

# communitas



## *Finding Connections*

# PAFA NEWS

SCIS has parent organizations called the Parents and Friends Association (PAFA) on each campus. PAFA serves as a way that parents can communicate ideas for the betterment of the school to the administration and Board. SCIS is proud of the high level of parent participation in their schools and value their partnership with the parent community. PAFA conducts various activities, from community events to charity fundraisers to volunteer support for teachers and students. Each campus has a PAFA board who works closely with each campus' administrations to plan events that help to make SCIS Campuses a unique experience for families, faculty, and students alike. We are always welcoming new members!

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## communitas

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Do you have a story to tell, a project to share, or art to be displayed? Let Communitas be a platform for your voice.

Communitas is about community and we rely on contributions from the SCIS community.

Should you have any comments, observations, wish to submit articles, or inquire as to ways to collaborate, feel free to send all inquiries or correspondence to the Communitas editor via email at [communications@scis-china.org](mailto:communications@scis-china.org).

Communitas is published three times per year for the SCIS community, our friends, and the larger Shanghai community.

We are social! Feel free to visit us on the web at [www.scis-china.org](http://www.scis-china.org) and follow us!



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5s,  
a selfie  
the teacher  
you spoke to



# Finding Connections



In this month's theme, Finding Connections, I choose to look no further than my immediate surrounding, our very own school, to draw inspiration.

The expatriate life and our international school setting give us endless opportunities to find connections that could lead to growing our yearning for lifelong learning, by continuously being curious about the diverse environment we are living in.

To be a lifelong learner is to realise that there are opportunities for learning outside the school premises and beyond dismissal time.

But why do we need to aim to be lifelong learners? To continue to learn, evolve, and open our minds, allows us to be creative and innovative. Through innovation, we can better our future and pass on the knowledge and best practices to future generations.

The Shanghai Community International School (SCIS) mission that we all try to ascribe to in our daily school life, "To develop inquiring, knowledgeable, and caring learners who contribute positively to their communities", speaks directly to this month's theme.

SCIS students are encouraged to learn by being inquisitive. They apply critical thinking to pursue further knowledge of the topic presented in class and also the world around them. The hope is that by honing critical thinking skills, students will develop problem-solving skills that will lead to innovation and, ultimately, positive contributions to the community they are in.

Here, you learn how to learn. When you are aware that learning does not end at dismissal time, and, can be continued via experiences outside of the school grounds, you are building your brain and behavioural muscles in finding connections between you and the people you encounter.

At SCIS, you are given a wonderful opportunity to be surrounded by people (peers, teachers, and school support teams) who come from diverse backgrounds. What makes this 'wonderful' is the journey to finding similarities with each other despite the differences between our respective cultures and background.

Finding similarities is an effective way to establish connections and relationships. Social relationships would show you that people naturally gravitate to similarities; finding something in common with someone is the first step in forming a relationship. When we are open in the pursuit of common ground with another person, the more open we are about our learning and recognising our differences, the more inclined we get to work through these differences.

However, we should also be mindful and ensure that we continue to see our peers for the individual that they are, as opposed to regarding them in a generalised perception. Seeing them for who they are and what they have to offer as an individual is the key to nurturing that connection.

Recognising differences could lead to fantastic opportunities to create something innovative. Appreciating that different cultures promote different ideas can bring about solutions to improving life. These connections, founded on similarities and recognition of differences, improve our learning by continuously enhancing our knowledge of different ideas. This practice makes us lifelong learners.

Understanding different cultures and the origin of their different ideas will hone our critical thinking and help us to mindfully practice openness to gain the full benefit of new experiences. All these make us feel fulfilled. Ultimately, self-fulfilment is what drives us to enjoy life.

Humans have a natural drive to explore, learn and grow, which encourages us to improve our quality of life and sense of self-worth by paying attention to the ideas and goals that inspire us. I am in the belief that ultimately, the most important thing is to educate our students about what the role of finding connections is in our happiness and success in life.



*By Daniel Eschtruth,  
Director of Schools at SCIS*





# Building a Better Tomorrow

## Through Service Learning

A student group is gathered in the library on a Friday afternoon engaged in meaningful and reflective conversation around sharing cross-cultural perspectives on mental health. What's noticeably absent? Judgement. Body language and expression from all the participants show their intent: to actively listen.

It has been months of planning, volunteering, and developing skills associated with photography, web design, media and more. As part of the Middle Years Programme (MYP) Personal Project, a Grade 10 student partners with Heart to Heart to run a charity exhibition and raise funds while showcasing incredible talent. Her project brings a human element to a clear message: this matters.

During an Advisory session, the whiteboard walls of a common area are bursting with creativity. Student-led club ideas include gender equity in sports, interactive mapping

of the community, debates on current events, art advocacy, and more. These leaders of tomorrow aim to motivate their peers to inquire, become knowledgeable, and ultimately make an impact.

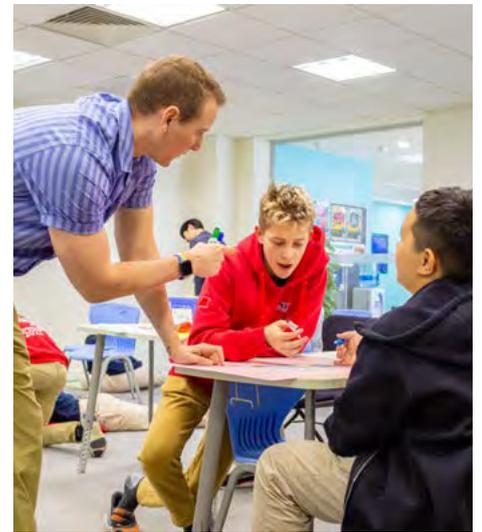
The anecdotes above capture just a snapshot of Shanghai Community International School (SCIS)'s multifaceted approach to service learning. As a result of the pandemic, students have seized unique opportunities through virtual conferences, allowing them to connect with others around the region, and even the globe. These opportunities have helped them become well-informed and brainstorm action plans focused on community concerns like youth mental health, inclusivity and belonging, and environmental degradation. Our older students have pursued avenues to volunteer locally more so than ever before. The strong pastoral program provided for our students not only fosters investigation

into service-oriented topics but builds leadership capacity and collaborative skills. Yet, the cornerstone of our growing program continues to be curricular integration that provides students with authentic experiential learning.

### A Focus on Community

When considering community engagement, we believe that several principles should be kept in mind, including ethics, notions of justice and equity, sustainability, empathy, and flexibility. A key aspect is modeling the process of service learning for students internally. The support of an open-minded administration, enthusiastic faculty, and eager parents has insured those initiatives are not only possible but that they thrive.

One such ongoing project is titled Community Voices, an initiative that allows us to pause and reflect on our namesake. In Individuals and Societies, concepts of fact versus perspective come alive



through student authored memoirs for grandparents, which uncover generational views and interpretations of historical events. In connection with this unit, there are plans for future collaborations with a local elderly home. Multilingualism and musical creativity come together in a music classroom; the study of guitar riffs around the world provides opportunities for students to connect with their families and promotes intercultural understanding. The Language Acquisition Department has paved the way in creating an authentic connection with our host country. Archetypes and other models of language and literature have taken on more meaning as we've connected and celebrated the everyday heroes of our community.

It is clear that a rigorous International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum can also address genuine needs. Students inspire others across divisions. They take the lead while planning for guest speakers on

key issues. They evaluate what it means to be a community member at school, then consider the bigger picture of global citizenship.

### Expanding Partnerships

#SCISDragonfit is a wellness initiative that not only emphasizes curricular links, but also poses social media challenges inviting participatory reflection from students, teachers, and parents alike. Submissions have come in all forms - whether it's recording a conversation questioning ableist mainstream views, sharing a recipe and accompanying food story, or writing a piece about feelings on vulnerability after failure. How is this project further reinforced? A partnership with Lifeline, a 100% volunteer-run, non-profit organization focused on mental health that provides confidential support across China. Planning alongside the Lifeline team provides exceptional learning opportunities both in and out of the classroom grounded in reciprocity.

Additionally, SCIS is committed to its ongoing partnership and support for Heart2Heart. Planning skills have been put to the test as upper school students in the National Honor Society strategize fund raising events. Our early learners contribute their artistic skills, which eventually become a source of pride with parents, during the Early Childhood Education Charity Auction. Through service learning and in line with the IB mission statement, our community is dedicated to "developing citizens who will create a better and more peaceful world."



**By John Gould,**  
MYP Service  
Learning Coach and  
DP CAS Coordinator  
at SCIS Hongqiao

# Collaborative Learning Environments

When you have the opportunity to explore an International Baccalaureate (IB) setting such as Shanghai Community International School (SCIS) you may notice your observations challenge what you remember or what you know about traditional approaches to learning. You would see the diversity of the student body, revel in the use of cutting-edge equipment, and watch in awe as young students explore materials you would never guess could be used for play or art. When you have the chance to watch closely as students learn, it becomes just as fascinating to see how they are learning, rather than simply what they are learning about. This is because each learning environment is designed to promote collaboration between students and educators. These designs are formally known as collaborative learning environments, and they're the cornerstone of the IB philosophy.

Educators at SCIS spend their time planning curricula, communicating with parents, and nurturing students. Behind the scenes, this planning impacts the way each environment is cultivated to ensure learning occurs. The type of furniture available, the way students can move around the space, how easily they may access materials, and how students would be expected to interact with one another are all factors that impact the potential of collaboration. All of these aspects are considered when setting

up our school each year, and our learning environments each day. Collaborative learning environments are designed to engage learners in a way that ensures they will problem-solve together, watch others as they model their ideas and thinking, and explore as a group.

Instead of single desks for workspaces, you may notice round tables, various surfaces or ways for students to document their ideas, and technology to make this work come to life. Students have the opportunity to collaborate so that they learn and grow from each other, sharing these environments with ownership. Collaborative learning spaces have been proven to develop higher-level thinking skills as well as boost confidence and self-esteem. By prioritizing open communication, individuals in collaborative learning environments can learn from others, and in turn, teach others what they know as well.

Student productivity increases in collaborative learning environments because students are naturally motivated to engage with their peers. Teachers facilitating collaborative learning environments have the luxury of bringing together learners with different experiences, knowledge, and learning styles. They create a space in which students understand their work is both important



and valued. This fosters a group mentality in which students can solve problems and develop understanding and respect for one another's unique differences and strengths.

Collaborative learning environments ingrain the knowledge students need to participate in group work, a set of invaluable skills everyone requires to be a responsible community member no matter the setting. This allows students to take action across environments while they inquire about the world around them and connect with others. It's within these connections that students can reach shared goals and meaningful outcomes. At SCIS, our collaborative learning environments are designed in hopes that the role we play as educators fosters critical thinking skills and empathy toward others, as students arrive to find their purposeful place in their community each day.



*By Rachel Griffin,  
Pre-Kindergarten Teacher  
at SCIS Hongqiao*



# “Building Independence in the MYP”



As teachers, we know our students are all unique, and as international educators, it is our responsibility to create a welcoming, challenging, and rewarding learning environment for all our students.

The Middle Years Programme (MYP) is based on inquiry and focused on conceptual understanding. MYP students are encouraged to seek out their own information and develop their own understanding. This encourages a collaborative relationship between teachers and students as well as student participation and teamwork. Inspired by the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework, we want our students to be able to set clear goals and to make decisions during each learning experience about how to get to that goal. Hence, our aim is to develop independent learners who can monitor their progress, reflect on the process, and ultimately set new goals.

Why is it important to build independent learners? First, building independence inspires student motivation for learning. Motivation connects to the emotional part of learning. There is a close connection between emotions and cognition. Our brain is designed to focus on what matters and motivation is the key to

success in school. To build motivation and recruit student interest, it is essential for teachers to present options for achieving the learning goal the students set for themselves. While we are offering choices to students, we promote student self-determination and increase the degree to which they feel connected to their learning. As a result, students feel pride in the results they accomplish.

Secondly, while building independence, MYP teachers make sure they include options for student self-regulation in their classroom routines. Student self-regulation is the ability to monitor and control emotions, thoughts, and behaviors. The ability to self-regulate is a very important part of human growth as self-regulation is a critical skill that ensures that a student can approach a new challenge in a controlled manner, independently or collaboratively. Students can practice self-regulation in skillfully designed self-paced classes, where they can take ownership over the planning and managing of the learning process.

While MYP teachers accomplish all the above, another goal to keep in mind must be to maintain a high level of collaboration between students. All learners in the twenty-first century must be able to

successfully communicate and collaborate within a community of learners. In class, teachers provide opportunities to work as a team and set clear guidelines for group work and peer support. Moreover, as a school, we encourage the creation of communities of learners who share interests and activities and that can set goals and take on responsibilities.

Learning to become independent learners is hard for young people and one of the most important parts of the teachers' work as facilitators is building relationships. Learning requires the emotional risk to stretch and grow, so teachers must set up a safe environment where every member of the class feels included, appreciated, and respected. Positive relationships are fundamental to success. When students, and adults, feel supported, they are more likely to be engaged, motivated, and achieve better academic results.



*By Valeria Massarotto,  
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## The Power of

# Play-Based Learning

Do you remember your favorite activity as a child? As you explored something that sparked your interest, consider the excitement and joy you must have felt. Play is an open-ended opportunity for children to pursue their interests, discover new possibilities, and express themselves. Creativity is unique to each child, and we can hear it through their language, see it in their gestures, and understand it in the process of their work.

During the Early Years of the Primary Years Programme (PYP) children are given the opportunity to make inquiries about the world around them by engaging in play and reflecting on the process of learning. Children are encouraged to explore their environment, both indoor and outdoor, and ask questions about what they see around them. Play can take on many characteristics:

- **Play is meaningful** – Children are curious by nature, and play gives them the chance to make sense of and find meaning in

the world around them. By making connections to something with which they are already familiar, children learn and build an understanding of these new experiences.

- **Play is engaging** – Through play, children are immersed in a world of wonder, which helps them to develop physically, socially, and emotionally.
- **Play is joyful** – Listen to and watch any environment in which children engage in play-based learning, and you will see and feel their enjoyment and motivation to learn and explore. Play brings out the joy of learning, and students are encouraged and guided to overcome challenges they encounter along the way.
- **Play is interactive** – Children naturally develop their social and communication skills through play. Play provides children with choices and opportunities to explore, experiment, question and problem-solve with other children. This helps them to understand others through social interactions and build positive relationships and friendships.



- **Play is challenging** – Through play, children test and adapt their theories, try out possibilities, compare, predict, take on challenges, innovate, and persevere—which all leads to deeper learning.

Learners in the Early Years have opportunities to discover their interests, move at their own pace, ask questions, and make decisions while learning through play. Play provides teachers and students with vehicles for developing life-long skills of self-management, research, communication, socializing, and thinking. Children begin developing these fundamental skills in the Early Years and through play-based learning. They are nurtured throughout their time in the PYP and beyond.

As educators in an International Baccalaureate (IB) school, our role is to support children in their play. We scaffold tasks and activities to meet the individual needs of our students. We

listen attentively to all children's wonderings and conversations. We are at the child's level, and we are present in the child's exploration. To gain insight into the child's understanding of the areas of interest they choose for themselves, we ask questions such as, "Can you tell me more? How did you do this? I wonder what would happen if...? How can we find out more about...? Why do you think...? and How do you know...?"

Think back to the last time you allowed yourself to play. Perhaps we could all benefit not only from the curiosity and skill-building of a child at play but also their boundless accompanying joy.



*By Vince Lehane,  
PYP Coordinator,  
and Meghan Hinds,  
Preschool Teacher  
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A few weeks ago, my dear Mikael, editor of the *Communitas* magazine, contacted me asking me to write an article on the topic “Breaking Down the Invisible Walls in the Classroom”. At that time I had no idea that we were about to get into a lockdown, so the topic quickly changed into being “real walls”! These days, anything can happen at any time. Every second is different from the previous one and Shanghai Community International School (SCIS) is great at adapting to the quick changes of life. How do we mold in an unexpected lockdown situation when we cannot break the actual walls?

Letting go of expectations is one of the tricks. Expectations create tension. Nobody wants an outbreak, but expecting the situation to go away doesn’t help us and it doesn’t push the situation away. Instead, we get stuck in frustration. We didn’t know when the lockdown was going to finish, the date kept changing. The outbreak will go when it has to go, at the right time. No expectations. In the meantime, we just have to focus on remaining content every second, no matter what. Then the situation goes away.

Another trick is to list the benefits of a lockdown. Everything that happens in life has a benefit. Families are enjoying time together, I waste less time in cafes. I cook healthy food at home.

My neighborhood cooperates like a family and I have made many new friends in my building. We share, and we support each other. Before that, we barely said “hello” in the elevator.

My heart also opens when I see my amazing SCIS team cooperating with resilience and coming up with a solution to any problem in no time.

The lockdown was great. It also brought to my awareness what I learned while trekking for a month in “el Camino de Santiago” when I was young. Something that I had forgotten: the fact that we don’t need anything material in order to be OK, content, and happy.

So, the topic of the article was “Breaking Down the Invisible Walls in the Classroom”. The walls were not in the classroom or in the lockdown. The walls were inside. There are no walls, they are an illusion.

We cannot break the walls in the lockdown, but we can melt the inner conflicts that arise when the external walls cannot be broken.

The lockdown is also a great opportunity for people to reveal who they are or who they want to be. There was uncertainty and fear.



Sometimes nothing to eat. In the film "Titanic" we could see all sorts of characters: some people pushed and hurt each other to survive. Others entertained the sinking ship by playing music. But some people were only thinking about how to save others. Who would you like to be? Now you can choose to represent your favourite film character.

This is also Service Learning. We tend to think that the International Baccalaureate (IB) concept of Service Learning is about creating an environmental project to recycle cans. This is of course true, but Service Learning is also being great with our family, peers, and neighbours when a natural calamity comes.

A lot more stuff is yet to come, but fear not, it is a blessing in disguise. Enjoy watching the film of life and choose your role!

Oh yeah, the outbreak is good. Everything that happens is good.



*By Andres Lopez, MYP/DP Language Acquisition Teacher at SCIS Pudong*

# How to Support Critical Thinking at Home

As parents, we always look for ways to enhance the learning experience for our children at home. It is more so during the uncertain time of virtual learning and current (or upcoming) lockdowns. We want to know more about how to facilitate our kids to think critically. Here are some tips.

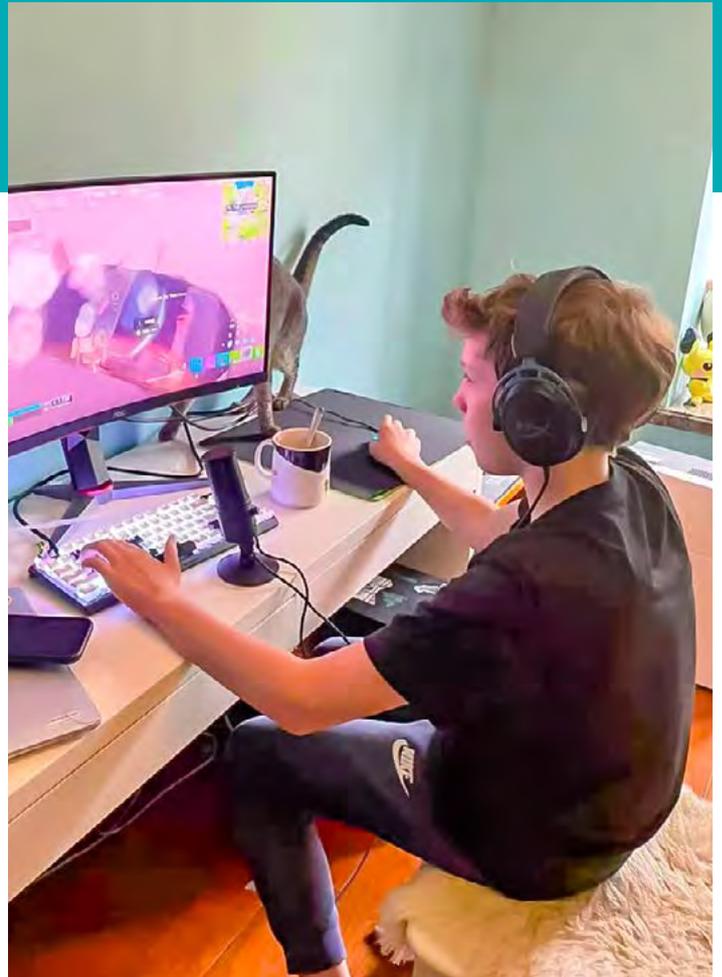
## Playing games helps to develop critical thinking among children

One of the most powerful tools parents can use to support critical thinking for kids at home is games (including video games). While one widely held view maintains playing games (esp. video games) is intellectually lazy, such play may enhance a range of cognitive skills such as spatial navigation, reasoning, memory and perception, and especially critical thinking. If used carefully and properly, parents can take advantage of the kind of cognitively agile and creatively playful mindset fostered by gameplay to promote critical thinking among kids.

## Children learn better when they have fun!

Empirical studies have suggested critical thinking comes more naturally in some states of mind (e.g., fluid, free, playful, curious, and confident) than in others (e.g., pressured, directed, assessed, or evaluated). When used effectively, games often promote the development of critical thinking tremendously.

Puzzle games, like the classic *Zoombinis*, help kids to solve problems and think ahead, and story-based games such as *Storymatic Kids* can help students understand and unpack local and global issues. According to a long-term study published in 2013, playing video games, especially role-playing games, was suggested to have a positive impact on students' problem-solving and school grades.



## What if my children spend too much time playing games?

Some parents may agree increasingly difficult puzzles make for cognitively powerful playtime; but there are concerns some games take too long or are tedious to complete, even after a solution is found or a pattern is discovered. If you have the same concern about using *Devil's Advocate*, you are not alone! However, parents can help kids to set up schedules (and visual schedules for younger kids) and timers to empower time management and self-regulation. Opportunity to shoot two birds with one stone!

### **Worry about too much screen time? We can talk about games instead!**

Almost every child has one or two games of their favorite, and they love talking about “their” games. Parents can use this as a perfect opportunity to ask kids why they prefer this game to others. Our children wouldn’t be able to answer such questions without critical thinking. Children usually would start contrasting, analyzing, and comparing different games. The conversation can become richer and more intense when parents intentionally guide kids to put down more thoughts on the game developers, competitors, and target audiences by researching video reviews, feature articles, tweets, their related art, fan fiction, or even cosplay.

### **Beyond games: Debate**

Another useful tip for parents is to debate with kids. Parents can intentionally challenge kids with a different point of view about a particular game, games in general, or any interesting topic, especially real-life scenarios. Most of our children start practicing “show and tell” at an early age, and storytelling is a universal foundation for an in-depth conversation. It helps children to stay curious about every element of a problem.

For example, do we need to pay the Ayi during a week of lockdown? She did not

come to clean and cook at our home. So, strictly legally speaking you don’t have to pay her. At the same time, her income is the critical source of her family income and her husband is a kuai-di (i.e., delivery guy). We are probably less financially affected than them. Also, we need to consider factors like, whether our Ayi is in lockdown and not able to work, our family is forced into lockdown and we don’t wish for the Ayi to come to our house during the lockdown.

We can then guide children to have a “dragonfly eye” view of the world, to see through multiple lenses. Parents can help children to picture the life of an Ayi, her husband, and her children. If an Ayi doesn’t work, theoretically it is ok not to pay her. However, is not working a choice made by the Ayi herself or a decision by the CDC and authorities? Is her husband supporting the supply chain for every community member in Shanghai? Do we, as employers, have enough budget to give her a full week’s pay? Would the Ayi feel embarrassed if we paid her for a non-working week? Should we pay her 50% (or 20%, 70%) instead?

Children will feel the need to look at and understand alternative explanations. They also need to figure out a logically powerful way to convince parents. And it opens an

excellent opportunity for kids to tap into their collective intelligence, acknowledging that the smartest people are not in the room. Children will also develop more tolerance for ambiguity.

### **Revisit the operational definition of critical thinking**

I am sure you have heard of critical thinking numerous times in life and people use it in different contexts with different connotations. Critical thinking is the process of analyzing facts to understand a problem or topic thoroughly. The critical thinking process typically includes steps such as collecting information and data, asking thoughtful questions and analyzing viable solutions. Critical thinking is a mindset instead of a “skill,” and it can become a habit through many practices parents can facilitate at home.



*By Dr. Catherine Kang,  
School Counselor &  
Carolyn Pang,  
Learning Support Teacher  
at SCIS Hongqiao*





# Fostering the Home-School Relationship

From early years to upper school, children learn best when the significant adults in their lives, such as parents, teachers, and other family members, work together to support them.

A good home-school relationship is much more than just reporting about a child's academic performance or behavior in class. Ideally, it is a partnership that provides mutual understanding about a child's learning and social-emotional development both in the classroom and at home.

The following tips aim to highlight ways in which parents can start their relationship-building efforts with the school on the right foot.

## 1. Close the gap and strive for continuity

Inside the classrooms, teachers work diligently to foster and encourage children's independence. Starting in the early years, this is done in every sense of the way with children encouraged to tackle everyday tasks independently. They get dressed, feed themselves, and aim to solve problems on their own. It is important to strive for a continuation of this when the child returns home from school.

A disconnect may happen at home if the child is no longer allowed to be independent. The child may be eager to

take on tasks but is not given the chance to put the skills they have learned into practice.

"Unnecessary help is a hindrance to the development of the child"  
– Maria Montessori

## 2. Develop fine motor and social-emotional skills

Allowing children to independently take on physical tasks enables the development of motor skills. Returning to our previous example, young children develop certain muscle groups and strengths when undertaking physical tasks, such as getting dressed. Movements such as pinching, pulling, pushing, and grasping are developed. These same fine motor skills are directly involved in the development of writing.

Additionally, these physical functions are closely related to brain development. Take self-feeding for example, this activity involves eye-hand coordination as well as focus and concentration. Insufficient development of these skills can lead to a lack of concentration and attention disorders later in a child's life.

Lastly, we recommend involving children in the natural consequences and responsibilities of activities, for example: tidying up after playtime. To prevent any future developmental struggle or delay, it is important to allow opportunities for these skills to develop at an early age.

## 3. Allow mistakes to happen and own up to them

Mistakes are very much a part of the learning process, and a child will often not realize it is a 'mistake' until it is pointed out to them by adults, which is often unnecessary. Trial and error are valid ways of developing problem-solving skills. When kids are trying to solve a puzzle or fit Lego pieces together, for example, letting them explore and figure things out on their own are wonderful opportunities for learning and growth.

The same applies to older children when they come and ask for help. With a math problem, for example, it is important to make yourself available to be there to help if necessary, but just as equally important, allow your child to try solving the problem on their own.

Sometimes a child may not be ready to realize a mistake and correct it, while other times they may not be mature enough. On both occasions, it is recommended to allow them to explore and allow that freedom of discovery, instead of pointing out that their current way of doing things is incorrect. Pointing out wrongdoings will only frustrate your child and withdraw their interest from the task at hand.

Sometimes parents also make mistakes, and they must admit when they do to model this behavior to their child. Showing vulnerability and openness are two

important and valuable skills, especially in today's world, for families to develop and have together.

#### 4. Give children a sense of belonging and responsibility

Children yearn to be included and participate in all aspects of family life. Giving children a voice and the ability to express their opinions, share their ideas, and be heard is extremely important. This promotes a sense of unity and belonging within their own home, where they feel connected with their family and comfortable enough to open up and talk about their struggles and share other aspects of their lives.

Teenagers, especially, tend to withdraw because they may have differing views from their parents, which may cause conflicts. At this age, they may find common views and more understanding amongst their peers. As a family, try to be understanding of this particular phase of their development, by giving them the necessary space but also being open to them when they need you.

Involving children in family conversations and the family decision-making process are great opportunities for connection and bonding. Involve them in open conversations about, for example, travel plans, where the family might relocate to next, etc. Additionally, try to remain open about choices your child would want to make regarding their personal interests and future aspirations (hobbies, extra-curricular activities, career, and university plans).

Another way to give children a sense of responsibility and belonging in the family is by inviting them to participate in daily tasks, such as household chores, meal preparation, or setting the table. This creates connection opportunities and family time, where you can ask your child about their day, their school, and social life. Simultaneously, this gives them a break from being in front of digital devices all day and allows them more hands-on, sensorial real-world exploration.

#### 5. Build a three-way communication bridge

Just as important as it is for teachers to let parents in on what is going on inside the classroom, parents need to inform the school about what is happening on their side of the spectrum. When we are fostering relationships between home and school, this open channel of communication is invaluable.

Relaying observations about your children's behavior at home to your teacher or counselor will ensure everyone is on the same page. When teachers and counselors are aware of what is going on with a student's life outside of school, they can better understand behavior or academic changes.

At the end of the day, parents know their child best. Having constant and proactive contact between the child, parent, and teacher or counselor is important as it allows us to have different perspectives about the child in a time of need and make accommodations when necessary.

#### 6. Reach out for support

Bringing up children is not always an easy task and can present some struggles for families along the way. As the saying goes "it takes a village"! Educators and counselors can always collaborate and work in partnership with families and vice-versa. The responsibility to strengthen the home-school relationship should come from both sides. As a school, we are not only working with students but with the whole family.

Parents are encouraged to reach out, connect and ask for help whenever the need arises. SCIS teachers and counselors are available to discuss struggles, learning difficulties, strategies, and enable conversation possibilities.

Both parents and the school play a vital role in influencing students' lives. Though it may seem challenging to find the time, energy, or skills to build trusting relationships with your student's parents or caregivers, it is well worth the effort.



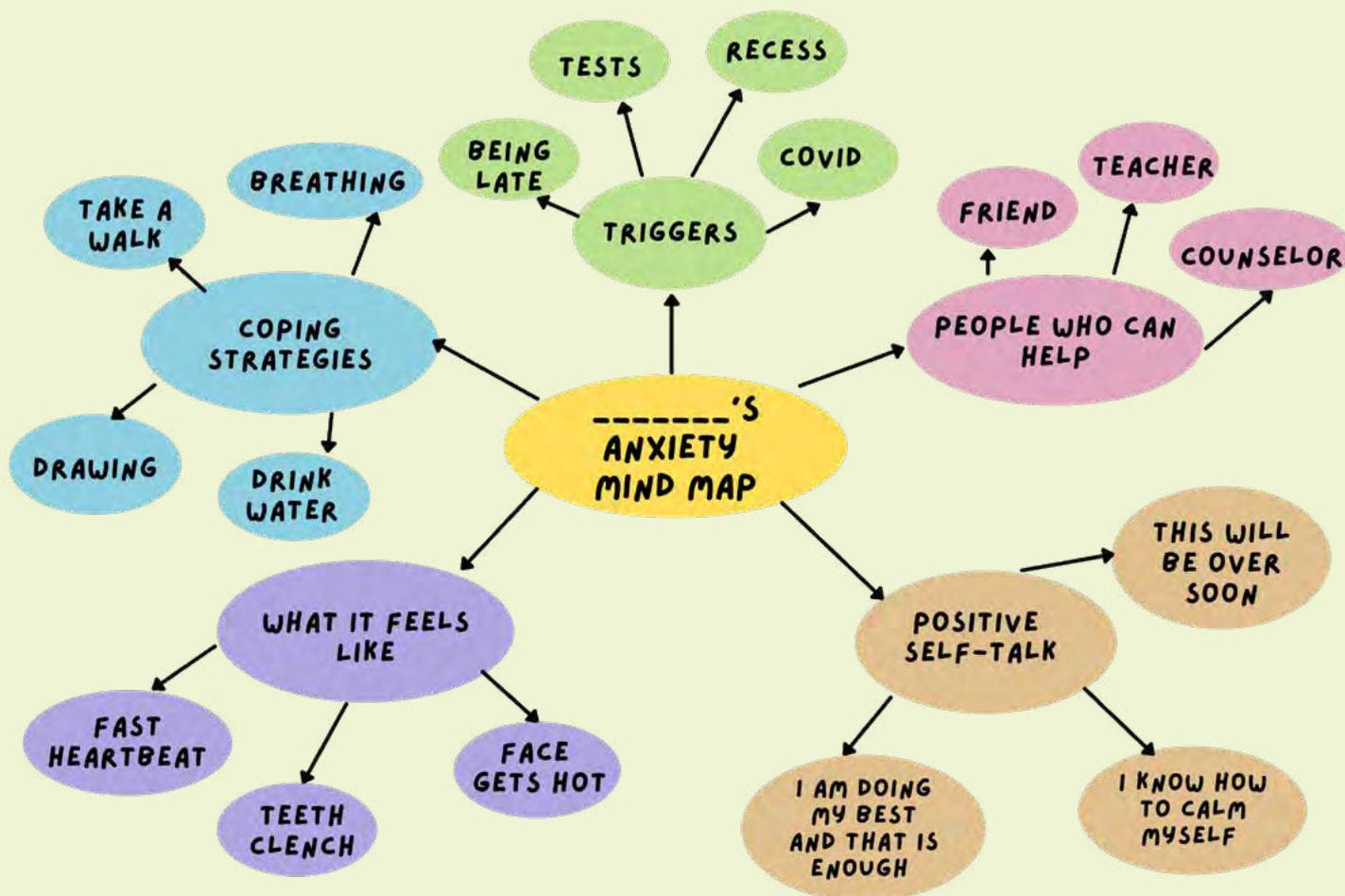
By *Mirian Bonomi, Upper School Counselor at SCIS Hongqiao & Mikael Masson Perez, Communications Manager at SCIS*

3 TO 4 YEARS		18 MONTHS TO 3 YEARS		12 TO 18 MONTHS	
<p><b>chores above plus...</b></p> <p><b>Kitchen</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unpack dishwasher</li> <li>Baking (measuring and mixing ingredients)</li> <li>Scrub and peel vegetables, eg. potatoes, carrots</li> <li>Assisting with cooking, eg. making lasagne</li> </ul> <p><b>Bathroom</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use toilet</li> <li>Close toilet seat</li> <li>Flush toilet</li> <li>Place wet clothing in laundry area</li> <li>Wipe after using toilet with assistance</li> <li>Wash hair (use travel bottles to minimise waste)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Bedroom</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make bed (pulling up duvet)</li> <li>Pack clothes into drawers/wardrobe</li> <li>Dress without assistance</li> </ul> <p><b>Other</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feed pets</li> <li>Help with recycling</li> <li>Folding laundry</li> <li>Folding socks</li> <li>Vacuuming</li> <li>Opening car door with remote</li> </ul>	<p><b>chores above plus...</b></p> <p><b>Kitchen</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare a snack/sandwich</li> <li>Peel and slice banana</li> <li>Peel mandarin</li> <li>Peel and cut apple with assistance</li> <li>Wash fruit and vegetables</li> <li>Make orange juice</li> <li>Set the table</li> <li>Clear the table</li> <li>Wipe table</li> <li>Sweep floor</li> <li>Use dustpan &amp; brush</li> <li>Make coffee for parent (push buttons on coffee machine/ fetch cup + saucer)</li> </ul> <p><b>Bathroom</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blow nose</li> <li>Brush teeth</li> <li>Wash body (use travel bottles to minimise waste)</li> <li>Clean face</li> </ul>	<p><b>Bedroom</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Help to make bed - pulling up duvet cover</li> <li>Choose clothes</li> <li>Get dressed with little help</li> </ul> <p><b>Other</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arranging flowers in small vases</li> <li>Pack + carry bag/backpack</li> <li>Put on coat</li> <li>Put on shoes with velcro</li> <li>Water plants</li> <li>Tidy toys into baskets + return to shelf</li> <li>Cleaning windows</li> <li>Load/unload washing machine + dryer</li> <li>Sort socks + clothing by colour</li> <li>Fetch products in supermarket/ push trolley/help unpack groceries</li> <li>Dusting</li> <li>Put lead on dog + brush dog</li> </ul>	<p><b>Kitchen</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pour glass of water/milk using small jug</li> <li>Add milk to cereal</li> <li>Scoop cereal into bowl</li> <li>Wipe spills with hand-mitt</li> <li>Take plate to kitchen</li> <li>Drink from a glass (use small amount of liquid to avoid large spills)</li> </ul> <p><b>Bathroom</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brush hair</li> <li>Brush teeth with assistance</li> <li>Wash hands</li> <li>Pack away bath toys</li> <li>Fetch and hang up towel</li> </ul>	<p><b>Bedroom</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fetch nappy/underwear</li> <li>Dirty clothes to laundry basket</li> <li>Open curtains</li> <li>Choose between 2 options for clothing</li> <li>Get dressed with assistance</li> <li>Take off socks</li> </ul> <p><b>Other</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Help to pack away toys</li> <li>Fetch shoes</li> <li>Help parent, eg. "Can you bring me the watering can please?"</li> <li>Turn on/off light switch</li> </ul>

# The Power of Mind Mapping

“SEE what you think.”

– Lois Farfel Stark, *The Telling Image: Shapes of Changing Times*



## What is Mind Mapping?

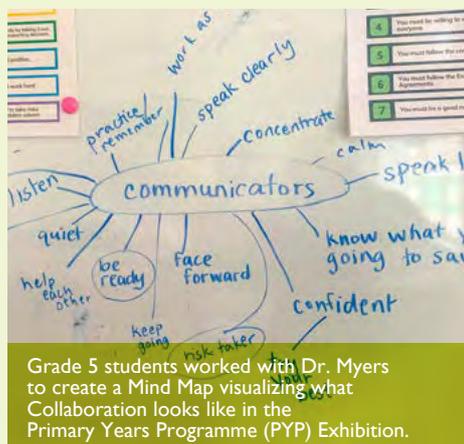
Have you ever tried solving a complex problem, learning a new subject, or brainstorming ideas only to find yourself drowning in pieces of information that are seemingly unconnected? Well then, Mind Mapping might be a useful solution to managing complexity in learning and life. A Mind Map is a form of Concept Mapping also known as Spray Diagrams and Spider Diagrams.

Developed as a personal development tool in the 1960s by author and consultant, Tony Buzan, a Mind Map is a diagram used to generate, organize, connect, and explain information in an alternative way. This two-dimensional note-taking technique shows the relationship between relevant knowledge about a specific subject by using words, symbols, and imagery.

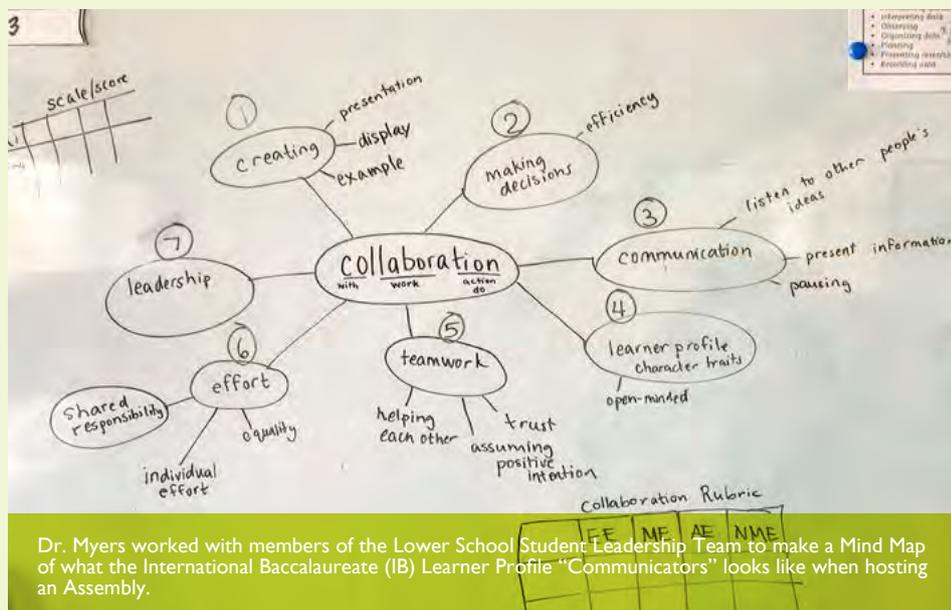
By creating a Mind Map information and ideas are easier to remember because they are organizing by relative importance. By clustering individual ideas in relation to the overall concept, you can easily add to Mind Maps you have already drawn to help you to make associations, connections, and generate ideas.

## How are Mind Maps used?

Mind Maps are useful tools that can help students for taking notes, brainstorming, researching, problem-solving, and personal development. By utilizing both the left brain (creative) and right brain (logical), the capacity for synthesizing information and expanding critical thinking, and learning is enhanced. Mind Maps have the capacity to help students apply critical thinking skills to social-emotional learning. "Mind Mapping is a creative modality that is recognized and adopted internationally by governments, major corporations, and academic



Grade 5 students worked with Dr. Myers to create a Mind Map visualizing what Collaboration looks like in the Primary Years Programme (PYP) Exhibition.



Dr. Myers worked with members of the Lower School Student Leadership Team to make a Mind Map of what the International Baccalaureate (IB) Learner Profile "Communicators" looks like when hosting an Assembly.

institutions but remains relatively obscure in the mental health literature" (Pillay, Huan Tang, & Funk, 2020).

Mind Maps are especially helpful for personal development. As a counselor, I use Mind Maps to help students process emotions, solve problems, and develop self-awareness. Mind Maps can help people discover their potential, understand who they are, and overcome obstacles. Below is an example of a completed Mind Map I use when young students are struggling with anxiety. By giving children the power to create an image of what they are experiencing and what support they have, they can develop confidence in their ability to shape their responses to experiences. Mind Maps give people the chance to see what they are thinking in ways that shape understanding and behavior. This simple visualization tool has the power to transform learning and self-awareness.

## How to create a Mind Map?

It is easy to create a Mind Map. Follow these simple steps.

- Step 1: Write the idea, topic, or project that you're exploring in the center of a page and draw a circle around it.
- Step 2: As you think of facts, tasks, concepts, etc. related to the main topic, draw lines out from the circle, write your subheadings and connect them back to the center circle (main idea).
- Step 3: Continue expanding your ideas to uncover the next level of information. Then, link these to the relevant subheadings.

- Step 4: Continue repeating the process until you have expanded your idea into a beautiful web of connections.

A completed Mind Map is a beautiful thing. Your Mind Map may end up looking like a simple wheel with subtopics radiating from a central spoke, or like an ancient tree with sub-topics forking off like branches and twigs from the trunk of a tree. You don't need to worry about the structure you produce – this will evolve to suit your creation.

Tips for making Mind Maps:

- Use single words or short phrases
- Use color to separate ideas and make connections
- Use symbols or images to support the words.
- Use lines and arrows to show connections

There are many digital tools and Mind Mapping software applications available.

[www.canva.com](http://www.canva.com)  
<https://www.mindmup.com/>  
<https://venngage.com/features/mind-map-maker>  
<https://www.thebrain.com/>



By Dr. Molly Myers,  
Lower School Counselor  
at SCIS Pudong



# Building Connections to our Host Culture





When we say host culture, what do we mean? Is host culture a static object that can be approached, or, rather, is it a living thing that every one of us is breathing in and out 24/7?

While we are not here to define this concept through a sociological lens, our role as Chinese educators is one of helping bridge connections between our host culture and the classroom. At Shanghai Community International School (SCIS) students are not only guided by their Mandarin teachers, but also by their immediate community to build their own connection to the Chinese culture that exists all around them.

Chinese culture resides in every literary novel and book that students read in their Mandarin class. Students have the opportunity to explore essential and traditional Chinese values such as the concepts of harmony, benevolence, righteousness, courtesy, wisdom, honesty, loyalty, and filial piety through reading either Mandarin or bilingual folktales that

have been circulating the Millennium. At the same time, the curriculum also provides students with many chances to celebrate various Chinese festivals and holidays. On these occasions, students participate in hands-on activities such as making paper lanterns, dragon dance, and holiday recipes cooking. When students share out their thoughts after reading or peek at why a holiday is celebrated in this way, they are taking the initiative to build a connection between themselves and the culture they are researching about. In this context, Chinese culture is perceived in a tangible way for everyone to observe and understand.

No matter how reliable the first connection could be, students are living in the Chinese culture every minute of their everyday lives. The way they interact with their host culture must be more than just reading about facts and stories. However, students need guidance to reveal the connection and as teachers, it is our responsibility to shed the light

on this concept and support students to better situate themselves within their host country. These enlightenments consist of moments, both big and small. It can be a quick talk during a morning meeting about a popular hashtag on social media and from there, students can connect their thoughts and feelings with the current events that are happening in the Greater Shanghai Area. Also, the connection can be developed in a class project that is inquiry-based and invites students to engage in more in-depth arguments about any chosen topic from their local community.

In this context, will students get a clear answer of yes or no? Hard to say. But they are undoubtedly approaching the host culture in a more meaningful and authentic way.



*By Yan Yan, Lower School Mandarin Coordinator at SCIS Pudong*





# The Foundational Levels of Community



Connections play a critical role in the development of all children within our Early Childhood Education (ECE) programs and provide the foundations for students to join and contribute to their classroom and school community. As students transition from Nursery through Kindergarten, they are making physical, emotional, and cognitive connections in new ways each day. Each year, students build on the foundations of the previous year and expand their thinking in new ways. Community is the cornerstone of Shanghai Community International School (SCIS) and it is at the foundation of what we believe within our early years program. The ability to connect to a community provides us with purposeful and meaningful relationships throughout our lives, giving us a sense of belonging. All adults within the early years community: parents, teachers, bus drivers, guards, chefs, and ayis play a critical role as co-constructors of learning in modeling, facilitating, and nurturing these connections.

When Nursery and Preschool students begin school, they often encounter a community outside of their family nucleus for the first time. These earliest years are very internally focused, filled with many firsts as children begin to discover, create, and reinforce internal connections while simultaneously building identity by exploring personal interests, developing skills, and literally finding their voice. Their world transitions from egocentric as they develop empathy, compassion, and



awareness for those around them and begin to desire and seek out others. There is a shift from parallel play, two students playing with Lego alongside each other, to cooperative play, students building a Lego tower with each other. Through play, students are beginning to mimic and make connections to the roles or jobs they witness within their community such as chef, police officer, family member, and teacher. Play helps children to experiment and learn about roles and relationships within a community. The adults around these early learners work hard to provide safe and inviting spaces for this exploration to occur so these children have a diverse repertoire of experiences to reflect on helping them form an understanding of the greater world.

A child's transition into Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten provides opportunities for even more connections and for their community to expand outside of the students and teachers in their homeroom class. With the addition of single-subject teachers in the daily schedule, these additional classes are in their own right, separate communities with specific goals, norms, and expectations. In these larger communities, students begin to play collaboratively by incorporating the ideas of those involved in their play. With the emerging ability to recall past experiences and connect the interests and preferences of their friends and teachers, play scenarios and friendships evolve quickly and extensively. Teachers in these age groups create experiences for children to independently and successfully negotiate, problem solve, and cope with adversity. Children at this age continue to build their

foundational skills through experiential learning and begin to connect and apply foundational skills with more consistency as they accept active roles and responsibilities within their communities.

The connections, or synapses, that are happening in a child's brain correlate to developmental milestones. Children experience exponential growth in their ability to complete a task or accomplish something previously unattainable due to the cognitive growth directly related to this brain development. Environments within the ECE are crafted with these individual neural milestones in mind, while also keeping in mind how developmental levels impact participation in a greater classroom community. The classroom community is at the heart of all early years learning because it, in essence, is a direct representation of our larger community. The early years classrooms are where people connect through the sharing of ideas, artwork, emotions, and empathy. It is exciting to watch ECE students grow within the program, as educators, we know the impact students will have on the larger SCIS community. Instilling the values of a strong community at an early age ensures these values will continue within the SCIS and global community for years to come in courtrooms, board rooms, laboratories, and households all around the world.



**By Andrew Bissonnette,  
Early Childhood Education  
Co-Coordinator at  
SCIS Hongqiao**



# Interdisciplinarity – Connecting Learning

One of the downsides of progressing through education is an increasing tendency towards the siloing of knowledge and skills into different disciplines and subjects. In fact, the word “subject” comes from the Latin word of “bring under”, in essence constructing an umbrella under which we sometimes arbitrarily place certain approaches, knowledge, and ways of thinking.

If you think back to when you were younger, you might remember a more holistic approach to learning where you were able to explore and find all kinds of connections naturally between things you were learning.

The International Baccalaureate (IB) recognizes the power of making connections between ideas and concepts across different disciplines and students who learn this way can take the knowledge and skills they’ve learned in one discipline and connect it to their learning in other subjects. They see how this approach can not only deepen the impact of the learning experience but can have the effect of creating new knowledge – something that could not be achieved by looking at a problem or an idea from only one frame of disciplinary reference.

As such, the IB Middle Years Programme (MYP) makes schools responsible for engaging students in at least one collaboratively planned unit – a so-called Interdisciplinary Unit or IDU – that involves at least two subjects, in each of the five years of the program.

As you may know, every year we carve out a very valuable week of instructional time to have students engage in interdisciplinary learning. These are often project-based and involve really interesting subject connections as the disciplinary grounding for interdisciplinary learning.

Students are then assessed against a set of IDU Rubrics (scaled up, as with all subjects, in expectations and depth from Y1 to Y5) and this appears on a student’s report card at the end of the final reporting period in June.

But these IDUs wouldn’t be anything without the weeks and months of preparation that goes into planning them. Teachers work in subject and grade-level teams to support and foster connections and interdisciplinary learning.

In Grade 10 students inquired into the nature of leadership to create a Website to consolidate their understanding of their

current or future style of leadership by making connections between Physical and Health Education (PHE) (leadership) and Individuals and Societies (historical leaders).

In Grade 9, students arranged service-oriented interdisciplinary learning between IAS and the Arts, engaging with JEDI (Justice, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) Issues and creating a graphic novel/comic to share their message.



Grade 8 students experienced a Science/ PHE IDU that analyzed sports performance using the scientific method and created videos to coach and improve their skills.

Math and Design students in Grade 7 focused on the testing of logic puzzles using mathematical knowledge and skills in design.

And finally, Grade 6s inquired into the concept of identity by reading children's books in their mother tongue along with an artistic interpretation of the book to lower school students as a means of sharing their culture and highlighting the importance of the books.

Middle Years Programme (MYP) Week and the IDUs that were carried out were highly successful, and it cemented our belief in the power of interdisciplinary learning in encouraging mental flexibility, collaboration and communication, problem-solving skills, deeper understanding, and the cultivation of interdisciplinary thinking habits.

It also prepares our students for graduate and professional studies and for inspiring careers in new and emerging fields.



*By Barclay Lelievre,  
Upper School Principal  
at SCIS Hongqiao*



# Self-Directed Learners: Working from Home

When we got the word on March 11 that Shanghai schools would be closed for an indefinite period, we were startled. At the same time, we knew we were prepared. As self-directed learners, Shanghai Community International School (SCIS) Dragons know how to keep the teaching and learning going wherever they are--on campus, at home, or wherever they may find themselves. We look forward to being face to face again, but we are incredibly proud of the agency and connection our students maintain through their own will and effort, effective use of tools, and creative scheduling.

When we are together on campus, the standard seven-hour school day makes sense. Our long block class sessions are utilized by teachers to include time for direct instruction, guided practice, and independent practice, frequently within a single class period. While students have daily opportunities to apply and



experiment with their learning, the structure of class time and its utilization is largely teacher-driven.

In developing our Virtual Learning philosophy, program, and timetable over the last two years, the SCIS-Pudong Upper School Team looked at the latest in educational research, learning about best practices for online delivery from experience from across the international education community. Over the last two years, we have gained a LOT of experience! We knew that we needed to limit screen time for the physical and mental health and well-being of our students, but more importantly, we saw the opportunity to create space for student initiative and individualization. That space, a two-hour block in the middle of the day, is our Virtual Learning Flex-time.

Virtual Learning Flex-time is used in a variety of ways. Students make sure that

at least some of the time is used offline, in ways that include physical exercise and time outside whenever possible. This, along with making time to prepare and enjoy a nutritious lunch, is essential to the balanced and healthy lifestyle that is the hallmark of the self-directed learner. But Flex-time is not only a lunch break or a recess. It is also a time for students to pursue learning at their own pace in their own style. Workgroups to meet outside of class for group projects. Some students value the independent time to review their notes from the morning and prepare for the afternoon. Others set individual or small group appointments with their teachers for focused and specific feedback which they can take on board to immediately enhance their work. Perhaps most exciting is the opportunity students have, within the school day, to practice agency and initiative, and apply the knowledge, understandings, and skills of academics to their home-based projects, pursuing interests and contributing

positively to their family's productivity during the lockdown experience.

Feedback from students and families has been overwhelmingly positive. As a grade 8 student, Gunit, stated, "I feel like I have more time to do my individual work because we have a 2-hour period of time where we can work on things we need to." Nicolas, Grade 10, appreciates "the abundance of independent time because it encourages discipline." Humans are self-directed learners by nature. Virtual learning and flex-time are allowing us to practice those capacities, and we will take them with us back to campuses as soon as health and safety allow!



*By Naomi Shanks,  
Upper School Principal  
at SCIS Pudong*



# Knowledge

## as a Means of Service



As our Counselor and Middle Years Programme (MYP) Physical and Health Education teacher, Lisa Cuthbertson, is finding ways to combine mental and physical health so students can experience a holistic education centered on social emotional learning. She has a passion for helping her students learn about their minds and providing them with tools needed to have a healthy relationship with

themselves and others. Not only does Lisa serve our student body, but adults as well. She recognizes the importance of teaching adults how they can show up for children and facilitate conversations as they navigate the good and hard parts of life, including global and social issues.

With two master's degrees and a third on the way, Lisa is very accomplished

in the world of academia. To add to her accomplishments, she was recently published in the Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) Journal, a highly competitive electronic journal that only has an acceptance rate of 18%. Lisa's article is a book review of "Stamped" by Jason Reynolds, which highlights ideas about race and how they have evolved in the United States since the colonial period. We asked Lisa about this process, her expertise, and her time at Shanghai Community International School (SCIS), here is what she had to say.

### Tell us about yourself.

I am the Physical and Health Education (PHE) teacher as well as a School Counselor at the Shanghai Community International School Main Campus. I like to ride my bike and run in my free time. However, I am currently in a masters program for counseling psychology so this leaves little time for other hobbies.

### How did it feel to be published in the TESOL journal?

To be published in the TESOL journal is a long process. It took an entire year before I knew they accepted my book review and





another six months before it was published. It was so awesome when I heard the news! I couldn't believe it, published in a journal. I had put in a lot of work, and it paid off.

#### **Why did you choose to write your book review about "Stamped"?**

I got very swept up in the movement happening in the United States for racial equality, but felt I didn't understand it. I wanted to read to help myself understand racism in America.

#### **Do you have a favorite part of the book "Stamped"?**

It was all so great, but what I appreciated most about Jason Reynold's writing was that he took big concepts and broke them down into kid speak. He made complex knowledge accessible to anyone who picks up his book.

#### **What led you to want to be a counselor?**

I love the social-emotional learning pieces. I noticed that when teaching PHE, I really enjoyed teaching students what it means to care for themselves and for others. Students learn how to function with groups in healthy and practical ways.

As a counselor, I am seeking tools and ways to support students as soon as possible. Depression and anxiety are on the rise. Our way of life is more stressful, and we are constantly connected to the point that we can't get away from anything. Our threshold for toleration and being challenged is lowering due to the lack of face-to-face interaction and increased use of social media. My hope is that I can teach students that boredom is a good thing. We don't always need to be accessible or stimulate our brain. Sometimes the greatest ideas come from boredom.

Not only do I love helping students with these challenges, but also teaching adults how to show up for kids. It is important that the adult know how to navigate these topics and facilitate meaningful discussions for students.

#### **Has this process changed you?**

Learning always changes you. When you add information, you get a bigger pool to help you make inferences and understand the world around you. It keeps your mind engaged in positive ways. Even when it is a struggle, I feel like I am more present in the world. It's a gift to get introduced to

concepts and ideas I would never have discovered on my own. My desire to continue my education isn't to become a university professor, but I do want to help people. I think being able to serve people builds on my natural strengths and I hope to continue refining them.

#### **What is your favorite teacher moment at SCIS?**

There are so many. The kids here are so sweet. I remember once we were playing a game where students were learning muscles and bones. Seeing the joy on students' faces and the fun that they were having made me so happy.

Congratulations and thank you Lisa for sharing your passions with us! We cannot wait to see where your hard work and dedication leads you.



*Interview by  
Kristen Bender,  
Communications  
Officer at SCIS*

# Home is Where the Heart is



Meet the Chapelon Family! Originally from France, the Chapelon is anything but. Living in Wales, then Sweden before eventually settling down in China, the family has a unique definition of what home is. After four years at Shanghai Community International School (SCIS) Remi, Celine, Amelia, and Eudoxie are now off to their next adventure as they prepare to head back 'home' to France.

Hear from those who experience SCIS first-hand, our Community Voices, as we celebrate their success stories, learning journeys, and the struggles in between.

### Where do you call home?

**Celine & Remi:** Home is where we settle down. Home is where we work, where we live, and where we love. Home can be a hotel room in Greece for a week, an aunt's home where we stay for a few weeks. It is where we feel safe, loved, and comfortable. Home is wherever we decide it is going to be. If that makes any sense :-)) we don't need to own our house or apartment to

have a home and feel at home. Home is where our heart is :-))

### Is China the first country where you have lived outside of France?

**Celine:** Before coming to China we lived in Wales for nine years, then France for one, followed by Sweden for ten.

### If you could go back in time, would you change anything? (Before moving here)

**Celine:** Nope! If I was to change anything in my past, then I most likely would not be here today so I would not change anything!

### What does SCIS mean to you?

**Celine:** SCIS was our safe place when we first arrived. It was a familiar setting for our daughters who attended an International Baccalaureate (IB) school in Sweden. A place where they knew the rules and could just fit in. Then it became a place of community - we met some of our dearest friends at SCIS!

**Celine & Remi:** SCIS is like a home to our children, therefore to us. SCIS is a place where our kids feel safe and happy, where they make friends, live, laugh, and cry. SCIS is a safe haven, a place we knew, as soon as we visited, the kids would feel "at home" because SCIS is an IB school so it is very similar to the school Amelie and Eudoxie attended back in Sweden. They both knew how it worked and that they would fit in. SCIS is another tool for us to feel at home in Shanghai. It is our normality.

### Celine, how would you describe your time working with Parents and Friends Association (PAFA)?

PAFA has been an exhilarating experience! Very challenging as well as we had to think out of the box and try on new ideas to pull our parent community together, as the regular activities PAFA used to run were not possible anymore. I was lucky enough to be surrounded by a great team of volunteers who stayed positive and motivated, regardless of the challenges we faced! I will greatly miss the friends I met at PAFA.



### What does it mean to you to be so involved within the school community?

**Celine:** I always have been involved in my children's school community: setting up a library, funding PTA, subbing, organizing winter markets, Dragon Fair, or Teacher Appreciation Week. As I am not working, the school community allows me to have a social life and challenge myself. It allowed me to meet many other parents from different experiences and backgrounds, learning a lot about the world and myself.

### What will you miss most about Shanghai? And SCIS?

**Celine:** I will greatly miss my Shanghai urban explorations and architectural wanderings. I am passionate about Art Deco architecture and the history of the city's old town, having spent many hours roaming the streets and likings of Shanghai. I will miss the craziness of Shanghai, its contrasts, its people, and walking through the streets of this vibrant and mesmerizing city.

**Amelie:** I will miss my friends, but I know that we will keep in touch through social media, and by the time we can all travel again I know we will have Shanghai reunions! I am already looking forward to these days!

**All:** We will miss meeting those exciting and open-minded people from all over the world. I will miss the hot sticky summers that we enjoyed thoroughly. We will miss the dance of the SCIS buses when school breaks, the PAFA Wine Club.

**Celine:** I will miss the SCIS uniform hidden under the baggy hoodies!

**All:** Most of all, we will miss the extraordinary people we got to meet and who became our friends, our Shanghai friends...

### If you had one piece of advice for someone starting a new life in a new city/school, what would it be?

**Celine:** Don't wait to meet people,

embrace the new life, the new experience. Get out there and make friends!

### What is next for you? Where is the next chapter of the Chapelon family taking you?

**Celine:** We are moving to France. We are not going back, rather moving to France as my kids have never lived in France even though they hold French passports. Their experience of France is that of a holiday place where family and friends gather to greet us. For the first time in a very long time, we will be living in a French environment. French language and culture will take over our lives. Which is very alien to us. It is overwhelming! We take it as a new adventure ... until the next one... because there will be a next one!



Interview by  
Mikael Masson Perez,  
Communications Manager  
at SCIS



# ***The Value of Hobbies and After-School Activities***

The After-School Activities (ASA) program at Shanghai Community International School (SCIS) is a dynamic program offered to students from Kindergarten to Grade 12. Guided by the SCIS mission of developing inquiring, knowledgeable, and caring learners who contribute positively to their communities, the ASA program is designed to provide opportunities for students to develop skills beyond the classroom while encouraging a balance of academics and extracurriculars.

Students and teachers alike build and strengthen friendships and gain new experiences while remaining in the familiar surroundings of our school campuses. The ASAs promote physical health, academic development, and the chance for students to improve their social and emotional growth. Many times, students try something new in an ASA only to discover they love it and want to continue it at home on their own as a hobby. Having a hobby has such great benefits especially because of how much it can stretch the student's creativity and help them gain confidence.

## **What types of activities are offered?**

In the Lower School, we aim for a balance of activities across the three domains of athletics, arts, and academics. Based on feedback from students and interest levels from prior sessions we offer a wide range of activities that vary each year. As always there are

classic clubs that many students love to join, but sometimes it's the new and surprising ones that garner a lot of attention. Over 70% of our Lower School students participate in our ASA program.

In the Upper School, many of our activities are student-directed which has led to an interesting array of choices. The Upper School students who wish to run an activity must adhere to the standards set out for them to ensure it meets the guidelines for a Creativity, Action, and Service (CAS) project. For example, our Knitting Club started with two dedicated students and their teacher advisors and has grown to over ten students who come each week to learn knitting to create hats and other small items for those in need.

## **Below are some examples of current and past ASAs:**

- Orchestra
- Rock Climbing
- Badminton
- Coding
- Creative Writing
- Portrait Drawing
- Craft Making
- Stock Market Club
- Student Council
- National Honor Society
- and so many more!

Our Student Council groups (Lower School and Upper School) have been an exceptional source of student leadership within our school. Led by devoted teachers, our innovative Student Council



students plan and implement a wide variety of events and activities for our school community. Always well attended, these activities provide yet another opportunity for connection beyond the classroom.

We have seen a correlation between an increased sense of belonging and students who participate in extracurricular activities. As a school, we plan to continue to foster the creativity and excitement of students through extracurriculars.

*"It feels like a zen den that I can be with my friends and do learning with something I love"*

– Jovi, Grade 5

*"I think that student council was great this year because we got to do lots of fun activities, and we got to take lots of action and we also made lots of new friends."*

- Evelyn, grade 5



*By Emily Corvers,  
Activities Coordinator  
at SCIS Hongqiao*



How  
One Student  
is **Leading**  
the **Way** for  
**SCIS Golfers**

We are excited to share the latest #communityvoices story about our very own dragon, Markus. This seventh-grade student is leading the way for future Dragon golfers. Markus finished on the podium for the Jia Nian Hua Junior Golf Championship Shanghai Regional Final.

The Jia Nian Hua series of junior golf tournaments are nationwide events geared towards promoting junior golf in China, and it is sanctioned by the China Golf Association. This tournament was the year-end final championship for the Shanghai region and boasted a full roster of 134 players, split among four age groups.

Markus won the Group A title by two strokes with a score of 81, his first win for Group A after taking three wins in Group B in 2021. Happy with his result from the tournament, Markus hopes to continue improving his golf skills and encourage others to take up golf as well. Markus has found his passion and hopes it can help fuel the Shanghai Community International School (SCIS) golf team in growing to its full potential. Learn more about Markus and how he fell in love with the sport of golf at SCIS.

#### Tell us about yourself.

My name is Markus, I am 13 years old and currently in Seventh Grade at the SCIS Hongqiao campus. My sister is Isabel and she's in Eleventh Grade. My favorite subject at school is English, and besides golf, my favorite hobbies include, among other things, art, drawing, writing, and playing video games.

#### How long have you lived in Shanghai?

I was born in Shanghai in 2008, and I have been attending SCIS since pre-K at ECE.

#### What is your favorite part about going to school at SCIS?

My favorite part of going to school at SCIS is the friendships I've built over the years. The teachers are very helpful, and I feel comfortable and confident learning in this kind of environment.

#### When did you start playing golf?

I started playing golf when I joined the After School Activities (ASA) golf classes at school back in First Grade. It was initially just for fun, but it grew on me, and I started taking private classes with a coach. Whilst I always feel the passion for golf, it wasn't until I was in Fifth Grade that I started training systematically and playing competitively.

I joined a golf club (GGE) and trained with some of the top-ranked junior golfers in Shanghai and China. I improved quickly and started winning some junior tournaments like the Boys U13 group in 2021. I turned 13 last December and moved up to the Boys U17 group. My handicap is currently 6.5.

#### What is your favorite thing about golf and why? Do you have a favorite club that you use?

Golf is said to be the most difficult sport in the world, as it requires both physical and mental toughness. It's an individual sport so your biggest opponent is yourself. Along the way, you have to deal with the elements and factors such as the weather and many others. But encountering these is the fun part of golf. My favorite club in my bag is my 8 iron because it's the most consistent club in terms of control and distance.

#### Who is one athlete that you admire most and why?

My favorite golfer is Collin Morikawa. He has a swing and game I wish to emulate. I've read his advice to young players, and I think it really helped me improve my game.

#### How do you balance your time between school/homework and golf?

Golf training takes up a lot of my free time since I train a minimum of three times per week on and off the course. I try to balance and manage my time by doing my homework as early as possible and following strict routines.

#### What do you hope to accomplish within the SCIS Golf team?

I hope my playing will bring the SCIS name to the junior golf scene in Shanghai, and I hope we will have more players in the coming year so we can play as a school team under the SCIS flag.

Congratulations, Markus, on a great golf season. We can't wait to see how your skills progress and how your passion for golf inspires others.



Interview by Kristen Bender,  
Communications Officer at SCIS



# Dragon Fair *Connections*

The Parent and Friends Association (PAFA) at SCIS works hard to make connections between parents, children, and staff. Many of the activities PAFA has organized in the past are aimed at strengthening these connections and fostering the development of a stronger sense of community. This year PAFA tried something new: making a connection with our host country by hosting our first-ever Chinese New Year Dragon Fair. Chinese New Year is a time of reunion and renewal. It is a time to celebrate together with family and friends. This was a perfect time to reconnect with our community in the first community event of the year, as well as to form a connection with the Chinese culture.

SCIS expatriate families have a special opportunity, as part of their international assignment experience in China to experience and celebrate a truly unique and ancient culture. This fair was a way to channel and reflect some of that rich culture in one place. We had vendors with Chinese tea, Yunnan coffee, calligraphy, flower arrangements, and local handicrafts, as well as many other unique Chinese items which were for sale. Parents were able to browse the market and socialize, while their children had fun at the trampoline park.

Our student council was present, as well, to sell items to raise funds for their activities. This was a good way for parents to connect with and interact with our upper school students.

In the spirit of Chinese New Year, the whole venue was decorated with red lanterns and balloons and we had 财神爷 (Cai Shen Ye), "The God of Wealth and Fortune", pass out treats to the children.

This event would not have been possible without the hours of work the PAFA team and its amazing volunteers gave.

Hopefully, we can continue with events such as this and keep building our connections with our beautiful host country China. It would be lovely to find a venue for next year where we can try some of the many local dishes and snacks.

*By Dylan Lotfi, PAFA Communications*







# We Have Come

We have come a long way. There were only a few lucky ones admitted and allowed. The sons of kings, priests, and scholars. The offspring of nobles. It was a luxury, non-regulated and limited in so many ways. Education, the system that presently is seen as self-certain in most cultures and societies, used to be a very different concept.

Today education is a safe, regulated, and respected structure. The availability of education is not the only thing that has changed. The education system, schools, and how teachers see a child as a learner have totally changed. The development and well-being in most parts of the world have given children the possibility to join a school as they are freed from physical work and seen as worthy of study. This entitlement is still threatened and vulnerable for many, but I hope these young learners will have the ability to change the world.

One key aim of the International Baccalaureate (IB) education is to be able to create a more peaceful world. Only by understanding their background, our children can be able to connect themselves to other cultures and belief systems and thus create a more respectable environment.

The idea of the IB education system is that its different facets would come together as a whole. And this idea is not for one year, for one moment, for one student, not even for one school. It is a continuity, a net of connections. Our children might change countries and schools and still be able to find themselves in familiar surroundings, connecting themselves again as learners and what they have learned.

*I am stunned by how mature our students can analyze and understand, and how much the IB system has developed their way of thinking.*



# a Long Way

Each of us is a part of that continuity. The cultures we are representing, our connections, and our ideas are building this net and journey for our learners. Whenever we might leave, we still stay connected. All of the kind words said and good deeds done have grown in connections and understanding and all of it is still there even after the people have left.

I see a lot of beauty in the IB. The world we live in is chaotic, unpredictable, and cruel sometimes. We are struggling while navigating all these sudden events in our lives in ever-changing situations. The IB is showing us how things can be connected, and how we can understand structures in our world. I am stunned by how mature our students can analyze and understand, and how much the IB system has developed their way of thinking. They can see the continuity in things and events, they can understand the connections between their lives and others. Even though life is meant to be lived here and now there is always the future and the past. Students are given tools to work with the concepts that will show them the time and the place, how to connect themselves and their lives in the world.

Our children are now enjoying an education so versatile that scholars in the 15th century would never have even been able to dream of it. They are given a steady foundation to become lifelong learners. We as parents can also grow and learn with them. Because learning is never over.

*By Sanna Korsstrom, Parents and Friends Association (PAFA) Communication*

# Spring Book Recommendations for All Ages

An important part of developing the skills of 21st-century learners involves giving students opportunities to develop empathy and understanding of the perspectives and experiences of others. Reading is a powerful tool for providing windows into other experiences and for spurring conversations and thinking about the systems of power that exist in a global society and our place within these systems. Find below book recommendations for all ages from our very own Shanghai Community International School (SCIS) librarians:

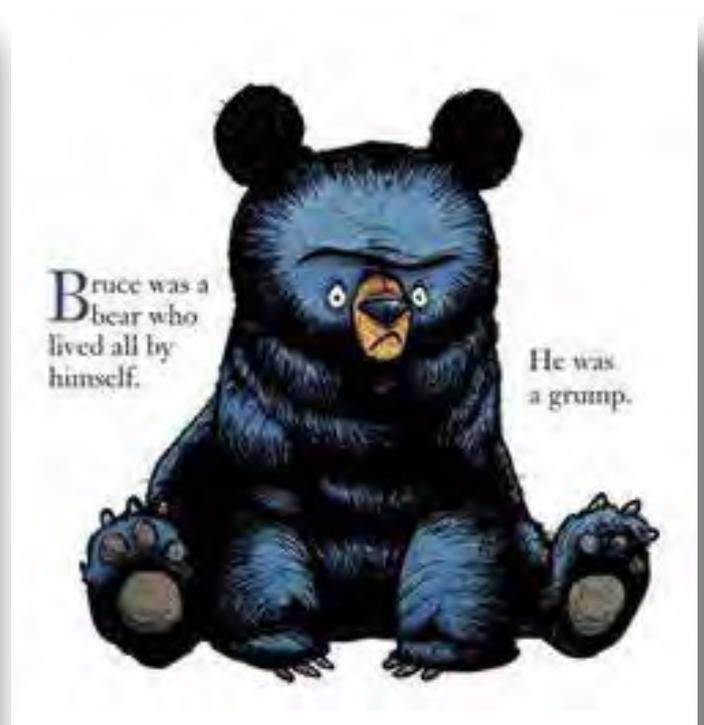
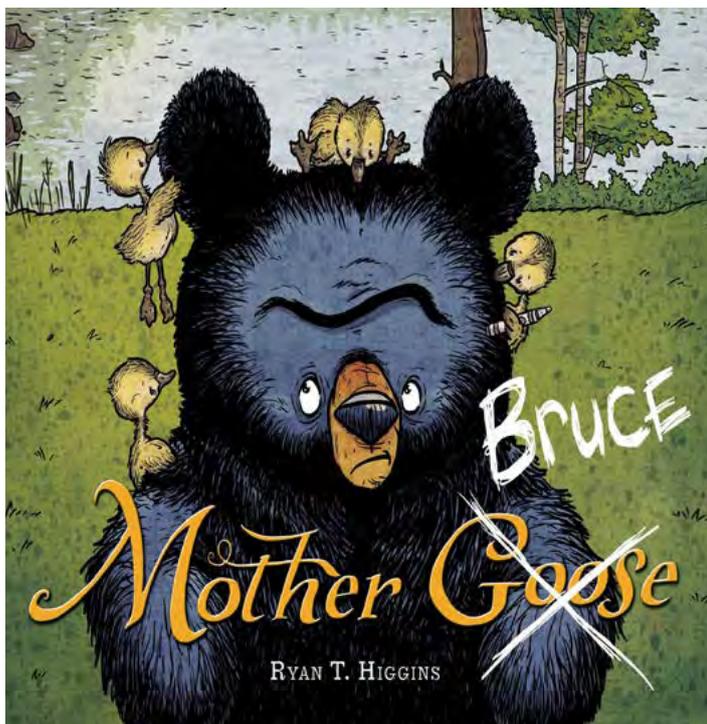
## Dan Zimmerman, Lower School Librarian at SCIS Hongqiao

### *Mother Bruce*

By Ryan T. Higgins

Ages 2-5

Bruce is a grumpy bear. He doesn't like much, except eating eggs. To his great horror, while gathering the rest of the ingredients to prepare the goose eggs he is planning for his next meal, they hatch! Not only does Bruce not like goslings, but they somehow seem to think that he is their mother. This adorable story helps to illustrate that even when things are going entirely wrong, sometimes you find happiness in the most unusual places.



## Michael Kim, Upper School Librarian at SCIS Pudong

### *White Fox*

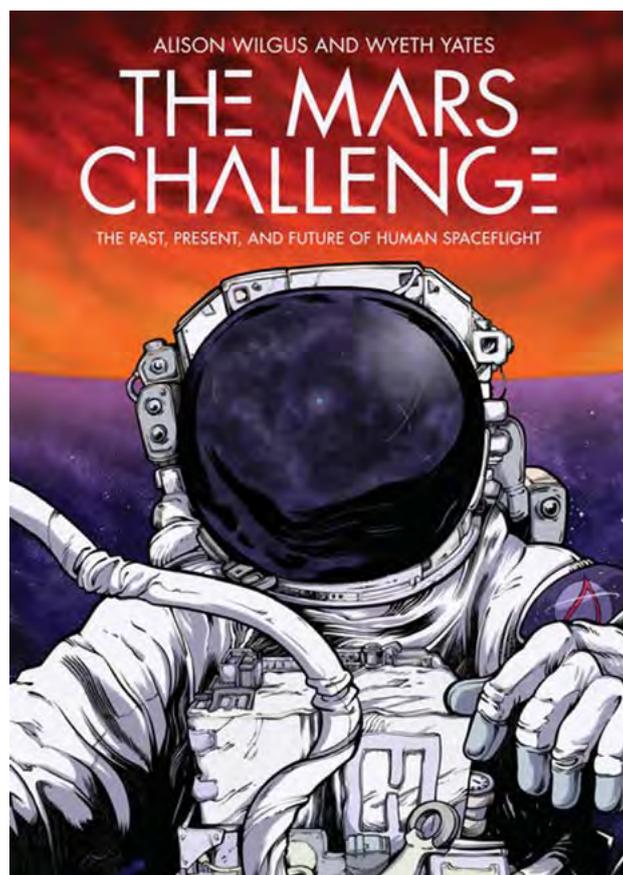
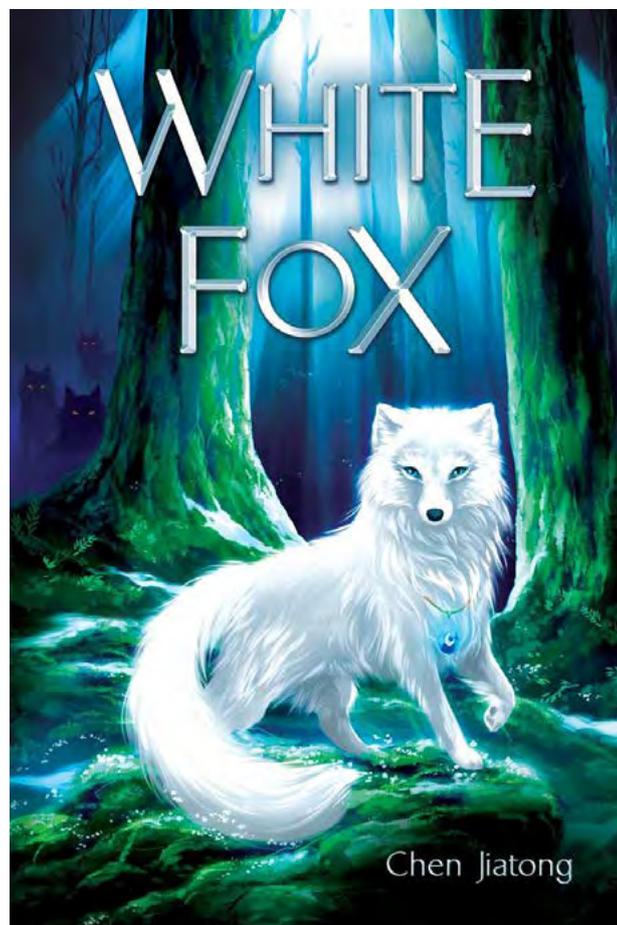
By Chen Jiatong

Ages 7-10

Yann Martel, the author of the 2002 Man Booker Prize winner *Life of Pi*, once said in an interview that the reason why he likes to use animals in his stories is that “they are a good symbolic vehicle.” He claimed that animal(s) become a part of the story but also carry a “symbolic resonance”. This is perhaps one of the reasons why *White Fox* by Chen Jiatong can establish an atmosphere of mystique in its narrative.

Dilah, a young white fox, is set on a journey to find a treasure with the power to make animals human. With the wicked blue foxes after the same treasure, Dilah is in a race against the clock to achieve his goal. Along the journey, he meets some unlikely friends – a seal, a weasel, a horse, and a rabbit – that teach him lessons about friendship.

This novel pays homage to the timeless tale of friends on an adventure, and many honorable lessons to be learned along the way. It may be a meaningful read for our younger readers, but those in middle school could enjoy it as well.



### *The Mars Challenge*

By Benjamin A. Wilgus and Wyeth Yates

Age 15 – 18

As a librarian, I regret that our Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM)-loving friends feel, without reasonable grounds, that there is nothing worth reading in the library. Sometimes I feel like they dislike the act of reading in itself. *The Mars Challenge*, however, is one book that could be enjoyed by these friends.

Who hasn't thought about being able to travel to outer space?? This graphic novel follows Nadia, a teen with a dream to become the first woman on Mars. Her friend Eleanor, on the International Space Station, takes her on a conceptual journey through a crewed mission to Mars. An illustrated narrative of scientific concepts and complex machinery, this read has elements that appeal to both the artistic and the practical mind.

At **SCIS**, we are

# Innovative Thinkers

who are



Scan here for the answers  
and to learn more

### Across

1. Able to find ways to overcome difficulties; skilled at solving problems
3. Adaptable in different circumstances
5. Reasonable or capable of reasoning

### Down

2. Innovative and imaginative
4. Careful in their consideration
6. Detail-oriented and critical-thinkers