YI LU

Learning Scientist & Design Researcher

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Academic Portfolio: https://yilu-education.owlstown.net
IBDP Film Classroom Portfolio: https://sites.google.com/view/myibfilmclass/home

RESEARCH PROFILE

Learning scientist and design researcher investigating how low-code AI creative production scaffolds epistemic agency and makes student thinking visible. My work integrates Vygotskian sociocultural theory with Papert's constructionism, drawing on principles of design-based research (DBR) and participatory action research (PAR) in classroom and community settings to co-design AI-mediated storytelling environments with multilingual and neurodiverse learners. My current agenda, "The Pedagogy of the Question," reframes generative AI as a dialogic partner in knowledge building rather than a shortcut to answers.

EDUCATION

Columbia University, New York, NY, USA 2015–2017
Dual Master of International Affairs (M.I.A.) & Master of Science (M.S.) in Journalism
• Thesis: Digital Storytelling in Cross-Cultural Education
• Concentrations: Technology, Media, Communications; Urban Policy
• Quantitative Coursework: Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, Quantitative Analysis I, Accounting & Finance

West Virginia Wesleyan College, Buckhannon, WV, USA 2007–2009
Bachelor of Science in Business Administration; Minor in English Literature
• Honors: Outstanding Student Award (Top 1%), Business Department
• Relevant Coursework: Business Statistics, Financial Accounting, Calculus I, Corporate Finance

University of Sunderland (Remote/International Cohort), Sunderland, UK 2024–2025
Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)
• Action Research Focus: AI-Supported Collaborative Learning & Discourse Analysis

PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATIONS

IB Educator Certificate (IBEC), Windsor University, Canada 2024–2025
DC Teaching License, TeachNow Program, Moreland University 2023–2024
Advanced TESOL Certificate – Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages 2022–2023

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Principal Investigator – "The Pedagogy of the Question" Research Program 2023–Present
QSI International School of Shenzhen
• Lead classroom-based design research in an IBDP Film "living lab" classroom (N = 45), studying how low-code AI filmmaking fosters epistemic agency and visible thinking.

• Designed multi-modal data collection: 200+ hours of classroom discourse, longitudinal portfolios, student reflections, and AI–learner interaction logs.
• Interim findings show ~32% mean gain in concept mastery (pre/post unit) and richer metacognitive discourse, particularly among neurodiverse learners.
• Developed the "Critical Prompting" framework to support students in using generative AI for questioning, critique, and revision rather than answer-copying.

Research Partner & Educational Designer
AvatarAI UK Ltd. – Shenzhen R&D Center 2025–Present
• Co-design AI-driven digital human systems for classroom dialogue and teacher dashboards, using the partnership as a translational research testbed.
• Led pilots integrating avatar-mediated Socratic questioning; documented a 20-point gain in vocabulary mastery (67% → 87%) and ~30% reduction in teacher preparation time, enabling more time for high-leverage instruction.
• Supported pilots with teachers in under-resourced and conflict-affected regions, including educators in Ukraine, who reported that avatar-mediated dialogues helped sustain student learning under conditions of disruption and stress.

Founding Researcher – AI Generational Bridges Project 2024–Present
China Elderly University
• Launched a curriculum-based research project on intergenerational learning and narrative agency with older adults.
• Co-designed a 10-week curriculum and app enabling older adults to transform autobiographical texts into short AI-mediated digital films.
• Early findings suggest increased digital self-efficacy and richer intergenerational storytelling within families and local communities.

TEACHING & ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP
IBDP Film, Yearbook & Photography Teacher; Learning Designer
QSI International School, Shenzhen, China 2023–Present
• Transformed the Film classroom into a "living lab" for AI-supported media production, raising IBDP Film average scores from 4.0 to 5.5.
• Founded the Annual QSI Film Exhibition (50+ films, 200+ attendees), connecting school and community.
• Led school-wide professional development on generative AI integration and critical prompting.

Founder & Curriculum Designer – YingHeBaMa Online Education 2018–2022
• Founded a direct-to-parent online platform for early English literacy (ages 6–12); achieved ~75% student renewal rate.
• Designed play-based digital storytelling curricula with ~40% increase in session engagement.

Teaching Assistant, Merchiston International School, Shenzhen, China 2022–2023
• Supported Year 1 instruction in guided reading and English drama.
• Co-developed formative assessment practices for emergent readers and English learners.

PUBLICATIONS & SCHOLARSHIP

Peer-Reviewed & Academic Work

• Lu, Y. (under review). AI-Enhanced Grouping Strategies for Equitable Interactive Learning: Supporting EAL Students in IB Film Studies—Action Research in a Chinese International School. Interactive Learning Environments.

• Lu, Y. (in preparation). Beyond the Prompt: Making Thinking Visible Through Low-Code AI Filmmaking in Neurodiverse Classrooms. Manuscript targeting the Journal of the Learning Sciences.

Public Scholarship & Practitioner Work

• Lu, Y. (under contract). 30-Minute AI Film Lessons: An Inquiry-Driven Practitioner's Guide.

• Lu, Y. (2025). The Digital Socrates: How AI Avatars Are Reviving the Art of Questioning. TEDx Talk.

MEDIA EXPERIENCE

Broadcast Associate, CBS News – CBS This Morning, New York, NY 2017–2018

• Produced and scripted news features under rapid deadlines; coordinated with senior editors and correspondents on investigative storytelling.

• Contributed to the CBS This Morning newsroom during a period when the broadcast received the Edward R. Murrow Award for Best Newscast (2017) and a News & Documentary Emmy and National Headliner Award for investigative reporting.

Television Host & Scriptwriter, "Walk Into America", Voice of America, DC 2009–2015

• Hosted and produced a weekly program on American politics and education for audiences in Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Mainland China.

• Pitched stories, directed field shoots, conducted interviews, wrote scripts, and edited videos.

• Achieved top program ratings at VOA; negotiated distribution on YouKu (10M+ views).

HONORS, GRANTS & AWARDS

Personal Honors & Leadership

Community Sponsorship Grant for Inquiry-Driven Pedagogy (>USD 5,000), QSI Shenzhen 2024

Outstanding Photography Teacher Award, Shenzhen Library 2024

Judge, National History Day (NHD) China Regional Competition – Documentary Category 2025

Session Chair, World Principals' Forum 2023–2025

Citibank Small Business Award, Tribe Lu Social Enterprise 2015

Washington Center Marketing Video Competition – 1st Prize 2009

Mentoring & Student Achievements

National History Day (NHD) China Regional Competition – 2nd Place, Individual Documentary 2025

American Scholastic Press Association Yearbook Competition – 2nd Place (Faculty Advisor) 2025

U.S. STN Film Contest – 4th Place (out of ~500 teams, Student Mentor) 2025

U.S. STN Film Contest – 6th Place (Student Mentor) 2024

HKIS Film Festival – Honorable Mention (Student Mentor) 2024

SERVICE & SOCIAL IMPACT

Founder, Tribe Lu 2013–Present

• Founded a social enterprise supporting craftsmen from Maliao, China by securing pro bono U.S. retail partnerships and promoting sustainable, community-based livelihoods across cultural and economic gaps.

Film Workshops for Underserved Youth 2023–Present

• Led free, week-long film workshops for underserved youth.

RESEARCH COMPETENCIES

• Primary Research Approaches: Classroom-based design research (DBR); participatory action projects (PAR); qualitative classroom observation with ethnographic sensibilities.

• Data Collection & Analysis: Multi-modal data system design (discourse, portfolios, reflections); qualitative thematic and discourse analysis of student interactions; spreadsheet-based quantitative tracking (Excel/Sheets).

• Instructional Design & AI Toolkits: low-code AI platforms (Runway, Pika); generative AI (Midjourney, DALL·E 3) for multimodal production; Pedagogy of the Question.

LANGUAGES

English: Near-native, professional proficiency; Mandarin Chinese: Native

Spanish: Basic reading and conversational ability