



# TANGO

# EXTRA

*Dancing with Words*

Senri & Osaka International Schools of Kwansei Gakuin

TANGO: Dancing with Words

Volume 13 Number 1 December 2019

## *SOIS Students Continue to Serve*

*by Noah Izumi*

*Now, with the holiday season upon us, it's an excellent time to reflect on the some of the good things SOIS students do in our community. Noah, one of Tango's leading journalists, provides us with some snapshots of just a few of the many ways SOIS students are hard at work making the world a better place.*

### **A quick note on the Club & Service Fair**

On October 21st, students were greeted by over 40 clubs and service activities in a joint Club & Service Fair hosted by the High School Student Council and Service Council. The fair provided an opportunity for students to meet the student leaders or representatives of the various activities in the school, and find the perfect club or service activity to pursue their interests or fulfill any SA/CAS requirements. To accommodate the new students entering OIS, this fair was conducted in English. The Club & Service Fair will be held again in April 2020, for SIS students who will be starting a new academic year.

### **Nature Beautification Project**

Previously introduced as "Selina's Not-So-Secret Garden" in the December 2018 issue of Tango, the School Beautification Project has since been revamped into the Nature Beautification Project. In addition to maintaining the greenery on the science patio started by Selina, the project has now expanded to include composting and cleanup activities. Although Selina has graduated, a group of dedicated students continue to make a positive impact on the school and the environment through this project.

### **Composting**

Have you ever considered the amount of food waste that's produced by our school cafeteria in a single day? I don't have the answer to this, but you could take a wild guess that it's a lot and you'd probably be right, especially when you see students throw away practically uneaten bowls of curry, or when your friend so stubbornly avoids eating the vegetables in their hoikoro. Needless to say, too much of our food ends up in the trash; the school community must come together as a collective whole to reduce waste, and we as individuals must carefully consider what we buy to make sure our consumption habits are less wasteful and more sustainable.

The good news is that a group of students in the Nature Beautification Project led by Kikka Okuda (SIS 12) tackles this issue by composting some of the food from the cafeteria that would otherwise wind up in the trash. The action takes place behind the school on a narrow path that borders the neighboring rehabilitation center, where the group brings vegetable scraps collected from Cezar's Kitchen every day after school. Kikka has also worked with the elementary to educate them on the importance of reducing waste, and uses the resulting compost as fertilizer for the gardens that bring color to our school. When asked about her motivation for composting, Kikka replied passionately that, "I make compost so that I can eat it!"



Pictured: Kikka Okuda. Photo supplied by Kikka.

## *Happy Holidays from the Tango Team!*



Photo from the "iheart japan" website: <http://www.iheartjapan.ca/2011/01/winter-in-japan/>

*Tango wishes everyone in the SOIS community a happy and safe winter holiday season.*



**Continued from Page 1—Noah continues his look into SOIS serving the community:**

### Gardening

The beautiful blooms and greenery that Selina brought to the science patio still remain to bring some relief in our busy lives. Some students come during their summer break to water the plants, and both teachers and members of the Nature Beautification Project work hard to maintain the plants at the patio. It's always nice to stop by the gardens during the day to take a deep breath and let your mind relax, even if it is for a short second.

### Cleanup Activities

Where there are humans, it's likely that there's litter. Littering is an issue anywhere in the world, and while Japan may seem to be a relatively clean country, it is certainly no exception. Even in Minoh, taking a look over the side of a mountain road will reveal an array of trash thrown out by irresponsible truck drivers and other individuals. Along with PET bottles, cans, and plastic bags you would expect to be littered, students who partake in cleanup activities often dig up the most unusual items, such as: VHS tapes, broken slot machines, fuel cans for car air conditioners, and even a mannequin head. So far, the Nature Beautification Project has conducted clean-up activities along the abandoned Fukuchiyama railway hiking trail, and more recently at the riverside of the Katsuoji River off the prefectural route 4 mountain road (read more about the activity in Karin Shimoo's article on page 9).

Skye Inada (OIS 12), one of the main organizers of the activity, explains that, "The purpose of the cleaning activities hosted by the Nature Beautification are twofold: 1) to give SOIS students a chance to immerse themselves within nature and appreciate the natural beauty shared amongst us here in Japan, and 2) to serve our local community by picking up trash so that we can maintain these special environments for those who inhabit them and those who wish to enjoy them."

Although the Nature Beautification Project works hard to clean up the litter in the local environment, Skye reminds us that, "While picking up trash is important, we must also remember that all of this trash has one source: us. Ultimately, our consumption habits need to change if we truly want to see a decrease of our degradation of the environment."



Photo by Skye Inada



## Editorial by Tyus Sheriff, Tango Club President

As teenagers, many of us find ourselves in a confusing position. We're told by adults to step outside the "bubble of ignorance" we've been living in for so many years—to put down the game controller and pick up a newspaper. We're told to educate ourselves about *real issues* plaguing the world—civil war, gun violence, famine. But, once we begin vocalizing our thoughts about these issues, we're told: "Oh, you're still a child—don't talk about issues you don't fully understand." We look outside of our bubble, only to be dismissed because we've been living in a bubble.

This isn't anything new, either. Jon Grinspan, a historian at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, writes of how "For much of the first century of American politics, young people operated as unpaid foot soldiers of partisan political armies," campaigning "behind the scenes, handing out ballots and emptying spittoons." And yet, when it came time for the youth to express their ideas, adults would dismiss them as "unsophisticated." Grinspan writes of a 16-year-old antislavery activist in the 1800s who was laughed at for his "childish enthusiasm" after which he was "coolly reminded that he was a boy."

Today, the youth are as vocal as ever. The news cycle has been dominated by the likes of Greta Thunberg, David Hogg, and Joshua Wong. And, despite the adversity they encounter, from Reddit-lurking trolls to politicians scoffing at their naivety, none of them seem to falter in pursuit of their ideals. The truth is, millennials and members of "Generation Z" are tired of inaction; dialogue with people in power seems to have led nowhere, and, if politicians aren't getting the job done, we feel the need to do something ourselves. After all, it's our future.

Recently, this very frustration towards the often condescending and unproductive attitude of certain members of older generations has culminated in the proliferation of the dismissive retort: "OK Boomer." It's a phrase that says: "You can criticize us all you want, but we don't care. At least we're trying to do something."

At the same time, I don't want our intergenerational discourse to be at a place where we're mutually dismissing each other. I don't want to have to resort to "OK Boomer." Instead, I'm sure I speak for many when I say I want all people of all generations and backgrounds to work together, mutually respecting each other's perspectives.

In this edition of *Tango*, you'll find articles by students—students who are marching for democracy, students who are fed up with government negligence towards the climate crisis. You'll find thoughts and opinions about the world we live in. Yes, many of us don't understand life. None of us have fully entered the "real world." But, all of us have seen enough of the world to know that things aren't perfect—and we at least feel like some of our ideas could help society. So, if you're an adult reading this, please take our words seriously. We'll take your words seriously, too.



## "It Was More Like a Festival Than a Protest"

### SOIS Students and Teachers March for Climate Change Awareness

by Aimi Mizuno

On September 20, 2019, damp, humid air surrounded us and rain poured down on the people taking part in the strike. The Global Climate March was an international strike that took place in 117 countries and areas simultaneously. Young and old citizens who were concerned about environmental problems hit the streets to voice their concerns. This march was first started by a 15-year-old Swedish girl, Greta Thunberg, in the summer of 2018, and the main objective for this march is to show the government and the UN how concerned people are about these issues.

This march started at 5 p.m. and a group of SOIS students joined, starting at the Osaka City Central Public Hall. We then walked our way to Umeda station. In total, it was about a 1-hour march.

Some teachers who participated in this event included Mrs. Henbest, our OIS elementary art teacher with her beautiful climate umbrella, Ms. Rumble, our middle/high school biology and science teacher, Ms. Lewis, our OIS 4th grade teacher, and Ms. Mecklem, our OIS learning lab teacher.

Most of the young demonstrators were marching at the front of the march, but since we students were marching with the teachers, we were towards the back. Around us, there were people from different backgrounds and in different situations. There was a person in a wheelchair holding a protest sign. There were tourists from overseas participating, too. They were chanting a slogan they had composed, since they couldn't pronounce the Japanese slogan.

During the march, many other people joined midway, including some students from OIS, and we ended the march near Umeda station.

The atmosphere of the march was more like a festival than a protest. Some people were playing the Japanese drum and they were chanting the slogan that they had composed for the day. The message of the slogan was to stop coal-fired power generation and reduce CO2 emission.

There are many global citizens who are concerned about the problem of climate change. However, looking at recent news, such as President Trump officially announcing America's withdrawal from the Paris agreement for the 4th of this November, the world is not dealing with this crisis adequately. It is time for governments around the world to get together and work towards a better future for our planet.



Photos by Aimi Mizuno

## What Does It Mean to Be an Ally of the LGBTQ Community?

with Erika Hatsuda

Erika Hatsuda is an ally of the LGBTQ community. In the past she has taken an active role in the Rainbow Week Committee and still takes every chance she can get to speak out in support of her LGBTQ friends in their struggle for acceptance. We spoke to Erika about what it means to her to be an ally.

### What does it mean to be an ally to the LGBTQ community?

It means you support the community. You don't have to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, etc. to be a part of their community or be an ally, but just be on their side and support them when they truly need it.

### When did you become an ally, and why did you become one?

I can't really say when, because I was never against the community. I just became a dedicated ally when I found out about the discrimination they faced and how unfair it was. I wanted to spread the word and show people what it really is like.

### What good experiences have you had as an ally?

I got to take part in different activities as well as learn more about the community. There were many things I got to learn, and a few that really shocked me.

### Have you had any negative experiences as an ally? How should such experiences be handled?

Not really, but if I ever experience something bad I would educate the person who is talking negatively, and tell them what it is like to be treated unfairly just because you identify with a different gender than what you were born with, or if you are attracted to people of your own gender, etc.

### If someone wants to become an ally of the LGBTQ community, what steps should they take?

It's not that hard to be an ally. As long as you believe that what they think they are is right then it really isn't hard. Be a part of a club if you have time, which I don't at the moment. However, I remember when I was a part of the club last year, it really was a good experience to properly understand the LGBTQ community.



## Welcome, Ms. Mel

### An interview with Aoto Utsugi

SOIS has a new librarian, Ms. Mel. Up-and-coming Tango reporter Aoto Utsugi sat down with her to ask her a few questions.

#### So, can you describe your life before coming to this school?

My life before coming to this school was in Singapore. I was at the Canadian International School which is 3,000 strong, so it was a very large campus and an extremely busy place. One of the disadvantages was that you didn't get to see many people and you didn't always know the students' names. So it was a busy spot.

#### What is your favorite part about this school?

What I really like about the Senri and Osaka International School is the fact that we have two campuses together. It's a unique opportunity for me as a librarian working with a Japanese colleague and I like the fact that I have a chance to know all my kids' names.

#### What kind of changes would you like to bring to the library?

One thing that I struggle with within the library is the set-up, but that's going to be soon resolved because we're hoping to have a library renovation. The large, open space means that noise really bounces, and right now students are not actively responsible for how they're using technology. So, although it's really nice to be able to come in and watch videos and play video games, I don't know if the library's the place for that, so we're going to work together so that everybody has a space. So there is a space for people to be able to do that, but also space for people to study—trying to get a better balance.

#### What does a librarian, like you, do every day at school?

I do lots of different things. So one of the things I get to do is that I get to work with teachers and students in the library, looking at research skills and recommending books, so a librarian does have a love of reading, but we also have a love of digital literacy, so working on digital literacy, citations, which is everyone's favorite, and sometimes librarians go into the classroom, supporting classes by going in and working alongside teachers. And we also get to do delightful things like book shopping and working with parents on different projects.

#### So what is your favorite part about being a librarian?

My favorite part is honestly the books. I'm an avid reader and I like to read lots of different things. I love young adult literature—that's one of my favorites—and I love to share that with other people. I find that the students here are avid readers and I enjoy sharing that with them.



#### So what books are you reading at the moment?

I just finished something called *The Fifth Wave* which is a science fiction book. I'm also reading Neal Shusterman: *The Toll*, the third in a series, which I am really excited about, and I'm working on my masters, so I'm reading lots of research papers on mental health and technology use and adolescence.

#### On the other hand, what is your least favorite part about being a librarian?

My least favorite part is probably how much I walk around here and say "shh", which I'm assuming is also the student's least favorite part about me being a librarian.

#### Is there anything you would like to tell the SOIS community?

That it's just been a pleasure to be here. It's really good for my son, myself, and my husband. I found the community to be really welcoming and warm, and it's wonderful to be in Japan.

Thank you.



Pictured: Ms. Mel celebrating books with elementary students and Geronimo Stilton on Book Character Day.

Pictured: Ms. Mel enjoying Japan with her family.



# Introducing Mr. Jackson

## An interview with Minami Matsushima

Minami, one of Tango's top reporters, interviewed Mr. Jackson, so that Tango readers could get to know him a little better.

**M:** You're our head of the school now, but all heads start off as teachers. What inspired you to be a teacher?

**Mr. Jackson:** As a musician I was always curious about how people achieve a high standard in various areas of music. This curiosity led me from studying music and playing music, to eventually teaching music. When I first started teaching, I really didn't have any idea of what I was going to do, since kids are a bit tricky in the sense that they don't always necessarily do what you want them to do. It's not easy to get the students to make the journey. But learning to give them the right things at the right times, learning how to encourage and motivate them, so that they feel excited to go home and practice, was what really inspired me as a teacher.

**M:** Wow...that just made me feel really inspired as well. So why and how did you transition from being a music teacher to being head of school?

**Mr. Jackson:** Well, by my late thirties, I was interested not only in music but in other subjects as well, and, on an even larger scale, how schools as a whole are organised. I was very passionate about wanting everything in my school to be good. I wanted my school to be a place in which all students had a fantastic experience, no matter what the classes they were taking might be, or whoever their teachers might be. I understood that the school needed to operate in a certain way for that to be possible.

I started taking courses, and eventually went from being a music teacher to the MYP coordinator, then school principal, and finally to where I am today. I'm still working on it, and it's definitely not easy, but I'm often surprised about how it's a little complicated in the same way kids are complicated.

**M:** Being head of school is complicated in the same way kids are? My trivial "problems" have never felt more validation.

**Mr. Jackson:** I actually approach leading schools in the same way I used to approach teaching. It actually has a lot to do with asking people to do right things at the right times in the right ways to get the right results. That's where things get slightly complicated, but that's also one of the things I like about my job.

**M:** What would you say is your favourite thing about your job?

**Mr. Jackson:** Solving problems.

**M:** Your *favourite* part is solving problems??

**Mr. Jackson:** Yes, how everything is like one big puzzle for me to try to help and solve. A lot of what I do involves people coming in through the door, sending me emails, telling me about what needs sorting out, what has gone wrong, how to improve learning, etc. It's really all a big puzzle, and I need to help find the solution.

**M:** That sounds very stressful to me. I would NEVER be able to deal with all of those problems.

**Mr. Jackson:** I don't always manage to either! Sometimes I end up making things worse, but the process of being able to solve these problems and help others to create a better community is definitely my favourite part of this job.

**M:** It sounds like we're in amazing hands...I digress, but I had no idea you were a music teacher. Just out of curiosity, which instrument did you use to play?

**Mr. Jackson:** I was a clarinetist when I was taking music in college, but lately I've been really enjoying singing and playing the guitar. I'm very serious about guitar, and I actually practise everyday.

**M:** I've heard about the Friday Flex guitar sessions from the MYP students! Well it sounds like you're really passionate about music, but if you could choose a different career, what would it be?

**Mr. Jackson:** If I could change my career to anything, I'd definitely choose to become a blues guitarist.

Right now, I'm doing an experiment where I'm practising the guitar. Is it possible to start now? Am I too old? Can I do it or not? I reckon I'd have the answers in 4 or 5 years time. With luck I'd be able to quit doing this job!



Photo by Dave Algie

**M:** LOL, love that.

**Mr. Jackson:** I'd be quite old by that time... but yes, when I retire, I would love to be able to play the guitar.

**M:** Before you retire though, what are some things you want to implement in our school?

**Mr. Jackson:** (*long pause*) There're so many I'd better grab my list...

**M:** Wait, what?

**Mr. Jackson:** This question is actually very difficult to answer, as it implies that there are things that are wrong or not good about this school. This school is very, very good, there have been so many things I've been amazed by since I've gotten here. I've been watching and enjoying fantastic things. So to answer your question, I'd like to change anything that can improve learning, to make OIS a happy school that students want to go to, where students feel respected, and able to achieve their maximum at. Anything in that general direction.

**M:** Aww...that sounds like an amazing school. Just a few more questions — what is your favourite food?

**Mr. Jackson:** Did you just ask me for my favourite *food*? Oh, well...Korean food. In particular, dolsot bibimbap. *Absolutely* delicious, and very healthy.

**M:** Favourite colour?

**Mr. Jackson:** Hmm...the colour of blue sea. It's just the most beautiful sight in the world.

**M:** Favourite musician?

**Mr. Jackson:** As of now B.B. King or Jimi Hendrix. As a player, I aspire to be somewhere between them.

**M:** Favourite meme?

**Mr. Jackson:** Meme? Oh my, I'm not a very meme kind of person. I must say though, I love those cute cat videos. AND DOGS. They're very cute. I love animals.

**M:** Final question — who do you admire and why?

**Mr. Jackson:** Apart from guitarists you mean? Loads of people. In particular, within the school, I must say it's the students who remain positive and contribute to the community. The kind of people who are friendly to everyone, effortlessly nice, and everyone in the class just loves them. Everyone gets along with them, and are comfortable around them.

**M:** (*Nodding vigorously*)

**Mr. Jackson:** You know how there's that one person everyone gets along with, and are comfortable around? Is it you?

**M:** No, no, definitely not.

**Mr. Jackson:** Me neither. I really do admire that skill. I always wonder how they manage to do that. If you figure it out, please let me know.



## *Kansai Regional University Fair and Our Unforeseen Futures*

*by Tanishka Murthy*

On September 12, SOIS hosted the annual Kansai Regional University Fair. For the previous two years, this fair had been hosted by Canadian Academy, so we were extremely lucky as SOIS students to be able to attend the fair in the comfort of our own school.

The students who attended the fair ranged from fairly young students in elementary school to 12th graders nearing the end of their high school lives. Although the urgency to gather information about universities may differ depending on which grade you are in, it's always good to think ahead and gather information.

There were approximately 125 universities attending, including schools from the US, the UK, Australia and many more. Among those 125 universities was also a booth for Kwansei Gakuin University which was helpful for any SIS or OIS students planning on enrolling there after graduating high school. Many students in SIS are considering going to Kwansei Gakuin University after high school. However whether you plan to stay in Japan or go to an Ivy League university in the states, attending the university fair definitely has its benefits.

By going to the university fair, you can learn about what these universities have to offer and what suits you best. For students who did not attend the university fair, it should be mentioned that having somewhat of an idea about what you are interested in in terms of university courses makes the process of learning about the school much easier. It also at the same time makes the job of the representative from each university easier since they will have better information to provide you with.

Another benefit of attending the fair is if you have a clear idea of the courses you want to take in college; each school can give you a proper answer about whether or not that specific school is right for you. The representatives are usually extremely helpful in informing us on whether the school we are looking at will have the courses we want or whether it will provide us with the right opportunities.

We all have different conditions when looking into universities, but at the university fair, finding the right university for you becomes so much easier because you get information directly from a representative of the school. If you find one that has the courses you are looking for and provides opportunities that benefit your future. That's it. You've found yourself the perfect school!

One piece of advice that may be useful is that you should know that the fair requires a lot of speaking and communication with the representatives from each university. You will need to come out of your comfort zone (as scary as that is) and talk to a lot of different people in order to get all the information you need. If it's your first time attending the university fair, it will definitely be nerve wracking in the beginning, however you as you go on, you will get used to the atmosphere and will start to find it interesting and helpful.



Photo by Sang Hyun Kim

Students currently in the 11th or 12th grade may possibly have an idea of what their life after high school looks like. However, I'm sure students who are yet to start IB, or yet to start high school are perhaps stressing because they have no idea what to do with their life after high school? Well, I myself have been stressing about that a lot this year as well ( Even though I still have 4 years. Haha.), and one thing I learned from the university fair is that even though it may seem like you have a lot of time, time is going to just fly by and you'll be making life changing decisions before you know it. Although we may have some time until we make final decisions, gathering information from an early stage and starting to think about what we want will help us feel more confident in our decisions (I hope) when the time actually comes.

Got questions about what's going on at SOIS?

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**SOIS Student Life  
Announcements**

[senri.online/SOIS-SLA](https://senri.online/SOIS-SLA)  
(OR [bit.ly/SOIS\\_SLA](https://bit.ly/SOIS_SLA))



## ***Sengari Trip a Real Highlight for DP Biology Students***

*by Nanami Hasegawa*

"You went to a camping site to do biology? You guys are such nerds!" said a physics student who was secretly jealous that he did not get to go on an overnight trip to complete his physics internal assessment. Although there are more reasons to take biology as a DP subject, this Sengari trip is one of the highlights of the course. The OIS G12 biology students went on an overnight trip to Sengari Camp to conduct fieldwork research as part of their curriculum.

We departed right after school on Thursday, September 26th. Once we arrived on the site, we had some downtime so some of us enjoyed a game of table tennis, while others explored the site in preparation for the data collection on the next day. When it came time for dinner, we gathered around the barbeque site and enjoyed a delicious meal cooked by Ms. Rumble and Mr. Sala. Once our stomachs were full, it was time to satisfy our sweet tooth. We huddled around a campfire while we failed to toast our marshmallows. This was our last school trip so we treasured the moment as we listened to each other's conversations under the stars. "It was more than just a science trip, it further strengthened the bond within our class," commented Noah. It made us realize how fortunate we were to be surrounded by one another during our senior year.

The breakfast the next morning got people out of their beds. We were served a traditional Japanese breakfast with salmon, rice and miso soup, which many of us were excited about. With food in our stomachs, we were excited to begin our fieldwork research. Explorations ranged from the effect of canopy coverage on biodiversity, size of spider webs, and effects of soil moisture. Each of us created an investigation and spent the entire morning collecting data from mother nature. "Although it was hard work, we were able to investigate our interests and were rewarded by the perfect cloudy weather," said Skye who braved through his allergies to collect his data. As we were out in the open, we faced challenges that were unpredictable. Many of us found ourselves walking through multiple golden orb weaver spider webs when moving through the forest. For a person that has grown up in the city, trying to take out the remains of the web from my clothes was a hassle.

Despite the spider webs, this trip would be one of the highlights for senior year. Many of us were in the midst of applying to colleges and working towards predicted grades, so taking a break from our daily lives was refreshing. It gave us an opportunity to reconnect with each other and experience the beauty of nature. Moreover, it has made us realize how biology is present in the real world. We were able to apply what we learned in class, such as how to measure biodiversity, in real life by going into the forest and collecting data from nature. Kudos to Ms. Rumble and Mr. Sala for making sure we didn't get lost in the wilderness and creating a memorable trip.



Photos courtesy of Allana Rumble

## ***A New Chapter for Tango***

***Busy students find time to be journalists.....and leaders***

This year, Tango will be led by President Tyus Sheriff (OIS 12) and Vice Presidents Yu Takahashi, and Tasuku Azuma (Both SIS 12). All three are taking IBDP and are terribly busy. In fact, Yu had a scheduling clash so couldn't attend our first meeting where the Tango club picture was taken. In spite of how busy they are, Tyus, Yu and Tasuku will continue the contributions to Tango they have been making for many years, with the added challenge of leading the club, advising Mr. Algie and inspiring the bright young talents coming through, some of which is pictured in the photo opposite.

One thing that has made Tango special is that its writers and journalists have always been fully engaged in the SOIS school life they so often write about. With seasoned campaigners leading the way, and enthusiastic new rookies on the beat, this looks set to continue for many years to come.



Photo by Dave Algie

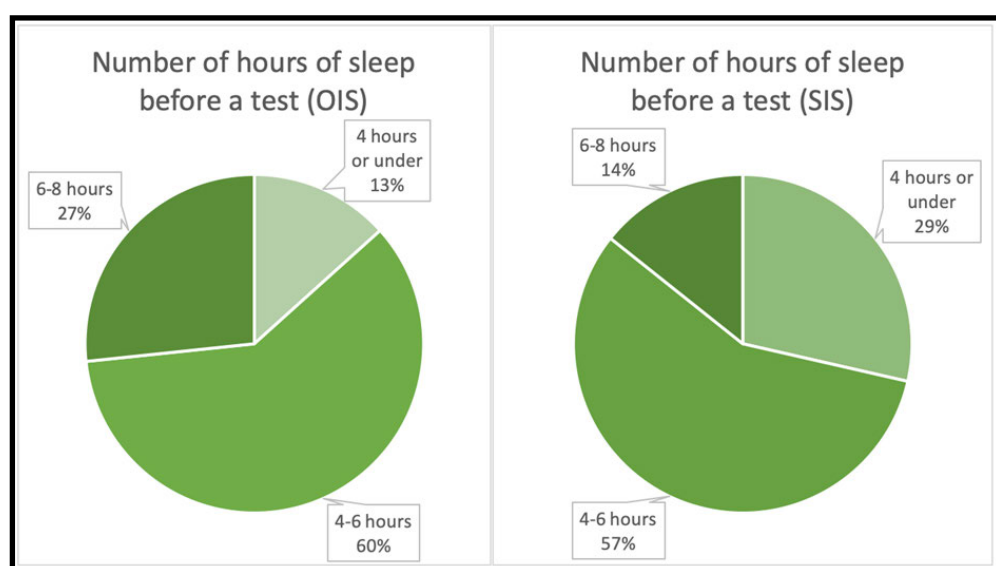


## SO (IS) SLEEPY

by Tasuku Azuma

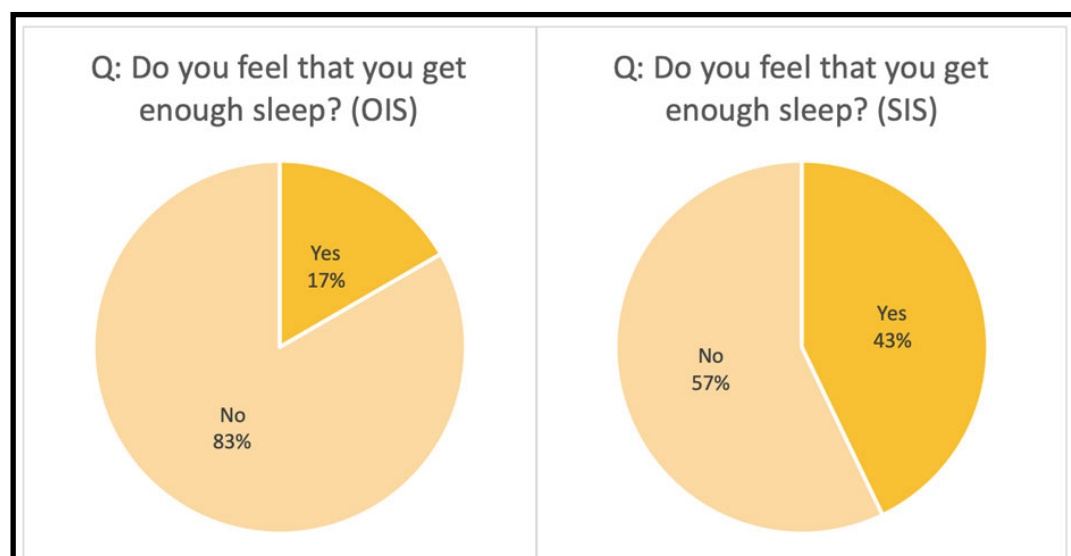
Last Friday, Grade 12 students submitted the final draft of their Extended Essays, which they have – or should have – been working on since the start of grade 11. It is a 4,000 word essay (8000 characters for Japanese). As I entered my first class for the day, I asked my friend, who clearly looked haggard, “When did you sleep last night?”. He replied; “No, I stayed up, all night”.

Conversations like this have become the norm, as the grade is currently pressed under a number of assignments and university applications, in addition to revising for unit tests for every subject. Especially before assignments are due, lack of sleep becomes not only the norm but also becomes glorified, signifying a student’s devoted effort toward the course. In such conditions, most people cannot concentrate well during other classes, and some – not to mention myself – succumb to the temptation of closing their eyelids. The same applies for the day of the test, as students meticulously memorize historians’ quotes, or religiously solve questions on stoichiometry. As a student moving from SIS to OIS, I have felt that OIS DP students are constantly in need of sleep, and this led me to investigate difference in hours of sleep before a test, between OIS and SIS. A brief survey was conducted (n=22), and the result is as follows:



The result was rather surprising, as the overall trend indicates more hours of sleep for OIS students, compared to SIS students. The greatest gap between the two can be seen in the lowest class, with more than twice as many students getting 4 or fewer hours of sleep in SIS, compared to OIS. Although this questionnaire did not target a large population, it serves as a basis to understand the actuality of sleep deprivation being more prominent in SIS, than OIS.

However, another question in the survey reveals a counter-intuitive result; the question asked, “Do you feel that you get enough sleep?”. The result indicates that nearly half of the SIS students who answered felt that the length of sleep was sufficient, whereas less than one-fifth of the OIS students answered felt the lack of sleep. Relating back to the first survey results, OIS students tend to feel lack of sleep, despite having relatively greater hours of sleep compared to SIS. Therefore, it can be said that in OIS, the demand and supply of sleep is in imbalance, where relatively the relatively longer duration of sleep does not seem to meet the students’ needs.



One possible reason for this outcome of survey, is the difference in course design. Tests are scheduled at the end of a unit in OIS, which can be as short as a fortnight, whereas the majority of SIS classes have mid-term, and end of term test, as their classes are designed to conclude in a trimester. As this results in much more frequent tests for OIS students than SIS students, it explains the reason for OIS students experiencing lack of sleep.

Another potential reason to explain this result, is quality of sleep. As the majority of the survey targeted grade 12 students, it is most probable that number of hours spent in front of computer screen exposing their eyes to blue light for a prolonged duration, hindered the quality of their sleep. Although computers are beginning to be used in a number of SIS classes, not all classes are required to do so, while the OIS and IB DP curriculum heavily relies on the use of computers. According to National Sleep Foundation, it is best recommended that people set “digital curfew”, which can be as short as 30 minutes before bed. It should be noted that it is ineffective to stay awake for another half an hour after last using a computer, as it breaks the original purpose of having enough sleep. This time can be used to go over notes, or read books, under lamplight. By doing this, sleep hormone melatonin is no longer suppressed from being released, and it induces longer duration of REM (Rapid eye movement) sleep, ensuring quality sleep.

Through the survey, it became apparent that OIS students tend to feel the lack of sleep, despite having longer mean sleeping hours compared to SIS, and it was speculated that this was due to frequent tests and use of computers in OIS. Sleep is an absolute requirement for students to perform well sustainably, but paradoxically, it is also the first on the list to be sacrificed for studying time. Hopefully, we will find just a right equilibrium of the two demands before we seniors go off to universities.

How and Why Using Electronic Devices at Night Can Interfere With Sleep. (n.d.). Retrieved November 26, 2019, from <https://www.sleepfoundation.org/articles/why-electronics-may-stimulate-you-bed>.

## Quotes about Lack of Sleep

*Methought I heard a voice cry “Sleep no more”*

*Macbeth doth murder sleep,” the innocent sleep*

*Sleep that knits up the ravell'd sleeve of care,*

*The death of each day's life, sore labor's bath,*

*Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course,*

*Chief nourisher in life's feast.”*

Macbeth Act 2 Scene 2, Lines 40-44. William Shakespeare

*The sound you make is muzak to my ears*

*You must have learned something in all those years*

*How do you sleep?*

*Ah, how do you sleep at night?*

How do you sleep? John Lennon

*And the policeman said*

*I'm here to keep the peace*

*Will the crowd please disperse*

*I'm here to keep the peace tonight.*

*I think we could all use some sleep.*

Behind the Wall Tracy Chapman



# Plastic Pollution Poisoning Paradise

by Karin Shimoo

"Our oceans will contain more plastic than fish by 2050". This is the UN Environmental Assembly's slogan on plastic pollution, effectively expressing the dire situation of the plastic pollution crisis. More than 300 million tonnes of plastic waste is produced every single year, with only 14% of that waste being recycled into a reusable material. The majority of our waste is incarcerated, filled in landfills, or even worse, illegally dumped into the natural environment.

The plastic pollution problem, along with any other environmental issue, is something that I am deeply passionate about. This passion roots from my relationship with nature; to me, being in nature relieves me of my stresses—it's essentially a sanctuary for my mind and soul. And, being an IB student, my dependency on nature to work its remedial magic on my stressed mind is increasing daily. Seeing the natural environment suffer as a consequence of the irresponsibility and ignorance of humankind is heartbreaking and fills me with resentment towards mankind. Particularly when it comes to the plastic pollution problem.

During this summer holiday, I had an experience that really alarmed me of the extent of plastic's contamination into the environment. I had been participating in a local beach clean-up, and as I was picking up the heaps of trash, I discovered an おかき (okaki) wrapper that caught my eye. The wrapper was tucked away behind a small colony of bushes, entangled to one of the weeds. The edges were frayed and the writing on the wrapper was starting to fade, but I could still make out the letters that told the due date. To my horror and dismay, the おかき's expiry date was written as : July 2008. 2008! The wrapper had been sitting on the beach for more than ten years. My brother just turned nine years old this year. The frayed おかき wrapper had been sitting on this beach in Toyama even before my brother was born. To me, this encounter put everything in perspective. We often hear daunting figures and estimates (such as "our oceans will contain more plastic than fish by 2050") but it's difficult to resonate with these facts, as they can be hard to imagine. My experience at the beach clean-up, as dramatic as it may sound, was truly an eye-opener for me, and suddenly, the threat of plastic pollution was more real and frightening than ever. The realization that the plastic pollution problem was affecting literally the entire world, even the remote countryside of Japan that I call home, brought with it the realisation that urgent action needs to be taken.

I think it is this realization, that we are indeed on the road to a terrible future, and the sense of urgency followed by this realization, that is driving young people such as myself to fight for a greener future. In recent years, particularly in the last two years after the rise of Greta Thunberg, more and more young people are rising up to combat environmental issues. One particular example of the collective desire of the youth for a greener future is the SOIS Nature Beautification Club. Not only does the enthusiasm of the members represent the shared sentiment amongst the youth around the world, the Nature Beautification Club received appraisal from around the world on Reddit, after a post went viral on the social media site. On the 23rd of November, five members of the Nature Beautification Club including myself went on a hiking trip in the Minoh Mountains with the objective of collecting waste, particularly plastic waste. During six hours, we collected roughly 300 plastic bottles, hundreds of plastic bags, and other wastes such as a disfigured head of a mannequin. Skye posted about the experience on Reddit, and the post made the front page of Reddit during the same day. As of now, the article has 80.8k upvotes, and surely, this indicates that the sense of urgency is felt amongst the people around the world.

Responding to these calls for actions, more and more nations are imposing bans on certain single use plastics such as plastic bags. Kenya has one of the strictest bans on plastic bags, where offenders could face up to four years in prison. Meanwhile, as a country that wraps individual carrots and places five pieces of lettuce in a plastic box, Japan has some major catching up to do.

In terms of our school community, we have an exciting project in the works that will contribute to the global effort against plastic pollution. The Eco Club (which I happen to be the leader of) is working in collaboration with Mr. Myers, Ms. Namba and Mr. Lewis to build receptacles for plastic bottles.

The school has recently found a company that is willing to recycle our plastic bottle waste— and for people such as Ms. Inada who has fought for the recycling of our bottles for many years, this recent news comes as a victory and a step in the right direction. Other students in the school community, such as the Eco-Bricking Club who aims to reuse PET-bottles as materials for furniture, are also joining in the global movement against plastic pollution. As someone who greatly cares about this issue, it's reassuring to see that members of our school also feel the same way. And I hope that this article sparks more conversation about how we can change as a school and reduce our consumption of plastic waste.



Photo by author showing the okaki wrapper along with other collected pieces of trash



Photo by author showing the rubbish collected by the Nature Beautification Club

1 #BeatPlasticPollution This World Environment Day , Unenvironment.org , <https://www.unenvironment.org/interactive/beat-plastic-pollution/>. Accessed 20 November 2019

2 "FAQs on Plastics." Our World in Data, <https://ourworldindata.org/faq-on-plastics>. Accessed 21 November 2019

3 Watts, Jonathan. "Eight Months on, Is the World's Most Drastic Plastic Bag Ban Working?" The Guardian, Guardian News and Media, 25 Apr. 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/apr/25/nairobi-clean-up-highs-lows-kenyas-plastic-bag-ban>. Accessed 21 November 2019



## *The Best Sports Day I Have Ever Had* by Janet Jones

As clichéd as this sounds, this year was the best Sports Day I have ever had in my many years of being at SOIS. I cannot exactly explain why it was, but the overall feeling of sports day this year was one unlike any other.

In my fifth middle and high school sports day, I was able to once again be take part in the performance leaders' committee for my grade, as I have since the seventh grade. Even though we did not get first place this year like we did for our performance last year, we came a close second. We were extremely happy with these results, especially because there was very little time for practice. Unfortunately, we were "blessed" with having blue as our team color for the second year in a row; but we were definitely able to pull off this color with the use of this year and last year's t-shirts throughout our performance. As usual, being part of the performance committee takes a lot of commitment because of all the extra hours that are put into thinking of a storyline, choreography, and getting people to actually participate and remember the choreography. This year was most definitely a struggle due to how busy all of the leaders were because of school, now that we are getting older. However, by the end, we came up with a performance that arguably should have been first place.

I felt like this year there were more people involved throughout Sports Day, which I think is a major reason why this year was so great. This was thanks to the High-School Student Council since they incorporated new activities that allowed more students with less athletic abilities to be able to participate in the activities. Also, more people were committed to cheering on each other during all of the activities, especially during the relay races.

Many of us are speculating that the winners of next year's sports day maybe us, the 11th graders. This is because usually every year the seniors (12th grade) win but because this year there was only a five-point difference for the overall points. There is a possibility that my grade just might win.

I am already looking forward to next year's sports day: for the team color, theme, new activities and most of all, the performance. I definitely recommend people to join the performance, even though you may feel like you can't join because you're not good enough. The reality of performance is that no one is extremely good alone, but that the end result only looks good because of the work that the students performing put in, together as a team.





New OIS Middle School Students Settling in Well

by Melody Meline and Haruna Yusa

Every school year we get new students from different places around the world. Each with a different story. Each comes to the school as a new student, but soon enough they are welcomed into the SOIS community and become a Saber Strong student. However, being new can be tough, so we interviewed a new student to OIS 7th grade to find out what it feels like joining the SOIS community.

We interviewed Anju Manfred, who had joined the grade 7 class after the summer break. We asked her what she enjoyed about OIS and what she didn't enjoy as much, and she said that she enjoys the interaction between SIS and OIS, however, she doesn't enjoy how constantly people are on their phones.

After being asked whether she feels accepted or not, she said that she feels both welcomed and accepted.

When asked what is different from previous schools she'd been to, she claimed that Managebac was a new and confusing program and that maybe there should be more of an explanation on how to use it, as she had never previously used something like it before.

And finally, after being asked whether she interacts with SIS members and her opinions on the 'two schools, one community,' she said "I like interacting with SIS especially during sports and I like the "two schools" but we really still feel like "two different schools".

Along with new students, we also have Elementary fifth-graders join Middle School. Some of them are prepared for middle school, while others are a little afraid. We interviewed an OIS 6th grader to see how they feel about joining the Middle School Program.

We interviewed Ellen Tanabe, who has been at OIS since kindergarten. When we asked how she feels about being a sixth-grader, she said, "I feel like I have more freedom. When there are tests, It's really nerve-racking and I can tell that there is more homework but not as much as I expected. Other than that, I think middle school is really fun."

Some sixth-graders were having some difficulty getting used to the MYP Program. According to Ellen, "In the beginning of middle school, I was really scared of not getting completely good grades and not being able to do certain things but after a while, the teachers encouraged me and helped me which made me feel much better." She said that, "One thing I miss about elementary is all the fun activities we did." In elementary, there was more time to play and have fun with the class. However, while Middle School may not have as many enjoyable activities as Elementary did, there are more opportunities to play sports and have more enjoyment at lunch as well. Ellen states, "I love that we can play more sports after school and during lunch." As in middle school, we have after-school sports to participate in and have the chance to be able to play with the sports equipment during lunch.

Fifth graders were used to the system of having tests but were not as familiar with the idea of having them so often. "I think that the tests are challenging for me.", Ellen says when asked what is difficult in middle school. The way tests are graded, along with the topics are also different. In elementary, working on projects was more common, for example, the PYP Exhibition, a project fifth graders work on as a final assessment to see whether to be accepted into the MYP Program or not. So, the system of having tests frequently can be quite challenging.

Overall, sixth graders and new students seem to be quite comfortable at OIS. They have gotten used to the middle school environment, especially at this point in the school year. However, new students may have some issues, and it is important to help them out if they need it.

What Is Your Favorite Spot in School and Why?

9th Grade

Eun Hah (OIS)

*"The Sabers Fitness Floor. Working out is tough, but it's pretty fun when you're with your friends."*



11th Grade

Michelle Hagman (OIS)

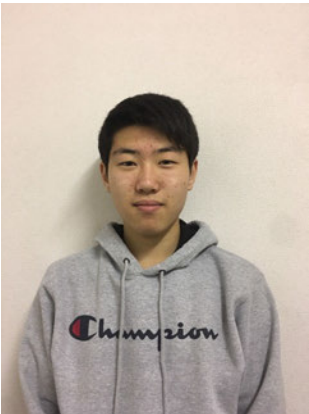
*"The hidden garden near the science patio. It's kind of hard to describe the location, but it's almost like a nature sanctuary that's closed off from the rest of the campus even though it's right in the middle of it. It feels removed and peaceful."*



10th Grade

Rui Tamura (SIS)

*"The field. I can relax there during unscheduled periods and play sports with my friends."*



12th Grade

Caitlin Gazzard (SIS)

*"The courtyard... When it's open. That's where I hang out with my friends. On a nice day, it's pretty relaxing (as long as it's not Flex Time)."*





## Roses That Grew from Concrete by Anju Manfred

I shivered in my sweatshirt, pulling on my drawstrings so the hood was tighter around my head. We were on Highway 1-580, and the swirly fog was creeping onto the road from the sides like smoke from a genie's lamp. Oakland usually wasn't this cold, but the fog had tumbled in from San Francisco. I hated when this happened.

I tapped my knuckles against the car window to the beat of the Drake song playing on the radio to warm myself up, but it had little effect. Eventually, I gave up trying to keep warm and just hummed along to the song. I knew the lyrics by heart. I had written them on a paper and taped it to my ceiling, right above my bed. "...tell 'em that it's over, ain't no debatin', all you need is me playin' on your playlist...", and so on.

"Getcha feet off my dashboard," Deiondre, my older brother, said coolly, making me look up at the dashboard. I had put my feet up without even noticing. "I get this car from Tamima, and this is how you treat it?" He continued. Tamima is our older sister. She's also the best sister in the world. "I get that it's an old car, but it's still *mine, Imani*."

I sighed, getting my feet down at a sloth's pace, looking over to him to see if the action got on his nerves. He had only one hand on the steering wheel, turning it like it took no effort at all, totally unbothered by my attempts to ruffle his feathers. His dreadlocks were long and sulky-looking because of the rain earlier today. He looked a lot like Daddy. He acted a lot like him, too. Like he knew he was too good for the world but didn't boast the fact (although he did boast the fact that he was three years, two months, and twenty-one days older than me all the time).

My reverie was broken when my younger brother started kicking the back of my chair.

"Hakim, stop that!" I turned around in my chair to face my little brother sitting in the back seat.

My eight-year-old brother was sitting unbuckled in the seat behind me, his head turned down at the screen he was holding. I couldn't actually see his face, only his thick, long curly hair. I leaned over my chair a bit more and saw that the game he was playing was a game including guns, and was actually quite gory.

"Who let you play that?"

"Uncle Adris."

I shrugged and turned back to sit back down in my seat. The car turned left as we got off the highway, starting to go into the maze of Oakland's suburban streets. Without the loudness of the traffic on the highway, I could hear the sputtering of our car engine even more now.

"What is this song, anyway?" Deiondre asked me, his tone hinting at disgust.

"'No Guidance' by Drake," I replied, shaking my head at his lack of knowledge for currently trending music. "From his newest album, too."

He scrunched his nose. "It ain't my taste."

Despite my protests, he reached over and changed the radio station, going through a couple of stations that had static. As the dial turned, it made a popping sound that sounded like somebody snapping. When Deiondre finally got to a station that satisfied him, the radio dashboard read '99.7'.

It was also a rap song, but way older than any Drake song. I scrunched my nose just like Deiondre had, half to mock him, half to just express my feelings. "Is this *Tupac Shakur*?"

Tupac Shakur was a rapper who was famous in the '90s.

"Yeah. You got a problem?"

"Nah, I just don't get him."

It was like Deiondre's world stopped when I said that. He went a bit tense and pulled over at the side of the road, in front of a tall grey house. As the car slowly came to a stop, I looked at his face and thought, "Wow, I might have found something that actually makes my brother mad" until he laughed a laugh that sounded both real and sarcastic and looked at me straight in the eyes.

"Tupac Shakur," he started, "was and is the best rapper of all time. He was a genius, Imani."

"I honestly like Little Bigs or whatever his name is better." I replied.

"Biggie Smalls!" Deiondre snapped, "Not Little Bigs. And girl, Tupac was way more amazing. Listen to these lyrics!"

I pursed my lips and listened a bit, but Tupac was only rapping about how change is good for everyone and how he wasn't mad at cha, whoever 'cha' was.

"I still don't get it. And I don't really care," I said after a bit.

"I don't care if you don't care but I care that you think of what caring is before you say you don't care."

*There he goes again, being witty*, I thought. I don't even get how he said that anyway, it's such a tongue twister. Tamima and Deiondre had the brains of the family. Hakim and I had what Momma called "couch potato genes".

"Tupac rapped about Thug Life, and he said that it stood for 'The Hate U Give, Little Infants F-s Everybody'. This *means*"—he emphasized the "means" to make sure I was still listening—"that when guardians or older people in general allow younger kids to be exposed to violence, the kids get used to it and will be involved in it when they get older."

"I-I don't...huh?"

My brother sighed, fiddling with the keys but not turning them enough for the car engine to turn on. "Look at it this way. A parent cusses in front of a kid. Kid gets used to cuss words. Kid starts cussing a lot when they're older. Then, kid's kid gets used to cussing. And then on and on. Get it?"

"No."

My brother frowned and thought for a bit. Finally, he said, "Have you checked on Makayla recently?"

A pang of sadness flooded over me like a wave with the mention of her. My jaw set and I looked out the side window, at the deserted yard we had stopped in front of.

Makayla had been my best friend when I was growing up. She used to live across the street from us, but her family had had problems. When we were nine, her daddy had died and her sister Kaia had eloped with someone outside of our city. Makayla and her momma had moved to the other side of the neighborhood shortly after that all happened, and I started seeing her only a few times a year after that.

Now, she wasn't doing so well.



"I don't know," I muttered, trying to get around the prying question.

Deiondre reached over and put his hand on my shoulder. "Her momma didn't protect her very well against the harshness of the world when she was a kid. Momma and Daddy protected us. We're what Tupac would call, 'Roses That Grew from Concrete'."

I nodded, forcing myself away from the car window. "I kinda get it, but you gotta explain later. School was tiring and I just wanna go home already."

All he said was "kay" as he turned the car engine back on. The vibration of the engine was usually familiar to me, but it felt distant now. I slumped a bit in my seat, feeling a weight on my shoulders that wasn't there before. Behind me, Hakim was still playing his violent video game, the sound of gunshots and gunshot impacts bombarding my ears.

"Hey, Hakim?"

"Yeah?" He answered, undoubtedly distracted by his video game.

"Can you turn that game off?"

"Why?"

I sighed. "I don't think it's appropriate for you. Not yet, at least."

Deiondre smiled next to me.



Image source: <https://goldbergenglish.files.wordpress.com/2011/02/rose.jpg>

## ***WSC- A Celebration of Learning***

*by Lindsay Yoo*

On November 8-13 this year, 21 students from both OIS and SIS went to Connecticut and New York to participate in the World Scholar's Cup. I was in a team with Rena Kawasaki (OIS 9) and Tomoka Matsushima (SIS 9), and we were the only junior team representing SOIS in the Tournament of Champions. WSC is divided into 3 different rounds of varied difficulties, and into juniors and seniors. First there are regionals, which was held at our school in May 2019, globals held in Beijing on June 21-26 2019, and ToC for the teams that qualified on November 8-13 2019. Schools from over 50 countries gather in one host school to celebrate learning through debates, the challenge, a team bowl, and collaborative writing. There is also a Scholar's Ball, cultural fair, and scavenger held to get to know new people.



My favorite part of participating in WSC is doing the scavenger hunt on the first day. In Beijing and ToC, scholars were split into random groups, with people they didn't know. This is a great opportunity to make new friends from all around the world, and learn about their unique cultures. All scholars are required to speak English, so there is no big language barrier. Also, once the scavenger finishes, you can reunite with your team and eat a delicious meal together. I also enjoyed doing the bowl with my team, where you use clickers to answer a question projected in an auditorium. Even though I made many mistakes and got wrong answers, it was fun because I was with my team and we stuck together.

Apart from friendships in WSC, as a school community we were able to bond and have stronger connections. Although we as juniors couldn't see the seniors too much, we still had a fun time together and grew closer. On the last day of WSC in Yale, we threw a surprise birthday party for Mr. Sheriff, which was organized by Tanishka Murthy (SIS 9). This was very special to all the members, because we were able to thank Mr. Sheriff and Ms. Namba for all their hard work in planning and organizing for WSC.

Whether or not you are good at English or public speaking, I encourage you to join WSC! I improved my debate and public speaking skills so much in just a year, and it was actually a lot of fun. A special thanks goes to Mr. Sheriff, Ms Namba, Tyus, Minami, Skye and all our teachers for understanding and rescheduling our tests!!!



Photos by Frances Namba



## *My Eiken and TOEFL Experience* by Rena Kawasaki

Over the course of the last few months, I took two Japanese-certified English exams. One was the Eiken, the Japanese national English test which was created to certify individual English ability in order to create more opportunities for people, mainly Japanese citizens, to take action globally. The other was the TOEFL which the official website defines as the 'leading English-language test for study, immigration, and work.' The reason why I took these tests as a student attending international school, was not because I needed the certification in order to go to a Japanese institution. It was because I needed a way to prove my English level in Japan. When I told my friends outside of school that I went to an international school, they would always ask, 'What is your Eiken level or TOEFL score?' As an individual that has learned English my whole life, I felt frustrated that my experience wasn't given credit and hasn't had its value understood in my own country. I completely understood that simply attending an English speaking school was not enough and I needed to prove myself, for example, in the future, when I am applying for Japanese-based scholarships in order for me to get funding to go to university. I need something that they can rely on. So I decided to use Eiken and TOEFL as a tool to help me become officially certified in Japan.

The exam process was completely different from what I imagined. I knew the exams were official and were to be tested rigorously but I didn't expect the amount of security and seriousness of both testing grounds. Eiken exams are taken in two rounds for you to get certified. Unlike the TOEFL where your score is your level, Eiken exams are taken in levels and whether or not you get certified at that level shows your ability. The first round of exams are paper examinations. In the first part, you read passages and answer questions by multiple choice. In the second section, you listen to conversations and lectures and answer questions about what you heard. Lastly, you write an opinionated essay about a certain topic and whether you agree on the given topic. These sections are called the Reading, Listening and Writing sections. The paper exams were set up like a university entrance exam in Japan and were nothing like the exams I had taken before. You would check in by ID number and sit in rooms according to your number. The very measured exam procedures were new to me and at one moment I had to call the proctor because I didn't know what year in the Japanese Imperial system I was born in. Overall, the paper exams were a nerve-racking experience in a nerve-racking environment.

After you take the paper examinations, you wait a week until your results come, which determines whether you can take the next round of exams or not. The next round of examinations is conducted in an interview format, where examinees are

scored on their speaking levels. The scoring is done in parts where you are scored on firstly your greetings and introduction of yourself and how you interact with the examiners. Then you are handed a series of four topic cards which you are to pick from to discuss your opinion. You will have one minute to prepare and four minutes to speak. After that, you will undergo a Q&A session where the examiners will ask questions about your speech. What the manual didn't tell me was that everyone else had gone through a mock interview either with their tutors or in their cram school and had the exact same format in their head. I and an SIS student that I met there watched cluelessly while the others knocked two times on the doors, asked 'May I come in?' and said 'Nice to meet you' and 'Here you are' when they handed the examiners' identification. I copied everyone else and nervously asked 'May I come in?' and then just went completely off the format I heard everyone else used because I was so nervous. And that was the end of my Eiken experience. Overall, after taking just one of the Eiken exams, I gained a massive amount of respect for the people who take these exams multiple times to achieve a higher level. I would not be able to endure that pressured environment for another round of examinations.

Next, I took the TOEFL exam. The TOEFL exam is not a Japanese made exam but made by an American company to help certify non-English speakers around the world to help them to get jobs that require English. The TOEFL exam is much like the MAP testing our school does every year, consisting of reading comprehension, writing essays, speaking tests, listening tests, all done on a computer with headsets and microphones. The hard part of the TOEFL exam is the painstakingly long examination process that is conducted over a maximum of 4 hours. I had to keep myself focused to answer the questions and complete the tasks to the maximum of my ability over the long duration of four hours. The TOEFL test is not necessarily about certification but about measuring your English level. So unlike Eiken, where the certification is identified with whether you passed or not, TOEFL shows the level of English from your score. I felt that the TOEFL exams were harder than Eiken exams because of the already high level of English used in the problems compared to the Eiken and also the very unique microphone system that they use in order to determine the individual's speaking skills.

Overall, the exams were an eye-opener about how Japanese and International standards compared to my English level and familiarized me with exam procedures in Japan and what to expect next time I want to be certified either in Japanese or International standards.

## *Student Success Center-Room 336*

Students wanting help with their IB MYP or DP work can come to the student success center every day after school from 3:30-4:30 p.m. in room 336. Teachers and tutors are available to help each day.

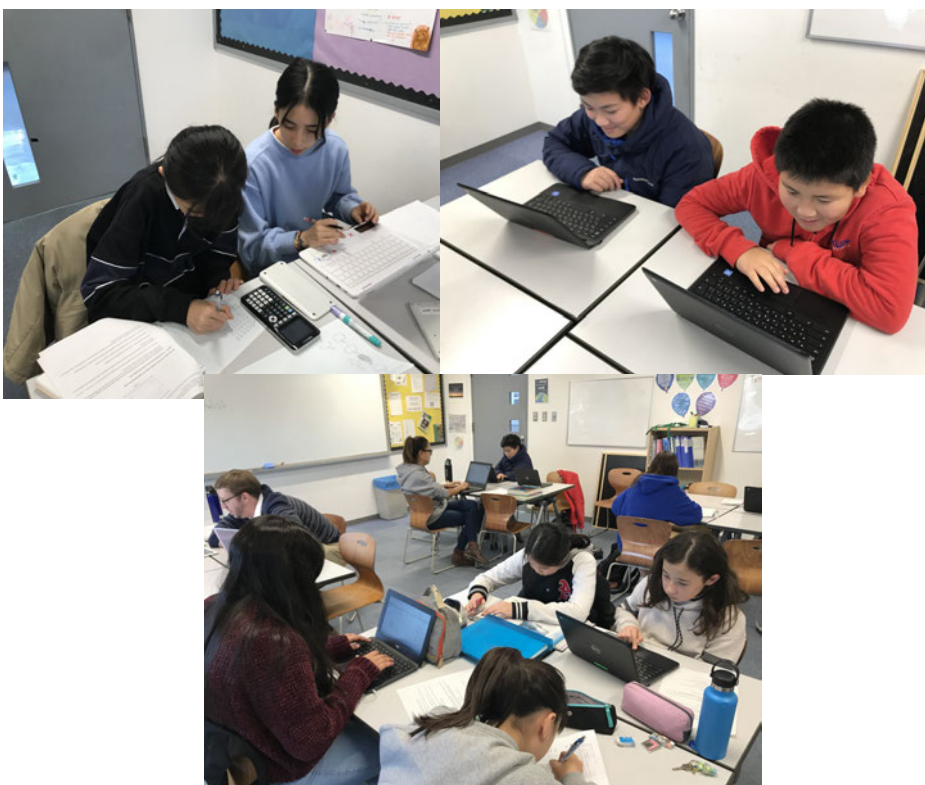
*Student Success Center is quiet so you can focus!* Yuka O

*At home, there's not always someone there to help you. But at Student Success there is always someone to help you!* Kanon

*The teachers are here so you can get help with your work.* Kate

*Student Success Center is a place where you can quietly do your homework!* Nene

*Student Success Center is a great place to get your homework finished.* Ellen



Photos above supplied by Lisa Chaleunsouk



Photo by Dave Algje



# Talking Bikes

with Yoshi Kamegai



Bicycles, they're something we see every day. Even with such a large market, the various types and colors of bicycles, it is almost impossible to find a bike that is unique. For this reason, some people even decide to buy individual parts and custom-make what they think of as *their* dream bike.

Some people who might be familiar with assembling computers and/or other DIY items probably realize that constructing an item from individual parts will cost much more than just buying the finished product. But in return, doing this will create a bike that is uniquely suited to its owner as well as produce a one-of-a-kind item.

Keeping all this in mind, bikes are expensive. Brands which collaborate with famous makers can be very pricy and bikes considered high-end specs can cost over ten thousand dollars for a single bike.

Adding to this, these bikes come in so many different variations that there are different markets just based on each branch of a type of bike. These include road-bikes, mountain bikes, crossway bikes, BMX.....the list goes on.

By now it may seem clear that finding or creating your individual dream bike is no easy task. So at this stage, I am on the lookout for a "dream bike" that I can buy to satisfy my craving to ride for the time being.

As someone who loves speed and long-distance riding, my dream bike would be a road-bike which specializes in low air resistance with thin and light wheels to maximize their speed.

So what could I look for to meet my needs?

Just taking the Shimano brand as an example, you can see how the pricing works for these kinds of bicycles. The Shimano bikes come in 7 grades, from the most elite and expensive model down to the cheapest and less sophisticated version. This doesn't mean the lower grades are weaker; some simply use different materials to make them more affordable.

Based on a projected budget of around 2,300 dollars I would be left with a choice between a grade 5 or 6 bike. Grade 5 bikes or the "Shimano 105", range from 1000 to 3000 dollars. The grade 6 bikes, Shimano Ultegra range from 2200 to 7500 dollars.

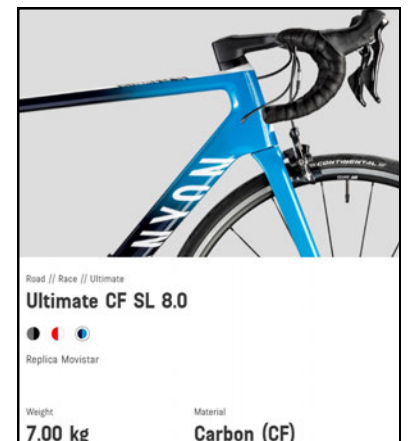
Grade 7 bikes would cost triple my budget, and although that would truly be a "dream bike", that seems beyond the budget level I could even contemplate at this stage, so it seems that a grade 6 bike would best serve as my "dream bike".

Even though this would not be a custom-made bike, and therefore the same bike would exist somewhere else in the world, in a way, the passion and the love one puts into their bike is what makes a bike unique.

After some searching, I've found a bike known as made by the Canyon company.

This maker specializes by directly sending the bikes to the user thus creating an affordable price for its customers.

I've also discovered a new bike, just on the border of my budget, called Ultimate CF SL 8.0. It is a bike that matches all of the requirements to be a dream bike. So there it is, a dream bike that is affordable, very cost efficient and meets the purpose of a high-grade road bike, meeting all the requirements for my own "dream bike".



# Keeping You App-to-Date

with Dave Algje



"Keeping You App-to-Date" was a regular Tango feature started by Owen Kralovec back in the heady days of 2017. After a hiatus, it has been brought back due to fierce online demand. This will be a short-lived renaissance for the column, because I only really know one app. But it's a doozy and everyone should consider having it on their device. It's called Flipboard, and I will tell you why it's so good.

Flipboard collects and organizes online articles-based on your own interests- for you in one app. It's super convenient.

Mr. Nicholl introduced me to Flipboard earlier in the year. You download the app for free, and fill in a survey about what interests you. I entered sport, music, politics, books and movies. Then, Flipboard collects free articles from all over the internet and gathers them for you in one place.

This means I don't need to go to CNN and then Rolling Stone Magazine, and then Politico.com to find the articles I want to read. Flipboard seems to intuitively know what I'm interested in and presents them for me in one package I can flip through a couple of times a day.

Of course, a lot of people find it a bit spooky having an app like this that seems to get to know you in slightly insidious ways. More and more, Flipboard is discerning what I might be in the mood for even before I have made a conscious decision about it. I am delighted when it finds me another article on Baby Yoda or about a bombshell from the world of politics that I am just in the mood to read. The app must use an algorithm that tracks my past reading and makes pretty accurate predictions about what will interest me. The app is watching me. So if this sort of thing makes you nervous, maybe the app isn't for you.

The articles are also very US-based. This doesn't bother me, as I like American literature, film, and music, and the political news from the US is way more exciting than news from my home country-sleepy, little old New Zealand. On the other hand, Flipboard doesn't get me the sporting articles I would be interested in reading on rugby and cricket.

I have been recommending Flipboard to students and to their parents as a way of getting easily accessible articles all in one place. Reading magazine and newspaper articles is THE way to build your vocabulary. This works best if it's done on a daily basis. Flipboard takes a lot of hassle out of that.

But as always, before you download any app to your device, make sure you know it's safe and that you have a clear plan for using it to make improvements to your daily life.





# Talking TOK

with Dave Algie



Men's



The Rugby World Cup held in Japan this year has been heralded as a great success. Japan hosted the cup with passion, style and grace. In addition, the Japanese team performed brilliantly. As well as the great rugby on display, the event provided opportunities for critical thinking about knowledge. A couple of these are briefly discussed below,

## The naming of the world cup raises a knowledge question about how naming shapes our perceptions.

The "Rugby World Cup" of 2019 was one of *two* Rugby World Cups held in recent years. The Women's Rugby World Cup was held in 2017 and was won by—let me check my notes—New Zealand. Which of these two tournaments was more important? Well, frankly, I think people see the men's tournament as the "real" world cup because we refer to it as "*The* World Cup". I've never once heard it referred to as the "The Men's Rugby World Cup". It seems to go without saying that if men are playing it, it is the most significant, so needs no clarification. The same thing applies in other sports as well. Society is so sexist! And language is so sexist! But what comes first? The sexist society or the sexist language? To what degree is our knowledge of the world—our perception—shaped by the language we use and that is used around us?

As we ponder this knowledge question, we should in the meantime be careful not to use language that inadvertently belittles or patronizes groups in society, or their achievements and worth. Women's rugby is an exciting, entertaining, growing sport. Watch some on YouTube. Check out the lethal tackling of England's Sarah Hunter, the athleticism of Australia's Ellia Green, and the speed of Papua New Guinea's Chelsea Garesa. The razzle-dazzle rugby these sportswomen play is a joy to watch. It would be silly to downplay women's rugby, even inadvertently, and allow lazy naming conventions to mislead us into undervaluing great sporting contests.

## The makeup of teams leads to the knowledge question: How do we know national identity?

This is an awkwardly phrased knowledge question, but I wanted to phrase it in a way that makes it clear that national identity is something one *knows*. I know my friend Ms. Cheney is Australian. I know another friend, Mitsuhashi sensei, is Japanese. And so on. And they know their own national identity as well, obviously.

Even though the Japanese rugby team did extremely well, there were questions from some in the press and the public as to how "Japanese" the team was. I can guarantee that each team member saw themselves as representing the nation of Japan, and proudly so. However, some players were originally from other countries including Tonga, New Zealand and South Africa.

Other rugby nations face these questions, too. One of England's best players is originally from Samoa, two were born to Tongan parents. One of Ireland's star players, Bundee Aki, was born in New Zealand to Samoan parents.

How "Irish" is Bundee Aki?

I would say, potentially, "very". I am not sure Aki even has Irish citizenship. But does this mean he isn't Irish? He has played there for years. He is raising his family there. He gives 100% when he plays. He gets emotional during the Irish anthem. Isn't this evidence he is Irish? Some of the players who represented Japan at the recent men's rugby world cup do not hold Japanese citizenship (Although Michael Leitch, born in New Zealand, is a Japanese citizen). Yet as I mentioned above, all of them almost certainly *feel* Japanese in some sense.



Image from The Mainichi. October 14 2019

You might ask, if you don't hold Japanese citizenship, a Japanese passport, how can you be Japanese? Surely you can't? Surely, the only way to be Japanese is by the Japanese government recognizing you as such?

Well, I question that mentality. Why does some state government get to determine what one's identity is?

Obviously, I know that the government can stop me rocking up to the airport, claiming to be Canadian, eh, and boarding a plane under that understanding. I'm not advocating a world in which people claim all kinds of national identities on a whim and willy-nilly. But the way I know my own identity and recognize myself should not come initially from the state, or what members in the public or press say about me

If Bundee Aki identifies as being Irish in some way, and there's evidence to back his claim, then he should be able to represent Ireland at rugby. It's highly likely that Aki does see himself as Irish. And Kiwi. And Samoan as well. That's healthy.

I think it's healthy that Japan has a multicultural rugby team, dedicated to Japan's success, soaking up Japanese language and culture while maintaining and sharing their own proud heritages and identities.

I also believe that once a person has provided evidence that they are dedicated to contributing to a nation—as every member of the Japanese rugby team has—then they should be seen as a representative, a member, a citizen of that nation.



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# Sabers Sports



## Sabers "Sports Shorts"

Coach Heimer, AD

[sabers.senri.ed.jp](http://sabers.senri.ed.jp)



Need a Christmas gift? Original Sabers t-shirts for sale @AD office.

<http://sabers.senri.ed.jp/merchandise.html>

### Sabers Notable Results

<http://sabers.senri.ed.jp/results.html>

- MS girls volleyball: WJAA champions
- MS boys baseball: WJAA champions for at least the 6th year in a row
- MS boys basketball: WJAA champions, defeating all teams by 29 points per game

### Shout Outs

- 1) Thank you again and again, super SSC members: simply the best. *Who are we?!*
- 2) Oi, Sabers TV superstars: Great shows so far. More fun in 2020. *What time is it?*
- 3) New Coach Hiraoka: there's no escaping now. *Once a Saber, always a Saber!*
- 4) Dear SIS Short Stories fans: winter break reading assignment, *"It isn't fair, it isn't right!"*

## Sabers "in the bleachers"

Question of the week: What Sabers Christmas present do you want from Santa?

- Ricky Sampson: "An AISA math title to go along with my cross country championship."
- Yume and Kentaro: "A smooth one-motion jump shot with 48-degree arc, lots of back-spin, and nothing but net, like Coach Sala's shot."
- Coach Sala: "A little heat in the gym, eh?"
- Fitness Floor users: PRs in the squat, bench, deads (and maybe some bigger biceps and a tighter booty).
- Giannis Antetokounmpo: "Larry O'Brien Trophy."
- Mr. Heimer: "5 more homestay families...please!"

## Girls Are Strong, Too

by Tanishka Murthy

*Strength does not come from winning. Your struggles develop your strengths. When you go through hardships and decide not to surrender, that is strength."*

– Arnold Schwarzenegger

At SOIS, we are extremely lucky to have so many opportunities to improve our physical health. We get to play a variety of sports in our PE classes, we have the choice to participate in about 4 sports a year, and WE HAVE THE SABERS FITNESS FLOOR!!!!

*If you want to be fit you have to workout, if you want to be strong, you have to lift some heavy weights.* –The wise words of Mr. Heimer.

The Sabers Fitness Floor has a variety of equipment we can use to get stronger, and is open for any students from Grade 9 and above to use. We are allowed use it in the mornings before class, during lunch, and after school. If there isn't a class going on in the gym, you can also use it when you have a free period.

An important thing to do before you start regularly going to the Fitness Floor, is to go to the orientation which Mr. Heimer holds once in a while. By attending that you can learn about how to use the gym safely because your safety is the most important thing. Yes, working out is fun and all but if you get hurt while working out, there is a possibility we will not be able to use the fitness floor anymore. So make sure to attend the orientation and you can be Sabers Strong!

Yuki Kojima, OIS Gr 12 student and leader of the workout club said that, "A big problem that many teens and students face today are mental stresses such as depression and anxiety. While working out cannot just be a magical potion for all your problems, it is proven to produce hormones that make you happier and raise energy levels."

He also mentioned that, "it is imperative to work out continuously and making it a life style". He says that going 3 times a week is when you will start seeing results.

Since I started using the Sabers Fitness Floor, I noticed the lack of female students using it. Yes, of course I do see some female students working out regularly but I felt as though girls are still a bit insecure about going there and using the equipment alone.

I asked him about whether or not girls should be encouraged to use the fitness floor and he said that, "Anybody should be encouraged to use the fitness floor including girls".

"If girls do feel uncomfortable, I suggest that you'd bring a friend to workout with you. If you need any assistance you could ask Mr. Heimer, and if he is not there many of the boys including me would be more than happy to help you out. If it is still uncomfortable, you can go to the gym in the morning or during an open period where there are not many people. There you could practice some exercises and build confidence in yourself".

*"DON'T let fear or your insecurities hold you back from what you could become"*  
-Yuki Kojima

There you have it. Using the Sabers Fitness Floor has so many benefits and girls are more than welcome to use it as well. I hope that after today, more girls feel encouraged to workout and be confident about themselves!





# Sabers Sports



## AISA Cross Country Meet in Busan

by Antonio Kogata

Cross country is a running sport in which athletes run a race on open air courses across fields or the countryside. The most recent AISA cross country event was held in Busan on the 10th to the 13th of October. After much effort and perseverance, we were able to reach fourth place overall. The upsetting thing was that we were only one point away from the third place team: Seoul International School.

The meet started midday on Friday. All the runners were enthusiastic and were excited to run. We started off by walking around and familiarizing ourselves with the course. The athletic director in Busan had told us about a hill in which we needed to run up at the very beginning of the race. It was horrible. The hill was at least a 70 degree incline and consisted of tall weeds, tree roots, and rocks all around us. After the hill we had to run another difficult course which consisted of concrete boulders with large gaps in between and was extremely dangerous when running quickly as your foot could easily get sprained or stuck in the gaps.



It was one of the worst running courses of our lives. It was so difficult and challenging that one of the girls during the race broke her leg and was sent to the hospital. The rocks hurt our feet, the course was winding with twist and turns which made us feel dizzy, and the hill tops were so high that it was difficult to breathe.

After the grueling run, all schools headed to the city (Haeundae) for some Korean street food and for some fun (drinking boba and relaxing on the beach).

The next day, was the relay. It was just as hard. We were paired up with our teammates and in total we were required to run 4 laps around the whole BEACH. The sand sunk into our feet which made us slower and filled up our shoes which made it extremely uncomfortable to run in. However, the relay ran along smoothly and our team finished on a high note. Straight afterwards came the 'fun community run' again on the beach. In this 5km run, people from the community were able to participate in running the course. In this run we were able to see teachers, school students, and coaches participate! During that time Tyus (another runner) and I went to Starbucks and vented about how hard the beach course was.

The event ended with a banquet provided by the chefs at the International School of Busan and the awards ceremony. Our team, again, were all surprised to see that we didn't place last, even though our whole team was convinced that we hadn't done too well. Unfortunately, it was revealed after much consideration, that we were just one point away from third place which was very disappointing to hear.

Overall, this cross country meet was an extremely interesting and enjoyable experience. We made many memories together with our own team and teams from different countries, especially on the beach at night time as we were able to play games and talk.

Here are a few words from Tyus Sheriff, our co-captain, and his first time competing in Busan.

### Interview with Tyus

*Why did you want to participate in AISA Cross Country?*

\*laughs\* I don't know. Um I enjoy running and especially the feeling afterwards as it feels good. I also wanted to go to Korea to meet new people

*How did you feel when you completed the 5km run?*

I felt really accomplished and felt really proud of myself for finishing my last race and felt like I gave it my all.

*Which aspect was the most fun in your opinion?*

Um, I think probably getting to see local Busan culture and meeting new people from different international schools.

*What do you think the cross country team should improve on?*

I feel like we should have a little bit more team unity and spirit. And I hope everyone shows up to practice, including me.

*Are there any other clubs you are interested in?*

No. I am only a cross country runner and I will only be a cross country runner until I die.



Photos supplied by Antonio Kogata