

Final Report
IPRO 314
Spring 2010

Executive Summary

This report is a summary of IPRO 314 and the work which has been completed as of spring 2010. The continuing IPRO 314 team, consisting of undergraduates from the Illinois Institute of Technology, is a group of diverse individuals who are undertaking the planning and development stages of a Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Equal Housing Rights March Memorial, to be located on the south side of Chicago.

The intent of this IPRO has been to facilitate the students of Gage Park High School, the authors of this memorial concept, in their endeavor to produce a lasting tribute to the civil rights movement in Chicago. This memorial project will benefit from the involvement of future IPRO teams, utilizing the objectives outlined in this report. This benefit stems from the continuing support that an IPRO team affords, especially in the area of design and implementation.

The IPRO 314 team has guided and supported the students of Gage Park High School, since the early planning of this memorial project, through close communication, experiential and design oriented activities, as well as adherence to their design intent. This has been carried out through the IPRO team's flexible organization and delegation of individual tasks. A flexible approach to the IPRO team's organization has enabled team members to focus their strengths in the most efficient use of time, while encouraging feedback and consensus.

This intermediary team has learned from the difficulties of the previous semester, specifically the conceptual and logistical obstacles that were encountered, and has advanced the memorial project to the point where concrete ideas may now be prototyped. Every effort has been made to better understand the context of this memorial and the desires of its student authors. The findings of this report will be invaluable for future teams as they advance this project toward completion.

Purpose and Organization

In September 2008, a civics class at Gage Park High School learned about their neighborhood. When the topic of civil rights came up, several students were in disagreement whether or not Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. came to their neighborhood to lead an equal housing march during the 1960's. One of the students questioned why there was nothing commemorating the event, and this prompted the civics class to set out to develop such a memorial.

In the spring of 2009, Victor Harbeson, teacher of the Gage Park High School reached out to IIT for support in realizing a lasting memorial to Martin Luther King Jr. and the equal housing rights efforts in Chicago. An IPRO team was assembled to facilitate the High School student's vision for the memorial and relayed valuable information about the organizational needs of the project to the current IPRO team.

In January 2010 a new IPRO team was assembled, with new and returning members, which has been organized to better facilitate communication and the design process. This team is prepared to hand off vital information, regarding the progress of the memorial project, to subsequent teams, which will bring this project to completion.

Organization and Approach

Five of the previous IPRO's members continued on from the fall semester, as this is the second semester of this particular IPRO. They left us with a plethora of knowledge, which gave our IPRO a great starting point earlier this semester. From here, it was a matter of organizing ourselves in order to utilize the information handed down to us. The way we structured ourselves is similar to that of the previous semester. Each of us was not assigned specifically to a particular role, but rather we found that individuals volunteered when particular tasks were necessary. This seemed easier with a larger group, since there were more people to handle various activities simultaneously. Many hands did indeed enable the work to progress smoothly.

Our team's approach was simple. We were left with several ideas and concepts that were important to the students of Gage Park High School, and it was our responsibility to develop these ideas. During our initial planning, our team decided on the general timeline of developing these concepts into several ideas for the students, presenting them to the students and gaining feedback, and then merging concepts into several versions of what the students desired in their memorial. This would be done throughout the course of the semester, repetitively, and result with several unique and similar concepts

First Concepts and Workshop

After the first meeting, the team was debriefed of the previous team's progress by the returning members. From there, the team determined that the first step to take was to develop the ideas and concepts the high school students liked into physical ideas. Our IPRO team decided that there were four main concepts that were distinguishably different that could possibly demonstrate concepts and ideas the high school students desired, so we divided ourselves accordingly, and started designing these ideas.

The first idea was a distributed memorial that would be placed at several locations throughout the city. The second concept was a design that could be placed inside a structure, similar to a museum exhibit. The third design was an outdoor park, capable of attracting visitors, and the fourth idea was a technologically advanced monument to be either isolated, or incorporated in any other idea.

With the designs completed, we planned our first workshop with the high school students. The workshop was designed to present our initial concept designs to the students, and gain their feedback. We held our workshop at the Institute of Design, with the underlying thought of exposing the students to interactive thoughts, ideas, and concepts that might provoke ideas they would like in their vision of the memorial.

The students were receptive of the Institute of Design's space, more in particular, their "Thinking Space." This was an interactive exhibit that helped demonstrate unique, visual, and audio ways to learn about otherwise mundane things such as books, pictures, and objects. These exhibits helped the students become more aware of what options were available in terms of interactive technology.

Our main goal was to gain student input from our four initial designs. The students were broken into four groups, based on each of the four IPRO designs, and then rotated between them all to gain input from all students. What we did with each group was make sure the students started with a

blank slate, in order to gain a fresh perspective from each group, and to foster new ideas to come out that might have been initially discarded. This approach worked well, since we received several differing ideas with multiple underlying themes.

After meeting with the students, our IPRO team met in our individual groups to compile the list of ideas for the individual concepts we developed. From here, we had a more integrated design, complete with high school student input and critique. Our IPRO Team polished up these ideas into something more presentable. From here, we started planning a second workshop to present our redefined designs.

Second Workshop

After presenting our ideas to the students, we received tons of thoughts and concerns of each of them. With these concerns and issues in mind, we set out to rework our designs to fix these issues. After addressing as many concerns as we possibly could have, we met with the students again to represent our designs.

This second time with the students was to gauge overall reaction to our final concepts, and ask what direction they would like us to take them next, as this entire project is their own doing. We structured our second workshop similar to our first. We wanted to make sure we had several degrees of critique from the high school students, so we presented each of our modified ideas to a particular subset of students, and rotated until they all saw each idea.

Workshop Review

Once this workshop was completed, we had a general idea of what the students demonstrated they wanted out of our individual ideas, and that was a basic combination of them all, including as many attributes as we possibly could. During our time left in the semester, we dedicated ourselves to doing so. We divided ourselves into three groups, each with at least one member from one of the four original designs. This was to ensure that four of the main concepts were represented when merging the ideas into one.

Our three final ideas were distinct enough to be recognized separately, but all had similar topics in it. One main characteristic was a building. The students themselves wanted a building of sorts, so several building designs were constructed, and tweaked in a particular manner to cater to other characteristics. We felt that as long as we addressed as many of the student desires while incorporating as many of the things they wanted from last and this semester, we had created sufficient prototypes.

Wrap-up

On the first class day after IPRO Day, we met with the Gage Park students one final time. This last meeting was not a structured workshop, but to inform the students of the progress we made with regards to combining their ideas, and to physically hand over our materials to them for their future use. The students have future plans of meeting with city officials, as well as Mayor Daley, to gain local support for their memorial, and our team agrees that the work we have done over the past semester was for them, and in their best interest to keep our workings.

Analysis and Findings

When we first started out, it was a matter of bringing each of the IPRO members onto the same level of understanding. The previous semester of this IPRO felt that it was most important to focus on the wants of the high school students, and we felt that this was a very valid concern, as well, since the purpose of this IPRO is to facilitate the development of the students' project. After determining how our team would focus our time, planning the remainder of this semester has been relatively clear.

It seemed to the team that having a central starting point was crucial for beginning our work. One main concern was whether or not our ideas would trump the students'. One way we found to fix this was to ask ourselves where our ideas were coming from. We expressed concern about new ideas coming strictly from one of our team members, as opposed to an idea presented by one of the high school students. This logic and evaluation process helped keep the students' main ideas in the forefront.

It was difficult, at times, to understand what the students were looking for. This is why our team has always focused on what the students want, giving us a guiding directive as to where our concepts should originate. We held ourselves to this in order to keep the high school students at the front of this project that we are assisting with.

We have progressed, throughout this semester, from many conflicting concepts to a handful of design pathways which integrate the key intentions of this memorial. The various original concepts have been synthesized into a body of work which is ready for final design consideration and implementation. We find that the next IPRO team will be more than prepared to offer a final design and prototype, based on the information and developments we have documented.

One thing our team was concerned with was making sure those students we particularly worked with were understanding of what we were trying to accomplish. Each of our meetings always brought new people to our workshops, and this semester was no different. There was always a percentage of high school students that were working with us while volunteering their own time, as opposed to coming as a field trip through their class. While the large percentage of continual students was constant, the issue was still prevalent and worth noting.

Regardless of the number or status of the high school students, we found that our new workshop style was more productive and beneficial. Having smaller groups of about five people was easier to pull ideas from, talk with, discuss, and manage than if we were to have worked with one large group of students. We have been able to get more quality work done in a shorter amount of time, and this has been a large advantage when trying to meet our semester's goal.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The work of this initial IPRO 314 team has progressed, in accordance with the desires of Gage Park High School students, through the intermediary stages of this Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. memorial project. There have been successful efforts to reach consensus in design intent and overall approach. This has been achieved through close communication, thought provoking exercises, and brainstorming workshops. The result of this IPRO has been to narrow the focus of this project to a handful of designs which may be synthesized by future IPRO teams. Future teams must provide guidance to keep the high school students focused on practical outcomes, while encouraging them to fully realize their vision.

The IPRO 314 team of spring 2010 recommends that this memorial project be carried over to future IPRO teams until completion. This is important because an IPRO team will be crucial in helping Gage Park High School students fully express their vision for the memorial, and we feel it will be necessary to bring about an appropriate final design. It is further recommended that future teams carefully consider the positive and negative results of this team's methods. They will then be able to efficiently approach a final design and better integrate the high school student's needs with the practical requirements of the memorial project.

A strong consideration should also be put forth by the university as a whole to support this project. As a collaborative member of such a monumental and influential project, helping to support this project in any way, monetary or otherwise, would only help boost IIT's public image and appeal to a more unique group of prospective students.

Actual Budget Expenditures

Bus #1	\$145
Bus #2	\$63
Sodexo Lunch	\$150
Food	\$165
Supplies	\$35