**PROJECT REPORT SUMMARY**

**Workplace Online Retention Class (WORC)**

The Immigrant Education Society (TIES) developed and delivered an e-learning pilot project called Workplace Online Retention Class (WORC) from January 2, 2018 - March 31, 2019. WORC was designed to help newcomers maintain employment through improved business communication and familiarization with Canadian workplace expectations.

WORC was offered through the TIES Learn Learning Management System (LMS), where newcomers with Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) 4-5 engaged with short, interactive English online training geared towards employment. The major activities were a weekly instructional webinar, self-directed learning activities, and teacher support. Altogether 51 students were supported through the program every week to answer questions, review, and provide assistance over two cohorts. The program has helped the participants to increase their confidence level, English language, and business communication skills, computer skills, and retain their employment. Additionally, TIES has been able to increase its expertise to serve newcomer needs efficiently, effectively, and staff received capacity-building experiences as they developed course materials.

## **Lessons Learned**

Following were the key findings of the project:

* The significantly larger client drop-off and mastery rates in Cohort 2 may indicate that a simultaneous teacher presence is *critically linked* to maintaining student retention in online studies.
* Many students had not participated in an e-learning class before, and as such did not have developed habits of self-study.
* A viable e-learning strategy requires a significant investment in IT support that is customized to the unique needs of distance education and e-learning.

Access to the project materials can be made by going to <https://www.immigrant-education.ca/CIESLearn/> and by contacting TIES for log-in credentials. A guide to using WORC was also developed to provide other immigrant service providers with an introduction and step-by-step guide to installing and running their own WORC course.