**Creating a School Website**

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**POST**

**People**

My learners are adults of all ages (17-76 years) and have a multitude of different learning goals. Some learners are focused on learning English (for jobs, helping children with homework, getting citizenship, etc.), and others are focused on increasing their math and literacy skills in Spanish to take the HiSET test.

In our school, we have laptops and iPads that learners can use in class. One classroom has an interactive white board, and other classrooms have access to a portable LCD projector.

Technology skills among our learners vary widely. Internet connectivity in homes is spotty. However, many learners have access to and are comfortable using smart phones, more so than computers. Many learners are also comfortable using tablet devices. A number of learners report that they frequently use e-mail, Facebook, and Skype.

**Objectives**

The learning objectives for this project are:

1. Learners will be able to access resources outside of class in order to supplement what they are learning in class.

The original impetus for this project was the historic snowfall in Boston this winter. In light of all our cancelled classes (some classes were only able to meet 4 or 5 times in the month of February), the director of my program and I were discussing ways to modify our service delivery. We decided that creating a website would be helpful, not just to give learners access to resources when class is cancelled, but to provide a way for learners to supplement their learning anytime they are out of class.

1. Learners will be able to take more ownership over their learning.

While some learners are proactive about finding ways to reinforce and increase their learning outside of class, there are others who don’t have the time or the skills to find those resources. With this school website, we can give learners an easy way to access resources that are related to the content they are learning in class. This way, learners can play an active role in their progress and learning.

CCRSAE Connections:

1. Language standard: CCR Anchor 4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.
2. Reading standard: CCR Anchor 7: Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
3. Writing standard: CCR Anchor 6: Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

**Strategy**

Because this website is a long-term intervention intended to target learners across all the classes in our school (ESOL leveled classes, ESOL family literacy classes, Spanish ABE classes, Spanish HiSET classes, and children’s classes), there is a wide range of technology skills and technology access to consider. We wanted to make the website available across a variety of platforms: computers, smart phones, and tablets. About half of our learners have access to a computer/Internet in their home, and more than that have access to smart phones/tablets. We used the website [www.wix.com](http://www.wix.com) to build our website because it includes a customizable, optimized mobile website builder.

Once the website goes live, we will introduce the website to different classes. As feedback is received, the website will be modified to meet the new suggestions.

**Technology**

We will use a laptop and a projector to demo the website in different classes. Laptops and projectors are portable technology tools that could be used in any classroom space that has an electrical outlet and a blank wall space. Learners could simultaneously use laptops/computers/smart phones/tablets to explore the website as it’s being introduced. Allowing learners to become familiar with the website in class will likely help learners to use the website more effectively outside of class.

Teachers will need to be technologically savvy enough to be able to navigate the website and explain its features to their learners. One or more teachers will need to be able to set up the website and continue to update it with new resources. Wix.com makes website building accessible enough that a teacher who is generally comfortable using computers, but has no experience writing code to build a website from scratch, can feasibly do it. There are other websites, like [www.weebly.com](http://www.weebly.com), that also provide a similar platform for website building.

**Formative assessment:**

This technology integration project is long-term and implemented across all adult classes in our schools. As such, coming up with formative assessments for all learners about this specific project is a little challenging. Teachers for individual classes may want to create their own assessment methods, depending on how they want their learners to incorporate the website resources into their learning.

Because we wanted to reduce barriers to access, our school website is not password-protected and does not require an individual account to access it. Based on my experiences teaching computer literacy classes, I know that many learners struggle with the concept of usernames and passwords. I didn’t want that extra step to become a barrier for learners accessing the content on the website. Unfortunately, this makes it difficult to track which learners are using the website and how learners are using the website. The only way to assess whether learners are using the website to meet the stated objectives or not is by asking them directly.

Our methods of formative assessment are as follows:

1. Immediately after an introduction to the website in class, give learners a survey to provide feedback about their initial impressions of the website. A template could be as follows:

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| 1. What do you like about the website? |
| 2. What do you *not* like about the website? |
| 3. What do you want the website to have? |

2. A couple of months after the initial introduction, give learners a follow-up survey to see if they are still using the website, how they are using it, what they would like to see changed, etc. A template could be as follows:

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| 1. How often do you use the website? Circle one.  Never Once a month Once a week Two or three times a week Everyday |
| 2. What parts of the website do you use? |
| 3. What resources do you use on the “Class Resources” webpages? |
| 4. What do you *not* like about the website? |
| 5. What do you want the website to have? |

3. As a more summative assessment measure, we could compare learners’ self-reported data on surveys about the website to other assessments (e.g., TABE CLAS-E, in-class quizzes, etc.) to see if there is a correlation between website access and learner gains.