Hello, my name is Emily Tomita, and welcome to my final project for the Technology Integration Project. For my final project, I decided to create a website for my program that allowed learners to access resources and support their learning more effectively outside of the classroom. Our program, the Intergenerational Literacy Program, serves a diverse group of immigrant families in the Chelsea community. We have ESOL family literacy classes, ESOL classes levels 1-3, Spanish language ABE classes, Spanish HiSET classes, and children’s classes. Technology skills and goals vary widely among our learners, so we wanted to make a website that was easily accessible and addressed learning goals for all our different classes.

So, this is our homepage. It has a menu, an explanation of the different features of the website, a search bar, a place for updates, contact information, and a form to contact us electronically.

The idea for this project came up recently. As you all know, the winter of 2015 was historically bad for the Boston area. More than half of our classes were cancelled in the month of February because of snow. Because of this significant interruption to classes, the director of our program and I began thinking about ways to modify our service delivery model so that we could provide ways for learners to continue learning, even when school was cancelled. We decided that creating a school website was one way to address this need. With a website, we could post online resources that learners could access when they couldn’t come to school.

But then we thought, beyond the issue of classes being cancelled, having a website would be a good tool for learners to support their learning *anytime* they were outside of class—maybe when they were on the bus going to work, when they were doing laundry, or after their children had gone to bed. The Internet has a wealth of resources, but finding the good ones can be challenging. We wanted to find *good* resources that were also connected to what people were learning in their classes.

(Show “Class Resources—ESOL” page)

For example, an ESOL class was reading a biography about Abraham Lincoln, so there is an online resource posted that has a guided reading activity about the life of Abraham Lincoln that focuses on past tense verbs.

(Show “Class Resources—ABE/HiSET” page)

The Spanish HiSET science class was learning about the environment, so we posted a link to a YouTube video that describes (in Spanish) the different biospheres of the earth.

(Show “Class Resources—ILP children” page)

We know that parents in our program also want resources to support their children. We have classes for little kids and big kids while parents are attending their classes, so we also have resources to reinforce what the children are learning. Obviously, learners who have kids who aren’t enrolled in a kids’ class can also enjoy access to these resources.

(Show “Class calendar” page)

In addition to class resources, we also wanted to include a calendar so that if learners miss a class, they can check to see what they missed. Each week, we post a new schedule with the themes for all the different classes. With this website builder, it was easy to embed a Google Calendar into our website.

(Show wix.com editing page)

We decided to use wix.com to help us build our website. As someone who is pretty comfortable using computers, but has no experience actually building a website from scratch, it was fairly easy to learn how to manipulate the different tools for building our website. You don’t need any knowledge of writing computer code, or anything like that. You start off by choosing a template, and from there you can customize the website however you like.

(Show mobile view)

We know that computer and Internet access in the homes of our learners is somewhat limited, so we wanted to create a website that was accessible on mobile devices. Wix has an optimized mobile version that allows you to change the way the website looks on smart phones. However, I’m still learning the best way to design the mobile version of our website. So, in the meantime, we’ve changed the setting so that smart phones still have the regular desktop interface.

(Show website homepage again)

So, what initially started as a small project to address the immediate issue of school being cancelled because of the weather, has since morphed into a long-term project that our school will continue to update so that our learners can continue learning when they aren’t in the classroom. This is still a work in progress. As we unveil the website to more classes, we are getting more feedback about what learners would like to see on the website. Just last week, one class suggested linking news sources to the website, as well as linking to other resources in Chelsea. As the needs and goals of our learners change, so will the content and structure of our website.

Thanks to Diana Satin and all the TIPsters who participated in this project. I look forward to any feedback or suggestions you guys have for me.