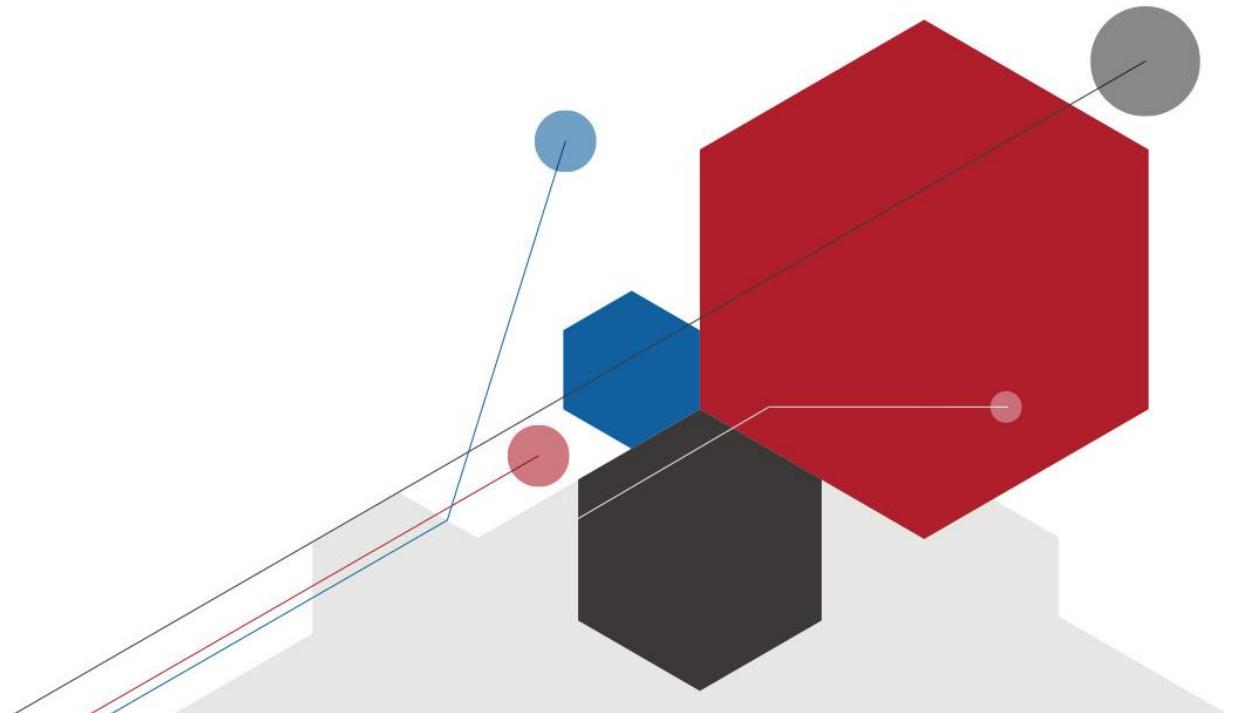# PATHWAYS OF FRENCH-SPEAKING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN FRANCOPHONE MINORITY COMMUNITIES (FMCS)

October 17th, 2016

PRESENTATION OUTLINE

1. Introduction and context

2. Methodology and approach

3. Profile of French-speaking international students

4. Pathways of French-speaking international students

5. Promising programs and practices

6. Remarks and conclusions

7. Questions and discussion

The project sought to deepen the Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship's knowledge of:

- The means of **attracting**, **retaining**, and **integrating** (socially, culturally, economically) French-speaking international students in a francophone minority context.

This project is within IRCC's mandate with regards to the ***Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages 2013-2018: Education, Immigration, Communities***

- IRCC has a mandate to **encourage francophone immigration** into Francophone Minority Communities (FMCs).

Canada is ranked as the 7th preferred destination country for international students

- Between 2008 and 2014, the number of international students increased by 66%, from 184 179 to 304 876. (IRCC, 2014)

- During this period, new government directives were introduced to ease the transitions between postsecondary education, the workforce, and permanent residence

- In 2014, 8% of all students in postsecondary institutions in Canada were from abroad.

Why study international students?

1. Economic integration: this population constitutes a source of potential immigrants who are both young and highly skilled.

2. Advantages for postsecondary institutions: international students increase the pool of potential students and are a source of additional funding.

3. Advantages for the Canadian economy: international students provide important financial contributions to the Canadian economy through tuition fees, housing costs, and discretionary spending.

What is the interest of FMCs with regards to French-speaking international students?

1. Ensure the continuity of the francophone postsecondary education system outside of Quebec

2. Contribute to the population growth of FMCs

3. Improve the vitality of regional FMCs and the pan Canadian francophone community
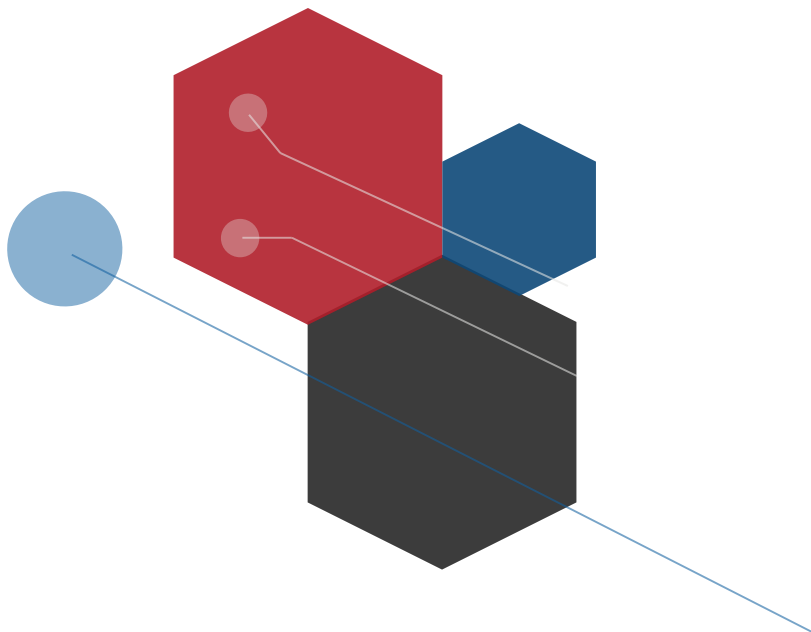
METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

"I think the biggest challenge that could really limit me, is making friends because it's not everyone who can listen to you and know that you are a francophone and be patient with you. With time, this can help improve your English."

– International student from the University of Alberta

"What interests me about Canada is its bilingualism. It's the possibility of speaking in French and studying in English or studying in French and speaking in English in environments that have diversity. It's its political, economic stability, and the mix of cultures too."
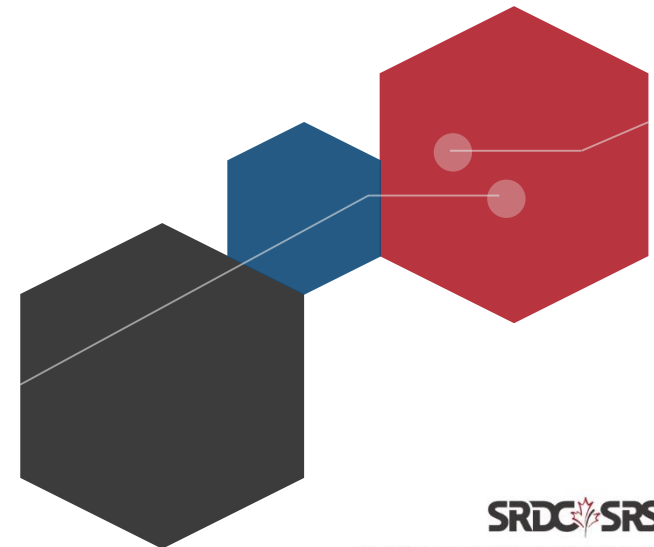
– International student from the University of Moncton

"There was a bilingual aspect, the fact that I could study in French and that I had the right to study in English. In Quebec, universities like the University of Montreal, the University of Québec, it's mostly in French, but for me, I like English also."

–International student from the University of Ottawa

Study's goals

1. To learn more about French-speaking international students with regards to their social, cultural and economic integration within FMCs;

2. Catalogue the services available to international students in FMCs and verify to what extent these services respond to the needs of that population;

3. Identify the factors that facilitate the social, cultural, and economic integration of French-speaking international students in a minority setting; and

4. Highlight promising programs or strategies that support international students in FMCs and ensure their retention in those regions.

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Stream 1 : Profile of French-speaking international students in a minority setting

Presents the profile of international students who reside in FMCs as well as the selected FMCs in the study.

Establishes links between French-speaking international students and their host community

Stream 2 : Pathways of French-speaking international students within FMCs

Describes the pathways of French-speaking international students.

Seeks to identify their needs and the offer of services that is available to them along the immigration and integration continuums

Stream 3 : Promising practices and strategies

Enumerates the factors that facilitate or limit the integration of French-speaking international students in FMCs in Canada while identifying promising programs.

Edmonton, AB

Moncton, NB

Ottawa, ON

The study was limited to three FMCs across the country.

The selection of FMCs was done on the basis of three criteria:

1. Francophone or bilingual university

2. Sufficient pool of French-speaking international students

3. Regional representation of the country (Western Canada, Ontario, and the Maritimes)

SRDC chose an approach that relied on a variety of methods that used both quantitative and qualitative data, from both primary and secondary sources.

Consultations with key stakeholders were conducted through semi-structured interviews and one discussion group.

In total, 46 individuals were consulted.

Sources	Total
Government representatives	8
Representatives from non-governmental organisations	10
Representatives from universities	14
International students	14

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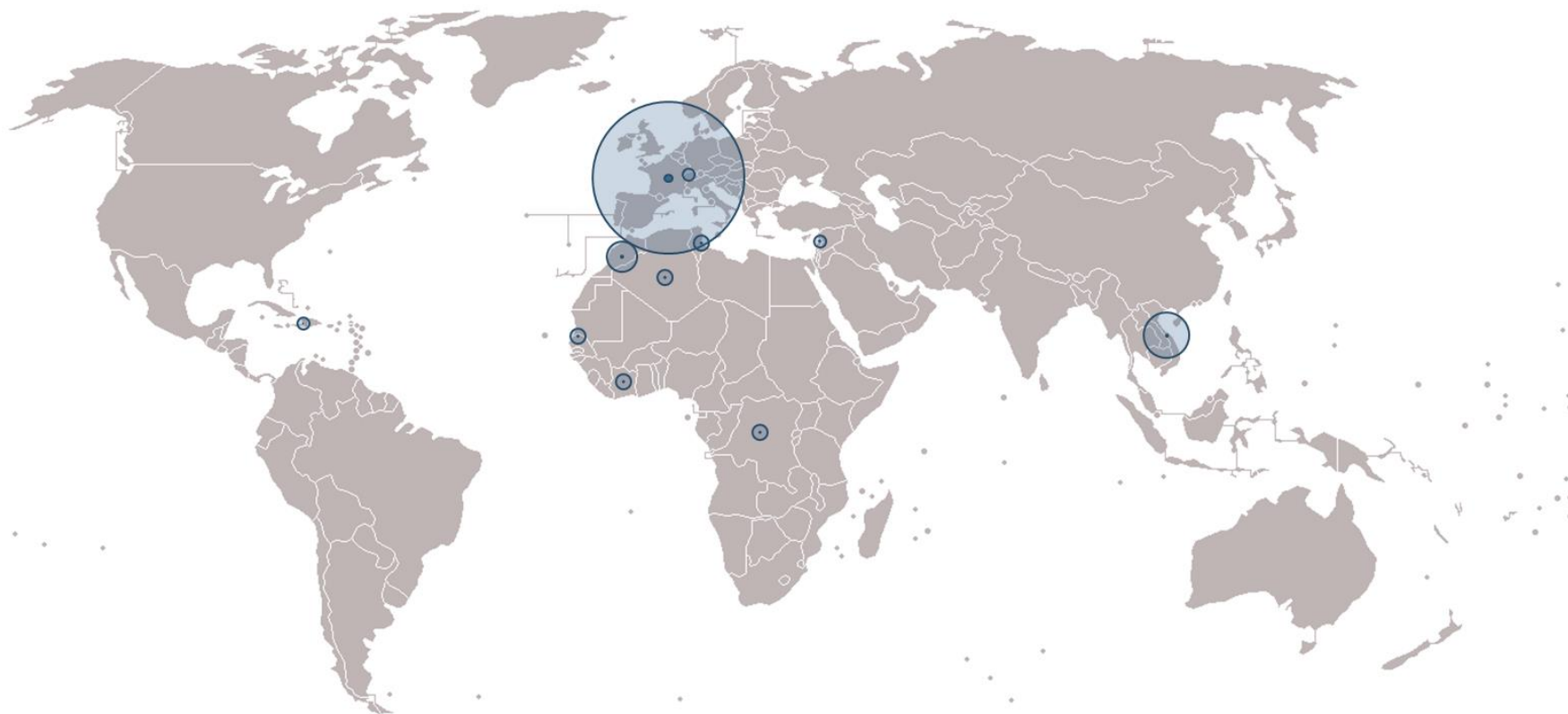
Three definitions can help identify a francophone student:

1. The first language learned and still understood (mother tongue) is French;

2. The first official language spoken (FOLS) is French; or

3. The language of study is French.

For most data sources, language data allows for analysis on only one definition at a time.

Mother tongue is the language variable that is most often collected.

However, for international students, mother tongue does not allow us to place individuals within Canada's binary linguistic context.
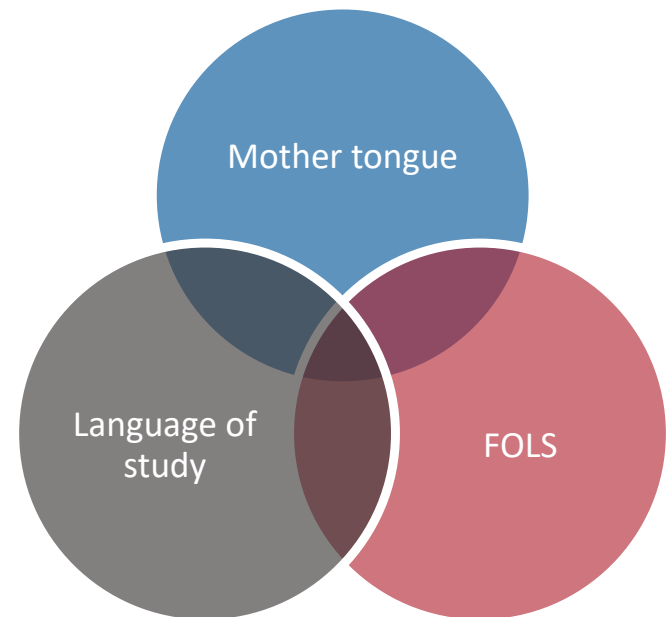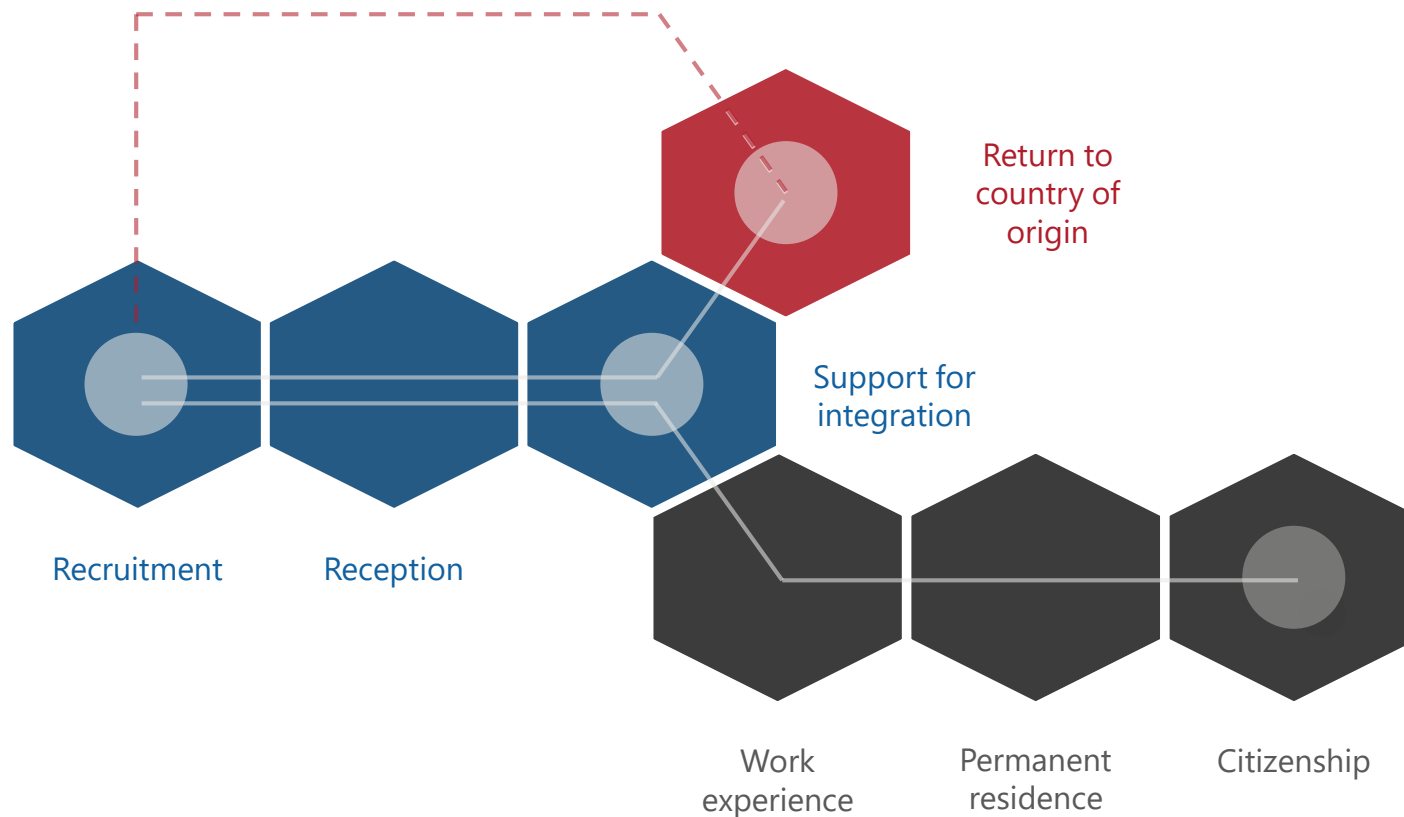
Synthesis

1. **Enrollment is on the rise:** In the three universities studied, we find an increase in the rate of enrollment of French-speaking international students.

2. **The increase is mainly attributable to francophone African countries:** France remains the most important source country of French-speaking international students, however the rise in the number of international students is sustained by those coming from sub-Saharan African countries and Northern African countries (particularly, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Morocco, Ivory Coast and Senegal).

3. **The majority of international students are registered in undergraduate programs:** Enrollment rates of international students in undergraduate programs rose from 80% to 95% between 2005 and 2014.

4. **The most popular programs are those in business administration/management:** A majority of French-speaking international students are registered in programs from the faculties of business administration and management.

PATHWAYS OF FRENCH-SPEAKING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Return to country of origin

Support for integration

Recruitment

Reception

Work experience

Permanent residence

Citizenship

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Push and pull factors for studying abroad

1

The economic health of the country of origin

2

The quality of the education system in the country of origin

3

The opportunity to learn English

4

Intercultural experiences, a different pedagogical experience

Pull factors towards Canada

1

A safe country where violence is minimal and visibles minorities are protected

2

Fair access to the labour market postdiploma, in line with one's competencies and expertise

3

Multiculturalism and diversity, where a multitude of cultures can integrate

Pull factors towards postsecondary institutions

1

Word of mouth, facilitated by students and graduates from the same country of origin

2

Financial support and tuition fees

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Supports for academic integration

1	2	3
Transitional session with language training and an introduction to the program of study	Improving services for all students	Evaluating international students' competencies at arrival

Supports for social and cultural integration

1	2	3	4
International student service centres	Raising awareness of interculturalism	Training for university personnel and teaching staff	Increased access to English language training

Challenges

1	2
Restrictions on admissibility to off-campus settlement services	Lack of resources for university student services to finance their projects

*"The idea, perhaps, shouldn't be about creating a service with flashing neon lights saying: 'international students, come through this door' which would result in labelling or stigmatizing a part of our student body. But it's more about **integrating a pedagogical culture** within the university that is centered on the student, a culture of learning that is active and collaborative that will benefit international students, yes, but all students."*

– University of Ottawa Professor

*"The university is making ongoing efforts, but it happened very quickly, too. I've often said: '**I have the impression that I wasn't prepared for this**' because our reality is that we're teaching to many cultures. [...] So we have this melting pot in our classrooms and we have to find a right balance to be able to function properly within it.*

"That is not easy to do."

– University of Moncton Professor

*"Interculturalism, in fact, is having a **better understanding of one another** and also having better knowledge of the **cultural background** of our students at their arrival. [...] It's about not judging behaviour, but understanding it."*

– Representative from the University of Moncton

Facilitating factors: Work permits

1

Off-campus work permits

2

Work permit for a co-op student

3

Post-graduation work permit

Barriers to hiring international students

1

The temporary status of international students

2

Differing work cultures

3

Employers' negative work experiences with international students

4

Limit on the number of weekly work hours for off-campus work permits

Barriers to finding work

1

Networking in a new setting, a practice anchored in North American work culture

2

Limited access to bilingual or francophone jobs in a minority setting

3

Recognition of past foreign work experience

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PROMISING PROGRAMS AND PRACTICES

International Students Connect

COSTI Immigrant Services and the Ministry of Civic Affairs, Immigration and International Commerce of Ontario

Francophone international students: Teaching for everyone's success

Centre for University Teaching and the Teaching and Learning Support Service at the University of Ottawa

The International Passport

Service Centre for International Students at the University of Moncton

Pilot project resulting from a series of consultations and a needs analysis with international students in Ontario.

A linguistic component was integrated within the study in order to identify and distinguish specific needs expressed by francophone students

COSTI and its local partners (e.g. : CÉSOC in Ottawa) offer seminars to inform international students and their spouses on various topics related to their integration in Canadian society:

- The Canadian banking system and financial management,

- The health care system,

- Housing, and

- The labour market

Source: http://ceris.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/C9JosieDiZio.pdf

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The International Passport seeks to engage all students from the university in a process of internationalisation.

The program encourages a greater participation in activities and workshops that focus on interculturalism in order to improve relations between Canadian and international students:

- A student receives points for completing activities with an international component.

- After earning 100 points, the student receives a certificate declaring that they have completed intercultural training during their studies.

- Examples of permissible activities:

  o Workshops offered by groups and organisations within the University of Moncton;
  o Conferences with an international focus and presentations about time spend abroad or the discovery of a different country;
  o At least 20 volunteer hours in an organisation with an international mission (Canadian students) or with a Canadian company or organisation (international students);
  o A minimum of 130 work hours per semester in a Canadian environment (international students only);
  o One year or a semester spent studying abroad in a partner university or a short term stay abroad; and
  o Having participated in settlement or integration activities and other internationally focused activities.

PASSEPORT INTERNATIONAL

Source: http://www.umoncton.ca/smi/node/51

FACULTY TRAINING

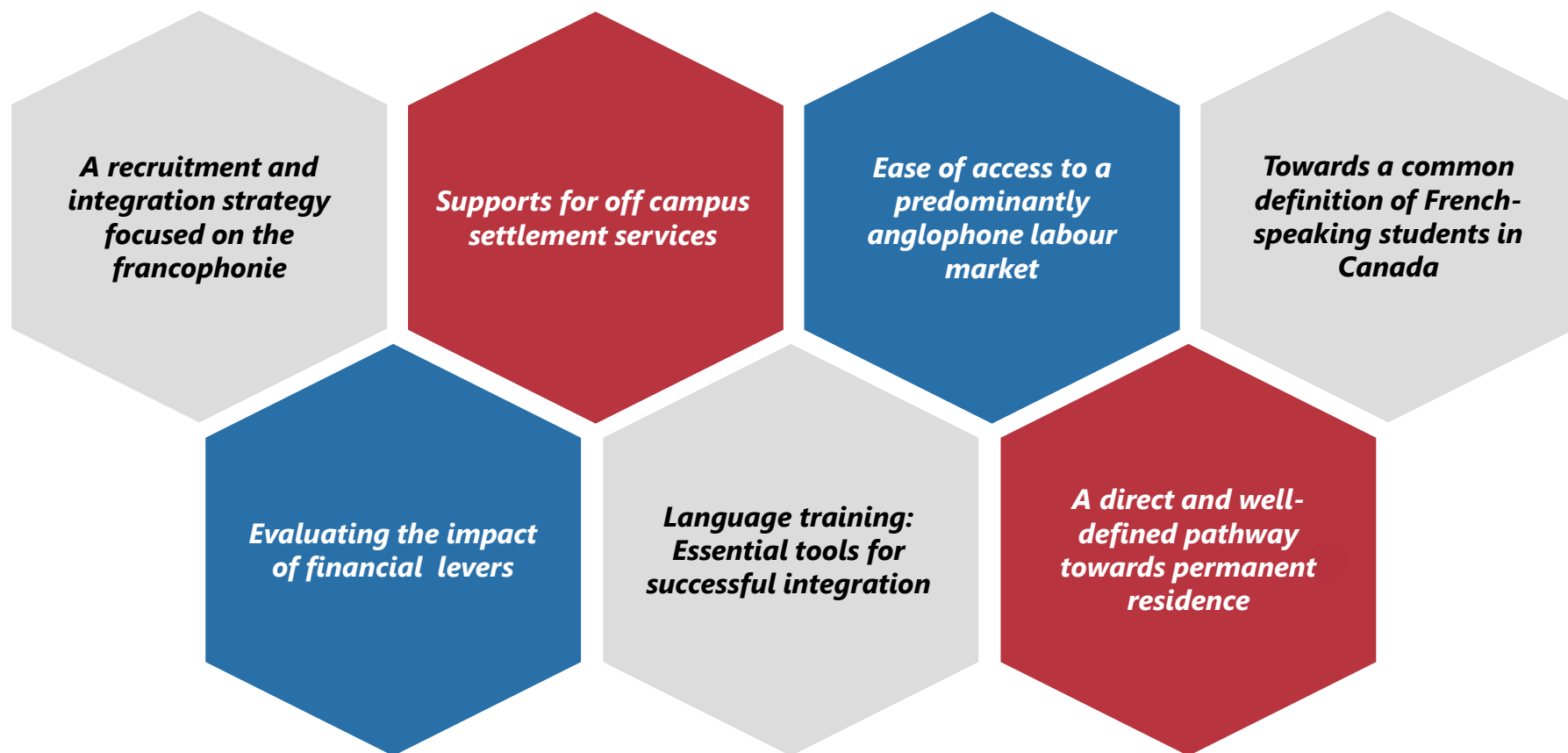**Francophone international students: Teaching for everyone's success**

An innovative training session developed by Patrick Milot of the Centre for University Teaching in partnership with the Teaching and Learning Support Service at the University of Ottawa

Simultaneously broadcasted online in August and September 2015, the workshop targeted all professors and teaching staff in colleges and universities across Ontario providing courses in French.

The topics discussed in the training include:

- Factors of cultural differentiation and techniques for intercultural communication,

- How the internationalisation of the student body impacts course preparation, and

- Best pedagogical practices for teaching diverse groups of students.

REMARKS AND CONCLUSIONS

A recruitment and integration strategy focused on the francophonie

Supports for off campus settlement services

Ease of access to a predominantly anglophone labour market

Towards a common definition of French-speaking students in Canada

Evaluating the impact of financial levers

Language training: Essential tools for successful integration

A direct and well-defined pathway towards permanent residence

STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

1

The desire to learn English

The potential to **improve one's English language skills** was one of the most important factors in choosing a university.

Students who were unable to communicate in English experienced difficulties in **interacting** with the anglophone community and even **integrating**, socially and economically, in the community

2

The importance of a pre-arrival contact

A number of pre-arrival initiatives proved to be crucial, providing **an important support** to international students throughout their transition to Canada

This first contact has had a positive impact on the students' **preparation** in coming to Canada and their **level of confidence**, knowing that they had at least one point of contact in their host city

3

Retention via economic integration

The determining factor in deciding to stay in Canada is the **possibility of getting a job** in line with one's studies

Students with **limited English language** skills would be **more likely to leave** their host community to pursue work opportunities elsewhere