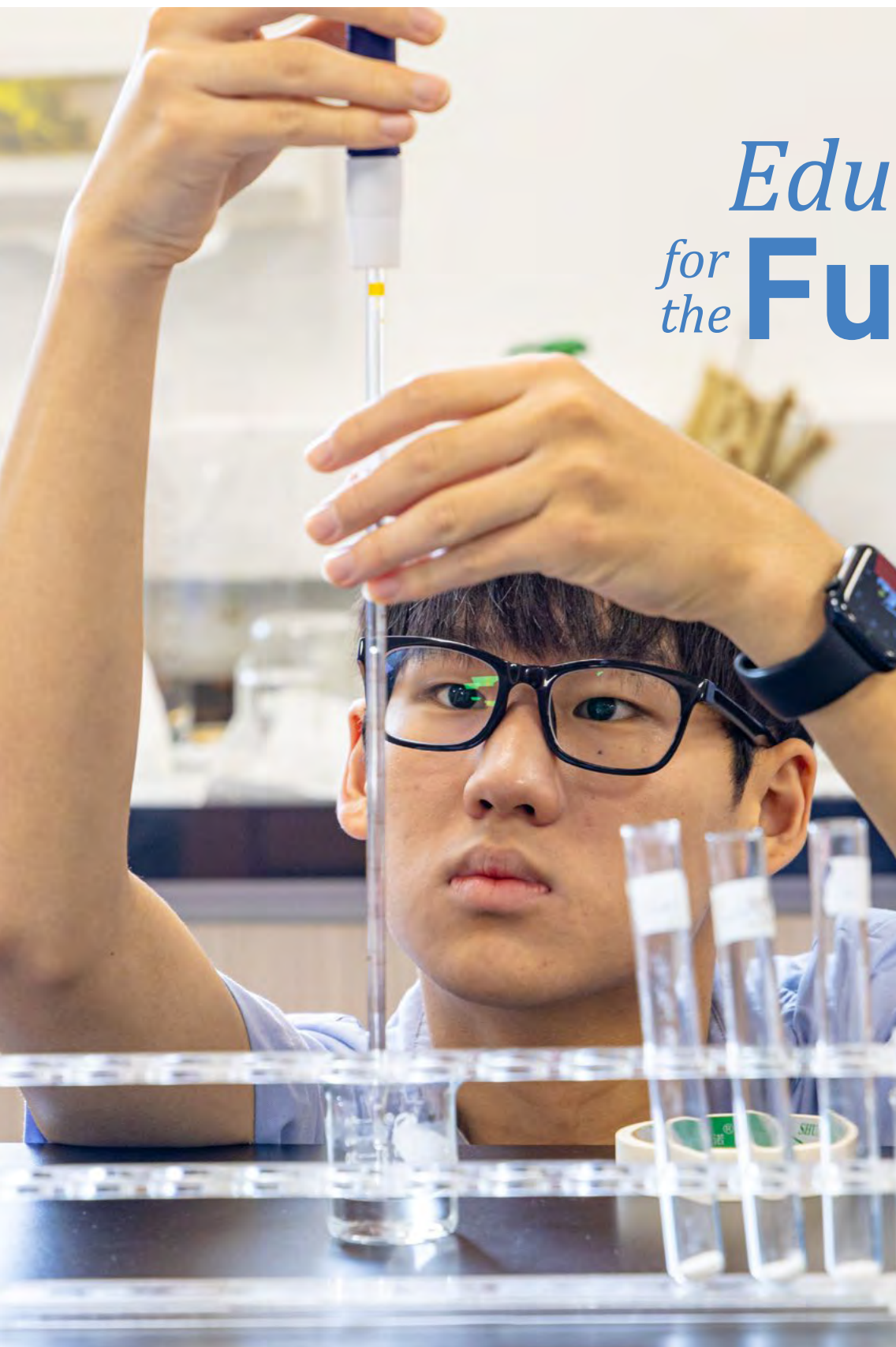


COMMUNITAS



Education *for the* **Future**

“We are your partners in ensuring that your child is equipped with the knowledge and more importantly, skills to be future-ready.”

“Together, we are not just preparing for the future; we are working to shape it today.”

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 values 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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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

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 and follow us!



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Education for the Future

In 2024, we find ourselves perhaps in the most rapid pace of a changing world. From the technology we use to current social expectations, the change is more apparent now than in the past 2 decades. In such an evolving world, the necessity for an education system that prepares students for the future is more significant than ever.

An education that focuses on inquiry-based learning empowers students with the knowledge, mindset and therefore skills that allow them to become resilient and self-motivated.

The IB curriculum's inquiry-based learning approach to learning aligns with a future-focused education.

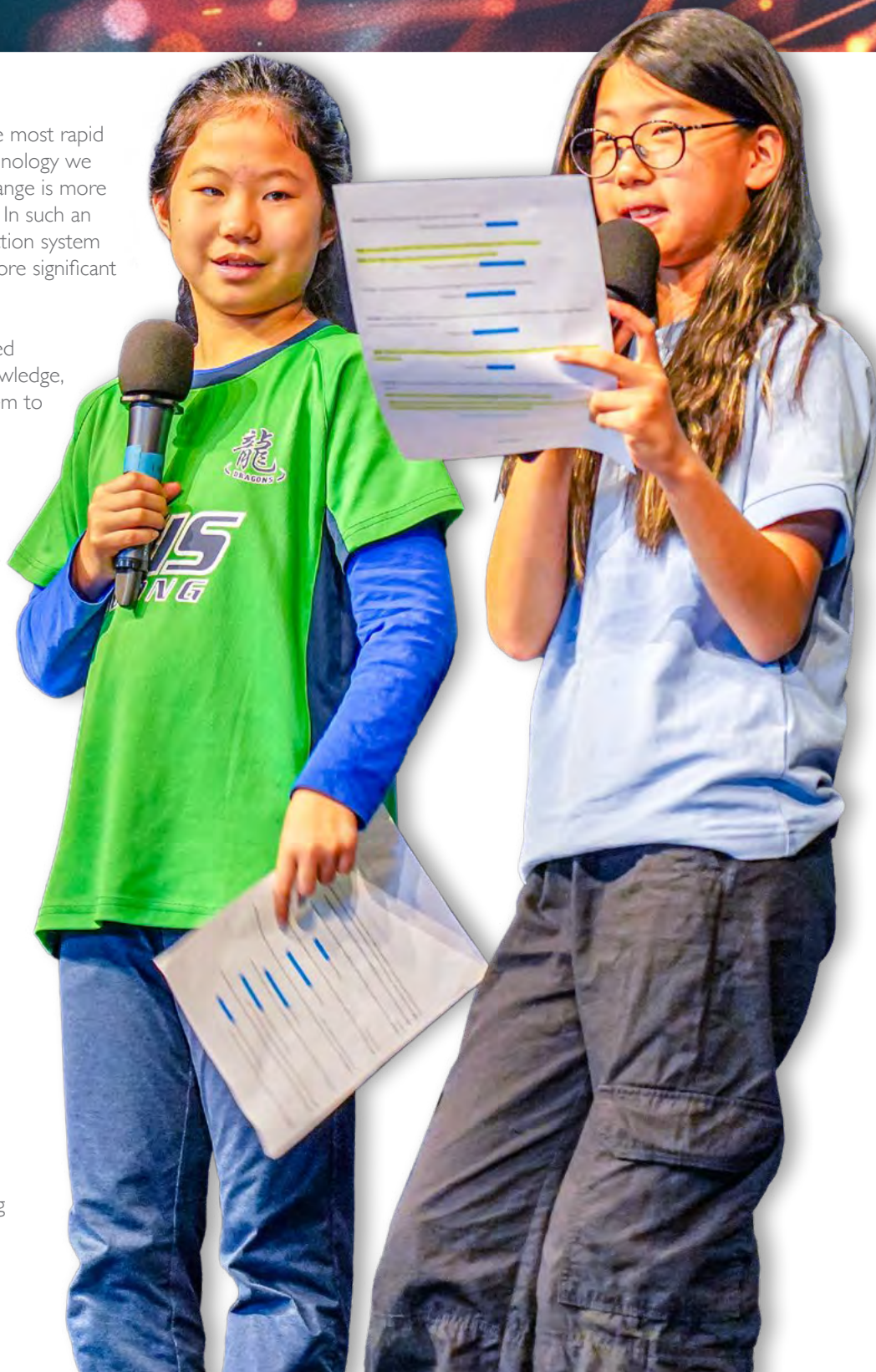
Before I share my thoughts on the core traits that we aim to cultivate in our students, it is necessary to discuss the changing outlook on education. The global outlook on education is shifting due to different challenges related to technology, environment and of equal importance, cultural changes.

The IB's philosophy and how it is implemented in our schools and classrooms use a forward-thinking approach that addresses the need for an education that is both interdisciplinary and holistic.

The core traits therefore that we are working to encourage and instill in our learners would be:

Resilience and Self-Motivation

IB's inquiry-based learning encourages students to be engaged by questioning and exploring in problem-solving. By being engaged this way, they develop a natural feeling of ownership for their learning, which then promotes self-motivation and determination.



*"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."
– Nelson Mandela*

At SCIS, we are proud to continuously provide a balance of guidance and freedom within the IB framework, through self-driven exploration when they do Extended Essays and Personal Projects. These projects engage our students to question, explore and research whilst demonstrating autonomy.

Global Citizenship and Sense of Purpose

At SCIS, we are sufficient in our emphasis on incorporating international-mindedness. This is two-fold for us; as an IB school and as one of the most established international schools in Shanghai, we recognize the importance of teaching students to view themselves as part of the global community, which is both a privilege and an opportunity for them to uphold.

Therefore, emphasis on community service by our students and the school community is carried out in service projects that connect their learning to real-world issues. As a pioneer of IB schools in Shanghai, we understand our sense or purpose and responsibility in educating our students to help make a difference.



Skills for the Future

Whether you are a long-time SCIS family or newly-joined our community, you would have heard the key competencies of IB that we like talking about: critical thinking, effective communication, and teamwork.

Critical thinking is one that we like to expose our students to, at every opportunity we get. This key competency goes beyond academics and cultivates a skill that equips them to combine learning from different disciplines and form a connection between them to discover innovative thinking and problem-solving skills.

Fostering Inquiry and Growth

Last but not least, the role of our educators is not to be forgotten. Our teachers as our facilitators of learning. They strive to guide our students through the IB program in inquiry-based learning activities in the classroom, encouraging curiosity and exploration from ECE to Lower School through to Upper School ages.

Our teachers are our asset; this is why SCIS focuses on professional development to assist our teachers in their evolving role in shaping our students to be ready



for the future. It is in our professional development program that our educators receive the opportunity to further their knowledge and strengthen their confidence in developing their teaching skills and attributes especially as they relate to implementing the IB philosophy and curriculum.

The future is something we can, and should be, excited about. We at SCIS uphold our responsibility as your child's educator with utmost pride and honour. We are your partners in ensuring that your child is equipped with the knowledge and more importantly, skills to be future-ready by instilling a love of learning through inquiry-based curriculum, autonomy, resilience and global citizenship.

At SCIS, it is more than acquiring knowledge; it is about cultivating a sense of responsibility in our students – one that we hope is used not only for the classroom but also for the world and making it a better place.



*By Daniel Eschtruth,
Director of Schools
at SCIS*



Navigating Tomorrow: Preparing Students for the Future of Education

As we stand on the threshold of a rapidly changing world, preparing our students for the future of education is both a challenge and an opportunity. Educators around the world are preparing students for a world that doesn't exist today. While it's true that the previous sentence has been uttered for a few decades now; it is also true the rate of change has never been greater. Thus, the opportunity and challenge remain front and center as we continue to evolve.

Grounded in the IB

At SCIS, we embrace this challenge through our commitment to the International Baccalaureate (IB) 3-Programme framework: the Primary Years Programme (PYP), Middle Years Programme (MYP), and Diploma Programme (DP). Each of these programs is designed to equip students with the skills they need to thrive in a complex, interconnected world.

One of the critical aspects of the IB framework is the development of Approaches to Learning (ATLs), which focus on fostering skills such as communication, research, self-management, collaboration, and critical thinking. For example, in the MYP, students engage in projects that require them to research real-world issues, encouraging them to think critically about the information they gather and how it applies to their lives and communities. These skills are not just academic; they are essential for navigating the challenges of tomorrow's world.



More Authentic Learning

Moreover, the need for authentic work and connections has never been more apparent. The post-COVID reality has reopened new avenues for collaboration with the outside world. Our units of inquiry are increasingly designed to engage with local and global communities, allowing students to apply their learning in meaningful contexts. Connecting with parents and the outside community helps demonstrate how classroom learning can translate into real-world impact. By fostering these authentic connections, we prepare students to understand their role in a larger societal framework.

Service learning is another vital component of our educational philosophy. At SCIS, we believe that students should not only be learners but also active contributors to their communities. Our service learning initiatives encourage students to engage with social issues, fostering empathy and a sense of responsibility. Learning isn't a passive exercise to prepare for your future. We learn in order to take action in the present. From supporting local non-profits and leading within the school to TOK presentations and service clubs focused on understanding ourselves and our community better, these experiences allow students to see the tangible effects of their efforts. These experiences help cultivate a mindset of service and advocacy, essential qualities for future leaders.

The Impact of AI

As we navigate the complexities of education in the 21st century, we



cannot overlook the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on the learning process. While AI offers remarkable tools to enhance learning—from personalized tutoring to access to vast information—it's crucial that we balance this power without losing sight of the essence of education: the journey—and personal struggle—of learning itself. At SCIS, we encourage students to view AI as a supportive resource rather than a shortcut. Just as we equip them with the skills to conduct research or engage in critical discussions, we also guide them in using AI responsibly and effectively.

Understanding these new realities means rethinking our assessments and collaborating with students about their learning journeys. By emphasizing process over product, we help students recognize that mastery comes from grappling with

challenges and seeking solutions, rather than merely finding the "right" answer. This approach cultivates resilience and a growth mindset, both of which are invaluable in an ever-changing landscape.

When it comes to preparing students for the future, we'll never be "there". The world of tomorrow is uncertain and unpredictable. Through our IB programs, authentic connections, service learning, and a thoughtful approach to AI, we are equipping them with the skills and mindset necessary to navigate the future. By fostering critical thinking, collaboration, and a commitment to community, we empower our students to embrace their roles as active participants in an interconnected world. Together, we are not just preparing for the future; we are working to shape it today.



*By Derek Luebbe,
Head of School
at SCIS Pudong*



Unlocking Potential: How the DP Prepares Students for Success Beyond School

“Developing the whole child” is the SCIS philosophy, which is synonymous with that of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP). The IBDP is more than just the final two years of high school; it’s a transformative journey that challenges students to become critical thinkers, global citizens, and lifelong learners. By pushing students beyond their limits and fostering a love of learning, the IBDP sets the stage for exceptional academic and personal success.

The IBDP framework at SCIS empowers students and teachers to unlock their potential. We embrace a rigorous and holistic approach, providing our students with a world-class education that prepares them for the challenges and opportunities of independent living in the 21st century. There is a strong emphasis on student-

centered learning and support that provides a safe environment to refine self-management and organizational skills before being launched into the world beyond home.

The IBDP instills a strong sense of global citizenship and intercultural understanding. Through the Core subject of Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS), students have the capacity to engage in volunteer work, mindful and physical activities, and service to others, developing empathy and compassion towards a commitment to making a positive impact on the world within their control.

Our diverse community is implicitly global, fast-tracking the skills of intercultural understanding at an early age. In conjunction with CAS, one of the cornerstones of the IBDP is the

Theory of Knowledge (TOK) course, which challenges students to question assumptions, analyze arguments, and evaluate evidence. Through rigorous discussions and independent research, students have the opportunity to develop the critical thinking skills necessary to excel in higher education and beyond.

At SCIS, we further enhance the TOK experience by organizing thought-provoking seminars, debates, and out-of-class experiences that expose students to diverse perspectives and real-world applications of knowledge. A DP student is trained to think critically, analyze complex issues, and articulate their ideas with clarity and confidence.

The rigorous academic standards of the IBDP prepare students for the challenges of university and beyond. The demanding

coursework and assessments, including the Extended Essay, develop strong research skills, time management abilities, and the capacity for independent thought. The DP's emphasis on in-depth learning and critical analysis equips students with the tools they need to succeed in highly competitive academic environments.

We support our students' academic journey through personalized guidance, academic support, and a strong emphasis on individualized learning. Our experienced teachers are committed to helping students reach their full potential and develop a love of learning.

Ultimately, the IBDP is more than just a qualification; it's an investment in a student's future. By fostering intellectual curiosity, global awareness, and personal growth, the IBDP empowers students to unlock their full potential and make a meaningful difference in the world. We are proud to be a part of this transformative journey and to provide our students with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in the 21st century.



**By Fritha Jameson,
Upper School Principal /
DP Coordinator
at SCIS Pudong**

"I have been very busy recently with assignments and deadlines, with multiple exams coming next month. But I have found the DP to be extremely helpful in preparing me for university!!" (former IBDP student)



The Importance of Relationships in School: Fostering a Sense of Belonging

Belonging is a fundamental aspect of the school experience and is crucial for students' emotional wellbeing and academic success. At Hongqiao Upper School, we have adopted a comprehensive approach to fostering these connections through our advisory program, the counseling team, and a data-driven strategy that ensures all students are seen, heard, and supported. Last month, I presented with Upper School Principal Amy Valerio at the East Asia Regional Council of Schools (EARCOS) Leadership Conference on how building these relationships has transformed the SCIS experience. Now, I would like to summarize this journey for our community.

At the core of our approach at Hongqiao Upper School is the belief that relationships are essential to student success and development. Our advisory



program ensures that students build strong, supportive relationships with teachers who understand their emotional and developmental needs. These relationships are like building a fire, requiring the right elements to burn brightly. Passionate teachers act as the kindling, igniting the fire with their dedication. A committed team, dedicated time, and strategic use of data provide the fuel, oxygen, and heat to keep that fire burning.

Each advisor in our program brings unique skills, helping the program grow and evolve. Advisors not only deliver important lessons but also conduct individual check-ins to ensure they truly know their students, creating an environment where every student feels connected and supported.

Our counseling team plays a vital role in nurturing relationships within the school. Counselors work closely with Grade Level Leaders and advisors to meet students' social-emotional needs. Through collaboration and visibility, they foster trust and create an inclusive environment. They also build strong connections with parents by hosting coffee mornings and other events to engage the community. By following students for more than one year, counselors establish long-term relationships that enhance students' wellbeing.





Each grade level is supported by faculty advisors who set the tone for community building. These advisors encourage a positive school-life balance and help organize initiatives such as Student-Led Conferences. Our advisory program supports students' growth throughout the week, with daily meetings during Dragon Time (Grades 6-10) and the Pastoral Block (Grades 11-12). Activities range from community-building exercises on Mondays to socio-emotional lessons planned by the counseling team on Thursdays. The week ends with fun activities like house games and student-led assemblies on Fridays, fostering camaraderie and school spirit.

To ensure the effectiveness of our programs, we use data to guide our decisions. Weekly "pulse" surveys completed by students during advisory provide valuable insights into their wellbeing, helping us monitor trends and address issues early, ensuring no student is overlooked. By analyzing both individual and group data, the Pastoral Team can tailor support to meet the evolving needs of our students. In addition to surveys, we gather data through faculty feedback. Twice a year, teachers indicate how connected they feel to their students, helping us identify those who may need extra support. This data, combined with counseling records and attendance, allows us to create targeted action plans for each student.

In today's educational landscape, fostering relationships and a sense of belonging is more important than ever. We recognized this even more during the challenging year of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our school's advisory program, supported by a dedicated counseling team and an evidence-informed approach, ensures that students are not only academically successful but also emotionally supported. By prioritizing relationships, we create an environment where every student feels known and valued, laying the foundation for both personal and academic growth.



*By Valeria Massarotto,
Upper School Pastoral
Coordinator, MYP
Individuals and
Societies Teacher
at SCIS Hongqiao*



Inspiring Young Minds:

The Impact of the PYP on Lifelong Learning

In today's ever-changing world, education must do more than just provide knowledge; it must prepare students for a lifetime of learning, curiosity, and growth. The Primary Years Programme (PYP) does just that by developing young learners who are not only knowledgeable but also inquirers, open-minded, and reflective. From the early years, students in the PYP are encouraged to take charge of their learning, use critical thinking skills, and develop a mindset that will serve them well throughout their lives. At its core, the PYP shapes young minds to become lifelong learners.

Curiosity at the Core of Learning

One of the PYP's most powerful aspects is its focus on inquiry-based learning. Unlike traditional methods, where students passively receive information, PYP students are invited to ask questions, explore their interests, and make real-world connections. Whether investigating local ecosystems, exploring global cultures, or analyzing historical events, students are driven by curiosity.



By Vincent Lehane,
PYP Coordinator
at SCIS Hongqiao

In a recent Grade 4 unit, students explored how inquiring into their curiosity helps them learn. Through learning experiences that encouraged self-driven research, collaborative discussions, and goal setting, students discovered the power of their agency and choices as learners. They investigated how their pursuit of curiosity contributes to personal growth and developed planning and accountability strategies that support sustained learning. This kind of inquiry not only builds deep understanding but also encourages a lifelong interest in learning that extends beyond the classroom.

The Power of Critical Thinking and Reflection

Lifelong learners are curious, but they are also critical thinkers. The PYP develops these skills by encouraging students to ask thoughtful questions, seek out multiple sources of information, and reflect on their learning. Students regularly engage in experiences that require them to think deeply, analyze information, and solve problems, equipping them with the tools they need to face future challenges.

Throughout each unit of inquiry, students are given time to reflect on what they learned, how they learned, and how their understanding has grown. It is through this pausing and reflection process that learning truly happens. This process of reflection allows students to take ownership of their growth and recognize the importance of learning from mistakes. In this way, students develop a growth mindset that will serve them well long after their time in school.

Lifelong Learners in Action

As students at SCIS move through their educational journey, growing and evolving into adulthood, they carry with them an awareness that learning is a continuous and lifelong pursuit. They become individuals who not only adapt to change but also embrace it as an opportunity for growth and discovery.

At SCIS, our mission is to inspire young minds, and the PYP does exactly that. It prepares students not just for the next stage of their education but for life itself. Through inquiry, reflection, and an understanding of their responsibilities within a global context, PYP students leave our classrooms as inquiring, knowledgeable, and caring learners who are ready to make meaningful contributions to the world.



Multilingual Minds: Shaping Identity & Perspective in a Globalized World



In an increasingly interconnected world, speaking multiple languages significantly influences our identities and perspectives. Engaging with diverse cultural landscapes provides both challenges and rewards. The ability to embrace diverse viewpoints not only deepens our understanding of communication but also cultivates greater empathy and appreciation for different cultures.

Understanding Cultural Contexts

Being multilingual enhances our comprehension of diverse cultural norms. For instance, expressions of disagreement can vary significantly across cultures. In some contexts, a direct response is acceptable, while in others, a more nuanced approach is necessary. This distinction between high-context and low-context cultures underscores the importance of understanding the context behind words and actions.

In my Language Acquisition classrooms, students encounter these cultural differences firsthand. They come with their own values and norms, and as they engage with peers from various backgrounds, they learn to navigate complex social dynamics. While initial conflicts may arise from differing communication styles, these experiences foster growth and understanding, enabling students to develop essential reflective and communication skills.

The Impact of Multilingualism on Self-Identity

Multilingualism plays a crucial role in shaping self-identity, particularly for students who grapple with questions of origin and belonging in an international environment. This complexity can lead to confusion, but it also encourages a deeper exploration of who they are.

In learning to communicate in different languages, students adapt their styles based on their audience, which reflects their evolving sense of self. For example, they may express themselves more directly with family members, while employing a more nuanced approach with peers. This flexibility not only helps them connect with others but also allows them to integrate various cultural influences into their identities, enriching their self-concept.

A supportive classroom environment—where making mistakes is viewed as a natural part of the learning process—

further shapes students' self-identity. In this nurturing space, they gain resilience and confidence as they explore their linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Additionally, the process of learning multiple languages cultivates problem-solving skills equipping students to approach situations with a win-win mindset. This capacity for diverse thinking allows them to analyze challenges from multiple perspectives, enhancing their decision-making abilities.

The journey of multilingualism extends far beyond linguistic proficiency; it is a profound exploration of self and culture, empowering students to define their identities freely and thrive in a diverse and interconnected world.



*By Andre Sun,
MYP/DP Language
Acquisition Teacher
at SCIS Hongqiao*





Exploring the Connection Between

Language Learning and Cultural Immersion

For multilingual learners, language is more than just a way to communicate; it's a vital part of their identity and home culture. As an EAL teacher, I've seen how weaving cultural immersion into our daily lessons can help students appreciate their own backgrounds as well as those of their classmates. Simple practices—like greeting students in their home languages or sharing stories from different cultures—show that language learning is a wonderful opportunity to embrace diverse perspectives.

In our multicultural classrooms, encouraging students to share phrases and vocabulary from their own languages fosters pride and curiosity about each other's cultures. This peer-to-peer interaction strengthens cross-cultural communication and highlights that learning a new language is a journey we all share. These collaborative experiences extend beyond the classroom, benefiting both students and teachers—many of whom are newcomers to a new culture. This approach nurtures empathy, enhances social skills, and broadens everyone's worldview, helping us all better understand and appreciate our host country.

In our Grade 1 classrooms, many students are already on their way to becoming trilingual. With daily English lessons, Mandarin classes, and a variety of languages spoken at home, this linguistic richness is both an asset and a privilege. As educators, we play a crucial role in helping students use this diversity to improve their language

skills and cultural understanding. One effective way we encourage this in our Grade 1 team is by introducing new Unit of Inquiry vocabulary along with translations for the languages represented in our classroom. This practice not only helps students learn essential vocabulary but also validates their home languages. We also promote translanguaging, which refers to the practice of using multiple languages fluidly in the classroom. This approach allows students to draw on their full linguistic repertoire, enhancing their understanding and engagement. By embracing translanguaging, we create an inclusive environment where all languages are valued, enabling students to express their thoughts and ideas more fully.





Learning multiple languages helps students develop cognitive flexibility and cultural awareness while instilling pride in their identities. It equips them with the tools to navigate a diverse world, building their confidence as they learn to communicate across cultures. This exposure not only supports their academic success but also contributes to their social-emotional development, enabling them to form meaningful relationships and adopt a global mindset.

The benefits of this diversity extend beyond the classroom and into our wider community. As students learn to appreciate different languages and cultures, they become ambassadors of cultural understanding, helping create a more cohesive and open-minded society. Families feel more connected when their children's home languages and cultures are recognized and celebrated at school. This inclusivity strengthens the community's sense of belonging and fosters mutual respect and shared growth, creating a rich cultural tapestry that benefits everyone involved.

Ultimately, the journey to becoming multilingual—and the cultural immersion that comes with it—enriches us all. It transforms our classrooms into spaces of mutual enrichment, where students, teachers, and the community learn to value diversity as a strength. By embracing this journey together, we foster an environment where understanding and connection thrive, paving the way for a brighter, more inclusive future.



By Megan Freiburger, English as an Additional Language Teacher at SCIS Hongqiao ECE



Home and School Partnerships

Home and school partnerships play a vital role in helping students thrive emotionally, socially, and academically. Establishing open lines of communication, participating in community engagement events, and volunteering enable families to actively engage in their child(ren)'s education.

Open Lines of Communication

Open lines of communication foster successful partnerships. By working together, we can celebrate and share successes jointly.

Parents can stay informed about special events, units, and learning by utilizing newsletters or learning management systems such as Seesaw or ManageBac. Additionally, parents are encouraged to regularly check their SCIS emails to remain informed and connected to the school.

Volunteering

Our diverse student population reflects a rich tapestry of cultures and traditions. Our campuses host various community

and classroom events that invite parents to share their heritage. Cooking a cultural dish for community events, like the Upper School International Breakfasts at Pudong, or helping plan a booth for the International Food Festival, are delightful ways to help students explore different cultures and share their own.

Volunteering for career events is another wonderful way to support our students. This opportunity is not limited to Upper School families; parents from ECE and Lower School are also encouraged to contact their child's homeroom teacher to see if a brief talk about their career could align with a unit of study.

Parent volunteers are the glue that keeps our community connected and engaged! Parents can volunteer as field trips or dance chaperones, cheer on sports teams, or participate in special nights. Consider serving on the Parent and Friends Association (PAFA) to support community engagement and collaborate on the many wonderful events hosted throughout the year, such as Art Action at ECE or Bingo Night at the Pudong campus, which benefit our school and community.

When Your Child Is Struggling

When students encounter difficulties in school related to behavior, friendships, or academics, it is crucial for parents and teachers to collaborate. For younger children who may struggle

with writing capital letters or reading words, parents should first reach out to teachers to learn how to mirror the strategies used in the classroom. Much has changed since many parents (including myself) were in school, so maintaining close contact with teachers and adopting their suggested strategies can help children reach their full potential.

If parents are concerned about social interactions or emotions at home, it is important to connect with their child(ren)'s homeroom teacher, advisor, counselor, or learning support specialist. These individuals are part of your child's team and can provide resources and strategies. Also, we can partner together to develop plans to support your child's success with connections between school and home.

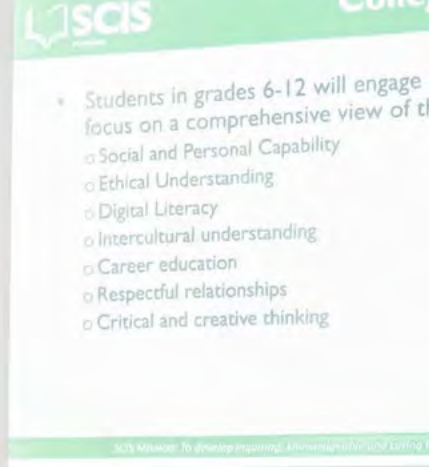
The home and school partnership, like any partnership, requires engagement and trust. By working together, we create a nurturing and supportive team for your child, promoting success and growth.



By Sarah Harkin, Counselor and Student Support Team Lead at SCIS Hongqiao ECE



How to Foster Resilience in Students Through Connection



In today's ever-changing and challenging educational landscape, fostering resilience in students is essential for their personal development and overall well-being. A key way to build this resilience is through nurturing strong relationships. These connections provide students with support, understanding, and encouragement as they navigate various challenges.

One effective approach to enhancing resilience is to create strong bonds among students, teachers, and mentors. Investing time in meaningful interactions—such as regular check-ins and collaborative activities—can significantly strengthen these relationships. When students feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and feelings, they develop a deeper sense of trust and safety within the classroom.

Building a supportive network is also vital. Encouraging students to connect with positive peers helps create an uplifting atmosphere. Participation in clubs, teams, or other group activities allows students to engage with like-minded individuals, fostering a sense of community and belonging that is crucial for resilience.

Understanding individual characteristics and interpersonal dynamics enhances students' ability to collaborate effectively. Engaging in group projects or discussions allows students to share their experiences, learning from both challenges and successes. This exchange not only promotes empathy but also encourages personal growth and resilience as students gain diverse perspectives.



Moreover, teaching conflict resolution skills is essential in helping students navigate disagreements constructively. Encouraging them to view conflicts as opportunities for growth fosters a mindset focused on problem-solving rather than blame. This approach equips students with the tools to handle disputes more effectively and maintain healthy relationships.

Emotional regulation is another important component of resilience. By helping students learn to manage and express their emotions in healthy ways, educators can empower them to cope with stress and adversity. Creating a supportive classroom environment where students feel safe to discuss their feelings enhances this skill.

The significance of meaningful connections in fostering resilience cannot be overstated. By actively nurturing relationships and employing these strategies, educators can create a supportive network that strengthens students' resilience and empowers them to thrive, even in difficult circumstances. Resilience not only benefits individual students but also enriches the entire learning community.

In a classroom setting, resilience can be cultivated through collaboration and shared experiences. Celebrating achievements, whether individual or group-based, fosters a culture of encouragement and positivity. Recognizing milestones—big or small—creates a sense of accomplishment that motivates all students.

In summary, fostering resilience in students through relationships involves a comprehensive approach that includes building strong bonds, creating supportive networks, encouraging collaboration, teaching conflict resolution, and promoting emotional regulation. By implementing these strategies, educators can help students develop resilience that enhances their personal growth and contributes positively to the school community. Together, we can cultivate an environment where challenges are met with strength and support, ultimately leading to greater resilience and success for all students.



By Hamila Asil, College and Student Support Counselor at SCIS Pudong



Traditional Principles Shine Through Time: Connecting Ancient Wisdom with Modern Values

If we were to stop any student in the SCIS hallway and ask them to name a few IB Learner Profile attributes, they would likely do so effortlessly. Often this list also serves as a helpful tool for teachers to refer to when discussing values. No one would argue against the power of these profiles in helping learners become better versions of themselves. However, history has also left an important space for those who, long ago, discovered principles equal to the ones we uphold today, using simplified language that leaves room for the reader's imagination to soar.

修身·齐家·治国·平天下 and The SCIS Mission Statement

“修身齐家治国平天下” (xiū shēn, qí jiā, zhì guó, píng tiān xià) is a Confucian philosophical concept that outlines a progression of self-cultivation leading to societal harmony and governance. It reflects the Confucian ideal that personal and familial virtue can extend to national governance and, ultimately, world peace.

If we take a closer look at both this concept and the SCIS Mission Statement, we can clearly hear the echo between them. The expectation for students to grow into inquiring, knowledgeable, and caring individuals is to enable them to extend their abilities in future service within a larger community. Both statements capture the belief in the interconnectedness of personal virtue, community harmony and contribution, and global peace. Each level builds upon the other, starting from the individual and expanding outward to society at large.

致虚极,守静笃|万物并作,吾以观复 and The SCIS School-wide Learner Outcome (Innovative Thinkers, Knowledge Inquirers, Self-directed Learners, Positive Contributors)

Unlike Confucian philosophy, Taoism usually encourages people to be humble and to follow the natural order of the universe. However, beyond merely responding to the flow of life, the saying “致虚极,守静笃;万物并作,吾以观复” from Dao De Jing urges us to maintain humility and inner peace while observing the changes and complexities of

the world. It emphasizes that everything is constantly changing and what we can do is to keep our minds calm and tranquil, accepting whatever comes.

When we compare this saying to the SCIS School-wide Learner Outcome, it becomes clear that both principles highlight the importance of being an inquirer who reflects and maintains inner peace to gain knowledge and energy from the external world. What is developed from the Daoism in the SCIS School-wide Learner Outcome is that the latter calls for more active actions from the students to be carried out in the local and wide communities where they reside.

The enduring wisdom of principles transcends time, offering insights that resonate deeply with the values found in the IB Learner Profile and the SCIS Mission Statement. These traditional ideals align seamlessly with modern educational goals, guiding students toward greater self-awareness and a deeper sense of responsibility. By integrating ancient wisdom with contemporary values, we not only preserve a rich cultural legacy but also breathe new life into it, offering meaningful direction for today's learners and helping to shape a more harmonious future.



By Yan Yan,
PYP Mandarin
Coordinator at SCIS





Dragons Unleashed

Epic Adventures, Epic China Trips

In mid-September, our adventurers from the Hongqiao and SCIS Pudonges embarked on thrilling weeklong journeys to vibrant cities across China! Each grade ventured into unique destinations, immersing themselves in a whirlwind of enriching activities that sparked curiosity and excitement.

These trips provided invaluable opportunities for students to deepen their connection with China while honing essential life skills. As they navigated new surroundings, they enhanced their interpersonal and teamwork abilities, fostering independence and self-reliance.

We would like to share insights from some of our students reflecting on their transformative adventures.





Cultural Immersion

"The trip to Zhengzhou allowed me to immerse myself in China's profound culture and history. From visiting the Longmen Grottoes and the Shaolin Temple to hiking up Sanhuangzhai, each experience deepened my appreciation for various aspects of China, including its religion, architecture, arts, and calligraphy."
- Allison (Grade 11, SCIS Pudong)

"We were very impressed and loved the trip to Inner Mongolia. We experienced Mongolian culture, and the highlight was in the desert, where we tried sand sliding and camel riding."
- Isabella (Grade 10, SCIS Hongqiao)

"Xi'an left a lasting impression, with the beauty of the mountains and the unforgettable food at the night market creating an amazing experience."
- Kalin (Grade 9, SCIS Hongqiao)

Adventure and Team Spirit

"The trip's rhythm was enjoyable. The dam abseiling was a highlight; many students took on this challenge and succeeded. Through this journey, we gained deeper self-awareness by pushing ourselves to take risks and confront challenges, like climbing the Great Wall."
- Fiona (Grade 11, SCIS Hongqiao)

"During the daytime, we had many fun activities like rock climbing, archery tag, and flag football. At night, we built the tallest tower and enjoyed the campfire."
- Joana (Grade 7, SCIS Pudong)

"I loved rock climbing and found it incredibly enjoyable. Kayaking was another highlight; it was my first time, and I had an absolute blast! These experiences truly reflected the spirit of adventure and teamwork."
- Mao (Grade 6, SCIS Pudong)

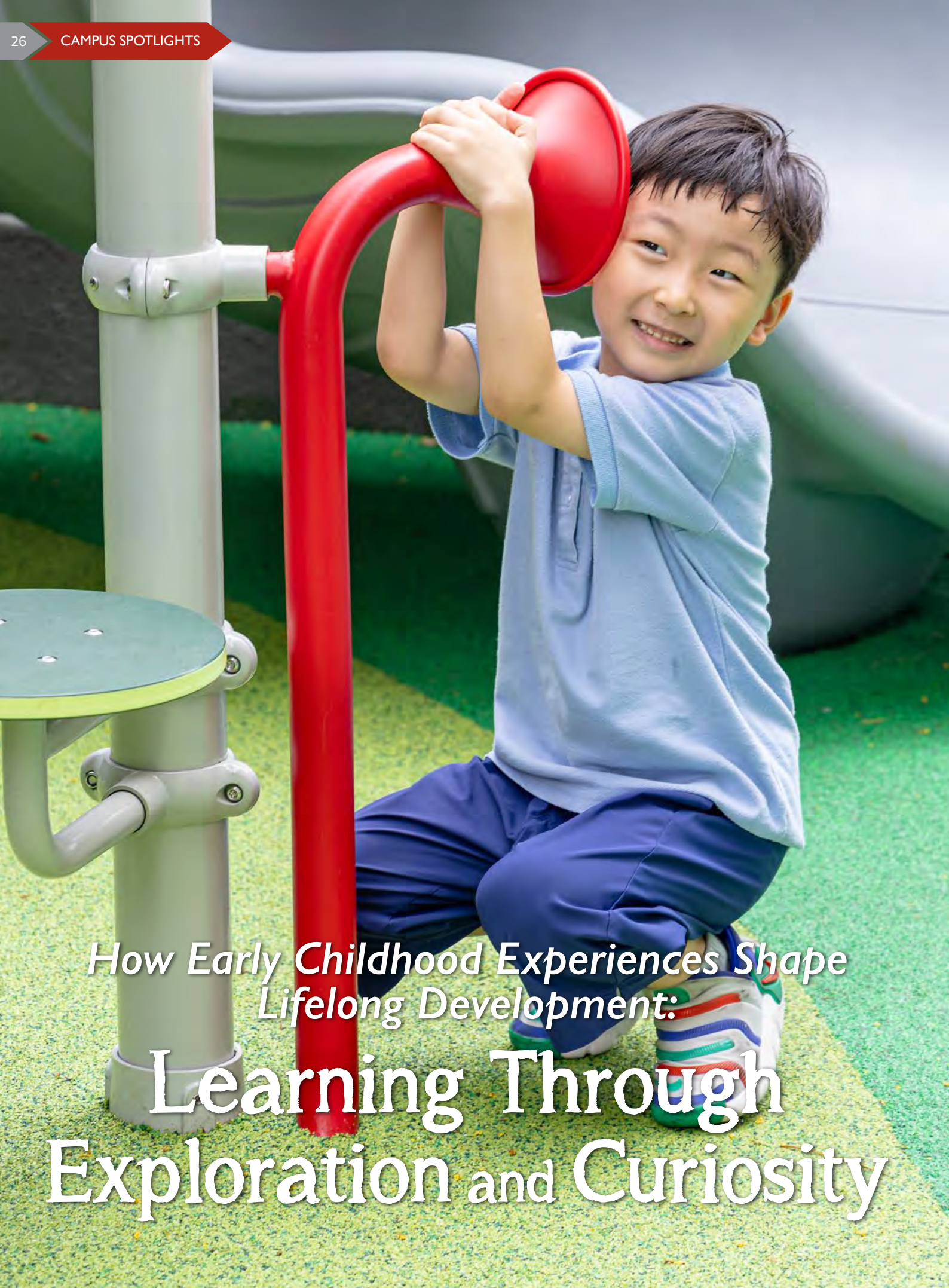
Learning and Personal Development

"Visiting numerous museums and participating in engaging activities like archaeology made me realize that learning can be truly enjoyable. I discovered fascinating information, such as the fact that there were three main dynasties for 1,800 years."
- Arda (Grade 9, SCIS Hongqiao)

"Interacting with students during Kungfu lessons, as well as dance and music activities, made me reflect on how different environments influence people's perspectives and lives."
- Hector (Grade 11, SCIS Pudong)

"The trip heightened our awareness of our surroundings and the environment, especially as we engaged in picking up trash during the hike."
- Matthias (Grade 8, SCIS Hongqiao)





*How Early Childhood Experiences Shape
Lifelong Development:*

Learning Through Exploration and Curiosity



In the early years of a child's life, the foundation for lifelong development is being built. Every experience, interaction, and opportunity for exploration plays a crucial role in shaping how children see the world and engage with it. We believe that children are naturally curious and capable learners, full of potential. Our approach emphasizes learning through exploration, where children are encouraged to ask questions, investigate their surroundings, and construct their understanding of the world.

The Role of Curiosity and Exploration in Learning

At the heart of early childhood development is curiosity. Children are naturally inclined to explore, touch, and experiment with the world around them. This innate curiosity drives their desire to learn and make sense of their environment. By allowing children the freedom to follow their interests and explore at their own pace, we provide the foundation for a lifelong love of learning.

Learning can be viewed as a process of discovery. Children are active participants in their own learning journey, rather than passive receivers of information. We encourage them to ask questions, share their ideas, and test their theories. When a child

wonders why the leaves change color in autumn, or how water flows in different directions, they are engaging in scientific thinking. These moments of inquiry are the building blocks of critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity.

The Importance of the Learning Environment

In our classrooms, the environment is intentionally designed to provoke curiosity and inspire exploration. Materials are carefully chosen to be open-ended, allowing children to use them in a variety of ways. Whether it's blocks, natural objects, or art supplies, these materials invite children to create, explore, and experiment.

Social and Emotional Growth Through Exploration

Exploration is not just about intellectual growth; it also supports social and emotional development. When children work together on a project, whether building a tower of blocks or painting a mural, they learn how to collaborate, communicate, and share ideas. These experiences teach them the value of teamwork, empathy, and understanding different perspectives. Relationships are central to learning. Children learn not only from adults but also from their peers. We encourage children to listen to each other's ideas, negotiate during play, and express their feelings.

These interactions help build strong social skills, emotional intelligence, and resilience—qualities that are essential for success in school and life.

Fostering a Lifelong Love of Learning

When children are given the freedom to explore their interests, they develop a sense of agency and confidence in their abilities. This empowerment fosters a love of learning that can last a lifetime. As parents and educators, our role is to support their natural curiosity, provide them with rich experiences, and encourage them to view challenges as opportunities for growth.

The early childhood years are a time of wonder, exploration, and tremendous growth. We are nurturing children's curiosity and helping them develop the skills, confidence, and joy of learning that will serve them throughout their lives. Together, we can create an environment where every child feels valued, supported, and inspired to reach their full potential.



By Clair Wain, Early Years Coordinator at SCIS Hongqiao ECE



Fostering Cultural Awareness in the PYP: A Gateway to Global Citizenship

Imagine a young student eagerly asking a classmate, “Can you teach me how to say ‘hello’ in your language?” while another suggests, “In my culture, we do it this way, but I understand others might think differently.” These moments capture the essence of transcultural competence—the ability to connect across differences, a core value nurtured in International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Programme (PYP) classrooms. Through inquiry-based learning and an emphasis on global perspectives, PYP students learn to celebrate diversity and view the world through an inclusive lens.

Transcultural competence is the ability to understand, appreciate, and engage with diverse cultures. It enables students to recognize their own identities while being open to learning about others, fostering empathy and global citizenship. At Shanghai Community International School (SCIS), this commitment to cultural awareness is woven throughout the curriculum, especially in the Programme of Inquiry (POI). By thoughtfully integrating content, examples, and perspectives from various cultural backgrounds across different subject areas, the POI fosters a rich, inclusive learning environment that validates the experiences of all students.

For instance, Grade 2 is exploring the unit “Where We Are in Place and Time,” with the central idea, “Exploring the movement and journeys of individuals helps us understand the world.” This unit encourages students to examine different cultures and experiences through stories of migration. Guest speakers are featured throughout the unit, allowing for multiple stories from different people to be shared. In Grade 4, the unit “Where We Are in Place and Time”, looks at elements of

past civilizations and how they continually influence the development of societies, allowing students to develop a broader understanding of global contexts.

The IB Learner Profile plays a crucial role in fostering cultural awareness and enhancing transcultural competency among students. With attributes like open-mindedness, and attitudes such as empathy, and responsibility, the profile cultivates an environment of inclusivity and respect for diverse cultures.

At SCIS, we believe that school disciplinary practices should also be inclusive and equitable, ensuring that all students are treated fairly and respectfully, regardless of their cultural background. This involves adopting restorative justice approaches that focus on repairing harm and building relationships rather than punitive measures. For example, our restorative questioning process encourages students to reflect on their actions, understand the impact on others, and consider how they can make amends. This approach not only resolves conflicts but also reinforces the values of empathy



and understanding, essential components of transcultural competence.

Our displays in community spaces also exemplify cultural awareness. By showcasing maps, languages, photographs, self-portraits, and "Who We Are" riddles, we create rich resources and displays that celebrate individual identities and invite dialogue, reinforcing the importance of understanding and appreciating different cultures.

Observing Transcultural Competence at Home

Parents can observe their child's development of transcultural competence through specific behaviors. Here are some examples:

1. Curiosity About Other Cultures:

Asks about classmates' traditions and holidays.

2. Inclusive Play:

Incorporates games or stories from various cultures.

3. Empathy: Shows understanding towards peers feeling excluded due to cultural differences.

4. Participation in Cultural Activities:

Engages enthusiastically in events celebrating diversity.

5. Language Skills: Practices greetings in different languages.

6. Respect for Differences: Acknowledges and respects varying opinions.

7. Reflection on Identity: Shares pride in their heritage while expressing interest in others.

Ultimately, the emphasis on cultural awareness in the PYP empowers students to become thoughtful, respectful, and active global citizens. By nurturing transcultural competence and incorporating the IB Learner Profile attributes, the PYP prepares students to appreciate diversity and embrace their roles as change-makers. As noted

in educational discourse, "Cultural awareness is not just an educational tool; it is the foundation of mutual respect and understanding in an increasingly interconnected world."

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By Rachel McLeod, Lower School Principal at SCIS Hongqiao



Celebrating Our *Dynamic Differences* at SCIS



SCIS is unique and fortunate to have one of the most diverse student bodies in Shanghai. Our students are made up of a rich mix of various cultures, experiences, and learning styles. We prioritize an inclusive environment that respects all of our learners. Supporting this diversity involves a thoughtful approach, including the implementation of strategies and adjustments that accommodate and engage all students. At SCIS, we embrace the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) approach, along with differentiation. UDL can increase accessibility for all learners without simplifying the work for any of them. With UDL, we focus on learner variability rather than learning difficulties. Some of the key ways to support diverse learner needs at SCIS are:

Fostering a Growth Mindset, Grit, and Resilience

Encouraging a growth mindset can significantly impact students' motivation and resilience. We teach learners that

abilities can be developed through effort and persistence. Celebrating small achievements matters, but so does acknowledging that mistakes are normal and productive. Mistakes help us see other perspectives and develop resilience. Helping students find their passion contributes to them learning a commitment to hard work and pushing through difficulty, building grit. Grit is also closely aligned with resilience, which is a predictor of adult success.

Differentiating, Scaffolding, and Chunking

Differentiation is key to addressing the varied needs of learners. This may include providing different levels of reading material, offering choices in assignments, or accommodating assessment presentations to suit individual needs. By offering multiple options, educators can ensure that each student has a pathway to demonstrate their knowledge and learning.





Scaffolding and chunking involve breaking learning into manageable steps and providing support at each stage. Using techniques like graphic organizers, guided practice, and modeling to help students grasp new concepts is part of the scaffolding. Gradually removing support as students gain confidence and competence is the goal.

Encourage Self-Advocacy and Independence

Students with differences are, statistically, at a significantly higher risk of socio-emotional challenges. Pastoral and counseling support, along with lessons in Advisory on healthy behaviors, are available to all of our students because everyone struggles sometimes. Some students may need explicit support in learning how to help themselves. Teaching students to self-advocate is a valuable skill. Empowering learners to communicate their needs, ask for help, and seek resources is an integral part of a SCIS education.

Promote a Positive and Inclusive Learning Culture

A welcoming and inclusive classroom environment is essential for effective learning. Teachers work to establish clear expectations and norms that promote respect and collaboration among students. Building an inclusive environment where students feel safe and respected is essential. Celebrating our diversity is embedded into the SCIS school culture. We are all so glad that all of our students are here.

Supporting diverse learner needs requires a multifaceted approach that prioritizes understanding, flexibility, and collaboration. By implementing these effective strategies, educators can create an inclusive environment where all students feel valued and empowered to succeed. Embracing diversity not only enhances individual learning but also enriches the educational experience for everyone in the SCIS community.



By Laura Muir, Upper School Learning Support Coordinator and Counselor at SCIS Pudong



A woman in a colorful floral dress and a young woman in a light blue school uniform are performing music together. The woman in the floral dress is standing on the left, smiling and looking towards the student. The student is on the right, holding a microphone and playing a cymbal. A music stand is in the center, and a drum is visible in the foreground. The background is a blue wall with vertical wood paneling.

How **Music**
Education
Fosters
Resilience?



And what if a performance does not go well? This is a huge chance to develop resilience as we learn that the next day will start as the day before did, with the sun coming up and the clock still ticking. Having played dreadful performances and having supported students through disappointment, we know that these are the times when the biggest opportunity for developing resilience occurs. We can use this moment to feel defeated, or we can analyze why it did not go as well as planned and how we can prepare for the next time. We bounce back. Is it painful? Yes. Is it worth it? Definitely.

Students who have been through such experiences have shared that they have been able to use the resilience they learned from their involvement in music education for school presentations in other subjects, during exam preparations and interviews for colleges and jobs. A student once said to me, "A class presentation is nowhere near as scary as playing in front of an audience".

I would go so far as to say that music education can play a transformative role in terms of developing resilience. Music education not only boosts resilience in our students but also fosters a mindset of growth that can be felt in the school community.



By Lydia Nova,
MYP/DP Music Teacher
at SCIS Hongqiao

Resilience. What is it, and what role can music education play in the development of resilience? The word resilience stems from the Latin "Resilire" which means to bounce back. The base of this word is "Salière" which is the verb "to Leap." This emphasizes the dynamic nature of the energy that is behind resilience. To be resilient is to foster within ourselves an energy that enables us to grow from both positive and negative life experiences.

Music education can have a significant impact on the development of resilience in a number of ways. Starting a new instrument is challenging. The learning curve can be slow, and the sounds we produce can be unsatisfying. This can only change with sustained, regular practice as we need to give ourselves time to learn the motor skills that the instrument requires, develop music literacy, and try to express ourselves all at the same time. How often have I heard, "I wish I could play an instrument"? You can learn an instrument, but it takes resilience.

The same applies to when we start to learn a new piece, song or part. We are in unfamiliar territory and must work through a period of discomfort with the score in front of us. If we are disciplined with our practice and during rehearsals, the discomfort gradually disappears. We learn to sit with the uneasiness of unfamiliarity, knowing that if we are steadfast, this will change.

At the core of this example is a transferable attitude that we can apply to

other areas of life: being uncomfortable with new challenges is normal and will transform with effort. This is resilience in its purest form—the leap out of discomfort. We are rewarded for our tenacity with newly found skills and knowledge. We can then repeat this process throughout life with our learned resilience.

Another area in which music education most certainly fosters resilience is performance. Learning how to regulate emotions when performing in front of a teacher, a class, at an assembly, or a concert develops aplomb. We can learn to understand the different ways we can be affected by adrenalin surging through our body and explore which coping techniques work for us.





Toddle: The Benefits of SCIS' New Learning Management System



Since the beginning of this academic year, our Grade 11 Diploma Program students, teachers, and families have been using Toddle as their learning management system. Toddle is a comprehensive teaching and learning platform that provides tools for curriculum planning, day-to-day teaching, assessments, progress reports, and family communication, all in one unified program. On 20 January 2025, all students from Nursery to Grade 10, along with teachers and families, will also begin to use Toddle as their primary learning and communication tool to replace Seesaw (Nursery to Grade 5) and ManageBac (Nursery to Grade 12*). (*As the Diploma Program is completed over 2 years, our current Grade 12 students will conclude their studies using ManageBac.)

Toddle offers multiple benefits for families, students, and teachers:

Family Benefits

Unified Learning Management System:

Consolidate all your children's educational activities into a single platform.

Assignment and Deadline Tracking:

Effortlessly monitor your child's assignments and deadlines, keeping you updated and helping your child stay on track.

Streamlined Communication:

Centralize all school announcements,

policies, and resources, simplifying communication between home and school.

Academic Progress Reports:

Access your child's academic progress reports easily, ensuring you are always aware of their performance and areas for improvement.

Attendance Monitoring: Keep track of your child's attendance with ease, providing you peace of mind.

Portfolio of Work: Maintain a comprehensive portfolio of your child's work and classroom experience that moves with them as they advance from grade to grade.

Student Benefits

Interactive Learning: Engage with learning experiences or activities directly connected to the unit plan via audio, text, images, or video.

Class Discussions: Participate in dynamic class discussions, fostering a collaborative and interactive learning environment.

Enduring Learning Portfolio: Keep a learning portfolio that stays with you throughout your entire time at the school, even when transitioning between programs (PYP to MYP and MYP to DP).

Goal Setting and Tracking: Set and track personal academic and developmental goals, encouraging self-motivation and responsibility.

Teacher Benefits

Unified Platform: Teachers can manage all their teaching and learning needs in one place, from long-term curriculum planning to day-to-day teaching, assessments, progress reports, and family communication.

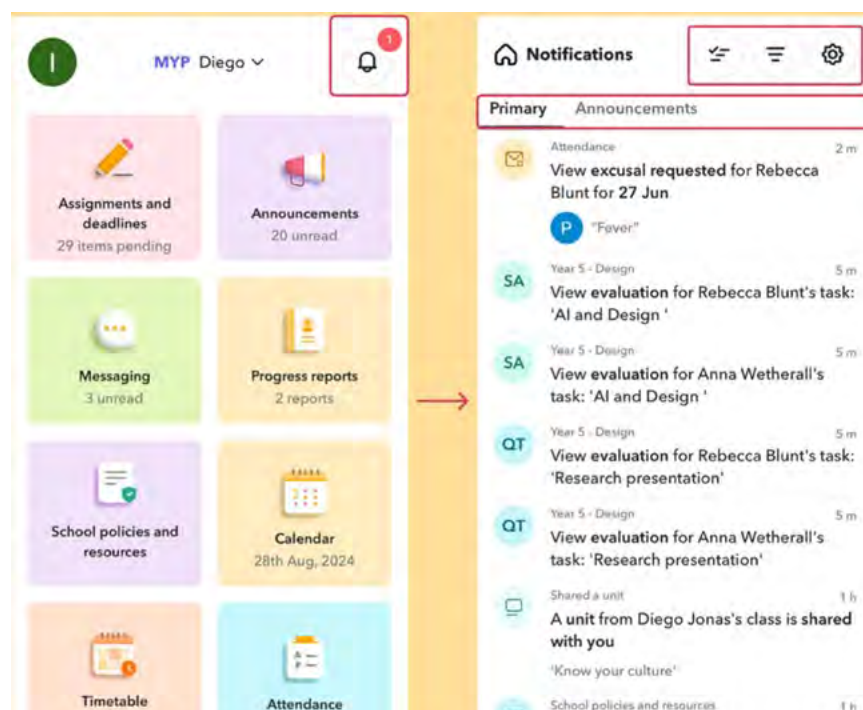
Class Flow Management: Teachers can create and manage class flows to share and organize their teaching content easily.

Class Portfolio: Teachers can add posts and compile a class portfolio, highlighting student work and classroom experiences.

With our transition to Toddle, SCIS is providing all stakeholders a unified and comprehensive platform to support teaching and learning, while also striving to improve and consolidate communication with families. Join us as we continue to nurture the educational journey of all our students.



By Paul Pavao,
Technology and
Integration Coordinator
at SCIS





Beyond Algorithms: Cultivating Critical Thinkers in a Digital Age

In today's evolving educational landscape, the skills students need to thrive go beyond traditional academics. This feature highlights the vital role of Upper School Mathematics in fostering critical thinking, adaptability, and collaboration. By prioritizing students' mental and social well-being, educators can better prepare them for the complexities of the modern world.

We invite Dr. Scott Carney, MYP/DP Mathematics, DP Theory of Knowledge Teacher at SCIS Hongqiao to share innovative teaching methodologies and insights on empowering students through Mathematics.

1. Please simply introduce yourself and share a bit about your teaching background and experiences.

I'm Dr. Scott Carney and this is my 13th year of teaching. I hold both a bachelor's and a master's degree in Mathematics Education, along with a master's in philosophy and a PhD in Education with an emphasis on Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment. I've had the opportunity to teach around the world, including in North America, Thailand, Singapore, Sri Lanka, and various cities in China such as Nanchang, Chengdu, and Shanghai. Each experience has enriched my perspective on education and significantly shaped my teaching practice.

2. What inspired you to become a teacher?

I didn't become a teacher for traditional reasons; it felt like a natural fit. I was fortunate to have an amazing teacher in 6th grade for Mathematics, which influenced my path. I excelled in Mathematics and enjoyed talking, so teaching seemed like the ideal way to combine those strengths into a fulfilling career.

What inspires me to remain in this field is the ongoing challenge and complexity of education. Initially, I thought being a good Mathematics teacher was simply about mastering the subject, but what truly matters is being really good at teaching and continually growing in that area, as well as understanding how to connect with students on multiple levels.

It fascinates me how two teachers can use similar approaches yet achieve success in different ways. That variety and challenge fuel my passion for teaching, and I take immense pride in being part of my students' journeys.

3. Can you elaborate on your teaching methodology and how you engage students in the learning process?

My teaching methodology is deeply student-centered. I prioritize understanding my students' needs and interests, which helps shape our lessons. Instead of following a strict lecture format, I view myself as a coach, guiding students as they collaborate and work through problems together.

In my classroom, students actively engage with the material, moving around and interacting with their peers while I circulate to offer support and insights. This approach encourages them to take ownership of their learning, fostering



independence and critical thinking. By focusing on inquiry-based learning, I aim not only to help them excel academically but also to equip them with essential skills for navigating the language of Mathematics. Ultimately, it's about creating a supportive environment where students feel empowered to explore and discover.

4. How do you encourage students to think globally and recognize diverse perspectives?

In my Theory of Knowledge (TOK) class, I often engage students in discussions such as asking students who they consider to be geniuses. They usually mention figures like Einstein or Mozart, which opens a discussion about why they don't include individuals from other cultures, often focusing solely on Europe. This helps them realize the narrowness of their viewpoint.

In Mathematics class, I also design activities that connect global issues. For instance, when we cover ratios and proportions, I have students use the populations of different continents to divide cookies according to those ratios. They quickly see that even though Asia has a large population, they don't get as many cookies as North America, which sparks conversations about economic inequality. Additionally, I also bring in discussions about household incomes compared to tuition costs, illustrating how many families can't afford education.

By framing lessons within a global context, I aim to cultivate a broader worldview, encouraging students to understand the interconnectedness of mathematics and global issues.

5. What specific skills do you think are most important for students to thrive in a rapidly changing world, and how do you foster these skills in your classroom

Critical thinking is essential across all subjects. A critical thinker in Mathematics doesn't simply focus on reaching the answer from point A to point B as quickly as possible. Instead, they take their time to reflect and ask questions like, "Is this the only way?" or "How does this relate to other concepts?"

Adaptability and collaboration are also crucial skills. In my classes, I randomly assign students to different

groups for classwork. This practice encourages them to develop flexibility in working with others, a vital skill in any collaborative environment.

Additionally, information media literacy has become increasingly important; students need to evaluate the credibility of sources in today's information-rich environment.

As educators, we can nurture these skills by creating an environment that supports exploration. By designing assessments and projects that encourage exploration and multiple approaches, we give students the time and space to think critically. This prepares them not only to excel academically but also to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

6. How do you view the impact of technology on Mathematics education, and what specific tools do you find effective?

Our first reaction to any technological innovation should be to consider what it can do that we couldn't do before. We should evaluate whether technology enhances learning rather than just simplifying tasks. For instance, while I appreciate tools like Khan Academy and IXL, I emphasize their potential to provide instant feedback, allowing students to assess their understanding right away. This instant response is a significant improvement over traditional methods, where students would often wait until the next day to check their work. Now,

they can work independently and receive guidance when needed, which enhances their learning experience.

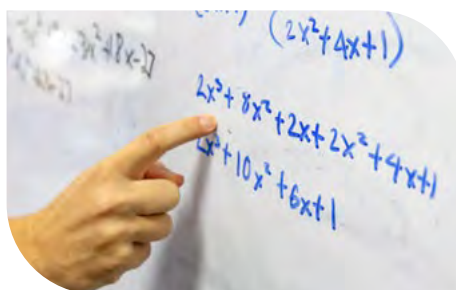
Moreover, I see technology as a valuable teaching assistant. It enables us to collaborate with AI and other platforms to refine lesson ideas and develop strategies tailored to my students' needs.

7. What changes do you believe are necessary for education to better prepare students for the future?

I believe education should move beyond just academic knowledge. We need to recognize that intelligence isn't solely about excelling in subjects; it's also about teaching life lessons that lead to a happier future—not just chasing jobs or money.

I envision an education system that prioritizes students' mental and social health. When students are emotionally and socially well, their academic performance improves. I'd love to see advisory classes that help students understand themselves better, learn to cope with stress, and build strong relationships.

While this approach may seem challenging initially, I believe that over time, students will not only catch up academically but also grow into more well-rounded adults. We must plant seeds for a future we may never see fully realized, aiming for a system that truly benefits all students.





Swim Team's Splashing Start

The 120 student-athletes of the Dragons Swim Team splashed back into action in late August. By October 12, swimmers were ready for their 1st of up to 12 meets in the year ahead. With coaches Carson (since 2015), Seven (2015), Me (2023), and newbie Coach Pan (2024), our goal of forming a team to rival bygone years has begun. Knowing that competitive swimming builds confidence, community, and resilience as it nurtures life lessons like commitment, time management, camaraderie, and goal setting, we as a team embrace the task of continuous improvement. SCIS Hongqiao hosted Shanghai Swim League (SSL) Round 1 with 415 swimmers from 6 international school teams.

85 Dragons swimmers competed, with 85% of them achieving a Personal Best Time (PBT) in one or more of their events, and 40% obtained PBTs in all their events. Once all the results were merged from the two other SSL meets, our Dragons placed an impressive

6th out of 23 teams from Pudong to Nanjing. That is up three positions from last year's Round 1 performance and a testament to a splashing start.

On November 1-3, 23 of our swimmers competed in Beijing at the SAS-ISB Swimvitational with over 580 swimmers from 19 schools. The competitiveness of the meet was notable, and our swimmers got to watch and participate in some impressive races. Out of 16 small teams (max. 32 swimmers), SCIS Hongqiao placed a respectable 9th amongst some of the most talented international school swimmers in East Asia.

Thus far, our team has too many contributing members to mention individually however the leadership from our eight captains is notable; they are Anna and David (Grade 5), Andrew (Grade 6), Julia (Grade 7), Yolanda (Grade 8), Ji-Woo (Grade 5), Gavin (Grade 10), and Naomi (Grade 11). Also noteworthy are our record breakers

this season, Justin, Alex, and Julia. Besides the above, the top point scorers have been Gaby, Yi Qing, Lucas, Audry, and Sofia.

In our 17 years of Dragon Swim Team over 1700 SCIS Hongqiao students have been part of our team's success. As dedicated Senior ACAMIS swimmer Rebecca says, "Swim team is a family, in which we all come together and support one another so we can improve as individuals, as a team, and as a school." Clearly being a Dragon Swim Team member is an experience our students benefit from and will remember and celebrate for the years to come.



*By Jon Biros,
Aquatics Director
at SCIS Hongqiao*



SCIS CAPTAINS 2023-2024



2024-2025 Aquatics Department SWIM TEAM



SCIS Pudong: Volleyball Recap



This season, the High School Volleyball teams were coached by two new members of the Pudong Dragons Coaching Team: Coach Jessie Doster and Coach Joel Taylor. Both coaches have done a fantastic job, not only refining the skills of our High School student-athletes but also helping to develop their characters. Both teams played some excellent games throughout the season, with the girls eventually winning the SISAC D2 Cup, while the boys represented the school at the D1 level, winning all the games in their bracket at the D1 Plate event. A week after the SISAC tournament, both teams participated in the ACAMIS Silver Division Volleyball tournament, hosted by Shanghai United International School Minhang. Both teams performed exceptionally well, with the girls showing great team spirit and the boys battling hard in their games as well.



Written by Harry Brookfield, Athletics, Activities, Aquatics & Expeditions Coordinator, Head of Physical and Health Education







SCIS Hongqiao: Volleyball Recap



DI Boys Volleyball team

By Coach: Justin Corvers

Our DI Boys Volleyball team had another successful season this year! After losing seven graduating athletes from last year's team, we understood as a group that we had a lot of work ahead of us. This year's team included six players from Grades 9 and 10, along with another six players from Grades 11 and 12, making it, by far, one of the youngest DI boys teams we've had in many years.

Led by seniors and returning players Benjamin, Bryce, and Didier, our team got off to a strong start to the SISAC season. After nine games, we finished with a 7-2 record and secured second place in the West Division during the regular season.

For our season-ending Green Division ACAMIS tournament, the DI Boys traveled to Hong Kong. We had an amazing tournament and ended up winning bronze on the final day of the event. The future of Boys' Volleyball at SCIS is very bright, and we look forward to seeing many strong returning players from this team back on the court next year!



DI Girls Volleyball team

By Coach: Melissa Dennie

This season, the SCIS DI Girls Volleyball team achieved incredible success, capped by winning the ACAMIS championship in Hong Kong. Throughout the journey, the team demonstrated resilience, teamwork, and dedication to growth. Each game highlighted their commitment to refining skills and strengthening bonds, allowing them to go undefeated throughout the entire tournament.

At ACAMIS, the girls displayed technical skill and sportsmanship, facing tough opponents with determination. Their hard-fought victories and final win showcased countless hours of practice and team spirit. Every player stepped up, contributing to this unforgettable achievement and representing SCIS with pride.

Beyond the championship, the season was filled with growth and meaningful memories. The girls learned lessons in perseverance and unity that will stay with them far beyond the court. We are immensely proud of their success and look forward to seeing what this talented team will accomplish next season.



D2 Boys Volleyball team
By Coach: Kirk Thomas

This year, our D2 Boys Volleyball team had a mix of players with varying levels of experience, including some who moved up from our CISSA Grade 8 program. From the very first practice, the boys worked diligently on their skills, focusing on hustling after the ball, maintaining constant communication on the court, and supporting each other at every point.

Our SISAC regular season showcased a blend of results, but the team displayed growth and promise in each game they played, win or lose. The season culminated in a critical match against YCIS Puxi, where the stakes were high: A win would secure our place in the Cup Final, while a loss would relegate us to the Plate competition. The boys truly gave their all and celebrated a fantastic 2-0 victory, advancing us to the finals!

In the SISAC Cup tournament, the team continued to shine, demonstrating exceptional skills, hustle, and teamwork, ultimately securing third place in the competition.

Congratulations to the team on a remarkable season! I look forward to building on this success in the next season.



D2 Girls Volleyball team
By Coach: Luke Patterson

The D2 Girls Volleyball team had an incredible run, going undefeated in the regular season and proudly bringing home the Western Divisional Champion plaque for the second year in a row. With several new players joining, the team quickly built strong connections and showed determination throughout the season.

In the cup finals, we faced a tough early loss that eliminated us from the championship race, placing us in the contest for 5th place. However, the team rallied with resilience, winning the remaining games with memorable digs and well-timed hits—a big step for players who had previously hesitated to take risks at the net.

While there are still areas for improvement, each player learned valuable lessons in confidence, resilience, and maintaining a positive mindset. Although we didn't meet every goal, this journey gave us plenty to be proud of, and I hope the team carries these experiences forward with pride and motivation for the future.



Exploring New Paths: A Journey of Transformation and Discovery



Sam Kane (Class of 2010) embodies the impact of a well-rounded education and the value of leadership in shaping a meaningful career. Achieving an outstanding SAT score of 2370, Sam not only excelled academically but also showcased his leadership skills as High School President of the Student Council and captain of both the basketball and volleyball teams during his time at SCIS Pudong. Recently, we had the opportunity to reconnect with Sam, who shared how his diverse experiences—from high school to law school—have shaped his professional path and continue to influence his approach to challenges today.

1. Tell us more about yourself. Can you walk us through your journey since graduating from SCIS?

I attended SCIS Pudong for five and a half years, graduating in June 2010. After graduating from SCIS, I went on to study International Relations at Georgetown University. Following graduation, I worked as a cybersecurity consultant in Washington, DC, for about four and a half years before deciding to pursue law school at the University of Chicago. After law school, I spent a year working for a judge in Baltimore before returning to Washington, DC, where I now work as a privacy and cybersecurity lawyer. I married my wife Priya last year, and we've been enjoying life in DC!

2. How did SCIS prepare you academically and professionally? How did the diverse environment at SCIS help shape your ability to navigate different cultural and professional settings?

SCIS played a pivotal role in preparing me for both university and my professional career. The academic rigor at SCIS, especially the emphasis on writing and critical analysis, gave me a strong foundation that made the transition to Georgetown University much smoother. The skills I developed at SCIS helped me tackle the demanding coursework at university, particularly in writing-intensive subjects.

But it wasn't just the academics that prepared me—it was the environment. SCIS's international setting, with students from all over the world, shaped my worldview in ways that I hadn't anticipated. Growing up in such a multicultural environment helped me develop a deep appreciation for different perspectives and taught me how to communicate and collaborate effectively with people from diverse backgrounds. Working with colleagues and clients from various cultural backgrounds is the norm in my current role, and the experiences at SCIS were instrumental in preparing me for that.

I also have fond memories of how SCIS encouraged personal growth, both inside and beyond the classroom. For example,



the English classes helped me refine my writing skills, which proved invaluable throughout my academic career. Through the basketball program, I not only developed my skills on the court but also gained valuable life lessons in leadership and motivation—principles that continue to guide me in both my professional and personal life.

3. Reflecting on your time at SCIS, what key lessons or values did you gain, and how have they influenced your decisions and outlook in your personal and professional life?

One of the most important lessons I learned at SCIS was the value of being open to new experiences. Before moving to Shanghai, I never imagined I would take part in activities like volleyball or drama. But at SCIS, I pushed myself to try them, which expanded my horizons and helped me grow in ways I hadn't anticipated. This openness to stepping into the unknown has been a guiding principle in many of my decisions in life—whether it was pursuing law school after several years of working, relocating to new cities, or traveling across the country. SCIS taught me to embrace new challenges and step out of my comfort zone—a mindset that continues to guide me today.

4. What sparked your interest in privacy and cybersecurity, and how did your career path evolve in this direction?

My interest in privacy and cybersecurity began after university when I started



working as a cybersecurity consultant. The rapid pace of technological innovation drew me in, and I quickly realized that cybersecurity was not only fascinating but also a crucial area of growth for the future. This realization ultimately led me to law school and my current role as a privacy and cybersecurity lawyer.

Working in cybersecurity consulting provided real-world experiences that deepened my interest and shaped my career path in this area. The field is constantly changing, which makes it both challenging and exciting—it's an area where there's always something new to learn and explore.



5. What advice would you give to current SCIS students as they prepare for their future, both in their academic journey and personal growth? How can they make the most of their time at SCIS?

My advice is to take full advantage of the unique opportunities SCIS offers. The intimate, community-focused environment at SCIS allows you to build strong connections with teachers and peers while providing the flexibility to explore a wide range of activities. Don't be afraid to try new things and challenge yourself—this is the ideal time to step into unfamiliar territory and discover what truly inspires you. Whether it's in academics, sports, or extracurriculars, you may uncover interests and skills that shape your future in unexpected ways.

Most importantly, take the time to explore and grow. High school is a crucial period for personal development, and how you engage with these years can have a lasting impact on your future.

6. Looking ahead, what qualities do you think will be most important for future generations, and how can students at SCIS prepare for the rapidly changing global landscape?

In today's rapidly changing world, adaptability and lifelong learning are essential. I experience this in my field of privacy and cybersecurity law, which is constantly evolving. The fast pace of technological development means there is always more to learn, and staying up-



to-date with new legal frameworks and approaches is crucial. Success today is not just about academic knowledge; soft skills, such as leadership, self-motivation, and effective communication, are equally important.

For SCIS students, this means cultivating intellectual curiosity and strengthening your critical thinking skills. SCIS already offers a diverse environment that fosters exposure to multiple perspectives, which is increasingly valuable in our interconnected world. By making the most of the wide range of opportunities at SCIS, whether in academics, extracurricular activities, or personal interactions, you can challenge your assumptions, be open to new ideas, and continue growing both academically and personally.

7. What are your professional and personal aspirations moving forward, and how do you see your journey evolving in the years ahead?

Professionally, I aim to continue developing my expertise as a privacy and cybersecurity lawyer. The field is always evolving, so I'm excited to keep growing in my role and staying on top of new challenges and opportunities. Personally,



I look forward to building a home with my wife, Priya, in the DC area, and I'm also eager to explore new hobbies and interests. Life has been fulfilling so far, and I'm excited to see what the next chapter holds!

Sam's journey from SCIS to his current career exemplifies the power of

dedication, leadership, and continual self-growth. His experiences highlight how the foundation laid during our school years can influence our trajectory for years to come. We look forward to watching how Sam continues to build on the values of curiosity and resilience as he navigates the next chapters of his life.



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:

alumni@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>



Weaving a New Narrative: Nurturing Growth and Connections at SCIS

After five transformative years in Shanghai, the FOSTER family has built a diverse and fulfilling collection of experiences at Shanghai Community International School (SCIS). Relocating from South Africa, they sought an educational environment that balances academic rigor with emotional enrichment. Their time at SCIS has revealed a nurturing community that has profoundly shaped their family's journey, fostering meaningful connections and celebrating each milestone in their children's growth.

Discovering SCIS: A Perfect Fit for Educational Excellence

Choosing SCIS was a thoughtful journey for the FOSTER family. They were drawn to the school's commitment to academic excellence while emphasizing emotional and social development. This delicate balance of intellectual and emotional intelligence deeply resonates with them, ensuring that their children, Sophie and Sam, receive an education that not only prepares them for the complexities of the world but also nurtures their individual growth. The vibrant sense of community at SCIS has been a cornerstone of their experience, offering a warm support network that has made navigating life in a new country both enriching and rewarding.

Cultivating a Love for Learning for Young Kids

Mrs. Foster beams with pride as she shares that, for five years, her children have never once uttered the words, "I don't want to go to school." From their very first day, both Sophie and Sam have thrived in a vibrant and supportive environment that encourages their curiosity and personal growth.

Sam joined SCIS at just three years old, seamlessly adapting to the welcoming atmosphere of the Early Childhood Education (ECE) campus. The caring staff were attentive to his needs, creating a space where he felt right at home. Mrs. Foster reflects on a particularly touching moment when she observed a boy at the ECE campus struggling with English during her visit. Instead of rushing him to communicate, the teachers patiently supported him in finding his voice, exemplifying their unwavering commitment to nurturing every child's unique journey.

Both Sophie and Sam have excelled academically at SCIS, benefiting from a rigorous curriculum that cultivates critical thinking and creativity across all subjects. Their profound love for learning is particularly evident in their reading journeys, which have been developed through engaging

literary activities and the dedicated support of teachers and librarians. This guidance has helped them build strong reading habits, encouraging exploration of various genres while complementing their overall academic growth.

Navigating a culturally diverse environment has also enriched Sophie and Sam's experiences. They have embraced new perspectives and friendships, learning to appreciate the rich tapestry of backgrounds represented at SCIS. This exposure has nurtured empathy and understanding, allowing them to adapt seamlessly while celebrating their unique identities.

Looking ahead, Sophie and Sam are filled with excitement for the opportunities that await them. Each grade presents new adventures, from the thrill of participating in Grade 5 Flash Mob to a wide array of academic and extracurricular activities. SCIS's holistic approach ensures that they are not only academically equipped but also nurtured in their emotional and physical well-being, providing a strong foundation for their continued growth and self-expression.

Deepening Connections Through Family Involvement

Throughout their time at SCIS, the FOSTER family has experienced significant personal growth alongside their children. Mrs. Foster has been an active member of the Parents and Friends Association (PAFA) for several years, initially serving as the Early Childhood Representative and now as the Lower School Representative. This involvement has allowed her to participate in organizing various school activities while gathering valuable feedback from fellow parents. She is committed to addressing the questions and

concerns of families, particularly those who are new to Shanghai, creating a sense of belonging and connection within the community.

In addition to strengthening connections, SCIS offers invaluable workshops designed to enhance understanding of academic expectations and emotional support for students. These interactive sessions engage parents in meaningful discussions and practical exercises, providing valuable insights into how to support their children's educational journeys. Mrs. Foster recalls a particularly enlightening session with a librarian who emphasized that "reading is not just about words, but about fostering a love for books and understanding their value."

As Mrs. Foster has deepened her involvement, the FOSTER family has established cherished traditions that have become a meaningful part of their lives. Sunday pancake mornings have evolved into a time for sharing stories about school, discussing new books, and celebrating each child's achievements.

The FOSTER family's journey at SCIS highlights the remarkable synergy between a nurturing educational environment and active parental involvement. As Sophie and Sam flourish in their academic pursuits, they not only embrace diverse perspectives but also build lasting friendships that deepen their experiences. Mrs. Foster's dedication to the community enhances their experience, creating a network of support that encourages growth and understanding. Through treasured family traditions and a shared passion for learning, the FOSTERS celebrate the unique opportunities at SCIS, confident that their partnership with the school will continue to inspire curiosity, resilience, and a lifelong love of education.





Passport Club:

A Global Mindset



Starts Here



In an era defined by rapid globalization and technological advancements, the ability to navigate diverse cultures and perspectives is more critical than ever. Our SCIS Passport Club offers a unique platform for students to engage with the world around them. The program not only ignites a passion for travel but also equips students with essential skills needed to thrive in a constantly evolving environment.



What Does the Passport Club Consist of?

The passport club is a community that encourages students to explore global cultures, broaden their horizons, and prepare for international citizenship. Through shared experiences, members cultivate a deeper understanding of the world, fostering cultural exchange and global awareness—both of which are vital in today's interconnected society.

The Importance of Global Awareness

In a rapidly changing world, global awareness is key to personal and professional success. Understanding diverse cultures helps students develop empathy, improve communication skills, and enhance critical thinking. These qualities enable them to navigate complex social dynamics and work effectively in multicultural environments—skills that are essential in an increasingly globalized workforce.



Activities that Foster Preparedness

The Passport Club engages students through various activities designed to cultivate adaptability and problem-solving skills. Cultural events, language workshops, and travel planning sessions not only spark curiosity but also challenge members to think critically about global issues.





The Passport Club Team – ECE Campus

Connecting People

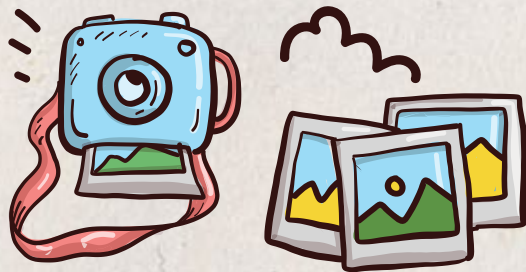
Beyond cultural enrichment, the Passport Club creates opportunities for families to connect and share on various topics. Arturo Casares, a parent volunteer who has been involved with the Passport Club for 18 months, shares, "Before my son joined the Passport Club, one of the games we played revolved around questions about countries, continents, and locations." Studying geography led to discussions about history and a global awareness of current affairs. "The Passport Club is a hobby that we both share and an activity that we can work on together," adds Arturo.

Global Citizens

Jade is a curious 9-year-old who joined the Passport Club two years ago. Her hobbies include reading, writing, and solving math problems. "Learning about countries and their locations has sparked a newfound interest in seeing the world," says Jade. She is interested in perusing a career in design or teaching. The Passport Club is a wonderful catalyst for personal growth and can ignite ambitions for a global career.



Arturo Casares, Passport Club parent volunteer



Conclusion

In a world that demands adaptability and global awareness, the Passport Club offers invaluable opportunities for students to prepare for the future. By fostering cultural understanding, enhancing essential skills, and creating meaningful connections, the club equips the next generation to thrive in an increasingly complex and interconnected world. So, why not embrace the adventure? Join the Passport Club and start navigating the future today!

By May Botha, PAFA Communications at SCIS Hongqiao

How to Get Involved

The Passport Club is open to all Lower School Students (Grades 1 to 5). If you are curious about the world or would like to find out more about SCIS's Passport Club, contact Joey Wong (Grade 1) or Debbie Foster (Grades 2 to 5). The Passport Club is complimentary to students, sponsored by PAFA, and supported by the school (stationary, folders, printing, etc.).

The Passport Club Team – Hongqiao Campus



Jade, SCIS Passport Club explorer



The SCIS Pudong Community is evidence of the cultural diversity that is experienced in Shanghai. Even after the pandemic, our campus keeps hosting families from all over the globe every year. Have you reflected on how challenging this cultural diversity can be for our community? Interaction between people from different cultures may lead to undesirable situations, such as misunderstandings, inconveniences, and conflicts, but if managed positively through communication, respect, and empathy, it represents an invaluable opportunity for growth, development, and evolution. This perception is the one promoted by PAFA on our campus.

Interculturalism vs. Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism is the idea of coexistence between people from multiple cultures, viewed as a merely circumstantial matter in which individuals interact only if necessary. In this scenario, people from different cultural backgrounds may not fully integrate and are more likely to group with others from their own nation.

Multiculturalism represents a passive stance towards coexistence, where the individuals involved show no intention of engaging with the international community or experiencing cultural exchange; in consequence, there is no interest in enriching themselves through other cultures but only in firmly maintaining their beliefs and values.

In contrast, interculturalism refers to the active process where people from different countries interact for the purpose of learning and understanding other cultures. This interest implies mutual enrichment through the acknowledgment of other's beliefs, traditions, and values.

In this process, the members of a community exercise respect, empathy, flexibility, and tolerance through an open mind and the will to create bonds of understanding, solidarity, and friendship; this experience leads to a potential cultural change.

Interculturalism promotes the creation of a modern community in which differences between its members are not conceived as distance between them, but as richness that generates a strong and positive interaction resulting in a collective identity.



In PAFA, we promote interculturalism through the events and activities we organize with the aim of experiencing a cultural exchange, getting to know each other better, creating bonds that unite us and allow us to build a community rich in values and traditions that exalt each of the cultures we represent, and make everyone feel respected and appreciated.

Proof of this was the "Cultural Festival" that took place in October, to which all the members of SCIS Pudong were invited to share their cultural traits and traditions through music, dances, games, activities, and even food. All the participants, including children, parents, and staff members, showed passion and pride in representing their countries. The atmosphere was full of joy, and we had the opportunity to travel the world and "visit" several countries across different continents in a couple of hours.

In line with the above, we can affirm that the SCIS Pudong Community is a testament to the creation of a unique entity enriched by the multiple cultures we represent and linked by respect and understanding among its members. As a unique entity, we have defined the values, traditions, beliefs, and norms that conduct our positive interactions. Our commitment is to continue strengthening the sense of belonging through the inclusion and integration of every member.

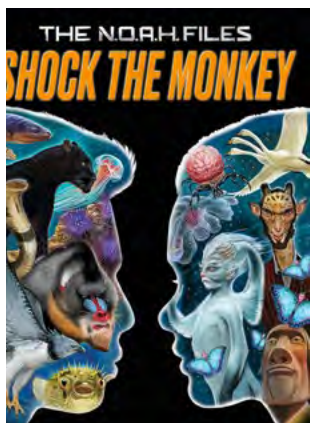
By Maria Jose Verduzco, PAFA Communications at SCIS Pudong



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 the possibilities of our future, the list is endless. Read below the book recommendations for all ages from our very own SCIS librarians:

Ashley Simmons, Upper School Librarian & IB Extended Essay Coordinator at SCIS Hongqiao



Shock the Monkey

By Neal Shusterman
Ages 8+

Noah thought he'd left behind the chaos of alien encounters, high-stakes chases, and world-saving adventures. Going into hiding was supposed to be the end of it all. But a new crisis erupts when

his friend Ogden's crush on Claire, the most popular girl at school, leads him to buy her a birthday star. Only, this isn't just a symbolic gesture—the star is very real and populated by a swarm of alien inhabitants. Soon enough, these extraterrestrials arrive on Earth, intent on abducting Claire and bringing her back to

"her" planet. With his animal-transforming powers, Noah must once again embark on a daring quest to rescue her. But with dangerous enemies lurking and a treacherous journey ahead, can he save Claire before it's too late? This action-packed, hilarious sci-fi adventure will delight fans of Eoin Colfer and Rick Riordan.

The House in the Cerulean Sea

By T.J. Klune
Ages 12+

The House in the Cerulean Sea by T.J. Klune is a heartwarming and whimsical story celebrating the beauty of difference and acceptance. Linus Baker, a lonely caseworker in a dreary, rule-bound world, is

sent on a classified mission to evaluate an orphanage for "magical" children. There, he meets Arthur Parnassus, the enigmatic caretaker, and a group of children whose powers and personalities are as diverse as they are extraordinary. Klune masterfully weaves themes of family, identity, and kindness through rich, memorable characters, making readers fall

in love with each orphanage resident. The book's setting is vibrant, almost magical, evoking a sense of wonder that enhances the story's central message of empathy and compassion. Klune's humor and sensitivity shine, creating a modern fairy tale that speaks to all ages. This enchanting, feel-good novel is a timely reminder of the power of love and acceptance.



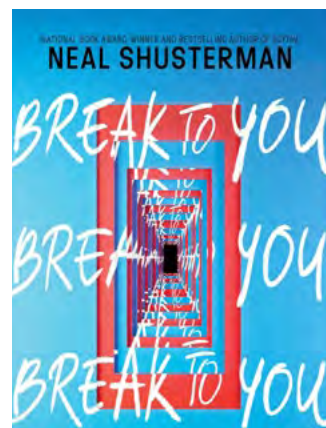
Break to You

By Neal Shusterman
Ages 13+

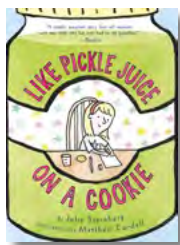
In *Break to You*, two incarcerated teens discover a lifeline and connection through a shared journal. Adriana, sentenced to seven months at Compass Juvenile Detention Center, pours her emotions into a journal she keeps hidden, only to be furious

when she finds it misplaced in the facility's library—its pages filled with another person's writing. But rather than scribbling random notes, this stranger is writing to her. Jon, with a hardened reputation after nearly four years at Compass, becomes her journal confidant. The two devise a clever method to exchange their hidden messages, gradually shedding their tough

exteriors and revealing their true selves. Security rules and the gender-divided facility make face-to-face contact impossible, but with help from friends, they embark on a risky plan to meet. The story's action intensifies with codes, secrets, and betrayals, all while portraying Compass's diverse population. Alternating perspectives reveal their world with intensity.



Malia Heil, Library & Media Specialist at SCIS Pudong



Like Pickle Juice on a Cookie

Written by Julie Sternberg & Illustrated by Matthew Cordell

Age 6+

In our international community, children often need to say goodbyes, and this story explains how goodbyes can be “like pickle juice on a cookie.” The storyline follows Eleanor in the summer leading up to Grade 3 as she processes one of her favorite people moving far away. There is grief and denial, kindness and coping. There is a growing gratitude for kept memories and a growing tolerance for new kinds of memories sneaking in. On top of all this, the poetic line breaks make this an excellent read-aloud as well as a beginning chapter book. This novel in verse can introduce a creative genre without it feeling threatening. The poetry moves the story along and subtly emphasizes Eleanor’s resistance to change and eventual acceptance of a new normal.



Starfish

By Lisa Fipps

Age 10+

Written in verse, *Starfish* expands our perspectives by giving voice to someone silenced by body shaming. Fipps's poetry flows easily and makes this a quick read, but she does well at slowing down to emphasize the pain of the main character, Ellie, to give it the space and attention it deserves.

The message here is strong: bullying must stop.

The title and front cover reveal the theme: spread out and stop hiding. The book is a shouted permission for everyone to be whole instead of partial, to be heard instead of hushed, and to demand respect instead of resigning to abuse.



Clap When You Land

By Elizabeth Acevedo

Age 14+

While this verse novel reads well as your eyes travel down the page, it is also captivating as an audiobook read by the author. Either way, Acevedo's poetry keeps your ears tuned in and your heart alert. The title refers to a Dominican tradition of applause when an airplane lands safely at its destination, and this metaphor parallels the difficult grief journey, especially when complicated with turbulent secrets. The main themes of mourning, belonging, and possession are superbly handled, and as a bonus, this book is a fantastic glimpse into another culture's richness, with biting contrast to first-world problems.

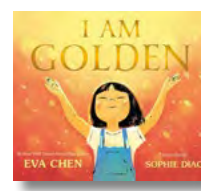
William Henley, Library & Media Specialist at SCIS Hongqiao ECE



Your Name is a Song

Written by Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow & Illustrated by Luisa Uribe

A young student does not want to return to school because everyone mispronounces her name. The child's mother teaches her about the history and beauty of names from cultures around the world. There is a glossary at the end of the book with the pronunciations and meanings of the names used in the book. Given our diverse community, this is an important story for everyone that illustrates the power of respecting an individual's name.



I am Golden

Written by Eva Chen & Illustrated by Sophie Diao

This is a story about a family of Chinese immigrants living in America. However, Chen's message highlights what it feels like to belong to two cultures, and the joys and the tensions that come with that. It starts with the question, “What do you see when you look in the mirror,” and it ends with an author's note that discusses her family's lived experiences. This story will speak to many of our students who are growing up in multiple worlds.



A Walk in the Words

By Hudson Talbott

This is an autobiographical story about a child who is struggling to learn how to read. He is “the slowest reader in his class.” While he initially feels ashamed and discouraged, he grows more confident as he uses strategies to break down larger words. While this story will resonate with people with dyslexia, it will build empathy in all students as we are all unique learners who learn differently.



المرونة
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KESEHATAN
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Resilience

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Stories to **thrive** 茁壮成长 For you. By all of us.

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SANTÉ

Crowdsourcing
Wellness



Scan the QR today and
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