

# communitas



A Voyage of Discovery

# 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 [etan@scis-china.org](mailto:etan@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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# Voyage *of* Discovery

A graphic of a sailboat with a white sail and a red hull, sailing on stylized blue waves. The waves are layered in shades of blue and white, creating a sense of movement.



# “Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom.” Aristotle

With the astounding growth in the consumption of social media services amongst young people within the recent, short number of years, it is more crucial than ever to take our role as educators, thoughtfully and seriously, of guiding our students in instilling confidence in themselves.

Why?

Online activities are constant, quick, and catchy, designed to flood one's feed for likes and engagement, thus exposing our children to a deluge of short bursts of entertainment but not necessarily a wealth of value.

While I agree that some may be educational and useful, it is easy to get lost in the abundance of it all. Young people get caught up in the cycle of fast and entertainment value, with an algorithm that blindly dictates what they see on their feeds. This format makes it addictive, particularly to our children, heavily influencing their view of mainstream topics such as beauty, power, and lifestyle.

Hence, I believe that as educators, we are in the unique position of providing opportunities for our students to discover their own strengths and weaknesses to combat the impact of social media on their perception of these important topics.

Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom, as Aristotle once said. It is because our life reflects our perspectives, beliefs, and behavior. These factors shape our attitudes and mindset, which affects how we go about our lives.

The more you know yourself, the more familiar you become with your capabilities and limits; With your knowledge of your unique strengths and attributes, realization of weaknesses, you get to form a clearer vision of yourself presently and for the future.

This is why at Shanghai Community International School (SCIS), we are proud to embrace the International Baccalaureate

(IB) philosophy of inquiry-based learning: to allow our students to explore self-discovery with critical thinking. Critical thinking leads to self-awareness and accountability. As educators, we are here to guide and implement projects in the class that would lead to discoveries of thoughts and ideas.

At SCIS, it is common to see questions or problems posed to students in class, with our teachers' structured guidance, to explore answers on their own and be resourceful in obtaining information.

In the projects we assign to students, our students are given hands-on opportunities to tackle a problem. Group projects will lead to the students drawing up a plan on how to approach the task, obtaining information, probing into their collected information, assessing and perhaps scrutinizing each team member's proffered solution and constructing an agreed-upon recommendation as a group based on these.

As a school, we have a responsibility to challenge their thoughts and views on things. We are mindful of how we carry out this responsibility as we aim to promote openness in an inviting atmosphere. We invite speakers and

experts who can speak to certain issues as a third-party figure can lend credibility in exploring more ways to approach a problem.

Discussions in class where we assist our students to share their thoughts and ideas prove to be efficacious, helping to refine their way of presenting their side to reflect a logical, clear manner. This practice develops their communication skills, as well as reinforces empathy to consider varying views.

As a school, we are satisfied that this approach to learning leads to students' curiosity being piqued, and an appetite for seeking answers and evaluating the diverse information they have gathered. When curiosity is activated, discovery takes place. It is in the process of discovery where the students become more aware of their respective potential, capabilities, and perceived limitations.

At SCIS, we have created an environment where our students are encouraged to explore ideas leading to the discovery of themselves, and this practice remains our ultimate commitment: *To develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring learners who contribute positively to their communities.*

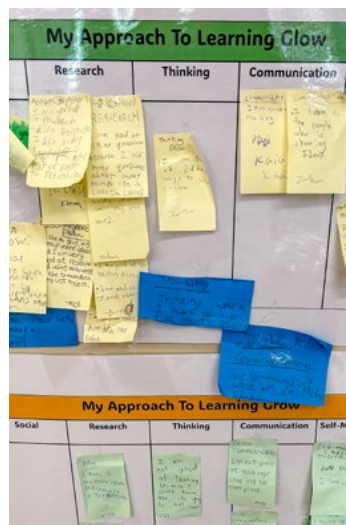


**By Daniel Eschtruth,**  
**Director of Schools**  
**at SCIS**





# The Power of Agency in Assessment



Walk through Shanghai Community International School (SCIS) on any given day, and you will find students fully engaged in making decisions on how they demonstrate their learning—this is agency in action. Assessment within the Primary Years Programme (PYP) is focused on monitoring, documenting, measuring, and reporting on learning progress. Whether students are using checklists to revise writing, collaborating on a math exemplar, or presenting work in student-led conferences, assessment practices are student-centered, ongoing, and a natural part of the learning process. Our teachers recognize their crucial role in cultivating student voice and choice and how this empowerment is instrumental in motivating students to develop skills essential for lifelong learning. While assessment may vary across classes, our philosophy is steadfastly aligned with the PYP framework: students are at the heart of everything we do.

## Choice and Voice:

When students take an active role in determining how to share their knowledge, such as selecting assessment tasks or choosing feedback to give, they can experience a sense of ownership, and this is when the magic happens. This empowerment ignites a spark, enabling students to recognize the importance of their voice, the weight of their contributions, and their ability to substantially impact their progress. Knowing that they possess strategies to solve problems and can seek assistance when needed, enhances their confidence and belief in their ideas. There is a deeper connection to their learning, motivating them to set goals and track their progress. They recognize the significant effect that giving and receiving feedback, along with engaging in self-reflection, can have on their personal growth. Using these assessment tools helps them to identify their strengths, preferences, and areas for improvement, leading them to set new goals. Curiosity, passion, and desire for growth become the driving forces, resulting in heightened intrinsic motivation and engagement. Giving students agency in assessment profoundly shapes their self-identity as a learner, honors their uniqueness, and creates a genuine commitment to do their best.

**“The person who does the work is the only one who learns.”**  
- Harry Wong







“The wider the range of possibilities we offer children, the more intense will be their motivations and the richer their experiences.”  
-Loris Malaguzzi

## Teacher Role: Transfer Skills

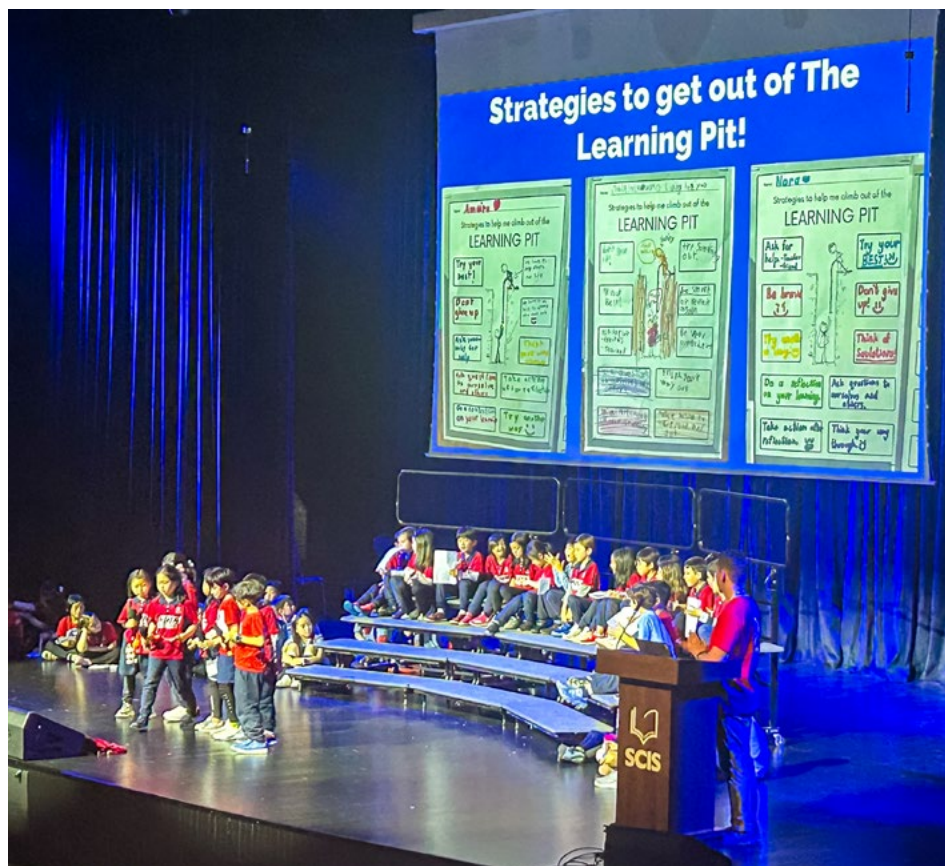
Teachers play a significant role in nurturing student agency in assessment, particularly concerning ATL (Approaches to Learning) Thinking Skills. Employing various visible thinking techniques, teachers enable students to engage critically with information and ideas at all stages of learning. This includes pre-assessing to gauge knowledge, ongoing discussions and checks for understanding, and reflections on both process and product. Teachers model the language and processes of critical thinking, and these practices encourage independent analysis, evaluation, and decision-making. Teachers create inclusive environments that encourage different perspectives, application of skills to new situations, and open-ended questions while providing ample time for reflection. As John Dewey said, “We do not learn from experience...we learn from reflecting on experience.” Teaching metacognition skills encourages students to pause and reflect on their learning experiences, improving their ability to identify strengths, generate new ideas, make transdisciplinary connections, and plan their next steps.

## Lifelong Learners:

Promoting autonomy instills a sense of responsibility, curiosity, and independence that goes beyond the classroom. Empowering students to take ownership of their learning cultivates essential skills such as self-regulation, problem-solving, and a growth mindset, which are imperative for tackling academic and personal challenges. As students engage in meaningful inquiries, reflect on their learning, and take purposeful action, they develop resilience, empathy, and adaptability to overcome obstacles. Instilling students with the ability to self-assess cultivates a generation of confident, self-directed individuals poised to make meaningful contributions to their communities and the world at large.

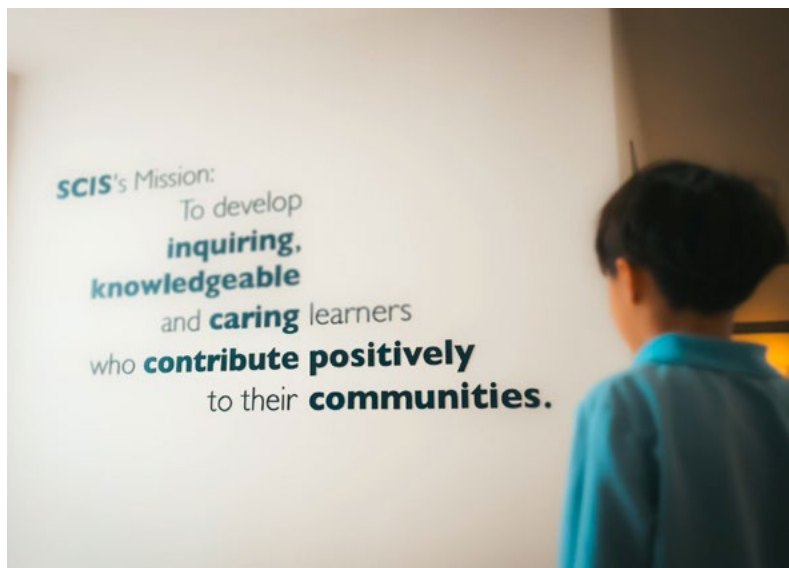


By Susan Cole, Lower  
School Vice Principal at  
SCIS Hongqiao





# Simplify, Amplify: Refining Global Engagement



## A Journey to Refine

When exploring complex concepts like global engagement, there's a natural inclination to seek definitions, yet this may limit our receptiveness to diverse perspectives. What if our focus shifted to refining rather than defining? While drawing inspiration from leading research and affiliations such as the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) or the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO), it's crucial to weave our school's evolving understanding of global engagement into its narrative. This involves embedding principles like service, action, and agency into our school's ethos over time, ensuring our mission isn't just displayed on walls but in the walls. It's a journey of shared understanding – echoed in conversations among students, parents, and indeed internalized by every member of our school community. Additionally, it's about openness to change.

## Simplify and Amplify

*"There is no communication so simple it cannot be misunderstood" – Sgarro.*  
Simplifying global engagement balances a shared vision with individual interpretations, prompting reflection. How can we ensure our message not only reaches but resonates? Enter **Discover, Connect, Thrive.**



Scan the QR code now to watch the video and delve deeper into Wilson's impactful use of film to capture and provoke thought on past and present initiatives. How might this video challenge or affirm your understanding of global engagement?



QR CODE OF DISC  
CONN THRIVE VIDEO

**Discover** is the ongoing journey of self-realization, acknowledging each student's unique inventory of interests and talents from early years to seniors, emphasizing the connection between self-awareness and effecting change.

**Connect** encompasses everything from simple greetings to overcoming barriers in forging connections, emphasizing skills like deep listening and relationship-building to combat against the 'dangers of a single story'.

**Thrive** represents holistic well-being, emphasizing social-emotional learning and community resilience. Is thriving solely personal, or does it also involve creating environments for collective flourishing?

Through avenues like student spotlights and assemblies, we're committed to amplifying these messages inclusively.



Hena K's photography skills were on display during the recent IM Systemwide Symposium Professional Development Day



## A Strong Foundation

At the recent East Asia Council of Schools (EARCOS) Conference in Bangkok, peace took center stage, echoed by keynote speakers Luong Ung and Russell Lehmann, who emphasized hope, curiosity, and perseverance in peacebuilding. They urged collaboration and critical thinking to build a more peaceful world in line with IB values.

The discourse around global engagement and community service often emphasizes going somewhere, leading to grandiose expectations of fixing others' issues. To shift this mindset, we must prioritize understanding the intent and impact of our actions internally before externalizing.

How can we model peace-building and critical reflection on campus to reinforce ethical ways of thinking and acting? This approach can ensure sustainable and reciprocal community partnerships.



*The recent annual action gallery fostered shared curiosity and ideation exchange between Upper and Lower School students on global issues.*



In the words of Maya Angelou, "Do the best you can until you know better. When you know better. Do better". Guest speakers like d'Arcy Lunn, Justin from Refugee, Rebecca Kanthor, Warren Stanislaus, and William Shan have laid an important foundation. They challenged students to consider diverse perspectives, engage in creative storytelling, and reflect on their lives, fostering awareness and empathy.

We aim to establish a continuum of learning from PYP to DP, guiding students in exploring their roles in the world. Through this journey, we aspire to cultivate peace within ourselves and in our communities.



*By J. Haakon Gould, Grades 1 - 12 Service Learning Coach & DP CAS Coordinator, Head of Individuals & Societies Department, DP Global Politics Teacher at SCIS Hongqiao*







# A Week of Cultural Immersion and Festive Delights



Chinese New Year is a vibrant and significant celebration in Chinese culture. During the second week of February, our students at the Hongqiao campus embraced the spirit of this auspicious occasion with activities and performances that immersed our students and teachers in the customs, traditions, and joyful atmosphere of Chinese New Year.

Throughout the week leading up to Chinese New Year, our Mandarin classrooms in both Lower School and Upper School buzzed with excitement as students delved into various activities. Teachers integrated language learning into cultural activities and workshops. In the Lower School, a "Craft Activity Day" was created so that students were able to engage in a variety of activities such as lantern making, window flower creation, Chinese New Year card making, calligraphy writing and documentary watching. Meanwhile, in the Upper School, students enjoyed the spirit of Chinese New Year through engaging activities such as paper cutting, riddle guessing, and role-play performances. One group of enthusiastic students even embarked on a field trip to a local restaurant, indulging in Chinese cuisine while immersing themselves in the rich customs and traditions that accompany this special occasion.

One of the highlights of our CNY celebrations was the vibrant and bustling Temple Fair that enveloped our school grounds on February 2. Colorful booths lined the pathways, offering opportunities for community members to engage in crafts activities. Participants eagerly tried



their hands at the intricate crafts, guided by skillful artisans who shared their expertise and stories behind each art form. The Temple Fair became a hub of creativity and cultural exchange, fostering a deep appreciation for the craftsmanship and beauty that are integral to Chinese Culture.

In addition, we also witnessed a remarkable milestone as our Upper School proudly unveiled its first-ever Dragon Dance Team. Comprised of enthusiastic students from Grades 9 and 10, this pioneering team dedicated hours to learning choreography, mastering the movement, and embodying the spirit of the dragon. The unveiling of the Dragon Dance Team coincided with the much-anticipated Theatre Opening Ceremony. Our Dragon took center stage and performed multiple times during the Theatre Opening Ceremony and the Upper School assembly. Students and teachers marveled at the flowing movements and the vibrant colors of the dragon. The energetic dragon dance

together with the performances at the Upper School assembly left a joyful impression on the community members that will be cherished for years to come.

The Chinese New Year celebrations at the SCIS Hongqiao campus were a testament to our commitment to embracing diverse cultures and fostering a sense of community. Through engaging classroom activities and captivating performances, our students gained a deeper appreciation for Chinese traditions, language, and customs. As we bid farewell to this festive occasion, the spirit of Chinese New Year continues to inspire us to celebrate and embrace the rich cultures that make our community diverse and vibrant.



*By Helen He, Head of the Mandarin Language Acquisition Department at SCIS Hongqiao*





# Why the IB Diploma Programme is Ideal Preparation for University



The first International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme (DP) cohort of students sat the inaugural IB World exams in 1971. Then, there were 681 students across seven schools. Fast-forward to 2023. 179,922 students (this includes the SCIS class of 2023) sat the IB World Exams at 3,189 schools in 149 countries. The

impact the IB DP has had on academic achievement and career outcomes has been well-known over the past 40 years.

The benefits of the Diploma Programme are far-reaching. During students' two-year journey, DP students develop holistic and deep subject knowledge, strong

executive functioning skills, and excellent self-guided research ability. Moreover, the emphasis on analytical writing across all six subject groups (including math!) ensures DP students are well-prepared for undergraduate coursework. The DP journey is not easy but experienced Diploma Programme teachers have seen gritty Grade 11 students transform into Grade 12 scholars who understand how knowledge is attained, construct valid arguments using reliable resources, and lead community initiatives on and off campus.

The DP is a global diploma. The IB DP is formally recognized by over 1,800 universities globally. Moreover, many countries authorize the IB DP as a pre-university preparation school leaver's diploma and DP graduates. Many nations give IB DP graduates similar privileges to their national high school certificate, and national governments have formal Memorandum of Understandings with the International Baccalaureate Organization (e.g., Netherlands, Australia, South Korea, etc).





Admissions officers at top universities around the world understand the unique and holistic skillset that DP graduates possess. Across elite universities on all five continents, DP students are significantly more likely to be admitted to selective institutions than students with other kinds of high school qualifications with similar test scores and grades. Students who plan to apply to selective universities in different countries will benefit most from a DP qualification.

After completing the IB Diploma Programme requirements, students are well-prepared (and at times over-prepared) for first-year university coursework. Many young SCIS alums who completed the Diploma Programme cite that their DP coursework provided so much content knowledge for their first-year subjects (e.g., economics, psychology, biology, etc.) that they felt familiar with the topics in their new courses. Moreover, these students shared that the DP requirements helped them research topics, organize arguments, and write essays in university.

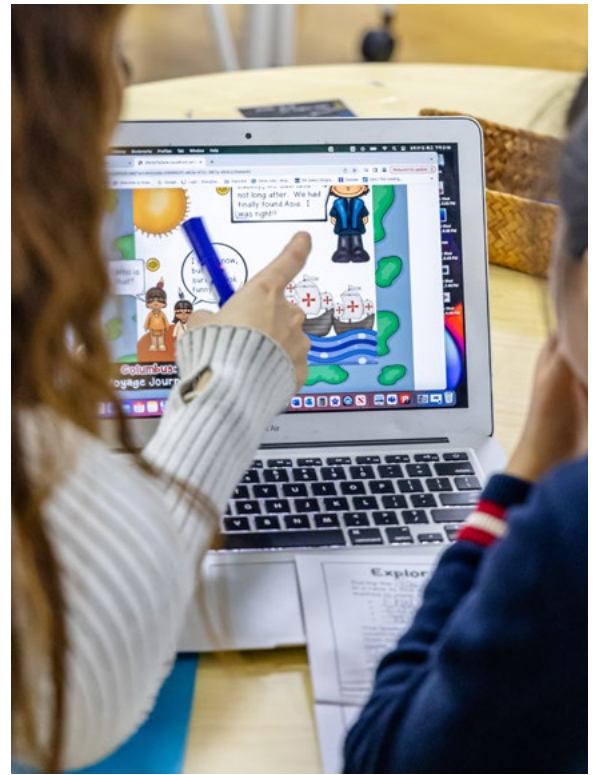
Choosing a high school pathway is a difficult decision. There are benefits to both the SCIS Diploma and the ID DP. For students who are interested in university-level coursework, independent research, and a holistic approach to understanding the world around them, the DP is a fantastic choice. At SCIS, students who do not take the full DP are still encouraged to consider sitting the IB World exams for a single subject. If your student is in Grade 9 or 10 and is thinking about which pathway to take, please encourage them to chat with their DP coordinator or counselor.



*By Sarah Harkin, Upper School  
Counselor at SCIS Pudong*







# Breaking Down Barriers to Learning: Cultivating an Inclusive Community

At Shanghai Community International School (SCIS), the pursuit of creating a truly inclusive community has been the cornerstone of our educational philosophy. The International Baccalaureate (IB) states that “it is the responsibility of every teacher, as a teacher of all students, to make sure that each student is exposed to teaching and learning that reaches them as individual learners.” Since 2018, SCIS has embarked on a transformative journey, aimed at removing barriers for all students to succeed. SCIS brought in experts on inclusion that trained our teachers and administrators on best practices. This commitment was further solidified in 2021, where a dedicated team of stakeholders defined our vision for inclusion. They articulated it as an ongoing and intentional approach designed to create an all-encompassing culture of belonging. By systematically identifying and removing barriers and harnessing the power of our diversity, all community members will have the opportunity to learn collaboratively and achieve our greatest potential.

The team also defined the SCIS Inclusive Learning Principles.



Central to our approach is the recognition of learning barriers -- both internal and external. These barriers can range from low self-esteem, learning disabilities, or mental health challenges. Addressing them starts in the classroom, with our educators employing Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework. Over the past six years, our system of schools has provided staff with multiple opportunities for training and collaboration collectively enhancing our UDL practices. The UDL guidelines are a framework that



improves and optimizes teaching and learning for all people based on scientific insights into how humans learn. UDL focuses on the principles that instruction should provide multiple means of engagement, representation, and action and expression. It asks the why, what, and how of learning. It champions the idea that learning should be versatile, allowing students to engage with content, understand it through various tools and strategies, and express their knowledge in diverse ways. This approach not only caters to the unique learning of each student but also cultivates a culture of lifelong learning.

In addition, SCIS has established robust support systems across all divisions to identify and assist students facing academic, social, or emotional challenges. Our integrated team, comprised of student/

learning support teachers, counselors, psychologists, speech therapists, and more, collaborates closely with teachers, students, and parents. Together, they provide comprehensive support of short-term interventions, short-term counseling for mental health issues, resources, accommodations for students with various diagnoses, and long-term structured learning support.

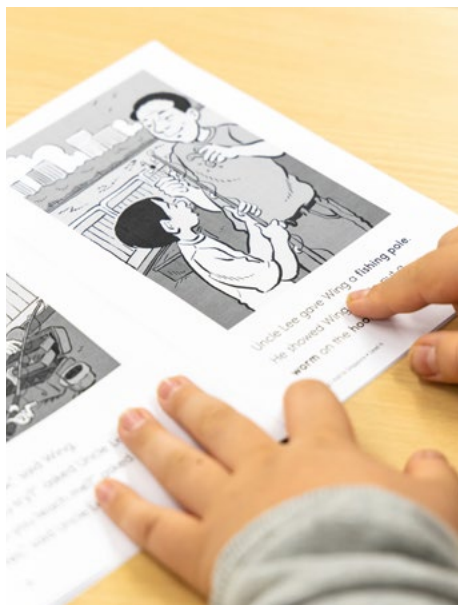
At the heart of SCIS's ethos is a growth mindset, encouraging resilience and perseverance among our students. We believe that by addressing the holistic needs of our students, we can create a nurturing and empowering learning environment for everyone.

Creating such an inclusive community is an ongoing journey that requires the collective

effort, openness, and commitment of the entire school community. It demands continuous reflection, a readiness to listen to diverse perspectives, and a proactive stance towards initiating positive changes. At SCIS, we are unwavering in our dedication, always seeking innovative ways to eliminate learning barriers and ensuring that every student can succeed. Through collaboration and shared commitment, we are making strides toward realizing a school community that epitomizes inclusivity, equity, and empowerment for all.



*By Kristi Dahlstrom,  
Director of Student  
Support Services at SCIS*





# Melodies in Motion: *Crafting Musical Journeys* at SCIS Pudong

One evening last November, a grade nine student waited anxiously in the wings of the theatre at SCIS Pudong. He was preparing to perform in the Winter Arts concert with another student in his class, a piano player and one of the best musicians in the school. Perhaps the word "anxious" isn't quite correct because Lucas was not nervous, just excited. Most of his classes are in the self-contained Academy but his music class is one he comes to on his own. Yes, his work is modified but the expectations of him in the class are the same as they are for every other student. And he knows this. His peers are supportive, but also expect him to engage in the class as they do. So, when he jumped the gun and came out on stage early, his duet partner Hector was able to gently steer back to the wings until it was time for their performance (which was great, by the way). In both of their reflective writing after the concert, the boys wrote about communication and being "in sync" with each other.

This is just one example of how the Upper School music classes at SCIS Pudong provide the space to learn for students of all levels. The focus of our program is to teach students to become performers, composers, researchers, and listeners but above all, to enjoy the progression as much as possible from wherever they start. Some students come into the school having had years of private lessons while others aren't sure on which end of the trumpet to place their mouth! Using a digital music theory program, Breezin' Thru, students can work at their own pace and engage with the material visually, aurally, and kinaesthetically. They can practice these concepts on a wind instrument in grades six to eight while branching out in high school to include strings, piano, guitar, and percussion. The driving force is the process is as important as the product.









# The Role of the Host Culture in Developing Intercultural Understanding - The Symbol of the Dragon



Shanghai Community International School (SCIS) is a community of dragons. In this community, we embody the dragon's spirit in various forms. We take pride in wearing the Dragon logo. We take part in Dragon-Fit initiatives. We say "Go Dragons" in sports games. And we celebrate Dragon Days. It seems that members of SCIS have a shared understanding of the symbol of the dragon, although there are significant cultural differences in its meaning. What is interesting is how the intercultural understanding has occurred.

## Chinese Dragon

The Chinese dragon, or "Lóng" in Chinese, is a legendary creature in Chinese mythology and folklore. It is illustrated as a snake-like creature with four legs, often associated with yang energy, water, and the heavens. The dragon is highly valued in Chinese culture and is seen as a symbol of power, strength, and prosperity. As a part of the Chinese zodiac, it appears in Chinese idioms, is weaved into fabrics for traditional Chinese clothes, and is used in dances to celebrate festivals. Unlike their Western counterparts, Chinese dragons are considered auspicious. Chinese people consider themselves to be descended from the dragon.

## Western Dragon

In contrast, the Western dragon has a more varied reputation in different cultures, often associated with fierceness and malevolence. In Western mythology, the dragon is often portrayed as a fire-breathing, scaly and reptilian creature with bat-like wings. Traditionally, western dragons have held the role of fierce monsters, characterized by greed in their hoarding of treasures and terrorizing villages and knights. In contemporary contexts, the symbolic significance of the dragon extends beyond mythology and folklore, with the creature associated with strength, wisdom, and protection. It is a popular motif in art, literature, and pop culture, representing various attributes such as resilience, ambition, and the pursuit of knowledge.

## Intercultural Understanding of the Dragon Symbol

By examining the similarities and differences in the representation of the dragon symbol across Chinese and Western cultures, we gain a deeper understanding of the shared associations and values that underlie these cultural traditions. One of the common traits associated with the dragon symbol is its connection to power, strength, and wisdom, evident in both Chinese and Western





cultures. The dragon also serves as a guardian or protector of treasures and sacred knowledge, representing a shared belief in safeguarding valued resources.

The dragon symbol offers a powerful example of the complex and multifaceted nature of cultural symbols, conveying a wide range of meanings and interpretations across different cultural contexts. Understanding these cultural differences fosters a greater sense of intercultural understanding and respect, building stronger connections across cultural boundaries.

### The Meaning of the Dragon for SCIS students

Hector, a Grade 10 student and a member of the Student Council at SCIS Pudong, claims *"as dragons, we are united as one community."*

Francesca, a Grade 10 student defines community as a place *"that is open-minded, and you can be inclusive and be whoever you want."*

When talking about the dragon's spirit, Audrey, a Grade 12 young artist, stated, *"it is like being able to put different parts of cultures of our host country and cultures that we are individually from all together, and merge to be creative and build upon each other to be collaborative."*

And for Allison, an athlete, *"the dragon symbolizes a sense of power and taking risks."*

In SCIS, the symbol of the dragon has transcended all cultural differences and has become a strong tie for SCIS students to proudly call themselves *"dragons"*.



By Xiating Fang, MYP/DP Mandarin Language Acquisition Teacher at SCIS Pudong





# The Magical World of Dramatic Play: Fostering Symbolic Expression in Children

As adults, we often marvel at the boundless imagination of children. Between the ages of two and six, youngsters possess a remarkable ability to transform living rooms into jungles, cardboard boxes into spaceships, and themselves into superheroes or mythical creatures. This is the world of dramatic play, a stage on which childhood creativity knows no bounds. But dramatic play is more than just fun and games; it is a critical component in developing symbolic expression and a cornerstone of early childhood development.

Symbolic expression is the ability to use symbols – words, numbers, images, or objects – to represent something else. This skill is essential for language development, reading, writing, and mathematics. Dramatic play naturally cultivates symbolic expression as children begin to understand that one thing can stand for another; a stick becomes a sword, a towel transforms into a cape, and spoken words can represent actions and emotions.

Through dramatic play, children learn to navigate the world of symbols. They start to grasp that written words are symbols for objects, actions, and concepts. As they engage in storytelling and

role-playing, they practice organizing their thoughts and using language to convey complex ideas. This skill is crucial for later academic tasks like reading comprehension and essay writing.

Dramatic play provides a safe and nurturing environment for children to explore emotions and social roles. By stepping into different characters, children experiment with various emotional states and social interactions. They learn empathy by "walking in someone else's shoes," which is essential for building social skills and emotional intelligence. This exploration of feelings through play helps children learn to express themselves symbolically through language and behavior, which is vital for healthy emotional development.

The benefits of dramatic play extend to problem-solving and critical thinking skills as well. When children pretend, they encounter imaginary scenarios that often require creative solutions. They must think abstractly and symbolically to resolve these problems, whether it's building a fort to protect against dragons or deciding how to share resources in a make-believe family. These skills translate to real-world situations where symbolic and abstract thinking is required.

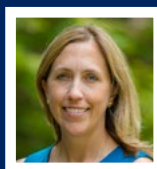


Parents can support and enrich their children's dramatic play by providing a variety of materials and opportunities for imaginative play. Costumes, props, and open-ended toys like blocks can stimulate creativity. However, it is equally important to allow children the freedom to use everyday items in unconventional ways, reinforcing the idea that anything can symbolize something else.

Adults are encouraged to engage with their children during dramatic play without dominating the narrative. By participating as co-creators in the fantasy world, parents validate their children's ideas and encourage further symbolic thinking. Asking open-ended questions and introducing new vocabulary during play also expands children's language skills and conceptual understanding.

In conclusion, dramatic play is a vital activity for young children, not just as a form of entertainment but as a crucial tool for developing symbolic expression. It lays the foundation for

language and literacy, fosters emotional and social intelligence, and hones critical thinking and problem-solving skills. By nurturing our children's imaginative play, we are giving them the keys to unlock the symbols that will help them interpret and engage with the world around them. As parents, we have the privilege of being both audience and actors in the wondrous unfolding drama of our children's development.



*By Heather Knight, Early Childhood Education Principal at SCIS Hongqiao*





# The Importance of Business Management in the IB Programme: *Cultivating Holistic Thinkers for a Dynamic World*



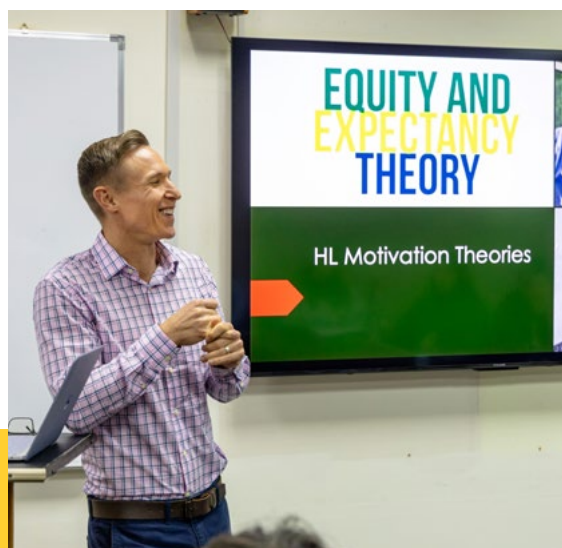
The International Baccalaureate (IB) Programme offers a comprehensive educational framework that equips students with a broad range of knowledge and skills. Among the array of subjects offered, Business Management (BM) stands out to me as a vital course that plays a pivotal role in preparing students for the challenges and opportunities of the modern world. The key areas of the course, which I feel make it such a valuable component of the Diploma Programme (DP) are understanding the various concepts of investment analysis, developing financial literacy skills, within both a business and personal context, exploring job industries with high growth prospects, and embracing technological innovations like AI and robotics.

Business Management in the IB Programme fosters a deep understanding of investment principles. Students learn to analyze financial markets, evaluate risks, and make informed investment decisions. This knowledge empowers them to navigate the complex world of finance, fostering responsible and strategic investment thinking. By studying investment

concepts, students gain insights into the allocation of resources, wealth creation, and the impact of economic factors on business decision-making. This aspect of the course also serves as a catalyst for further interest in investing, which is a cornerstone for building wealth. I feel that this aspect of the course is what excites me most; when students get switched on early, they are more likely to have the advantage of time on their side, which is a key element for compounded investment returns.

The course also equips students with essential knowledge of managing personal finances and understanding the financial operations of businesses. Students learn about budgeting, financial planning, and the importance of financial responsibility in personal and professional settings. This understanding enables them to make informed financial decisions, develop effective budgeting strategies, and appreciate the financial implications of various business activities. I have often said that a teacher's most important responsibility is to have students leave the classroom with tools for life; skills and abilities that





will enable them to succeed as independent adults. I believe that the topics and concepts we cover in BM most certainly accomplish this.

Business Management also provides students with insights into various job industries and their growth prospects. Through case studies, research, and analysis, students gain an understanding of emerging industries and the factors driving their success. This knowledge aids in career planning, as students can identify job sectors with high growth potential and align their skills and interests accordingly. Additionally, by studying successful businesses and industry trends, students develop a forward-thinking mindset that prepares them for the dynamic nature of the global job market.

Lastly, in today's rapidly evolving world, technological innovations like Artificial Intelligence (AI) and robotics are transforming industries and reshaping business landscapes. We introduce students to the impact of technology on organizations, encouraging them to think critically about

its implications. Students learn about the integration of technology in various business functions, such as marketing, operations, and supply chain management. They also explore ethical considerations and societal impacts associated with technological advancements. This knowledge equips students with the ability to adapt to technological changes and leverage innovative solutions in a responsible and sustainable manner.

Teaching this course has been extremely rewarding and I encourage all Grade 10 students to seriously consider taking the course as they prepare to begin their DP journey.



**By Dr. Nick Spring-Peers, DP  
Business Management Teacher at  
SCIS Hongqiao**





## “Thank You for the Feedback”: The Power of Feedback to Transform Teaching and Learning

In the International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Programme (PYP), assessment is integral to supporting students' acquisition of knowledge, conceptual understanding, and approaches to learning. The key to assessment is not simply measuring or reporting, it is feedback, which serves as a powerful tool for teaching and learning. By providing timely, specific, and well-constructed feedback, teachers can support students' learning journeys and foster an assessment-capable community approach. Seeing assessment as a collaborative relationship between teachers, students, and the community ensures continuous improvement in teaching and learning. When assessment and feedback are approached with a focus on inclusive, student-centered practices, we leverage the power of providing multiple means of feedback through multiple means of expression.

### Empowering Students through Feedback:

As students actively engage in assessment and act upon constructive feedback, they become effective, self-regulated learners. Feedback allows students of all ages to reflect on their progress, set learning goals, and make informed decisions about how to achieve those goals. Whether it's a thumbs up, a completed rubric, a computer-based test, or a simple conferring conversation with a teacher, feedback gives students ownership over their next attempts when learning or trying new things. Students develop assessment capabilities through reflection, self-assessment, and the selection of evidence that showcases their learning. Ideally, they become self-adjusters, utilizing feedback to modify and improve their learning strategies. By embracing feedback, students develop metacognitive skills, refine their learning strategies, and foster a sense of agency over their education, which is a goal of the PYP.

An assessment provides feedback used to feedforward. This feedback/feedforward process centers on insights into







current learning to inform future learning, which increases student motivation and independence. It goes beyond pointing out areas for improvement; it's imperative to the process that feedback highlights students' strengths, celebrates their achievements, and acknowledges their unique perspectives. Well-designed feedback creates a safe and supportive environment that nurtures students' self-esteem, motivation, and overall well-being. It fosters a sense of belonging and inspires a growth mindset, empowering students to embrace challenges and persist in their learning endeavors.

### **Creating Positive Experiences with Assessment and Feedback:**

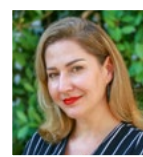
Effective assessment and feedback are collaborative processes involving both teachers and students. In a PYP setting, students actively participate in setting learning goals and co-constructing success criteria, ensuring a sense of ownership and relevance. By providing multiple means of representation, expression, and engagement, educators can tailor feedback to match students' learning styles, preferences, and abilities. Through varied

formats, such as written comments, audio recordings, projects, videos, or visual aids, feedback becomes a personalized and empowering tool that supports every student's journey toward success.

In the PYP of the International Baccalaureate (IB), we recognize the importance of providing feedback co-constructed with students. Co-constructing learning goals and success criteria allows students and teachers to personalize the learning journeys, connecting new knowledge to prior understanding, and monitoring progress along the way. Regular check-ins, dialogue, and reflection sessions allow for ongoing communication and adjustment, fostering a growth mindset and empowering students to take charge of their learning. With individualized and personalized assessments and feedback experiences, students develop a positive relationship with learning, which is instrumental in shaping students' attitudes toward growth.

Feedback is a powerful tool for teaching and learning, facilitating students' growth through embracing effective

assessment practices and providing feedback, educators foster a culture that celebrates failures and successes in a safe and supportive context. Through engaging in collaborative and personalized assessment feedback processes, we empower students to become self-regulated learners who take agentic action. Assessment and feedback are not mere tools for measuring student progress; they are catalysts for inclusive learning experiences. By reorienting the value of feedback in education, we pave the way for meaningful, mission-aligned educational experiences that inspire students to be inquiring, knowledgeable, caring learners who contribute positively to their communities.



*By Molly Myers, Lower School Principal at SCIS Pudong*



# Byte-Sized Brilliance: SCIS's Tech Revolution Sparks Innovation

Discover the cutting-edge tech innovations flourishing across SCIS campuses, where robotics, esports, and virtual reality are shaping the future of education. From robot competitions igniting STEM passions to esports leagues fostering teamwork and strategy, and immersive virtual reality experiences enhancing learning, SCIS is at the forefront of tech education.

## Pixel Power: SCIS Students Dominate in Esports

In February, SCIS joined the Chisel Cup Esports league, a consortium of International Schools in China and around Asia. Between January and mid-May, students played against schools in the following activities: Mario Smash Brothers, Mario Kart, and Rocket League. So far, our students have competed against SAS Pudong, SAS Puxi, and Dulwich Suzhou.

When asked what they like about esports, team members shared:

Spencer: "Connecting with the friends here and beating other people in Super Smash Bros."

Judy: "The games and playing with friends or beating the other team is cool. I enjoy having snacks, too. That's what I enjoy about."

Stewart: "I like the competitive feel and mood I experience throughout the gaming competitions."

Esports has many social and emotional benefits. Each session starts with social expectations, and we emphasize mutual respect and appreciation for each other. For

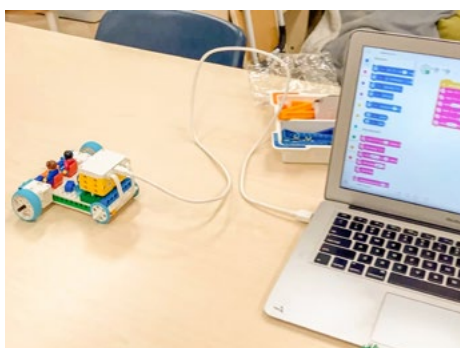
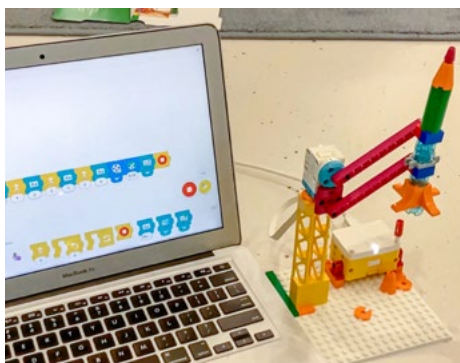
some students it has been a way to connect with others over a shared passion and for others a way to push themselves with competitors from around Asia. Like traditional sports, esports competitors also enjoy being part of a team and something larger than themselves. We are looking forward to future adventures!



**Sarah Harkin, Upper  
School Counselor  
at SCIS Pudong**







### Lego Logic: Crafting Creativity in Robotics

In our Hongqiao Lower School Robotics ASA, students learn to code Lego robots, sparking their interest in technology and innovation in engaging ways. Beyond assembling robots using Lego parts, this program cultivates important skills like teamwork, problem-solving, creativity, critical thinking, communication, adaptability, and resilience. Through collaboration, students tackle real-life problems, exercising their creativity when designing their Lego robots. Moreover, in this ASA, students may also develop qualities like perseverance and attention to detail, all of which are valuable traits in various aspects of life and future careers.

Robotics serves as a rich learning foundation for various skills, from time management to computational

thinking. Students delve into coding and programming, equipping themselves with tools for the digital world. These skills extend beyond the classroom, potentially benefiting our Grade 3, 4, and 5 students as they progress to Upper School and explore further academic pursuits.

We foster an inclusive and welcoming environment for all students to explore their STEM interests, regardless of background or experience. By practicing these skills early, students get ready for future school tasks and gain abilities that help them in many parts of their lives.



**Nadya Faquir, Grade Three Teacher at SCIS Hongqiao**

### VR-rific Education: SCIS Dives into Virtual Reality

We are now equipped with Class VR headsets, which are designed to help raise engagement and increase knowledge retention for students of all ages. VR (Virtual Reality) introduces a whole new concept in education technology, allowing students to visualize their learning, including but not limited to, being able to explore historic places, meet people from past times, learn how things were built, experience different emotions, and imagine the future.

Class VR comes with a portal that makes it easy to guide students through curriculum-linked virtual learning experiences. Lower School teachers can create a play list of VR content that is relevant to their Unit of Inquiry and can see a real-time feed of what each student is viewing inside their headset, helping to ensure students are always on task.

Not only do the VR sets allow students to explore places that they may otherwise not be able to experience, such as moon landings, or a journey through our veins, but students are also able to use AR (augmented reality) with their headsets, which allow them to increase their senses through touch. When students hold an AR cube, they can visualize and feel, for example, what a heart looks like from all angles.

We are excited for students' growth while being able to make further sensory connections to their learning.



**Petra Akinsola, Technology Integrator at SCIS**

### VR sets have arrived at SCIS!





# ***SCIS Hongqiao ACAMIS Basketball Summary***

Last week Shanghai Community International School (SCIS) hosted the ACAMIS Green Division Basketball tournament at their Hongqiao campus. Schools from Hong Kong, Shenzhen, Qingdao, Hangzhou and from around Shanghai came together for an incredible three-day basketball event. The campus was buzzing on Thursday morning as SCIS welcomed teams to their school and showcased some of their own amazing student talent during the opening ceremonies of the tournament. The SCIS varsity girls and varsity boys' teams also kept the energy flowing as they kicked

off their tournaments with convincing victories on their home courts. Both gyms remained high-spirited and supportive throughout the entire event. Saturday saw the completion of the tournament with Qingdao Amerasia International School Girls and Discovery College Hong Kong Boys eventually winning their championship matchups. The SCIS varsity girls ended with bronze medals around their necks and a trophy in their hands after an impressive third place finish. The SCIS junior varsity girls team took home the Spirit of ACAMIS award for their incredible sportsmanship, effort and positive attitudes both on and

off the court. After a tough three days, the SCIS varsity boys team persevered through many injuries and illness to finish a respectable fourth place overall. It is amazing to be adding these types of events back onto our calendars! On to the next one – Go Dragons!



*Written by Justin Corvers,  
Athletics Director  
at SCIS Hongqiao*







# ***SCIS Pudong ACAMIS Basketball Summary***

Our Pudong basketball teams traveled up north to participate in the ACAMIS silver division basketball tournament in Beijing.

Both teams played tough competition over three days. Throughout this time, I, as a coach, witnessed the development of many players.

From new basketball players who had never touched a basketball and scoring

their first basket to seasoned players dealing with adversity and overcoming challenges on and off the court, the athletes played hard until the final whistle. Even though we did not walk away from the championship, we did bring back with us lasting memories and a newfound passion for the sport.

A special thanks to seniors Charlie S., Samuel B., and Sarah P., who played their final game in a Dragons uniform. Your

leadership throughout the season has set a shining example for the younger players as the basketball program moves ahead into next year.



*Written by Luke Cantrill,  
Basketball Coach  
at SCIS Pudong*





# Shane Wang's Slam Dunk Journey

from SCIS to Asian Hoops Stardom!



Meet Shane Wang, Class of 2011 at SCIS Hongqiao, who navigated the changing landscapes of SCIS from Changning to Hongqiao and Pudong. An avid sports fan, particularly in basketball, Shane kickstarted his career by focusing on functions and exploring marketing. His journey led him to collaborations with NBA China and a role in a professional Asian basketball league. Shane emphasizes the importance of dreaming big, setting realistic goals, and persevering in the face of challenges, showcasing how the SCIS philosophy of goal-oriented growth continues to guide him in his dynamic career.



## Hi! Please introduce yourself and share your time at SCIS.

My name is Shane Wang. I was in the Class of 2011 at SCIS Hongqiao. My history with SCIS has been long. My family moved to Shanghai from Taiwan in 2004. At that time, I started off 6th grade at the SCIS Changning campus, which is no longer around. After that, I went to SCIS Hongqiao for Grades 7 and 8 and then transferred to SCIS Pudong for Grades 9 and 10. For my last two years of high school, I moved back to SCIS Hongqiao. So, I grew up with SCIS with all the changes, renovations, and relocations. I made some lifelong friends, friends that I keep in touch with to this day. After high school, I went to the University of British Columbia (UBC) in Vancouver. After I graduated from university, I decided to return to Shanghai because it's a place that represented the past, present, and future to me, as I also met my wife here in this special city.

## How did you kick start your career?

Sports (particularly basketball) have always been something that I'm very passionate about and it really shaped me into who I am today. I was a part of varsity sports back at SCIS, and I still play basketball and softball for leisure today in Shanghai. After graduating from university, I didn't really know how to get involved in the sports

industry for work, I just knew I wanted to be in this space. With no connection or resources, I focused a bit more on functions rather than industry as the sports industry has many functions just like other businesses. Since I was always into storytelling, I wanted to get into marketing. I started off with a marketing internship at a law firm to hone those skills. After nine months, I had an opportunity to join a sports academy in Shanghai where I had my first job in sports with an opportunity to work directly with NBA China on some projects. Then I switched to working for a few different marketing agencies where I learned more about data analytics, insights, campaigns, and creatives, which helped me to steer my career path into working for a professional league in Asia. With some goal settings and a lot of luck as well, I was able to carve out a career path within the sports industry and I'm super grateful for it.

## What are some of the challenges of working in this industry?

I've been a big NBA fan my whole life, but I didn't really know much about the leagues in Asia. Even though leagues in Asia and the NBA both play basketball, it's a completely different product. Also, it is very different to watch a game as a fan than as a working staff. There's a lot of communication behind the scenes



with different teams, players, and often gatekeepers. And the results that fans see is a product of a tremendous number of communications, collaborations, and sometimes arguments too with different internal and external parties, and often it leaves very little room for errors as thousands and even millions of fans or business partners might catch on quickly. In the end, it's still a process to learn and adapt to the working style of different stakeholders, no matter what job or industry you're in, that's always something that you need to navigate through.

### What are some perks and benefits of working in a professional basketball league?

We have the best seats in the house, directly on the court! There are lots of interaction opportunities with these different players and teams as well. It's always good to pick their brains since they live and breathe basketball, and as a fan myself, it is always good to have more knowledge.

### What skills did you learn at SCIS that you carried to university and even up to now?

A lot of coaches that I had back in SCIS were very goal-oriented people. Whether it was volleyball or basketball, we set goals

for the season. I think this can be applied to our personal lives as well, as I took that formula for my career. I set out bigger goals for myself and apply small goals/steps to ensure that I can get there. I'm still early in my own journey, but I believe this is a good formula to make things happen, whether it's for work or for personal development. Have your eyes on the prize but embrace the process.

### What do you expect for the next 5-10 years from yourself?

I want to go on the biggest stage this industry has to offer and having an opportunity to create that here in Asia is a big ambition that both me and our team have. For now, I'm just trying to better myself by learning more about professional basketball and elevate the overall level, especially in Asia.

### What advice would you give to current SCIS students who are interested in working in the sports industry?

Even if you think it's a crazy dream, there are still ways to achieve it. Think about what you want to do in this space and set some realistic, honest, and actionable goals. It's a long journey ahead and there will be times where your passion will be tested, but just like what they say in sports.... Keep your head up and keep going.



## THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

### Alumni Mission:

The SCIS Alumni Association has been established in order to foster the continued cordial relations of the SCIS community. Its goal was, and continues to be, to link alumni with the School and with each other, and to support and maintain such forged relationships. It strives to provide ample avenues and opportunities to encourage alumni to participate actively in the SCIS community.

### Alumni Contact:

Elena Tan  
[etan@scis-china.org](mailto:etan@scis-china.org)

### Alumni Requirements:

1. Graduated from a SCIS Campus

OR

2. Went to school here for at least one year AND be over 18

### Social Media

Facebook site:  
<https://www.facebook.com/alumniSCIS/>

Linkedin site:  
<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/4757677>





# Frame by Frame: Exploring the Cinematic World of an SCIS Student

In a recent exclusive #StudentSpotlight interview, we sat down with Wilson, a Grade 11 student at SCIS Hongqiao, where he shared insights into his passion for videography and his experiences behind the camera at SCIS events like the recent ACAMIS Basketball livestream. Read on to discover the highs and lows of his creative journey and gain valuable advice for aspiring videographers! 🎥

## Please introduce yourself!

My name is Wilson, and this is my 11th year with SCIS. I've been here since 1st grade. I have a lot of interest in music, photography, business, and sports like badminton and basketball, and a strong passion for videography/film.

**We know that you are the man behind the camera for a lot of SCIS events such as Service Learning, MYP Graduation, and most recently – the ACAMIS Basketball livestream hosted at the SCIS Hongqiao campus. Can you share with us the highs and lows of this livestream event?**

Going into that project, I knew I wanted to create something at a level of quality never seen before in ACAMIS sports live streams. Still, I must achieve that while

keeping it relatively low cost and within a minimal setup time. I started planning everything down to the details a few months back. However, the time it took to wire all the cameras and software setup still took way longer than expected, in fact the setup time cut into the tournament time, so not all the features initially planned could be used for the entire duration of the tournament. The stream was also very unstable at the beginning.

At last, we were still able to pull off the 8 multicamera setups, instant replays with transition graphics, and the real-time scoreboard. I'm still very happy with the final results given how tough of a task it was, and this wouldn't have been possible without the amazing support from the 15 student volunteers helping set up the wires and ensuring the cameras were up and running, the IT department providing any equipment we needed and internet support, also the trust of teachers that gave me the resources to achieve this.

## How and why did you get into videography?

I've been passionate about photography for as long as I can remember, and I've always loved watching movies/TV shows. In 8th grade, when we did the arts rotations as a part of the MYP arts program, we got to rotate through the different arts programs our school had provided, from Music, Drama, Visual Arts, to Media. That was when I got to try filming videos. We practiced camera movements in media and even created our own short film. I think it was when we were creating our own short film that I felt a passion for film. From the planning of shots and locations to the teamwork on set, I felt an excitement I'd never felt before. From there, I started learning more on my own and filming videos for the school assembly.

## How did you learn about all the technical difficulties and functions of videography?

I learned some of the basics from Mr. Reed



in 8th grade Media, and he recommended me some great YouTube channels to check out. Then from there, I spent a lot of time watching tutorials about lighting and cinematography on YouTube on my own time, but the best way to learn something is hands on experience.

After the music video I shot for a Media project in 9th grade, I got some recognition from people in school. An 11th grader at the time (now graduated), his name was Lesaan. He brought me on to do some corporate work, mostly working with clients in the music video industry. From there on, I started working more professionally and learned so much from him and other professionals in the television commercial industry.

### How has SCIS helped you become a better videographer?

I think it is the opportunity the school has provided me with. My out-of-school work is very focused on music videos and commercial videos, and working with clients limits my room to create and

express what I want. Here at SCIS, teachers encourage me to create it however I like, giving me creative freedom, and getting me the resources I need to achieve it.

### Do you take part in other video opportunities outside of SCIS? If so, please explain.

Yeah, mostly music videos in the hip-hop industry and some concert recaps. I am recently working with more corporate brands like Lenovo for commercials.

### Do you aspire to become a videographer as your future career? What are your next steps?

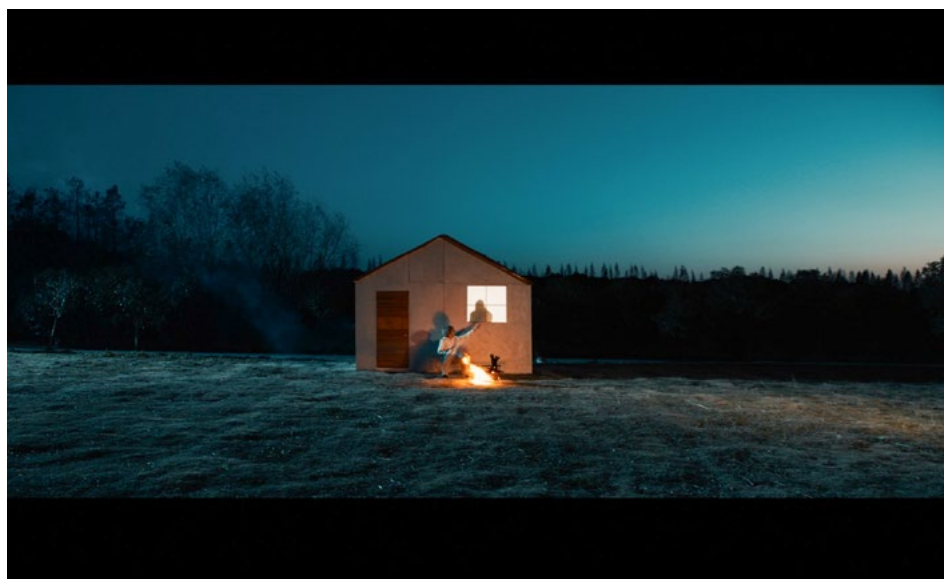
Of course. I hope to start my own production one day, but now, I am looking for more filming opportunities and working on bigger film sets, learning and perfecting my skills.

### Lastly, do you have any advice for fellow Dragons who are also pursuing this field?

YouTube tutorials are a great starting point, but they are nothing compared to



the experience you gather while you're filming, and something that may work for someone else may not work for you, so find your own style. Lastly, lighting and color grading is underrated, put some effort into those two and you will elevate your work for sure.







## We Need You! Join our PAFA team

The SCIS Parents and Friends Association (PAFA) is exactly what it sounds like – PAFA is you and me. We are a group of parents and/ guardians who meet monthly to keep our association running and ensure that parent-related views are brought to the school's attention.

The Board consists of representatives from our Early Childhood Education (ECE) and Hongqiao main campuses, who manage various parent-led initiatives. We partner with parents, guardians, teachers, and school management to contribute positively towards our community.

## What is the PAFA Board?

### List of roles

- **President:** Leads with the motto of “serve, lead, inspire.” Facilitates monthly PAFA Meetings & regular General Meetings, partners with school management, leads PAFA events & initiatives.
- **Vice President:** Assists the President & steps-in where needed.
- **Treasurer:** Oversees expenditure & PAFA financial reporting.
- **Secretary & Communications Coordinator:** Promote PAFA events & communicate PAFA-related information to the school community.
- **School Representatives:** Act as a liaison between parents and school administration. PAFA has representatives in ECE, Lower School and Upper School.
- **Events Representatives:** Plans and promotes events.



## Why we need YOU

PAFA is driven by the creativity and collaboration of its volunteers. We need representation from all backgrounds to share in a diverse way of problem solving and serving our school community.



### What is expected of candidates

- Joining the PAFA Board is a one-year commitment. We meet monthly for approximately 90 minutes.
- Parents are encouraged to join specific events too. If you are pressed for time and perhaps unable to commit to a permanent role, we appreciate you dropping-in and volunteering at events that suit your schedule.

If you are interested in a PAFA position or general volunteering, please email [pafa-hq-comms@scis-parent.org](mailto:pafa-hq-comms@scis-parent.org) and express your interest, or for more information.

We look forward to hearing from you!







"I'm a big believer in school pride and spirit, and want to instill this in my own kids as much as possible by being as involved as I can in their school and community. Seeing how happy it makes my sons when they see me helping at a school event or in their class as room parent, or on a field trip makes it worth all the time and work! I love our SCIS PAFA community, so spending time with these wonderful moms and dads is always fun!"

- Lisa Renstroem, Preschool and Grade 4 parent

### PAFA Yearly Events and Participation

- Back to School Night
- Welcome Back BBQ
- Halloween Bash
- The Winter Carnival
- Market Days
- Teacher Appreciation Week
- Charity Art Auction
- Cultural Craft Fair
- Year-End Picnic

### SCIS Parent Clubs

SCIS Parent Clubs are a great way meet other parents at SCIS where parents can be social, creative, innovative, and active; all while being part of our truly international community. The clubs provide our parents with an opportunity to be more involved and create a better, inclusive environment.

Here is a list of our parent led clubs:

- Hula Dancing
- Knit & Chat

- Picturebook Club
- International Cooking
- Mahjong
- SCIS Moms Football
- SCIS Parents Basketball
- SCIS Dads Football
- Cardio Workout

If community is your thing, then look no further. We'd love to have YOU on our team.



"Thanks to SCIS's community mindset and PAFA's engagement, I have found meaningful ways of contributing and making an impact. I feel like a welcomed member of our school community. I am involved in the Passport Club, a great activity to discover the world with a "finger on the map". Recently, joined the Teacher Appreciation Week activities. Another highlight is being able to showcase our Slovakian culture and food at various events.

I am fortunate to be so close to my kids and I do not take it for granted.  
- Tatiana Veberova, Kindergarten and Grade 2 parent





# PAFA Promotes a Culture of Peace Through **Effective Communication**

The Key to Conflict Prevention and Management





The promotion of a culture of peace must rely on the notion of understanding between people interacting in society. Community life requires the awareness of each of its members that the “other” exists and that, just as we must ensure our rights are respected, we must also recognize and respect the rights of others.

But how can we put these words into practice? The first step forward is effective communication which consists of the process of exchanging thoughts, opinions, interests, needs, feelings, emotions, perceptions, knowledge, and information, making sure the messages are received and understood clearly.

Communication can be verbal –what we communicate with words, images or sounds– including tone of voice; or non-verbal, through our body language –postures and gestures. Even silence communicates a message. Therefore, we must be aware of the power of communication we have, to exercise it positively.

In an illustrative but not limited way, here are some of the basic skills and principles to achieve effective communication:

### Active listening

Listening is the most powerful tool to reach understanding, and we need to practice attentive listening, and not just hear what people express; that means listening with all our senses and perceiving the verbal and non-verbal elements contained in the message received. It is neither accurate nor honest to say that



we are listening “carefully” to someone, while we are doing something else. Active listening implies looking into the eyes, having open body language, being patient, and refraining from interrupting abruptly and capriciously.

### Assertiveness

Assertiveness is the ability to express any message clearly, directly, concisely, congruently, honestly, and respectfully. Being assertive is crucial to be able to express any message and receive a positive response of understanding and legitimation, even if the receiver may have different opinions. Non-verbal language is important and must be equally assertive. An effective approach to practicing assertiveness is to focus on expressing interests and needs.

### Empathy

Empathy is the value of consciousness of others’ feelings, emotions, points of view, perceptions, interests, and needs,

channeled into the understanding of their actions and reactions according to their motives, limitations and circumstances, putting yourself “in the shoes of the others” in any situation. It is a key that opens doors to the creation of strong communication bridges. An empathetic person creates an atmosphere of peace in which communication flows effectively.

### Neutrality

Neutrality refers to the ability to communicate without making judgments or giving opinions, except in cases where opinions are expressly requested. Being judgmental generates friction and discontent. The same goes for criticism of people, their lives, their families, their decisions. Being neutral requires refraining from telling others how they “should” think and what they “should” do because such an opinion would be limited and might even be biased.

In conclusion, effective communication creates a scenario where the parties feel free and safe to express themselves honestly and peacefully, preventing conflicts or managing them positively and efficiently.

PAFA-Pudong promotes effective communication at every meeting, event, or situation involving our community or society.

“We have two ears and one mouth so that we can listen twice as much as we speak”.  
- Epictetus.

*By Maria Jose Verduzco, PAFA  
Communications at SCIS Pudong*





# Book Recommendations for All Ages

Books are a handy resource packed with information, insights into a happy life, life lessons, love, fear, and lots of advantageous instruction. Books open doors to a world of ingenuity, creativity, and resourcefulness. And stories are an integral part of our lives. They talk about history, mythology, our beliefs, our inspirations, and possibilities of our future, the list is endless. Read below the book recommendations for all ages from our very own SCIS librarians:

## Malia Heil, Librarian at SCIS Pudong



### *Hilda*

By Luke Pearson

Ages 6+

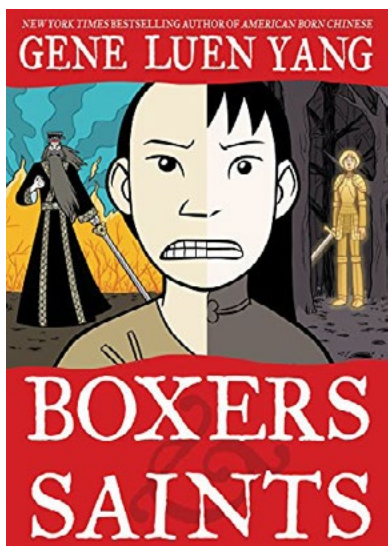
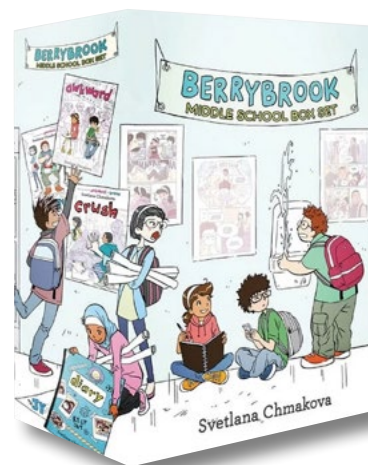
With rich, immersive illustrations, these graphic novels have us interacting with mythical creatures while learning lifelong lessons about friendship, courage, and even advocacy. In blue-haired *Hilda*, we finally have a heroine who is not inappropriate or predictable. She's brave even when terrified and strong even when transformed into a troll. Really, Pearson writes through the mythology without a side glance, so Hilda shines as a character in the real world, even though hers is wild, weird and wonderfully foreign.

### *The Berrybrook Middle School Series*

By Svetlana Chmakova

Ages 10+

Chmakova captures those moments (in drawing and in dialogue) when we wish we could just disappear, specifically in middle school. Each book in this almost-anime series follows a different character and explores those strange, necessary emotions that usher us into maturity. The first book, *Awkward*, aptly starts with our preteen protagonists tripping over friendship and identity (particularly groupthink). The second installment, *Brave*, tackles the difficult theme of bullying, doing especially well at exposing soft bullying by "friends." Then comes *Crush*, which deals with those weird flutters and all the drama that comes along. Overall, these first three books in this still-expanding series validate the cryptic emotions of middle school but also encourage kindness as a habit, making for a good combo of change and consistency.



### *Boxers & Saints*

By Gene Luen Yang

Ages 13+

Violent, disturbing, mystical, infuriating -- this two-part account of the Boxer Rebellion begs discussion and serious contemplation. Read *Boxers* first. It will shake your beliefs about cultural and religious influence, about patriotism, about filial and tribal duty. Then *Saints* takes another perspective equally convulsive. Together, you come away with a better understanding of uprisings, of foreign imposition, of religious impressions. Furthermore, the literary and artistic parallels between the books carry heavy nuances and yield important, complex conversation.



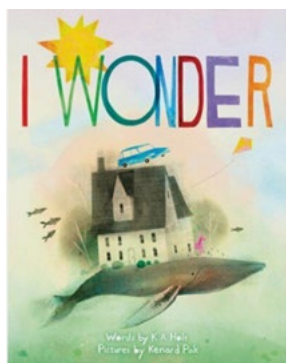
## Clair Wain, Early Childhood Librarian at SCIS Hongqiao

### ***Extraordinary!***

By Penny Harrison

Age 3-6

*Extraordinary!* by Penny Harrison, illustrated by Katie Wilson, celebrates magic in everyday moments through delightful storytelling and captivating illustrations. This is an enchanting picture book that sparks curiosity and wonder in young readers, encouraging them to find joy and beauty in the seemingly ordinary, making it a perfect companion for imaginative exploration.



### ***I Wonder***

By K.A. Holt

Age 3-6

*I Wonder* by K.A. Holt, with illustrations by Kenard Pak, invites young minds on a captivating journey of curiosity and discovery. Through thought-provoking questions and delightful illustrations, this book ignites the imagination and encourages children to explore the wonders of the world around them, making it an ideal read-aloud for curious minds.

### ***On a Magical Do-Nothing Day***

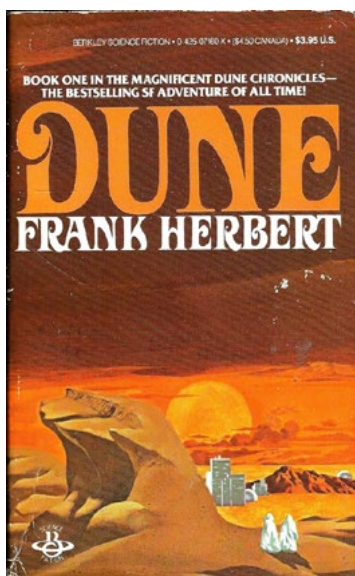
By Beatrice Alemagna

Age 3-6

*On a Magical Do-Nothing Day* by Beatrice Alemagna beautifully captures the allure of nature's wonders for young readers. As the main character, a child, ventures outside for a break from playing with the game console, a fascinating adventure unfolds, revealing the joy of exploration and imagination. This captivating tale encourages children to embrace the magic of the outdoors, making it a delightful read for young adventurers.



## Ashley Simmons, Upper School Librarian at SCIS Hongqiao



### ***Dune***

By Frank Herbert

Ages 10+

Book reviewed by Hudson Haozhe Xu, Grade 8

*Dune* by Frank Herbert is quite possibly the greatest work of science-fiction literature ever. It is set in a distant future where humanity has colonized other planets and is ruled by a feudalistic system of noble houses, an emperor, and groups like the Bene Gesserit, a secretive group of nuns that can control with their voice. The story follows the journey of Paul Atreides, the young heir of House Atreides, as he navigates the treacherous political landscape of the desert planet Arrakis. Arrakis is the only source of the valuable Spice; Spice is a highly coveted and valuable substance that allows certain people like the Bene Gesserits to see the future as well as allow a group called Guildsmen (the NASA of Dune) to guide a spaceship to its destination safely. It also extends life and enhances mental abilities; however, it is highly addictive, leading to Spice becoming the most valuable thing in the world. As Paul and his family take control of Arrakis, they become embroiled in a deadly power struggle with rival noble houses and the Bene Gesserit. Along the way, Paul discovers hidden truths about Spice, his destiny, and the eventual fate of the universe.





*....building a more  
peaceful world" - IB*