Baloonr Increases Class Project Ideas by 1600%

"Baloonr is the tool for brainstorming in the digital age. Get more ideas and build on the ideas of others on your team. By using Baloonr, the best ideas can be surfaced and selected."

— Martin Schray,
Adjunct Industry Professor of
Information Technology & Management

Overview

Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) located in Chicago, Illinois, is a private, Ph.D.-granting institution with programs in engineering, science, psychology, architecture, business, design, and law.
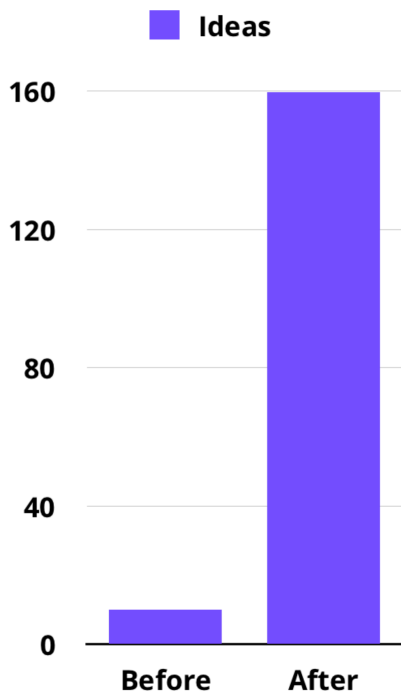
Industry
Education

Size
7,800+ Enrolled Students (2016)

Ideas

160

120

80

40

0

Before   **After**

99%

**student participation
(up from 7%)**

IIT & Baloonr

The Illinois Institute of Technology used Baloonr with a Digital Design Course to come up with app ideas for their capstone projects. In previous semesters, an analogue process was used to generate these project topics, and the bulk of the recommendations came from faculty and the decision-making process was left up to them as well. Before using Baloonr, students were not particularly thoughtful about the ideas they put forward and weren't committed or bought into the process. Unfortunately, this lack of buy-in and enthusiasm for project topics carried into the actual project work.

When Baloonr was introduced to the class, the quality and quantity of capstone project ideas skyrocketed (1600% increase in the number of ideas), as did the overall level of engagement for putting forward ideas (99% participation by students). This increase in engagement was critical to ensuring buy-in and success throughout the rest of the class and project work. The instructors, Jeremy Alexis and Martin Schray, noted how easy and fast it was to get started, especially when compared to the previous method (from several class sessions, to one, 30-minute session). They simply emailed all of the students to get them started, after which the work moved forward in phases with clear in-app notifications and guidance. At the end of a phase, traction and engagement made the top ideas very obvious. It was also easy for students to see and select the projects on which they wanted to work.

Challenges

Brainstorming project ideas

Generating new ideas for capstone projects was always hard, ineffective, and time-consuming before Baloonr. In previous years, the instructors asked students to email their ideas or share them in class, and they generated 10-12 total ideas from the 70-person class. The "public" and collaborative forum for gathering these project suggestions resulted in both production blocking and evaluation apprehension (http://blnr.co/1WBSo5A). Many of the ideas were similar to each other because everyone had heard the original suggestions, and students held-off participating for fear of judgment and a lack of time and opportunity to put their suggestions forward.

"Baloonr was at the center of a better and more innovative student course experience. Students produced more ideas, we captured and managed those ideas more easily and students felt more bought into the process of proposing and selecting projects."

- Jeremy Alexis, Senior Lecturer

Analogue processes and no tool in-place

Ironically, in a course on Digital Design, brainstorming took place in a completely analogue way, where students would write down their ideas on whiteboards and sticky notes.

Valuable classroom time wasted

Before Baloonr, it would take students up to two classes to envision and choose projects. The entire class is taught in 14 sessions, meaning that 15% of class time was spent on generating and selecting project topics. Preferably, much of that time would be reassigned to working on projects and discussing with peers and faculty.

Results With Baloonr

Improved volume, quality of ideas, and increased engagement

Before Baloonr, students were noncommittal toward ideas and not as thoughtful about their participation. Baloonr got rid of of this roadblock; the volume of ideas increased, the quality of student projects improved, and student engagement skyrocketed. Students were "bought into the projects" and "got to work on projects that they had selected" - this buy-in resulted in better project quality and course outcomes. Baloonr generated 160 unique ideas and 99% of the class participated. The capstone project ideas were vetted and ranked by the crowd (in this case, the class), providing the instructors with a high degree of confidence in which ideas to select for the class projects.

50%

time saved on project selection

An anonymous and digital process

Near 100% engagement brought forth a quality of ideas that were never captured on sticky notes. Students put forward, championed, and shaped ideas about what they wanted from the course, all within Baloonr. Introduction of Baloonr significantly changed the structure and effectiveness of the courses.

Regained valuable classroom time

Capstone project selection is now done in 30 minutes. Professor Martin Schray was impressed by the "lightning fast" selection process.

About Baloonr

Baloonr is a bias-free app that levels the playing field, allowing companies to anonymously surface and prioritize information from any group. We help you eliminate group dynamics—like culture and workplace politics—and overcome logistical challenges—like remote teams and outdated processes—so you get the best and most information, feedback, and ideas from your group. Our customers say that using Baloonr is *"like putting on glasses for the first time."*

For more information visit www.baloonr.com.

Address
Baloonr, Inc.
25 Taylor Street, 3rd Floor
San Francisco, CA 94965

Phone
(888) 988-4225

Email
takeoff@baloonr.com

@baloonr   /takeoffatbaloonr