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[Home](#) > [Publications](#) > [Teacher Newsmag](#) > [Archives](#) > [Nov./Dec. 2013](#)
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[Current Issue](#)
[Archives](#)

Math Catcher

SFU offers free workshops

Are you looking for a free and interesting way to promote mathematics among your elementary or secondary school students, including members of Aboriginal communities? Over 1,600 children and youth have taken part in SFU's Math Catcher program in schools throughout BC.

The program aims to educate students about mathematics and scholarship in general by encouraging students to recognize how math is used in everyday life and how it forms the basis for many of our daily decisions and life-long choices. The storytelling, pictures, models, and hands-on activities used in this 90-minute presentation encourage young people to enjoy math and helps dispel myths that math is boring and abstract.

Another key component of this program is to introduce these concepts to Aboriginal students through the use of First Nations imagery and storytelling and inviting Aboriginal university students to help with the presentation. Dr. Veselin Jungic, associate chair of the SFU Mathematics Dept., who started the Math Catcher Program in 2011, says "It is crucial that we engage Aboriginal students in mathematics at this early age because without numeracy skills, too many study and career options will be closed to them."

As part of this program, Dr. Jungic has developed books and animated videos in several First Nations languages (Blackfoot, Cree, Squamish, Heiltsuk, Nisgaa, Sliammon, Halq'eméylem, and Huu-ay-aht) as well as bilingual picture books in Blackfoot/English, Squamish/English, and Nisgaa/English that he includes in his presentations.

The Aboriginal students who assist in these workshops are currently enrolled SFU students who volunteer their time to this program. They get the opportunity to share their experiences studying mathematics and science as a university student. This often sparks a lively question-and-answer session with the students.

Students from Metro Vancouver, Kamloops, Sparwood, Oliver, Bella Bella, Brentwood Bay, and Chase have benefited from this program supported by Simon Fraser University, the Pacific Institute of Mathematical Studies, the University of British Columbia, and the National Sciences and Research Engineering Research Council of Canada. If you would like to bring Math Catcher to your classroom, please contact:

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<http://mathcatcher.irmacs.sfu.ca/node>

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