



# ELSA Net

# NEWSLETTER

*Spring 2011 | Issue 23*

## Understanding our Learners

### Feature Article

Understanding our Learners  
through Journal Writing

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A tree with Mardi Gras beads at the university in New Orleans  
TESOL Conference, March 17th - 19th, 2011

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## Our Mission

ELSA Net empowers its members, throughout the province of British Columbia, to help their clients achieve language and resettlement goals by providing leadership, communication networks, and resources.

## Our Vision

Excellence in Settlement Language Services

Our values reflect our passion for education and support our success.

Excellence  
Diversity  
Unity  
Communication  
Accountability  
Teamwork  
Ethics

## ELSA Net

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The ELSA Net Newsletter is available in PDF format on the ELSA Net website: [www.elsanet.org](http://www.elsanet.org).

Contributions to future editions of the ELSA Net Newsletter are welcomed at [esl@elsanet.org](mailto:esl@elsanet.org).

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*Special thanks  
to our contributors!*

# Update from the Ministry

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## Update from the Immigrant Integration and Multiculturalism Branch, Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Innovation

### Ministry Reorganization and Name Change

Following the announcement of British Columbia's new cabinet on March 14, 2011, responsibility for immigration policy and WelcomeBC is now with the new Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Innovation. Responsibility for multiculturalism has been assigned to the Ministry of Social Development. Details of these changes are being finalized and further information will be circulated as soon as possible including any changes to the name of the Immigrant Integration and Multiculturalism Branch.

### ELSA Literacy to Level 5 Request for Proposals (RFP) Results

Following the announcement of the ELSA Literacy to Level 5 Request for Proposals (RFP) results in March, the Branch is implementing a transition plan in partnership with service providers to ensure continuity of service for students. We understand the sensitivities involved in this transition for all service providers, and in particular for staff and students of service providers who were unsuccessful in the RFPs. We appreciate your patience and cooperation to ensure that students transition as smoothly as possible.

### ELSA 6 & 7 Pilot Projects Information Session

The Branch held a public information session on February 17, 2011 to present our plan to pilot ELSA 6 & 7 classes in the fall of 2011. We also solicited feedback on some of the unique features of the proposed pilot. A transcript, attendee list and the PowerPoint presentation is available on BC Bid at <http://www.bcbid.ca>.

The Branch expects to implement this pilot during the fall of 2011. We now anticipate posting a Request for Proposals (RFP) on BC Bid in late April - a few weeks later than originally communicated during the presentation - in order to avoid an overlap with other current RFPs posted by the Branch.

### STaRS 2

We are making rapid progress in the development of the new STaRS 2 application. In February, the Branch provided early demonstrations of the new STaRS 2 application to the STaRS Users Working Group. Although the application was only 60% complete, the overall reception was very positive. The group was able to provide a number of recommendations that we hope to incorporate into STaRS 2. Given the scope of the project, the development is expected to be complete by mid-April. User Acceptance testing (UAT) will immediately follow and run until mid-May. The Branch will have a number of users from the STaRS Users Working Group to participate in this process. End user training is planned for June, prior to the start of the new ELSA services. More details on UAT and end user training to follow.

### ESLSAP - ESL Settlement Assistance Program

The English as a Second Language Settlement Assistance Program (ESLSAP) provides free English language support to eligible adult immigrant and refugee newcomers living in rural or remote communities throughout British Columbia. Applications for the ESLSAP second round Call for Proposals and for ESLSAP English Practise Groups Pilot Projects are currently in the assessment stage. Results will be announced shortly.

### WelcomeBC's Client Engagement Unit Reaches Out Via Social Marketing

Since its launch in April 2008, WelcomeBC.ca has helped more than 300,000 clients access comprehensive information on immigration, labour market and settlement services. Now, WelcomeBC's Client Engagement Unit is breaking new ground by reaching targeted groups online and through social media.

### Newcomers' Guide 2011 Edition

A new edition of *The British Columbia Newcomers' Guide to Resources and Services* is currently under development. The project is now in the research and revision stage, and the new edition is expected to be available for order in May 2011.

(continuing on page 4)

# Update from the Ministry

(continuing from page 3)

## Newcomers' Guide Video

The Newcomers' Guide Video Project is a series of short instructional videos hosted on WelcomeBC.ca that will supplement the information provided in the print version of the B.C. Newcomers' Guide. The first 10 videos will be released April 2011 and will consist of a range of topics from banking to health insurance. The videos will be available in 11 languages (English, French, Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, Korean, Spanish, Russian, Vietnamese, Arabic, Farsi and Punjabi), will include voiceover/caption features, and will be enabled for mobile devices. Filming is currently underway.

## New ELSA Brochures

New ELSA brochures have been printed and are now available for order and download on the WelcomeBC.ca website. These brochures were written in simplified English, and translated into 10 different languages (Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, Russian, Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean, Punjabi, Arabic, Persian, and French). Region specific versions of the brochure are also available (Metro Van/Fraser Valley, Interior, Northern, and Vancouver Island).

Free printed brochures are available for order on the WelcomeBC.ca website by browsing to: [http://www.welcomebc.ca/wbc/service\\_providers/publications\\_and\\_reports/order\\_form.page](http://www.welcomebc.ca/wbc/service_providers/publications_and_reports/order_form.page)

Brochures can also be downloaded directly.



# ELSA Net Update

## ELSA Net Board of Directors 2011

### ELSA Net Society Officers

Nina Miller, President  
Katie Graham, Vice President  
Jean McRae, Secretary-Treasurer



### Lower Mainland - Public

Marta Batory, Richmond Continuing Education  
Public Rep - TBD  
Richard Sim, Vancouver Community College - Alternate

### Lower Mainland - Private

Paul Badger, Vancouver Formosa Academy  
Bernard Tang, Excel Education Centre  
Sheryl Zehr, Burnaby English Language Centre - Alternate

### Lower Mainland - Non-Profit

Katie Graham, S.U.C.C.E.S.S.  
Nina Miller, MOSAIC  
Diana Smolic, ISS - Alternate

### Surrey / Delta

Ewa Karczewska, Immigrant Services Society  
Lenard Langlois, DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society  
Yvonne Chard, Delta Continuing Education - Alternate

### Fraser Valley

Corinne Vooy, Abbotsford Community Services  
April Neave, Chilliwack Community Services - Alternate

### Vancouver Island South

Jean McRae, Intercultural Association of Greater Victoria  
Winnie Lee, ICA of Greater Victoria - Alternate

### Vancouver Island North

Jose Gonzalez, Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society  
Jackie Martin, Cowichan Intercultural Society - Alternate

### East and South Central BC

Paul Lagace, Kamloops Cariboo Regional Immigrant Society  
Hilma LaBelle, South Okanagan Immigrant and Community Services - Alternate

### North and North Central BC

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### Assessment Centres

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Vasso Vahlas, Surrey Language Assessment Centre - Alternate

# ELSA Net Update

## ELSA Net Spring Conference Participation

**Literacy BC Showcase** - ELSA Net was excited to be part of the March 14th and 15th Literacy BC Showcase event for their Whole Life and Learning Disabilities project. The Whole Life Learning



project was a two-year professional development project to support adult literacy practitioners address learning disabilities within their programs. ELSA Net was funded through Literacy BC to have Robin Schwarz Lovrien facilitate our *Understanding Learning Disabilities in the ESL Context* Certificate program. The Showcase on the 14th and 15th was



an exciting forum where participants shared their work, their learning and their resources. ELSA Net gave a presentation on our certificate program and hosted a display table of resources and information.

**TESOL New Orleans** - The TESOL Conference was held in New Orleans this year from March 17th - 19th. Conference highlights included plenary speakers Allastair Pennycook and Walt Wolfram. Pennycook spoke about the disappearance of "Standard English" in a world of increasing globalization. Wolfram shared ideas from the innovative Language and Life project in North Carolina. The aim of the project is to educate and promote dialect diversity. Who would have ever imagined a dialect museum or dialect documentaries? Wolfram also travelled with his students to state fairs where they set up booths with games, quizzes and funny badges that promoted dialect diversity. To learn more about this project visit: [www.talkingnc.com](http://www.talkingnc.com).



## Metropolis 2011



The Wall Centre was buzzing from March 23rd to the 26th with academics, practitioners and policy makers who came together to discuss issues and to share research and resources on immigration. ELSA Net was part of a well received poster presentation in partnership with Vancouver Community College's World Beat program and Manitoba Education's Intensive Newcomer Support program which focused on programming for immigrant youth.

# Feature Article

## Understanding our Learners through Journal Writing



**Lilian** is a very talented writer and journalist. She also happens to be an ELSA 5 student studying at SUCCESS. Although her teacher was aware of Lilian's writing talent, it wasn't until Lilian shared her journal entries that her teacher began to understand the richness of her writing and her

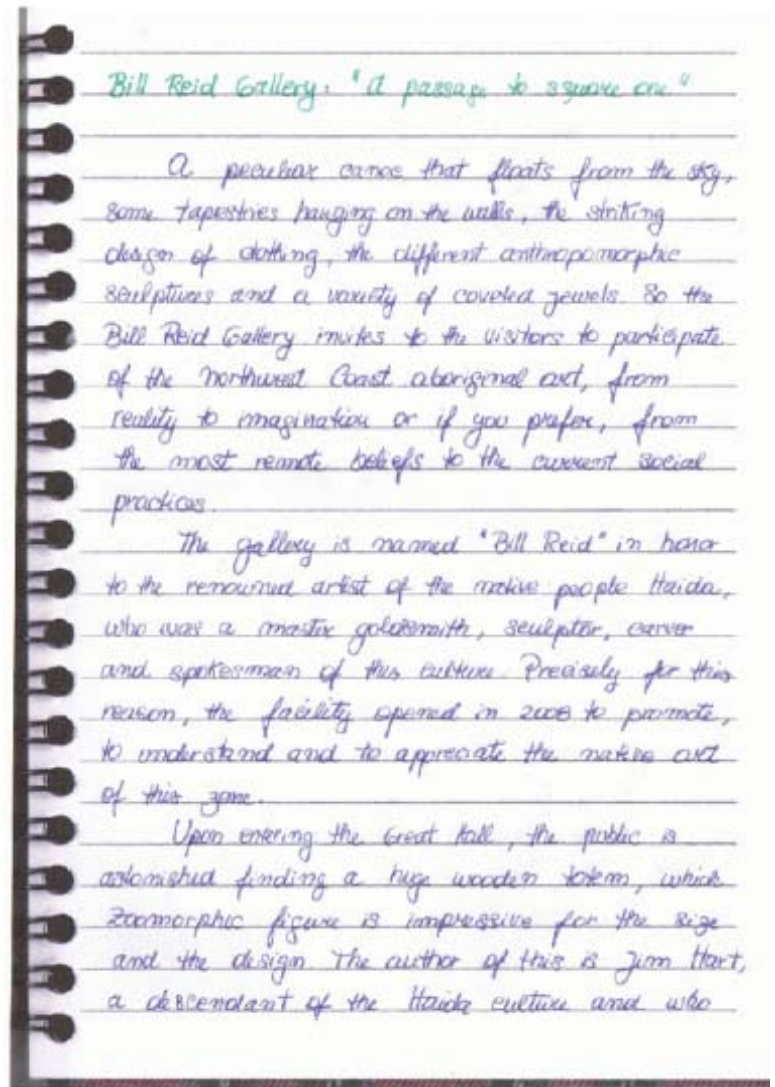
experiences. We hope you enjoy Lilian's beautiful journal as much as we and her teacher did. In her journal she offers her account of a field trip to the Museum of Anthropology.

### Bill Reid Gallery: A Passage to Square One

**A** peculiar canoe that floats from the sky, some tapestries hanging on the walls, the striking design of clothing, the different anthropomorphic sculptures and a variety of coveted jewels. So the Bill Reid Gallery invites to the visitors to participate of the Northwest Coast aboriginal art, from reality to imagination or if you prefer, from the most remote beliefs to the current Board practices.

The gallery is named "Bill Reid" in honor to the renowned artist of the native people, Haida, and who was the master goldsmith, sculptor, carver and spokesman of this culture. Precisely for this reason, the facility opened in 2006 to promote, to understand and to appreciate the native art of this zone.

Upon entering the Great Hall, the public is astonished to find a huge wooden totem, which zoomorphic figure is impressive for the size and the design. The author of this is Jim Hart, a descendant of the Haida culture and who carved the totem in tribute to Reid.



Also in this spectrum are present two important works of Bill. "Mythic Messengers" made out of bronze which represents the interfaced of wolves, whales and eagles with men; this interprets the transmission of customs and beliefs through generations. And, "The Raven and the First Man" is made of onyx and symbolizes the origin of man, because reflects a crow standing on a shell that is protecting some little naked guys.

The magic of contemporary textiles can be seen in the exhibition "Time Warp", which will open until January 16th. These coats, tunics, dresses, shoes and bags are made from wood, leather, and with accessories of copper, cedar barks, colorful threads and spruce roots. While the tapestries have geometric images painted with

# Feature Article

red and black acrylics.

The gallery also has permanent shows. For example, there is an area dedicated to stunning gold and silver jewelry. Here the bracelets, metals, rings and necklaces impress for the delicacy or the enigmatic shapes, and the inserts of pearl, shells and diamonds. And on the second floor of the building, there are some works made with mixed media, such as serigraphy, lithograph, photography, drawing and watercolor; also there is a set of small sculptures of human bodies built with wires.

Undoubtedly, Bill Reid Gallery helps us to remind the customs and the rituals of the past, to discover the meaning of life and to reconnect with nature. It is an ancestral world that should be admired not only because we approach to the history and the anthropology, but because it encourages us to value and protect our original peoples.



To see or print the original journal go to  
<http://www.elsanet.org/site/resources/newsletter>

## Journals in the ESL Classroom

Journals are an interesting way for students to express themselves and for teachers to get to know students better. Dollar Store workbooks can be used for journals that can either be kept by the students or in the classroom. Here are some ideas that have been gleaned from several online articles (see below) on journal writing in the ESL classroom.

- **A response to literature** - students can write a quick 5-10 minute response to poetry, music or readers. For beginner students, you can help the process by providing guiding sentences that they can fill in. For more advanced students a freeform response is possible.
- **Brainstorming** - journals can offer students a safe place to express their ideas. Introduce different ways to brainstorm using diagrams or writing lists. Every time you have a brainstorming activity, ask students to do it in their journals. Brainstorming diagrams can then be transformed into other kinds of writing.
- **Write and respond** - Use journals for students in different classes to write to each other. Make sure the classes have different colored journals and have students write - trade journals - respond - and return them. A write and respond technique can also be used between teacher and student. For example, the teacher may begin by giving students a letter of introduction then ask students to write a similar letter in their journals. The journal can then be passed back and forth between the student and teacher as a form of dialogue.
- **Writing about experiences** - students can respond to experiences such as a field trip or a lesson. Make sure to help the students by providing them with the language needed to respond. If comfortable, students may also like to write about life experiences. Be sure to advise students not to write information that is "intensely" personal - especially if journals are stored in the classroom.

When looking and responding to journals, it is important to remember that a journal provides a safe place for students to express themselves in writing. Because of this, teachers should avoid "marking" journals and focus on responding to content as a way of communicating authentically with their students.

### Interesting links:

**Managing Conflict in the ESL Classroom with Student Journals** [http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/5957386/managing\\_conflict\\_in\\_the\\_esl\\_classroom\\_pg2.html?cat=4](http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/5957386/managing_conflict_in_the_esl_classroom_pg2.html?cat=4)

### ESL Strategies for Literature Response Journals

<http://www.suite101.com/content/esl-strategies-for-literature-response-journals-a128665>

### Journals in the Classroom: Flexible Instructional Tools

<http://712educators.about.com/cs/writingresources/a/journals.htm>

### Secret Partner Journals for Motivation, Fluency and Fun

<http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Stewart-SecretJournals.html>

# Resources

## Learn and Teach about 2011 Census

2011 Census Adult Education Kit is available online through CIC. The kit is in PDF format and available to order or download. The kit includes: an instructor's guide, students workbook, an evaluation form and a form for ordering additional materials. You can find the 2011 Census Adult Education Kit at: [http://www.census2011.gc.ca/ccr02/ccr02b/ccr02b\\_000-eng.htm](http://www.census2011.gc.ca/ccr02/ccr02b/ccr02b_000-eng.htm)

## 2011 Census from Statistics Canada

In Canada, a census is taken every five years. The next census is in May 2011.

Each household will receive instructions about the census in early May. At that time, you will decide if your household will answer the census questions by computer or on a paper questionnaire. You will mail the paper questionnaire in the green envelope provided by the census.

The census provides information about the people who live in Canada. If you are a Canadian citizen, a landed immigrant, a refugee claimant, or if you hold a work or study permit, you are required to answer the questions asked by the census.

### WHY SHOULD YOU FILL IN YOUR CENSUS QUESTIONNAIRE? BECAUSE...

**THE CENSUS IS IMPORTANT TO everyone who lives in CANADA**  
A census includes everyone who lives in Canada. When Statistics Canada receives your answers to the census, it adds your answers to the answers of everyone else living in Canada. Together all our answers are used by Canada, our province and our communities to prepare for the future.

**THE CENSUS MEANS SERVICES FOR your community**  
The answers you provide on the census are used by your community to plan services such as schools, seniors housing, health care, daycare, police services and fire protection. These services are important to every one of us. Census information also helps identify communities which need English and French as second language programs and heritage language classes.

**OUR PROGRAMS DEPEND ON IT**  
In addition to community services, the census helps to determine how much money is transferred to your province for health care, education and other social services. But that's not all. The 2011 Census will also help decide how many Members of Parliament are elected to Parliament in Ottawa.

**THE LAW IS ON YOUR SIDE**  
Statistics Canada is required by law to protect the information you provide on your census questionnaire. Only Statistics Canada employees working directly with the census will ever see completed census forms.

**WE DEPEND ON YOU!**

Completing the census is both a civic responsibility and a legal requirement for all people living in Canada. When you fill in your census questionnaire you continue a tradition that goes back over 340 years - from a few pioneer villages in 1666 to today's large and prosperous country.

If you need help:

Please call our free telephone service at 1-877-777-2011 from May 2 to 31 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. Operators who speak other languages will be available.

For more information, visit [www.census2011.gc.ca](http://www.census2011.gc.ca)

## Citizenship Information

For those students who are ready, new citizenship information can be found at the following links:

- Applying for Citizenship <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/citizenship/index.asp>
- Study guide in various formats <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/discover/index.asp>
- Sample study questions <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/citizenship/cit-sample.asp>

The Richmond Public Library has developed an online practice test in English and French, which you will find at <http://www.yourlibrary.ca/citizenship/>.

## CRITICAL THINKING

Adapted from David Hill

As we become exposed to increasing amounts of information from diverse sources and increasing ideas from diverse cultures, critical thinking becomes an important skill to negotiate modern, multicultural environments. Yet, many newcomers come from educational and social environments that discourage or undervalue critical thinking. Critical thinking involves the ability to think and analyse information and draw conclusions independently of those of the author or source.

### Three aspects of critical thinking:

Critical thinking develops in three intersecting areas associated with gathering, analysing, and expressing information. These critical skills are developed through critical research (analysing sources), critical reading (analysing information), and critical thinking (analysing expressions).

CRITICAL THINKING  
CRITICAL READING  
CRITICAL EXPRESSION

For the full article go to  
<http://www.elsanet.org/site/resources/newsletter>

# Resources

## Vygotsky in my Classroom

By Michelle Fuller

**B**right professionals populate my ELSA classroom. Despite outstanding grammar and extensive vocabularies, they are still reluctant to speak to each other. They believe that they will learn English only by listening to their teacher and have nothing to gain by speaking to each other. Perhaps even we teachers slip into believing this sometimes.

In truth, there is research to support the benefits of student to student communication. When my own students avoid talking to each other, I tell them about a Russian man named Vygotsky. Lev Vygotsky had a theory that the best learning took place in groups, not in isolation. He saw that the negotiation of meaning, which is necessary in student to student

interaction, increased learning. An example from my classroom illustrates this beautifully. My student, Edna, had a habit of pronouncing the word 'where' as 'were'. I had corrected this a few times in her speech, but then got so used to her speech that I stopped noticing it. During a communicative activity one day, Edna was reading a sentence to Ron that included her problematic word. Since Ron had trouble understanding her, he asked for clarification again and again until figuring it out. Edna fixed it, then said it right again in the next sentence, because it mattered. She hasn't made the mistake since.

Student to student interaction is an invaluable part of our classroom life. If your students are not convinced of this, they might be interested to know that research supports it.

\*Student names have been changed.

## Cyber Space

### Blogging 101

By Colleen Rogan

The word blog comes from the combination of the words 'web' and 'log'. Blogs are like online, interactive diaries where the author can create entries and have other people view, leave comments, take surveys and "participate" in their online journal. They are a fantastic way to engage students, share information with colleagues and post reflections about your work. It may seem daunting to think of starting a blog for yourself or your class, but it is actually quite easy. Here are some resources to learn about how to start a blog:



resources - especially listening resources.

These are all links from his blog:

**Sean Banville's Blog**

<http://seanbanville.com>

**Breaking News English**

<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com>

**ESL Holidays**

<http://www.eslholidaylessons.com/index.html>

**Business English Matters**

<http://www.businessenglishmaterials.com>

**Listen a Minute**

<http://www.listenaminute.com>

Also check the ELSA Youth Blog at <http://elsayouth.org> which has a link to the Vancouver Community College ELSA Youth student blog. Both are great examples of how to put together a blog that will engage students.

Blogs are usually free to create and easy to use. Some of the most popular programs to create blogs are: [www.wordpress.com](http://www.wordpress.com) and [www.webs.com](http://www.webs.com)

**The Website Set Up Guide by Daniel Piechnick**

<http://websitesetupguide.com/basic/blog-wordpress.htm?gclid=C12FkOz2nKcCFRtqgwod6wSwbQ>

**WIKIHow**

<http://www.wikihow.com/Start-a-Blog>

There are countless ESL blogs to explore and get ideas. Sean Banville's blog is one of my favourites because it has so many

# Child Care Resources

By Naznin Dhanani, ECE, I.T.E.,  
ECE Resource Coordinator, ELSA Net

## Early Childhood Resources

New book on *Welcoming Newcomer Children  
The Settlement of Young Immigrants & Refugee*  
Dr. Judith A. Colbert

This website is a resource for teachers and others with an interest in supporting young newcomers from birth through age 8. Here is the link:  
[www.welcomingchildren.ca](http://www.welcomingchildren.ca)

## Digital Photography & Documentation: Making Children Visible in Early Childhood settings

*"The quality and capacity of our future population depends on what we do now to support early childhood development."*

Fraser Mustard, Founder, Council for Early Childhood Development

"Making children visible" in early childhood settings is one way you can support newcomer families.

Throughout the day children are in a responsive and learning environment.

Children are engaged in learning opportunities that support their emotional, physical, intellectual, cognitive and spiritual development. In order to "make children more visible" in your child care program, taking photographs of children throughout the different transitions and activities will help in:



- Support Newcomer Families to understand what the children are learning
- Support Newcomer Families to feel secure and that their children are safe
- As an Early Childhood Educator you will be displaying the importance of the early years and how children learn through these rich experiences
- Support children to feel self-worth, self-respect and self-confidence by displaying their photographs

## Tips for taking photographs of children

- Always show children the photograph you have taken of them - this will create a trusting and respectful relationship between you and the child
- It is important to let the children touch the camera - this creates empowerment to the child that they are partaking in the photograph. Example: you could have a child on your lap and help him take another child's photograph.
- Display photographs with documentation. This helps parents to know what kind of activity or transition the child was participating in. Also, this helps parents understand what their child likes and who their friends are. This will support an appreciation of diversity between cultures.

Educators play the most significant role in children's lives and by this documentation we are displaying "our important role in children's well-being". Also, as you start taking photographs you may find that children sometimes like to pose for the photograph, which brings a whole new insight to photography.

## Creating our Village

### Enhancing Volunteerism in Young Children

*"Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek."*

-Barack Obama, from a campaign speech

The Canadian Olympic Song "I Believe" is inspiring as it talks about the "power of you and I". We as a Canadian Community have the most impact on our children. As research from Harvard says, "the healthy development of children provides a sturdy foundation for responsible citizenship, strong communities, and sustained economic prosperity. Dramatic advances in neuroscience, molecular biology, genomics, and the behavioral and social sciences are deepening our understanding of how healthy child development happens, how it can be derailed, and what we can do to keep it on track. These scientific advances explain how early experiences are biologically embedded in the development of the brain and other organ systems and have long-term impacts on physical and mental health as well as cognitive, language, and social skills. By identifying the early, controllable influences on positive and negative life outcomes, this framework can guide the targeting of more effective policies and services for young children and families."

<http://developingchild.harvard.edu>

# From Our Members

## Sexual Health: Responding to Students' Need for Updated Information

By Linda Davies

During the month of February, Catherine Evashuk, Sexual Health Educator, gave two workshops at New Directions, responding to our students' need for updated, culturally sensitive materials for learning about sexual health. She began by acknowledging the "Taboo" status of sex, and then defined sexual health, explaining why it is important. She gave the students ideas on how to get more comfortable talking about sex - talk to yourself first, saying the words in front of a mirror before talking with your children.

Literacy to Level 5 students got a lesson on basic anatomy (male/female, internal/external) with pictures, information about screening tests for cancer (when to do them, how they are done, what to expect), including mammograms, pap tests, colon cancer, testicular cancer and menopause. She brought in a birth control kit and explained natural, barrier and hormonal methods.

The intended goal of the workshop was to help students understand that sexual health is part of overall health, sound out and identify the scientific names of private body parts, gain knowledge about self exams (testicular and breast), discuss comfort levels when talking about sexual health in small groups, and express opinions and ask questions regarding birth control.

There was some concern before the first workshop about respecting cultural boundaries, and how students would respond to the open discussion of sexual health. Catherine's ESL teaching experience helped her to get her points across. There were one or two negative comments on the evaluations, but overall the workshop was a success. We invited Catherine back for a second workshop for students who wanted more! Catherine's contact info: [evashuk@gmail.com](mailto:evashuk@gmail.com)

## Family Literacy Day Fun!

By Shannon McDonald



The theme for Family Literacy Day this year was Play for Literacy. The ELSA program at the Fleetwood location of DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society decided to make Family Literacy Day a school event. Our ELSA program is supported by a licensed preschool for the children of the ELSA stu-

dents. The children invited their parents and/or grandparents to join them for a session of activities related to the theme Play for Literacy. The children and parents had a great time playing literacy related games, singing songs and then reading a book. It was wonderful to see so many smiling faces as the families rotated through different game stations, played together and enjoyed time together.

Playing simple games is a great way for parents and grandparents to support the learning of their young ESL children. They also see that by reading and playing games together, they can support each other as both children and adults work towards improving their literacy skills.

Those students who didn't have children in the preschool joined in some Family Literacy Day group games and activities with their teachers and fellow classmates. Friendly competition between students made for an exciting afternoon of fun and prizes. The highlight of our Family Literacy Day was a visit from "Betty the Literacy Bear" (AKA our coordinator Sheryl) who handed out bookmarks to all and gave hugs to lots of very excited children.

# From Our Members

## A Difficult Journey

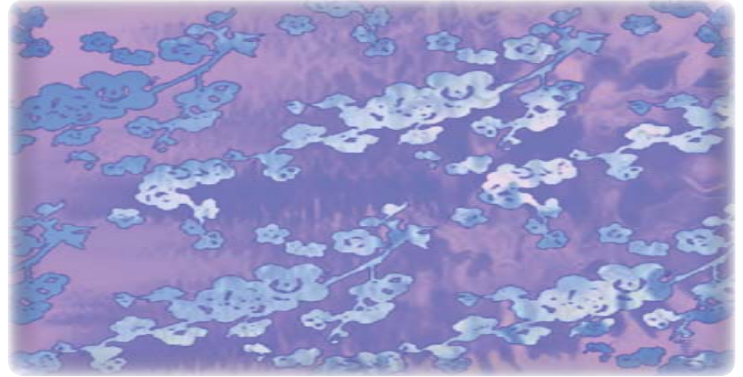
By Eva Touzard

Imagine being cramped with 490 people on one overloaded boat for three months with very little water and food, with one toilet and no showers, surrounded by filth and garbage. We can't imagine such an ordeal. Yet, when we are faced with these stories from students in our classes, we learn about the some of the difficult journeys to Canada.

*"To drink, we got 1 liter of water every three days, no tea. We ate Maggie noodles three times, instant curry rice for dinner and had no fruit or vegetables. We washed ourselves with ocean water and were itchy."*

Two men with such stories are Sandramugunthan and his friend Jeyakumar who left their wives and daughters in their war-torn country in order to seek a better life in Canada. They paid an agent to fly to Bangkok, stayed for one month in a hotel and then started their long and hard journey on the "Sea Sun". 493 men, women and children from Sri Lanka endured many tough months.

Sandra tells his story: "To drink, we got 1 liter of water every three days, no tea. We ate Maggie noodles three times, instant curry rice for dinner and had no fruit or vegetables. We washed ourselves with ocean water and were itchy. We collected rainwater to have more to drink. No medicine was available. We were sea-sick. It was so hot. We had only three fans. We couldn't sleep because we were always hungry. Our entertainment was one TV for 493 people". Why



did you come to Canada: "Teacher, the situation [in our country] is difficult; it is dangerous and not good".

After arrival in Canada, most were kept in detention until their identification papers were sorted out and clarified. "The jail was better than the boat. We had a bed, a toilet, water, food and a gym. All the Canadian workers in the jail were so nice to us."



Now Sam and James come to class every day and are eager to learn English. These two men are full of energy, optimism and hope to make a new life in Canada. They are patiently waiting to be reunited with their family. They are grateful to all Canadians. It is a privilege for PICS to have the opportunity to help, instruct and show compassion to those in need of support.

# From Our Members

## Inspiration from a Retired ELSA Teacher

By Diane Nikkel

In June 2010, after ten years of teaching ELSA, I joined my husband, Peter, as a retiree who had blazed the trail for me two years earlier. To celebrate his retirement we walked 780 km across northern Spain on the ancient Santiago Camino pilgrimage. Carrying our backpacks and sleeping in bunk beds (or sometimes on floors) in crowded hostels, we felt more like students in our gap year than retirees! My retirement celebration



orphans. With family style homes, schools, clinic and industries including sawmill, reforestation, dairy, bakery, hospitality, bottled spring water and honey, Bulembu is already employing 500 people and hopes to be self-sustaining by 2020. Hopefully, in the near future, we will be able to spend some time volunteering in projects like these.

I came to teaching late in life. After graduating with my BSc, and a five year stint as a social worker, I spent the next 25 years as a fulltime mother and volunteer in the church and community with my pastor husband. In 1998, after the tragedy of losing our 24 year old son, David, in a scuba diving accident, I enrolled in the TESOL program at VCC. It was both healing and the fulfillment of a dream to work with people of other cultures. I was given tools to concretely help new Canadians settle and thrive in our community.

I worked diligently at finding innovative ways to teach the skills necessary to communicate in a new language and was always excited when a lesson really clicked. It was equally

important to me to build community and friendship in the classroom. To see my students supporting and caring for each other was my deepest joy. I had great admiration for the courage, perseverance and intelligence shown by these people, often stripped of the respect and recognition they had in their first countries, who now struggled to understand and be understood in the most basic English.

My empathy and admiration grew through a five month experience of being "on the other side of the desk". In February 2009 my husband, 16 year old daughter and I went to work with a charity in Guadalajara, Mexico. We had varied duties, including teaching English, but much of our time was spent in Spanish language school. As I tried to communicate both in and out of the classroom, I quickly realized how mistakes in



any one of vocabulary, grammar or pronunciation could render me unintelligible. It was humbling and frustrating but made me a better teacher back in Canada. I would highly recommend this for any ELSA teacher.

*"The ten years I spent with ELSA were very fulfilling and challenging. I found that my age, with its accumulated life experiences, was actually an asset in working with adult immigrants and refugees."*

was not quite as challenging, but just as meaningful. Fulfilling a lifelong dream to go to Africa, we spent two weeks in Swaziland on a listening and learning tour of two charities our friend is involved in. One was the only eye clinic in Swaziland. The other was Bulembu, a closed asbestos mining town that was being developed into a community for 2000 HIV/AIDS

# From Our Members

# From Our Students

## The Spirit of Giving

By Claire Pinkett



*ISSofBC Tri-Cities ELSA Program students with Instructional Coordinator Claire Pinkett (in red) and L3 Instructor Diana Ospina (in beige and white) kneeling in the centre of the picture*

You may have heard on the news that the SHARE Food Bank in Port Moody ran dangerously low on food in the days leading up to Christmas. A plea went out to the community to increase donations in this time of need. Well, the ELSA students at ISS in the Tri-cities answered this call by filling 24 boxes with non-perishable food items for SHARE. It started as little friendly competition between classes with the Level 5 AM class at Westwood Street challenging other classes to bring in more food than them. The good-natured rivalry between the Level 4 and Level 5 classes spurred others on and spilled over to the Lincoln Avenue campus, with all of those who were able joining in on the giving. In the end, the Level 5 AM class won out, filling 6 boxes themselves. Instructional Coordinator Claire Pinkett awarded the winning class with a Tim Horton's gift certificate so that the students could buy some treats for their class Christmas Party and a good time was had by all.

With so many newcomers celebrating their first Christmas in Canada, this was the best way to demonstrate what the season is really all about. The students' generosity and giving to those of our community that were in-need (some of them classmates) touched all of the staff in the Tri-Cities ELSA Program. We are now planning some field trips to the SHARE Food Bank so that students can see the good work being done with their donations!

## Volunteering and Civil Engagement

By Bonnie Sibley

*"It is a pleasant experience because I was first time to deal with Canadian. I'm usually nervous or to hesitate when I'm not prepared to speak in English conversation but my fear was utterly groundless. It was easy to me that somebody asked me the price reason of the bake sale. After all, my worry became courage and I gained confidence. If I get a chance again, I can probably challenge it."*

At Christmas time the Seniors Department at Abbotsford Community Services has a bake sale fundraiser. For the last four years my Level 5 class has taken charge of many aspects of the event except handling money. This year students were challenged with pricing, organizing product placement, and sales. This act of volunteering leaves a huge impression on the students and this annual event moves my students outside the classroom and integrates volunteering into their learning experience. What better way to connect with a new community?

*"It was very impressive to me. As a matter of fact, sales was not a new experience to me because usually I had sold duty free during the flight. But bazaar was different, all items were collected from the donation and it was run on a purely voluntary basis. Volunteering and donations are very common event in Canada that makes a deep impression on my mind."*

*Level 5 Student  
(Abbotsford)*

# From Our Students

## Funds Raised for Peace Project

We are students from the ELSA youth class (English Language Service for Adults) at Vancouver Community College (Broadway campus). We raised money through a program called "Pennies for Peace".

### Pennies for Peace

By Deepika

Greg Mortenson is an American hiker and the head of the "Pennies for Peace" program. He created this program so that students all over the world can help raise money for education in Pakistan and Afghanistan. The idea is that anyone can make a difference by donating a penny. A penny may be



worthless in Canada, but it can buy a pencil in Pakistan and Afghanistan. He also wrote a book called "Three Cups of Tea". This book describes how he went from climbing mountains to building schools in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Mortenson has built more than 130 schools in these two countries.

We were so inspired by reading the book, "Three Cups of Tea", that our class decided to raise money by giving presentations about the book and the "Pennies for Peace" program to other ELSA classes on our campus. We collected a total of \$370. We also encouraged other ELSA students to volunteer and help raise money. Everyone seemed to enjoy learning about this program and was interested in helping the children in Pakistan and Afghanistan.



We would like to encourage other ELSA classes to get involved. Not only can you help children get access to education, you can increase your confidence in speaking

English in front of people. If you would like to find more information about this project, visit these links:

<http://eslyouth.wordpress.com/pennies-for-peace-three-cups-of-tea/>

<http://www.penniesforpeace.org/>

<https://www.ikat.org/>

\* \* \*

## A Letter of Thanks from the VCC ELSA Youth Class

Last week, the ELSA Youth Class had the opportunity to visit some ELSA classes and talk to teachers and students about the "Pennies for Peace" project. First of all, we'd like to thank those who allowed us to do this and for listening to us present the information carefully. We were very happy about your enthusiastic response to Greg's story and his cause. Thanks to your generous donations, we raised a total of \$370, which we have already given to the "Pennies for Peace" foundation.

Other than successfully raising donations, we also learned a lot about giving presentations. Before the presentations, we felt nervous and afraid that you wouldn't understand us, but with each presentation, we gained more confidence.

Thanks again for giving us a chance to do this.

Sincerely,  
ELSA Youth Class



# From Our Students

## The Power of Networking

By Natalia Dudko  
Communications Specialist

Today we are trying to understand how to build relationships in professional areas. Every immigrant knows that 'networking' is a popular way of finding a job in Canada, but most people have problems with it because adaptation to culture takes time. On the other hand, web-based technologies offer effective instruments of social communication. Nowadays, both the Internet and the Intranet can be bases for personal or corporate networking. The advantages of using computer-mediated systems include: low maintenance, extensive possibilities and quick access to information. The combination of Internet and Intranet systems make it possible to create a new approach to networking among learners in and across various ELSA sites and organizations.

For the full article in PDF go to ELSA Net Resource Page at  
<http://www.elsanet.org/site/resources/newsletter>

## How Building a Website Helped me Learn

By Babak Torabi

I am a new immigrant who came to Canada 5 months ago. I am a Mechanical Engineer with 10 years of professional experience in my country. I have started to look for a job but I can't find a good job because I don't have any Canadian experience or a Canadian certificate.

I thought about how I can help myself. I need two important things to find a good job: to improve my English and to get the Professional Engineer's Licence (P.Eng.). Learning English requires four skills: speaking, listening, writing and reading. I had to spend 80% of my time learning English, so I decided to plan to use two skills (writing and reading) to help me to find a job and to get the P.Eng. Licence.

A job interview requires a good presentation and the P.Eng. needs a 10 page special report and presentation. I decided to make my website. The website has many advantages:

1- I had to collect my experience. This helped me to make a good presentation.

(Resume writing skills)

2- I had to write many pages for my website. This helped me to write reports for the P.Eng.

(Writing skills)

3- I had to learn to make a website, so I read many books about making websites. (Reading skills)

4- I can't present all my experience and achievements over ten years on a 2-page resume, but I can on my website. The website helps me to communicate with employers.

(Communication skills)

5- I sometimes used YouTube to learn about the software to make websites. (Listening skills)

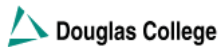
6- I learned new things that improved my opportunities to find a job.

So making the website has improved my English and has helped me to get the P.Eng.- both are my targets to help me find work in my related field.

I don't know whether or not my website can help me to find a good job, but I am very satisfied because I can create something that help others and share my experience. I was very successful in my country. I was the youngest manager in my last company. So I want to be prosperous in my new country. I want to prove to myself that my previous success wasn't just chance.

To visit my website, go to: [www.babaktorabi.com](http://www.babaktorabi.com)

# From Our Community



## Mentoring Opportunity

Do you remember your first exposure to an ESL classroom? Do you cherish your training program and the practicum experience? Would you like to make the effort to be a sponsor teacher and enhance your own PD this summer?

In summer 2010, ten Douglas College TESL trainees were fortunate to experience their practicum hours with ten ELSA teachers. Their feedback included comments such as "It was invaluable to me to observe how our government supports new Canadians;" "My sponsor teacher was perfect" and "I wish I could have more time with my ELSA Sponsor Teacher."

This summer, Douglas College would be honored to place even more trainees in ELSA Net programs. If you've never had a Student Teacher before, feel free to explore this opportunity for the first time. This quiz can help you determine our expectations.

To see the quiz go to ELSA Net Resource Page at <http://www.elsanet.org/site/resources/newsletter>

*I wish I could have more time with my ELSA Sponsor Teacher!"*

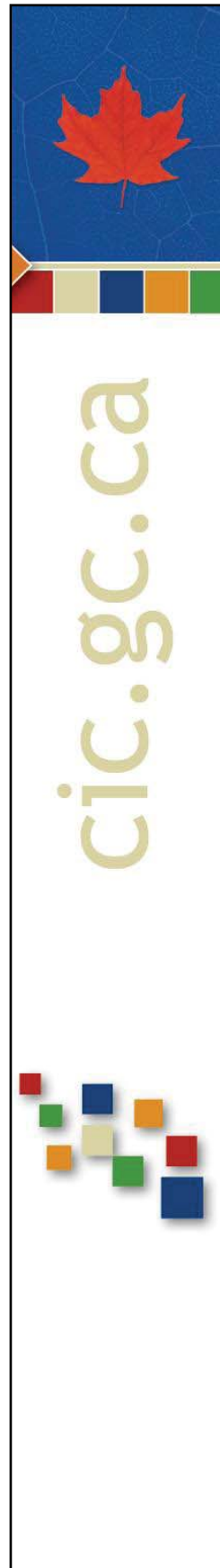
*Practicum Student - Douglas College*

The Douglas College TESL program has 300 hours of coursework and 30 hours of practicum. By the time they meet you, they will have had 1 hour of face-to-face tutoring experience. Our catchment area covers all of the GVRD, so a placement in any program is suitable. The trainees will begin their 10 hours of observation in mid-June and are required to complete their 10 hours of teaching by the end of July.

Douglas College hopes you will seriously consider partnering with by investing in the next generation of ESL teachers. For more information contact the TESL Practicum Director Janice Penner, [pennerj@douglas.bc.ca](mailto:pennerj@douglas.bc.ca) or the TESL Program Coordinator, Julia Robinson [robinsonj@douglas.bc.ca](mailto:robinsonj@douglas.bc.ca)

*"It was invaluable for me to observe how our government supports new Canadians"*

*Practicum student - Douglas College*



## Requesting a Guest Speaker

CIC Vancouver serves the Greater Vancouver and Lower Mainland/Fraser Valley area. We provide guest speakers to the following types of organizations:

- Community organizations providing services to permanent residents, visitors, refugees and prospective immigrants or prospective new Canadian citizens.
- Other community based service providers.
- Other government departments.
- Public and private schools, school boards and other educational institutions or organizations.
- Volunteer and not-for-profit legal services societies and organizations.

For the full article in PDF go to ELSA Net Resource Page at <http://www.elsanet.org/site/resources/newsletter>

# From Our Community

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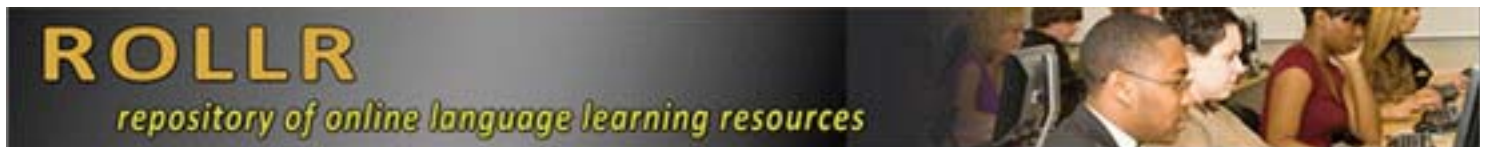
Check out the Literacy BC Library!



You're invited to use the Provincial Literacy Resource Centre at Literacy BC. We loan books and audiovisual materials to any adult in BC by mail, free of charge.

Browse our catalogue at <http://www2.literacy.bc.ca/catalogue/>. We have materials for teachers, tutors, students, researchers, and program developers - anyone interested in adult literacy. Our collection covers a variety of topics including workplace literacy, Essential Skills, health literacy, Aboriginal literacy, adult learning disabilities, English as a Second Language, and family literacy. We also have reading material for adult learners.

To borrow or ask a question, email us at [library@literacy.bc.ca](mailto:library@literacy.bc.ca) or call us at 604-684-0624 or 1-888-732-3234. The loan period is 4 weeks. Return postage is covered on print materials; borrowers are responsible for return postage on audiovisual materials. If you want to arrange an in-person visit, please call ahead.



## Online Language Learning Resource

By ROLLR Administrator

The Repository of Online Language Learning Resources (ROLLR) is a CIC (Ontario Region) initiative to provide a resource sharing mechanism for settlement language instructors. Launched at the 2010 TESL Ontario annual conference, ROLLR has 330 learning objects, which include interactive self-correcting reading, listening and writing activities at the Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) 3 to 8 range. Learning objects at the CLB 2 range will be added this year. These resources are based on the LINC (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada) Curriculum Guidelines, and

they complement the nationally distributed LINC Classroom Activities books (2010).

The University of PEI developed ROLLR using open-source software for Ottawa-based New Media Language Training, Inc. Registration at ROLLR is free, and registered users can download and deploy the learning objects to most learning management systems. ROLLR allows users to search by CLB level and/or keywords, preview learning objects in a runtime environment, and give feedback on each item. Social media is also an important feature of ROLLR. Registered users can upload items, which will be vetted for quality control. You can learn more about repositories and learning objects by visiting [ROLLR.ca](http://ROLLR.ca) and clicking on our YouTube channel link. [ROLLR.ca](http://ROLLR.ca) will be demonstrated at the 2011 TESL Canada conference in Halifax. ROLLR is part of the [LearnIT2teach.ca](http://LearnIT2teach.ca) project.

# From Our Community



What's new



**Story of the Week** is a very important and a very popular feature of the NALD website.

Adult learners get the opportunity and the space to share their personal stories of how they were able to overcome obstacles and improve their skills. In addition, when adult learners read an inspirational story written by another learner, they very often become motivated to write their own stories. In this way, they demonstrate their success and encourage others to learn.

## Guidelines

- The National Adult Literacy Database welcomes Story of the Week submissions from adult learners who are either enrolled in or have recently taken part in literacy classes. Please include the name of your tutor or instructor and that person's contact information.
- Ideally, stories are no longer than 500 words. NALD accepts different styles of writing such as poems, short stories, essays and testimonials as long as the stories are written by an adult learner living in Canada and enrolled in a literacy program.
- Story writers are asked to submit a short autobiography including their interests.
- A photo of the learner may also be included.
- Stories submitted to NALD are not edited but they must be written in good taste and be free of any form of discrimination. Learners' stories are not edited for accuracy, style or content.
- Stories are posted on our website from Monday to the following Sunday under Story of the Week at [www.nald.ca/story/story.htm](http://www.nald.ca/story/story.htm). Previous stories can still be accessed in the Story of the Week archive at: [www.nald.ca/storyoftheweek/archive.asp?lang=1](http://www.nald.ca/storyoftheweek/archive.asp?lang=1). Here, the stories can be searched by author, province, territory, or date. It is also possible to search from a list of stories available in audio format.

## Guidelines for sending audio files of learners' stories

Recording should be done by another person, such as a teacher or tutor. This



digital recording can be done on a computer or with a digital recorder. When recording, the room itself should be quiet, with preferably only the person recording and the learner reading being present. The story should have been written by the learner and it should take roughly two to three minutes to read.

When saving the digital recording, use MP3 or WAV and include it as an attachment in an email message. For digital recording of an audio story, you can use, for example, Adobe Audio or the recommended freeware, Audacity. The recording can be sent, along with the text file of the story and a photograph of the learner.

## How to submit stories

Please send stories by email to [lorette.melanson@nald.ca](mailto:lorette.melanson@nald.ca).

For more information about submitting learners' stories, please contact:

### Lorette Melanson

Manager, Research and Communications  
National Adult Literacy Database (NALD)  
Sterling House

767 Brunswick Street, Fredericton, NB E3B 1H8

Tel. (506) 457-6844, Fax (506) 457-6910

Email : [lorette.melanson@nald.ca](mailto:lorette.melanson@nald.ca)

[www.bdaa.ca/www.nald.ca](http://www.bdaa.ca/www.nald.ca)

[www.naldatwork.ca](http://www.naldatwork.ca)

[www.bdaaautravail.ca](http://www.bdaaautravail.ca)

# From Our Community

**Settlement Net** is an online database of resources for staff in immigrant and refugee service providers. Originally only available to staff in BCSAP Streams 1 and 2, AMSSA is pleased to extend access to ELSA providers in 2011.

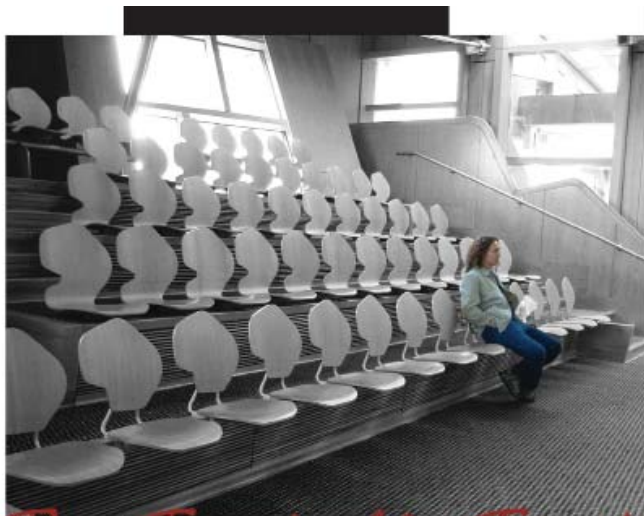
The site consists of 4 sections:

1. Client Service Resources - these are contacts, program info, public education materials, research results, statistics and media clippings to help frontline workers assist their clients and stay on top of developments in current events and public policy.
2. Settlement Sector Development - Government and service provider announcements, newsletters and publications, tools and resources to aid in organizational and program development, professional development resources, and minutes and reports from sector networking events.
3. Events Calendar - a calendar of events - meetings, events, workshops, conferences, public lectures, etc. - of interest to service provider staff and/or their clients.
4. Directory of Service Providers - listing of immigrant and refugee service providers in BC with Settlement Net accounts. Service providers can choose to share direct contacts for managers and staff to facilitate inter-agency communication, networking and referral.



Users can post events, program information, materials and more to staff in immigrant and refugee service providers across the province and can sign up for a weekly email update on new resources added to the site

For more information, or to set up an account for your ELSA program staff, please contact Melissa McDowell at AMSSA by phone (604 718 2783 or 1 888 355 5560 toll free) or email at [projects@amssa.org](mailto:projects@amssa.org).



*The Teachable Teacher*  
*We ask our students to learn something new every day. What have you learned today?*

**BC TEAL**  
**43rd Annual Conference**  
 May 6-7, 2011

SFU Harbour Centre  
 515 West Hastings St.  
 Vancouver, BC V6B 5K3

**Plenary Speakers:**

**Steven J. Madlinsky**  
 Professor,  
 Curriculum and Teaching  
 Boston University

**Heesoon Bai & Kumari Beck**  
 Professors,  
 Faculty of Education  
 Simon Fraser University

Registration and Event Details:  
[www.bctea1.org](http://www.bctea1.org)  
 ph.: 604.736.6330  
 fax: 604.736.6306

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