhere. I got to know them while we worked on arrangement. As it turns out, they met each other on the first day of *of Chorus.* I learned that one was a music teacher, and the other was a science teacher, and that they had no classes together. There we all were, hanging out in the music room on a Saturday afternoon, just making music. All of a sudden the science teacher is right in there, up to her elbows in holiday harmonies.*

The community that emerged in *of Chorus,* was one that encouraged the development of personal and professional relationships. The openness of *of Chorus* attracted participants with diverse teaching and professional backgrounds, many of whom were eager to further the development of their professional skills. Over time, as the community developed and as relationships developed, more and more I would notice participants sharing their knowledge and engaging in discourse about teaching and learning. Unexpectedly, participants had begun to mentor one another.

SUSTAINABILITY.

Especially when making an aesthetic contribution to an already existing community, it is important not only to consider what
that contribution might be, but also what its future might look like, as taking it away could be more damaging to the community than not doing it at all (Roberts, 2011). One characteristic of a co-curricular activity situated in a post-secondary setting is that leadership and membership can change from year-to-year; therefore, community development and mentorship go hand-in-hand with creating and providing sustainable programming.

As the nature of Chorus was such that membership fluctuated and evolved, regularly providing new material was required to maintain an equitable balance of challenge for participants. Having multiple leaders contributing to the development of repertoire and the execution of programming can prevent leader burnout. Anticipating the future direction of the group not only provides participants with valuable professional development opportunities, but speaks to the collaborative environment that exists within the Chorus community.

SINGING AT DUNCAN McARTHUR

I was riding the bus to school one morning, when a pal from my softball team got on the bus. I wished him a good morning, and we began to chat. As was typical of Chorus rehearsal days, I had my guitar strapped to my back. My friend casually asked why I needed to bring it with me to school that day. When I told him that it was a rehearsal day, he was delighted. He proceeded to tell me how he’d gotten into the routine of eating his lunch in Student Street, so that he could unwind while listening to the choir. He told me he thought that our presence in the building lightened the mood. It reminded him to put our ideas into practice for ourselves as learners as well.

I situated rehearsals in Student Street, the heart of Duncan McArthur Hall, as it was a fully accessible space that did not require advanced reservations, and it was very visible. As seeing others actively engage with an inclusive community in this post-secondary setting promotes the notion that inclusive communities can be cultivated at the post-secondary level (Mills, 1989; Roberts, 2011), visibility would be one of the ways in which Chorus could contribute to the greater community at Duncan McArthur.

As a community at Duncan McArthur Hall, Chorus modelled inclusivity, diversity, and respect for our physical space. As the majority of rehearsals were held in a shared space, it was incredibly important to properly maintain it. We were careful to remove any residual tape left behind from our lyric posters, and did our best efforts not to block entrances, exits, and desired routes to class. The sandwich board that was used to remind everyone about upcoming rehearsals and events weighed no
more than 250g, making it light enough for anyone to move. Maintaining our physical space allowed us to show respect for our fellow community members whose ears would be bombarded with our musical adventures twice a week.

There is a growing body of literature that suggests exposure to music can positively influence listener well-being (Boyes & Reid, 2005; Chin & Rickard, 2014; Saarikallio, 2011; Unwin, Kenny & Davis, 2002). By situating  "Chorus in a public space, we were able to provide the community at Duncan McArthur with regular opportunities to be exposed to music, and new music at that. "Chorus made a lot of noise in Student Street, yet not once were we asked to lower our volume. That not one person approached me with a single complaint is remarkable; I take this as a sign that the greater community supported the learning that took place while we raised our voices.
This section outlines how we brought \textit{Of Chorus} to life by exploring the day-to-day routines and structure of \textit{Of Chorus}. Included in this section are discussion of repertoire selection and arrangement, the creation of the schedule for \textit{Of Chorus}, as well as a description of rehearsals, performances, and recordings, accompanied by a rationale centred on the idea that singing is for everyone.

The repertoire we engaged with needed to reflect the well-being aspirations of \textit{Of Chorus}. The songs we sang needed to be upbeat; they needed to be able to take you to positive musical places; they needed to be happy. Arrangements needed to be accessible enough for novice participants, but they also needed to carry a challenge heavy enough to keep those with more musical experience interested. As the rehearsal would be the setting of \textit{Of Chorus}’ aesthetic discoveries, the songs would be the vehicles that took us on our wonderful adventures.

\textbf{REPERTOIRE SELECTION.}

\emph{When \textit{Of Chorus} existed only in its infinitesimal idea stage, I had just begun volunteering for the campus radio station. My friend and I hosted a Monday}
morning program dedicated to showcasing new and independent mostly Canadian music. Suddenly I was surrounded by an enormous amount of music to listen to. I fell in love with many different songs, bands, and artists. All the while I listened to them, I would think to myself “gosh this would be fun to sing with a whole bunch of people.” When it came time to choose music, I found myself deep in the dingy but well-loved basement of Carruthers’s Hall, scouring CFRC’s music library, combing the shelves for inspiration. I was excited beyond bounds to try out some of the wonderful music I’d found there.

Repertoire selection needed to consider several criteria; it especially needed to reflect the well-being aspect of ofChorus’ purpose. The repertoire that ofChorus sang needed to have a musical feel that could foster positive well-being by encouraging feelings of happiness, and joy, and, whenever possible, the text of the music we engaged with needed to represent positive and/or relatable themes. Pop music is popular because it includes musical elements that can evoke emotional responses, often happy ones. I selected pieces of music that contained pop music characteristics including catchy choruses and driving percussive elements, as repertoire needed to be appealing to as many people as possible. Although instrumentation was a limitation, it was important to provide as much musical variety as possible. Varying musical choices enables additional opportunities to create a connected environment for participants.

To encourage developing teachers and novice musicians to feel confident enough to engage in leading the other ofChorus members learning a piece of music, or simply to engage in learning music with others, the repertoire we learned needed to be not so complex that participants could become intimidated by it and subsequently disengage from the process. At the same time, repertoire needed to be accessible enough for novice participants to have the confidence to entertain the notion of taking a leadership role, whilst also being challenging enough to hold the interest of participants. Below is a list of ofChorus’ repertoire.

- Wicked Little Girl* – Dawn and Marra
- Manna for the Soul* – Ash & Bloom
- One Thousand Parasailors* – Jordan Klassen
- First of the Last to Know* – Peter Katz
- Deny, Deny, Deny* – Joel Plaskett
- Both Sides Now* – Joni Mitchell
- Nothing but a Child – Steve Earle
- Song For A Winter’s Night* – Gordon Lightfoot
- Bewitched* – Katie Beth
- Moon Stars Sun* – Andy Rush
- Yellow Door – Kevin Fell

*Canadian Content
ARRANGEMENTS
The purpose of *Chorus* was to provide as many people as possible with the opportunity to sing with one another. As the *Chorus* environment was such that it would be able to welcome new participants at any given time in the process, its repertoire needed to be constantly and consistently updated and expanded. What we were able to do was constrained by the amount of practice time we had. Arrangements did not only have to be easy enough for musicians to learn in 20 minutes; they had to be easy enough for anyone to learn in 20 minutes. Each person who participated in *Chorus* would come to choir with her or his own set of musical experiences and level of musical abilities. Some folks might have been told they were bad singers, or maybe someone had heard that singing in choir is “uncool”; whatever the case may be, the act of singing on its own can be intimidating. In singing with others, we engage in an act of vulnerability (Bailey & Davidson, 2002, 2005; Balsnes, 2012; Clift & Hancox, 2001; Glick, 2011; Judd & Pooley, 2014; Mellor, 2013). As such, levelling the playing field became ever more important. There is safety in numbers; if we all engaged in learning a piece of music from a similar point of experience, we could see a reduction in potential barriers to participation. Arrangements needed to be accessible enough for everyone to learn, and they needed to be exciting enough for everyone to want to learn them.

“Using our ears, we learned together prompted by larger posters of lyrics made out of chart paper and markers.”

NOTATION.
Using notated music with *Chorus* was costly and time-consuming. I was also concerned that using notated music might deter students with less musical experience from participating. Rather than provide every student with notated music, we learned together using our ears and were prompted by large posters of lyrics made out of chart paper and markers. Any notated arrangements (see attached appendices for sample notated arrangements) were used only as a reference for leading the group. After we had firmly established ourselves as a group, participants

“Arrangements needed to be accessible enough for everyone to learn, and they needed to be exciting enough for everyone to want to learn them.”
with developed musical abilities requested harder and notated music. At this time, my confidence in my notation abilities was not very high; any notated arrangements I had brought in only served to confuse everyone. Thankfully, I had a mentor with a vast library of choral arrangements to lean on. One of the things I would do differently, had I the opportunity to do this all over again, would be to take the time to hone my notation skills. However, as I continued to develop new content without the constraints of notation, I felt more willing to try new and different things that I might not have been able to articulate using music notation. The constraints left by my own notation abilities enabled some incredibly rich learning and co-learning opportunities.

**USING MY EARS: USING OUR BODIES.**

Although arrangements were not notated, I engaged in a similar process of arranging existing pieces of music. Once I had found a piece of music that I was excited to work on with *of Chorus*, I listened to it over and over. I would sing and dance to it, allowing the music to become a part of my body fully engaging my instrument, while I made decisions about how we would sing it together. I considered how I could have different voices work together to tell both the lyrical and musical stories.

Do not be afraid to bring in an original composition. It will encourage your singers to share their own work.

In an arrangement typical of *of Chorus*, verses and choruses were sung together using existing harmonic structures. To promote accessibility, the melody line was shared between the different voices (i.e., high, medium, low). If the existing harmonic structure of the piece were too simple, it would be expanded. I often selected pieces that contained simple vocal structures, as this allowed us the flexibility to experiment and expand on what was there. Occasionally we used our voices to make instrumental sounds, and our bodies to make percussive ones. Engaging in this type of music making facilitated an environment that encouraged collaboration.

**ARRANGING TOGETHER, OF COURSE.**

When I was initially designing *of Chorus* I considered that participants would contribute to repertoire by bringing in existing arrangements or suggesting pieces for someone else to arrange, I did not expect that we would develop into a community of arrangers. Each time I brought an arrangement
to *Chorus*, inevitably someone would make a brilliant suggestion that would end up creating a richer and more vibrant musical sound. Sometimes adjustments were made out of necessity (e.g., because it was too difficult or I had made a mistake), but these suggestions always seemed to make the arrangements better. Noticing this reciprocal arrangement relationship developing with *Chorus*, I decided to try something completely different. We would create an entire arrangement together, from beginning to end. I hoped this activity would engage students in the process and encourage students to try arranging music on their own or with others, so they might consider sharing it with *Chorus*. The first time we created a complete arrangement as a group, we arranged a song I had composed. Not yet having been recorded, we were all working from the same level of experience. I hoped that bringing in an original composition might give others the courage to do so as well. We later recorded three original compositions, one written by myself, one written by Andy Rush, and the last written by *Chorus* member, Kevin Fell. The following narrative tells the story of *Chorus*’ first wholly collaborative arrangement.

*That day’s rehearsal was held in the Music Room at Duncan McArthur, as the room itself contained a piano and was connected to several other practice rooms that we could use when we broke out into small groups, I was excited and I was nervous. As soon as people started to arrive I began explaining what was about to happen. Having prepared a little bit at the previous day’s rehearsal they were ready and willing to try this out. I nervously introduced the song I had written. It was the first one I had written in a long time that I had felt a deep connection with. When we sang through the song together for the first time, I was overjoyed. Students were singing music I had written, and they were singing it hard. We opened up a discussion about where the song could benefit from vocal harmonies, and then broke off into groups led by musically experienced participants to create them. With participants scattered throughout the practice rooms I took a moment to stop, look, and listen. I could hear people debating about whether or not a certain note would work, and I heard students cheer when they had finally come to their collective decisions. All of these sounds were beautiful, and all of them were ours. I brought all the groups back together, and they took turns teaching us what they had done.*

*Students from the next class had begun to arrive, and we hadn’t yet run through the piece from start to finish. Now with an audience, we sang through Bewitched, and were met with a round of enthusiastic applause. When that day’s rehearsal drew to a close, we had come so far it felt like an eternity had flown by in only 40 minutes.*
We were seated in his studio, Andy and I, thumbing through what he would call our “books of life,” considering when we might perform and working out when and where we would hold rehearsals. I was very keen to hold rehearsals during the school day; I thought lunchtime would be ideal, but neither of us knew when lunchtime was. I decided the easiest thing to do would be to telephone the school and find out. It was August, a busy time of year at the Faculty of Education, so the person on the other end of the phone sounded a little relieved when all I wanted to know was when lunchtime was. I hung up the phone and we were set; we’d hold rehearsals in Student Street, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:50pm to 1:30pm.

Be careful not to over-schedule already busy people.

Designing a schedule for Of Chorus included selecting rehearsal, performance, and recording dates, times, and venues. Paramount to creating an accessible schedule for Of Chorus was consultation of program schedules and calendars. A comprehensive understanding of the schedule of the community in which we were situated allowed us to avoid potential conflicts with respect to rehearsal spaces, to know when students would be in class or on practicum, and to have a better understanding of when assignments would be coming due.

Lunchtime it is! At the Faculty of Education, all Bachelor of Education program tracks share a lunch break. Graduate students, faculty, and staff do not share the same break period although, for the most part their schedules fluctuate from day-to-day. In considering that students might have multiple commitments during lunch period throughout the week, and in order to open up participation opportunities to graduate students, faculty, and staff, we chose to hold rehearsal twice each week, during the shared Bachelor of Education lunch break. People would be given the option to attend on either day and were encouraged to attend both days if they were able.

Consider your community’s annual events and holidays when designing a schedule.
Considering the workload of the participants is critical in scheduling, as overloading students during heavy assignment periods would very likely add to students' stresses, doing the exact opposite of what of Chorus was meant to do. It was also important to speak to participants about scheduling performances and recordings, in order to come up with a number of potential dates prior to booking performance or recording venues.

REHEARSAL VENUES.

The primary location for of Chorus rehearsal was the southeast corner of Student Street, the initial purpose of which was to promote participation in of Chorus, but it also served to provide the Duncan McArthur community with the opportunity to take part in an aesthetic experience, even as passive participants. Rehearsals were also held in the Duncan McArthur Auditorium, the Studio, and the music room. Each rehearsal venue had benefits and drawbacks. Rehearsing in Student Street provided of Chorus with plenty of visibility; however, at times the auxiliary background noise became an issue. Occasionally it was difficult for singers to hear each other, making it difficult to fine tune arrangements. When Student Street was especially busy, singers were forced to stand closer together in order to better hear one another. Surprisingly one benefit to rehearsing in a public setting was how it influenced participants' level of confidence. Perhaps it was because of Chorus was situated within a Faculty of Education, a community that fully supports growth and development, that experimenting with new music in public seemed to aid in ameliorating performance anxiety in participants. When offered opportunities to participate in performances, performance anxiety was almost a non-issue. More intimate rehearsal venues afforded us the opportunity to fine tune arrangements, as singers were better able to hear one another. Rehearsing in the Studio, auditorium, or music room, however, removed our visibility.

LOGISTICS.

Although taking up space in Student Street did require an official booking, there are various annual events and professional development days that take place in Student Street throughout the year. In these cases, rehearsals were canceled or alternate arrangements for a rehearsal space had to be made. Performances or recording sessions were held when the opportunity suited the schedule of the largest number of people possible, and were not held while Teacher-Candidates were on practicum. Contacting the Faculty of Education Events Coordinator was an effective way to deal with these challenges, as the events coordinator has a calendar of scheduled programming.
COMMUNICATING WITH THE PUBLIC.

After establishing a schedule, it should be shared with participants and potential participants. Although the primary use for recruitment posters was for initial recruitment, the posters remained visible throughout the school year, equipped with rehearsal dates, times, and locations. In this way, they also served as a reminder of the invitation to participate with Chorus. Collecting email addresses during rehearsals and communicating via email with participants allows a consistent avenue to provide updates and changes in scheduling. I used a small Post-It Note “sandwich board” to invite the community to rehearsals each week, to notify them of any updates or venue changes, as well as to publicize performances and recording opportunities. Using the sandwich board promoted inclusivity and served to support the philosophy that singing is for everyone.

REHEARSAL.

Several weeks had passed and we had begun to establish a regular group of attendees. Sure enough, it would be a well-attended rehearsal. I was eager to teach the group One Thousand Parasailors (Klassen, 2013). The only lyrics to the song were da da da. It would be so simple! As people began to gather, I was still preparing myself for the rehearsal. I plugged in the speakers and away we went, jumping feet first as they say, into One Thousand Parasailors. We had hardly passed the tenth measure when someone from the group pointed out a mistake I had made in the rhythmic notation, sparking a lively discussion about whether or not we should imitate the recording or sing what I had notated. Certainly we had plenty on our plate for that day’s rehearsal, but instead of worrying about the time, we talked it out. In the end, after we decided imitation was the way to go, we were closer, having collectively engaged in making an aesthetic decision. Every rehearsal that followed this one would be livelier, and more collaborative. As was often the case, my mistakes were a catalyst to communal creativity.

Chorus happened during rehearsals. The primary purpose of Chorus was to create opportunities for people to share in the experience of singing with one another. At rehearsal, we engaged in aesthetic experiences
together and subsequently grew into a vibrant community of learners. As such, rehearsals played a critical role in the facilitation of the mission for Chorus. Considering how the rehearsal would provide additional supports for participant well-being, and how inclusivity and community development could be enacted was paramount to designing a rehearsal plan. Rehearsals on their own, can have many purposes including musical exposure or experimentation; they can be focused on polishing up existing repertoire, or their primary purpose can be to have fun. Although working within the lunch break meant that rehearsals were limited to 40 minutes, all curricular objectives needed to be addressed. Having a concrete understanding of the rehearsal time limitations helped to facilitate successful rehearsals, by enabling the construction of and achievement of reasonable goals for teaching and learning.

REHEARSAL PLAN.

It is possible to do a lot of work in a short amount of time. The following example rehearsal plan (figure 1) demonstrates the goals and achievement timelines for a rehearsal in which teaching time was split between two directors. Although Andy and I worked together in planning rehearsals, when we were each responsible for teaching a piece, we each carried out our own plans of action. The first half of this sample plan represents the means through which I carried out teaching the piece I was responsible for, and the second half is my understanding of Andy’s facilitation style.

**Challenge.** Rather than teaching songs from beginning to end, as repertoire consisted largely of popular style music with fairly simple musical form, songs were analyzed and broken down into smaller repeating sections. The sections would then be taught by rote, using lyric prompts. I often began teaching new pieces by working on the most difficult parts, with the understanding that we might run out of time before learning the whole song. If we were only able to accomplish one part, I felt that learning a difficult component of a piece would not only challenge and excite participants, but also set us up for a quick success at the following rehearsal.

Occasionally we created group arrangements of music during rehearsals, either working from original pieces of music that were created by members of the group or existing music, in which case we would deconstruct the form of the piece together, break off into smaller groups to develop different sections of the piece, and then come back to the group and put it all together. This type of engagement would take up the entirety of a rehearsal, but the following rehearsal would be equally as exciting when we were able to put the
**Figure 1. Sample Rehearsal Plan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ONE THOUSAND PARASAILORS &amp; FIRST OF THE LAST TO KNOW</th>
<th>Running Time: 40 minutes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Materials:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Recordings</td>
<td>✓ Paint-safe Masking Tape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Laptop or Portable Music Player and Speakers</td>
<td>✓ Announcement Poster Re: Performing at Market Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Notated Arrangements</td>
<td>✓ Guitar &amp; Tuner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Lyric Posters and Sheets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Time</strong></td>
<td>Participants arrive and connect with one another as they get settled in, collect notebooks if needed and read any posted announcements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:50 – 12:55</td>
<td>Recordings of Jordan Klassen’s One Thousand Parasailors and Peter Katz’ The First of the Last to Know are played in the background.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>One Thousand Parasailors</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Katie)</td>
<td>Guided listening of One Thousand Parasailors, drawing attention to the form (ABAB) and voicing of the piece. (2.5 minutes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:56 – 1:05</td>
<td>Part A – Everyone learns the melody together by rote. Use arrangement as a guide. (5 minutes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part B – The group is separated into high and low, and everyone learns both parts together by rote. (5 minutes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Run through the piece, if possible more than once. (2.5 minutes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>First of the Last to Know</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Andy)</td>
<td>Introduction of the piece. (2.5 minutes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:06 – 1:25</td>
<td>First listening of the piece is guided. On second listening, participants are invited to sing along. (6 minutes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chorus, as it has the most complex harmonies in the piece, by rote. (5 minutes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Verses, by rote. (4 minutes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Run through the piece. (2.5 minutes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Announcements &amp; Clean-up</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:26 – 1:30</td>
<td>Take poll of singers who are interested in performing at Springer Market Square on the weekend, rain or shine. Details to follow in an email. (1 minute)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tidy Up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Note any additional catch up work for next rehearsal.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

finishing touches on something we had created together.

**Connectedness.** As a key component of the mandate and mission for *Chorus*, community development needed to be accounted for within the rehearsal plan.
Never having to explicitly announce it, communion would organically occur as people readied themselves to sing with one another; community time was included at the beginning of rehearsals. Including community time at the outset of rehearsal promoted the development of a more collaborative and connected learning environment, and afforded me a better understanding of, and more control over, the time limitations of rehearsal.

**Flexibilty.** Of Chorus was meant to be an environment in which people could positively influence their well-being through experiencing low-stakes aesthetic challenges (Deci & Ryan, 2001; Fredricks, Hackett, & Bregman, 2009; Roberts, 2011). As we were working within a very limited time frame, and in consideration that the primary purpose of Of Chorus was to facilitate opportunities for people to sing with one another and to have fun while doing so, perfection was not atop the list of priorities for rehearsals. Remembering to have fun while engaging in an aesthetic challenge can make for more meaningful experiences for participants (Aoki, 2005; Eisner, 2009; Greene, 1977). Being open to make changes to arrangements to better suit the needs and abilities of the vocal landscape at any given rehearsal and being flexible with respect to rehearsal goals, are necessary to the facilitation of positive experiences for participants.

**CONDUCTING**

Most often, the teacher responsible for leading the group was also responsible for musical accompaniment as well. Playing an instrument makes using proper choral conducting technique near impossible. When I was leading the group, I used facial expressions and occasionally used vocal cues to communicate musical ideas with singers. I also danced as I played, using my body to keep time. It is fun to dance your way through conducting, and it encourages others to dance along as well (Murray, 2012). Dancing can help participants ground themselves in the rhythm, allowing for the creation of a more cohesive musical product. This alternative conducting style was in balance with the relaxed format of Of Chorus. Especially for those students with less musical experience, it served as an alternative and accessible way to lead others in learning a piece of music.

**INSTRUMENTATION**

Due to limited access to fully equipped rehearsal venues, and in part because I am not an experienced pianist, repertoire selected for Of Chorus rarely required the use of a piano. For the most part, instrumentation was limited to acoustic guitar, and other portable instruments. At all times, students were encouraged to bring instruments to rehearsal and join in on accompanying the choir.
Students brought a number of instruments, including a harmonica, a violin, a banjo, a ukulele, a djembe, and an acoustic guitar. When rehearsing in venues that included access to a piano, a student would often put it to use. The limitations of instrumentation enabled some incredibly rich musical moments.

After rehearsal one day, I was catching up with a colleague with my guitar in hand; it’s a very small acoustic guitar, and it tends to garner a lot of questions. Soon, we were interrupted by questions from a teacher candidate, who asked about my little guitar. “Can I see that?”

“Sure,” I said. Immediately I began to make beautiful music. Suddenly I noticed the banjo at his feet. “Umm...you wanna jam a tune?” I said. The next rehearsal, we were working with two acoustic guitars, a banjo, and a harmonica. It was hardcore.

VOCAL PLACEMENTS

When working with a consistently fluctuating and evolving group of people, placing voices can be challenging, but it does not have to be. As time was limited during Chorus rehearsals, we did not have the luxury of auditioning and placing each individual voice. Furthermore doing so could potentially dissuade community members with less experience from taking part. I considered vocal placement when selecting repertoire in order to reduce the potential intimidation of placing one’s own voice. Often pieces could be split into high, medium, and low voices. Participants would be asked to select the range that felt most physically comfortable for them, and then to stand together with others from a similar range. If the balance was askew after participants had placed themselves, I would ask for volunteers who felt they would like a challenge to switch parts. I was careful to remind participants that they should be mindful about what their bodies were telling them. If they ever felt physically uncomfortable, then they were to stop and switch to a less strenuous section if they were able.

PERFORMANCES

In my experience with formal choral settings, performances typically occur twice per year, once in December and once in late spring with the second performance being
of higher stakes. Even though our primary purpose was not actually to perform, it was still important to provide those participants who wanted to, with opportunities to do so. I included participants in the planning process. I had ideas about what I wanted us to do, but I wanted participants to feel invested in performances as well. Especially for participants with more developed musical experience, having the opportunity to showcase what they have been working on in rehearsals, in a performance setting, can be helpful in motivating students during rehearsals themselves. As performing publicly can cause anxiety for people; so as not to dissuade this group of people from participating in our choir's full stop, performances were not a requirement of membership.

Our performances mimicked the energy and atmosphere of our rehearsals: one of exploration, enthusiasm, and growth. Our performances took place in low stakes, relaxed environments, where we could simply come together, be humans, and make music together. Our choir performed at the annual Duncan McArthur autumn arts festival, the Kingston Farmer's Market, the Memorial Centre Farmer's Market, the auditorium at Duncan McArthur, and, of course, in Student Street. Although all performances required advanced planning, in some cases, an opportunity would come from someone making a suggestion about singing together on the weekend sometime. Other times, opportunities would come up through connections I had made within the Kingston arts community. The following narrative about our first performance at the Memorial Centre Farmer's Market, our third performance opportunity overall, illustrates what an opportunity can look like.

In late November I received a phone call from a friend of mine, who was organizing a choral music day at the Memorial Centre Farmer's Market and had heard about our choir. I quickly checked my calendar. It would be late in December by then and assignments would be looming in students' minds. Although concerned about turnout, I snagged it. I mean, how could we pass up the opportunity to be showcased amongst our peers? How could we pass up an opportunity to actually participate in the Kingston Choral community? When the day came, our group was expectedly smaller than usual, but everyone was willing to make it work. As we were the last choir to perform, it was later in the day and attendance at the market had slowed. Despite our smaller numbers and only having an audience of vendors, we had a whale of a time. We sang through all of the songs we knew. In order for us to maintain all of our harmonies, we had to take turns singing parts we were unfamiliar with. We improvised and experimented. We laughed and we danced. Perhaps it was because we
were so used to learning in a public setting that we were able to pull this off without worrying about making mistakes. Just as we were running out of new material, a familiar face from Duncan McArthur arrived at the market excited to hear us sing. He was unsurprised and more than willing when I asked him to join us in improvising an arrangement to Jingle Bells. The few of us who had instruments, quickly worked out the chords for the song, while the rest of us hummed our new vocal lines. The confused hush from the near empty market caused one singer to speak up and tell everyone who we were and what we were doing. When we got ourselves together and sang our jazzy version of Jingle Bells, our efforts were met with bright smiles and enthusiastic applause.

**RECORDINGS**

Although we were recording in the Studio, it was not in fact, a recording studio. The Studio is a space at the Faculty of Education dedicated to arts learning and research. Its walls house various works of art, many pieces of which were created by members of the Duncan McArthur community. Tucked away in its southeast corner, is a well-loved upright piano. Throughout the school year, the Studio is the home base for artists-in-residence. For those of us who were lucky enough, the studio was our dwelling place for a graduate seminar or two. It is modest in size. On recording day, with all of our instruments, jackets, backpacks, and sack lunches, the Studio looked packed and busy. We tuned up our instruments and prepared ourselves to sing. Before we began singing, I welcomed everyone and thanked them all in advance for what would make for very hard work. After I'd given a run down of the evening’s plan, we rocked and we rolled.

Recordings were a vital component of the ofChorus process. A recording session offered participants with an anonymous performance opportunity. Students who did not feel they could participate in performing with an audience would be able to experience showcasing the work they had done within the safety of the inclusive, non-judgmental, growth-oriented environment of ofChorus, one with which they had already established familiarity. Recordings also served as documentation of the songs we learned and arranged together. As much of our work was not done using notation, recording was a necessary means of preserving our efforts.

Creating recordings does not require expensive recording equipment. We completed one recording session in the Studio at Duncan McArthur. All recordings were done using a single zoom recorder (i.e., a hand-held digital audio recording device) mounted to a microphone stand. The audio was then edited using Audacity, free digital audio editing software. Recordings can be heard at ofchorus.bandcamp.com.
There is a special kind of connectedness that comes from singing with others. Working together to create that perfect harmony, breathing in and out as one, creates calmness that grounds and centres us. In singing with others, we actively engage in exercising self-care; self-care is essential to healthy living. I started ofChorus because I believe in the power of singing with others, and I believe that singing is for everyone. At first I only planned on running ofChorus for one year, but I was thrilled when a new group of students was interested in getting together to sing. Over the span of its two years, I witnessed the positive effects of singing with others take hold of those who participated and those who listened. It is my hope that this document inspires others to continue singing at the Faculty of Education, and that it inspires them to create other co-curricular and community choirs.

“And all meet in singing, which braids together the different knowings into a wide and subtle music, the music of the living.”

– Alison Croggon, The Naming
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

* Starts Thursday September 4th *

Sing with the Duncan McArthur Choir

NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY
NO AUDITIONS
STUDENTS, STAFF OR FACULTY
EVERYONE IS WELCOME!!

Rehearsals:
Tuesdays and Thursdays
12:50PM - 1:30PM
in Student Street
Contact: Katie Hurst
katryn.hurst@queensu.ca

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ANYONE can Sing with ChorUs

In Student Street
Tuesdays & Thursdays
12:50PM - 1:30PM

No Auditions! No Experience Necessary!

Starts Tuesday September 8th

For more info contact:
Katie Hurst katryn.hurst@queensu.ca
Chorus: Positioning A Co-Curricular Choir within A Faculty of Education

Starts Thursday September 4th

Sing with the
Duncan McArthur
Choir

WHO CAN JOIN?
Anyone! Students, Staff and Faculty! Experienced or not.

REHEARSALS
Tuesdays and Thursdays
12:50PM to 1:30 PM
in Student Street

REPERTOIRE
New, Independent, and
Canadian! Something for all!

no audition necessary

Questions? Contact Katie Hurst at katryn.hurst@queensu.ca
Anyone can Sing with Chorus

No Experience Necessary
No Audition Required

We're in Student Street
Tuesdays & Thursdays
12:50PM - 1:30PM

Your place for community, learning, and fun!

Starts Tuesday September 8th

For more info contact:
Katie Hurst at
katryn.hurst@queensu.ca
APPENDIX B

Chorus: Positioning A Co-Curricular Choir within A Faculty of Education

Score

Deny Deny Deny

Joel Plasket
Katie Hurst

C

G

F

Am

Hey! under cover lover! When you com-in' home? I'm a different lover than I was be-fore—Hey! Under cover lover! Why you ratt-lin' on? What's keep-in' me from lock-in' up this door. Hid-ing in the back seat wait-in' for a dark street trying to find a place to run—Living for the las night, blu-er than the moon light ev-ery bo-dy comes un-
done—A-round, a-round, our love came down Like the Ber-lin wall—Deny
deny you can't deny you let the cur-tain fall.

©
One Thousand Parasailors

Music by: Jordan Klassen
Arranged by: Katie Hurst