

Interactive Urban Landmark Kiosks For Equal Housing Rights

I PRO 314
Fall 2009

Prepared for:
I PRO 314
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Acknowledgements

The IPRO 314 (Fall 2009) team acknowledges the efforts of the Gage Park High School students and their professor, Victor Harbinson, to bring about this lasting memorial to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the civil rights movement in Chicago. We also acknowledge the support of our professor, Thomas J. McLeish, and that of the Digital Media Center Director, Joy Robinson.

Executive Summary

This report is a summary of IPRO 314 and the work which has been completed as of fall 2009. The initial IPRO 314 team, consisting of undergraduates from the Illinois Institute of Technology, is a group of diverse individuals who are undertaking the planning and early design stages of a proposed Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial, located on the south side of Chicago.

The intent of this IPRO is 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 require the involvement of future IPRO teams, utilizing the objectives outlined in this report.

The IPRO 314 team has guided and supported the students of Gage Park High School, in the early development of this memorial project, through close communication, experiential and design oriented activities, as well as adherence to their overall vision. This has been carried out through the IPRO team's flexible organization and delegation of individual tasks.

The preliminary process has been difficult, owing to conceptual and logistical obstacles, but the groundwork has been laid for future teams, in an effort to better understand the context of this memorial and the desire of its student authors. The findings of this report will be invaluable for future teams as they advance this project toward completion.

Purpose and Objectives

The main purpose for IPRO 314 is to plan, develop, and construct a memorial to Dr. Martin Luther King's efforts in obtaining affordable housing in the Gage Park neighborhood. This IPRO was brought forth through the efforts of students from Gage Park High School's Civics class, and is in its first stages of development. Although our IPRO is new, we as the first team have a sound understanding of the purpose and general plan of the entire project.

As a new IPRO, our team has outlined several major objectives to measure the progress of the overall completeness of the IPRO. Many of these objectives could not possibly be

completed in the first semester of this project, and thus it is recommended that future IPRO 314 groups follow this outline.

1. Meet with Gage Park High School students to gauge interest levels and their ideas about the end product
2. Keep student ideas and concerns prevalent in design process
3. Develop initial concepts of memorial designs from first student meeting
4. Receive feedback from students on developed ideas
5. Upon student approval, develop a prototype of the desired concept
6. Work with school and city officials to determine a place for the memorial

The list of objectives is in no way complete or finalized. In the initial planning stages, these were the main objectives our team saw as major milestones in the project's progress. Over the course of the semester, we continually reevaluated what was feasible in the time we had left. Our process of what we accomplished will be discussed in a later section.

Organization and Approach

The Fall 2009 IPRO team has been organized in a nontraditional manner. There is no concrete structure of designated tasks; team members decide which tasks interest them, and volunteer to do them. For example, a different person would always volunteer to take class notes, depending on who would run the class's meeting. Another would keep track of tasks that needed to be accomplished, and before class would end, team members who could easily do a task would volunteer. There has been no single person that has monopolized on a particular task, or who has done nothing.

The main approach our IPRO team has followed is to develop the high school student ideas and concerns into a viable memorial for the event. It was the expressed concern of our group that we do not take this project on as our own, but instead take the ideas, thoughts, concerns, and issues the high school students have, and develop them into a conceptual design. This design will be reconstructed until the students approve, upon which further development and planning will ensue.

Building on this approach, it has been essential to understand fully what the students want in their design. This has proven difficult, but several attempts have been made to solve this issue.

Early Approach

Our first attempt to understand what the students wanted to construct occurred in mid September, in the form of an introductory workshop hosted and organized by IPRO 314. We structured our workshop in a way to open the students' minds to a new way of thinking about memorials, and then organized a small situational based design game.

After our initial workshop with the students, our team didn't achieve much with regards to the results we expected, but we did receive basic input as to what the students desired in the final product. This workshop included an introductory slide show of several ideas that could be used in their memorial, as well as an initial workshop to determine what they envisioned as their memorial, in the form of a sketch drawing. From our observations and notes received from the students, as well as ourselves, our team started to develop several initial ideas.

From these ideas and observations, our team created distinct prototypes. From here, we reevaluated our prototypes and compared results within our team, and then as a whole compared our design concepts against the initial goals the high school students initially had. We concluded that our ideas did not align well with what the students desired, but that some general design concepts were worth reconsidering.

Redefined Approach

After our first meeting and workshop with the high school students, our team determined that a more structured form of interaction was in order. The main information we took away from our initial meeting was that the student interest was there, their next steps in this process simply were unclear to them. With this in mind, we determined an effective way to involve the students more with our team while learning the information we needed from them.

As a team, our next step was to restart the process we had, outlined in the objectives section as steps 1, 2, and 3. We concluded that we needed to gain more information from the students as to how they would like to proceed with designing this memorial. From here we scheduled and conducted an educational field trip to the Chicago Historical Society to expose the students to several characteristics of exhibits that they desired in their memorial.

Our next meeting's goal was to interact with the students in a more educational environment, and to broaden their ideas about what a memorial should encompass to attain their goals of multiple usability, interactivity, and how to convey their desired story. The trip included free exploration time throughout the Chicago History Museum accompanied by a scavenger hunt. The hunt's purpose was to have the students discover several exhibits the IPRO team thought they would find useful and interesting and interact with them.

As a follow up to what had just occurred, and to get the students to begin thinking about how to incorporate ideas they saw into their goal, as well as understand how user interaction affects people through activity, our IPRO team hosted a follow up workshop to design an exhibit based on the housing marches and their effects. The students created several distinct prototypes based on what they saw and liked. These designs would set the stage for the following workshop.

In a following workshop the next day, the students took concepts and ideas discussed the previous day, and applied them to the design process of their memorial. This workshop was more geared towards initial design of the students' memorials. From this workshop we, as an IPRO team, were more concerned with having the students begin the designing themselves than anything else. This way, the students have a general idea of where they would like to take their project, and it leaves the perfect checkpoint for the following IPRO team to pick up where we left off.

Analysis and Findings

Through working with the high school students, our IPRO team has realized that the students themselves do not have a fully developed concept of what they want in this memorial. Several key attributes have been mentioned, and deemed important, such as the memorial being interactive, having visitors bring a memento from the memorial with them, having the ability to allow multiple people to use it, and have the memorial convey the importance of Dr. King's actions.

We have taken it upon ourselves to take these concerns and desires that the students have, and to create possible memorials that the students approve of. This has been difficult, since our IPRO team has only met with the students three times in an environment that fosters the development of such ideas. From what we did find, however, they are keen on the same several ideas, which tells us a little about what the students deem important

Workshop 1

From our first workshop, our team did not gather much meaningful information. The workshop included a useful drawing workshop to determine the students' initial concepts of the memorial, but it was not as beneficial as we had hoped. Our team had expected to gain a consensus on the basic design of the memorial the students wanted, but instead we found that they wanted something ill-defined and not well planned, such as an informational kiosk. No specifics were known about this kiosk, such as what information it will contain, how people will use it, or even what it stands for.

In the same workshop, we presented the students multiple examples of memorials that were interactive, urban, or containing one of the characteristics the students wanted in their memorial. The purpose of this was to get the students to think on a larger scale, to think of different things that can be used in a memorial, not simply things that have been used frequently in other exhibits. After reviewing these designs, the students were able to conceptualize more descriptive features of their memorial, but still heavily preferred an informational kiosk.

With our first initial meeting out of the way, we tried to design several general ideas around the students' concepts, such as a museum/building, a statue, something interactive, and an abstract event for the memorial's event. We, as a team, found that this

was too vague, and that we really couldn't encompass many of the ideas the students wanted without overshadowing their dreams of this memorial, and that we needed to interact with the students and pick their brains once again.

Workshop 2

Our second meeting with the students needed to be educational, fun, and primarily get them to think outside the box with regards to their memorial. We decided on a field trip/workshop, as this would allow us to expose the students to what we wanted and then find what worked for their memorial. Our team eventually decided on the Chicago History Museum, as it was geared towards conveying historical meaning of events to people, simple for people to understand, and allowed multiple people to use many of their exhibits at once.

With our destination in mind, we wanted to have the students learn as much as possible about the different kinds of memorials and exhibits, and how different each could be. To do this, we designed a scavenger hunt for the students to complete. The goal of the hunt was to have the students interact with many of the museum's exhibits, and find out why the exhibits were created in their particular manner. This helped the students see the different effects of the types of memorials, and how to incorporate their features into their own memorial.

The second part to the field trip was to have the students start developing a museum exhibit, whose focus was the housing marches they were trying to memorialize. The students could use whatever they found interesting at the museum to portray what they wanted. What was the most shocking was that the students skipped designing a museum exhibit, and went right into designing their own memorial.

This workshop was supposed to be a prelude into a future workshop that focused on group designs of the memorial, but since the students wanted to design in this manner, we would not hinder their determination. They came up with several designs that encompassed many different characteristics that they enjoyed while browsing the exhibits. They all had a personal touch, added by each of the groups. One of the biggest benefits for us as an IPRO, though, was that there was now physical proof of the main characteristics that students wanted to see in this memorial.

Workshop 3

The following day the students were work shopped again with our team. Since the main objective of this workshop was completed unintentionally in the previous workshop, our team decided to take it one step further, and work with the class on designing final concepts as a whole.

As always, we wanted to make sure that we were focusing on what the students wanted. We started off by listing the characteristics and functions that the students listed as important, and asked them to evaluate their importance to us. What we learned was that the students were more interested in the effects the memorial would have on the community, and less focused on what particular technologies were included. This meant that the students were realizing what was supposed to be conveyed in a memorial, not what was going to make it useful.

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 early 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 field trips, and brainstorming workshops. The result of this IPRO has been to pinpoint possible obstacles which future teams may avoid, such as allowing the design process to steer far from the original student's intent and not providing enough guidance to keep the high school students focused on practical outcomes. A positive result has come from enabling the students to achieve a more developed understanding of their vision for the memorial.

The IPRO 314 team of fall 2009 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, while laying the logistical groundwork for the final design and implementation. It is further recommended that future teams follow the guidelines set out in this report and carefully consider the positive and negative results of the initial team's methods. They will then be able to efficiently approach this project and discover better methods for interpreting the high school student's needs, as well as developing better guidance tools.

Appendix 1. IPRO Budget

Item	Proposed Expenses	Actual Expenses
Transportation		
- Gage Park H.S (9/17/09)	30.00	0.00
- Proposed travel	30.00	-----
- Chicago History Museum field trip (11/23/09)	-----	0.00 (150.00)*
Travel subtotal	60.00	0.00
Meals for H.S. Students		
- Introduction meeting (9/19/09)	160.00	157.95
- post field trip workshop #1 (11/23/09)	100.00	0.00 (178.25)*
- post field trip workshop #2 (11/24/09)	-----	175.44
Meal Subtotal	260.00	333.39
Prototyping		
- Materials	100.00	0.00
- Machine Shop time	0.00	0.00
Prototyping subtotal	100.00	0.00
Other		
- Parking for students(9/17/09)	20.00	0.00
- Chicago History Museum scout trip tickets	-----	96.00
Misc	70.00	0.00
Total	\$510.00	\$333.39

***Expenses covered by the Digital Media Center**

Appendix 2. IPRO TEAM

IPRO 314 (Fall 2009) team members:

McLeish, Thomas J.—Faculty

Akhtar, Ayesha

Cheng, Eric

Kim, James

Noor, Nashrah

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Parker, Joseph

Petty, Sonya

Schleich, Kenneth

Tan, Sophia