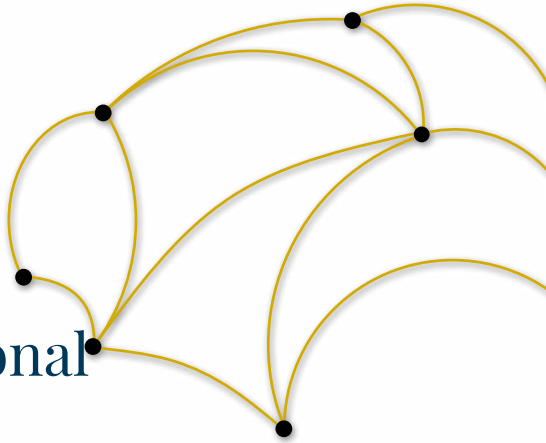


## Chapter 2



# Continuing International Education And Expansive Learning:

## A study on extracurricular activity clubs

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**Abstract:** This research originated from a continuing professional development program for teachers in which I participated in Canada at the beginning of 2006. Upon learning about the reality of a school in Toronto, I was deeply impressed by its educational practices, which inspired me to investigate the topic of extracurricular activity clubs in full-time schools. The aim was to understand their potential and promote interventions within the Brazilian school community where I worked. The study adopted an interventionist research approach, grounded in the Activity Theory (Engeström, 1987). Data were analyzed based on the theoretical assumptions of active learning methodologies (Bacich; Moran, 2018), Expansive Learning (Engeström, 1987; Engeström; Sannino, 2010), and the Change Laboratory methodology (Virkkunen; Newnham, 2015). The findings highlighted the importance of extracurricular activity clubs as an active learning methodology and demonstrated their potential to foster expansive learning processes within the context of a Brazilian school, inspired by educational practices observed in Canada.

**Keywords:** Active Methodologies; Extracurricular Activities; Expansive Learning.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

This work is the result of a continuing education program for public elementary and high school teachers held in February 2026. The program is entitled “Ganhando o Mundo Professor Program<sup>1</sup>” (Winning the World Teacher Program). It is a scholarship program offered by the Paraná State Department of Education, in southern Brazil, to 250 teachers for international training, whose main objectives are, according to Paraná (2005):

- a) To promote the exchange of pedagogical experiences between Brazilian and foreign education professionals;
- b) To encourage the development of linguistic and cultural competencies;
- c) To expand the participants’ repertoire of pedagogical and educational practices;
- d) To contribute to improving the quality of education in the public school system of Paraná;
- e) To expand the professional capacity of public servants through participation in improvement courses, conferences, and congresses;
- f) To share the acquired experiences with other professionals in the state’s basic education network.

The second edition of this training took place between the end of 2025 and mid-2026, and, with great satisfaction, I was one of the teachers selected to spend one month in Canada, in the city of Toronto, improving my knowledge through theoretical and practical studies in institutions at various educational levels, while also expanding my cultural repertoire through immersion in Canadian daily life in the province of Ontario, in the city of Toronto.

Among the various activities carried out during this international training, one of them was visiting schools. In one of these schools, I observed that it was a full-time, highly competitive institution. Many classrooms functioned as robotics, mechanics, and video production workshops. The institution strongly encouraged competition and student protagonism. It was in this school that I witnessed something so inspiring that it deeply

impacted me: student protagonism and autonomy through extracurricular activity clubs.

This school has dozens of clubs, and it was the leaders of these groups, together with the pedagogical team, who welcomed the teachers from the Brazilian delegation. I was so amazed by the empowerment and protagonism promoted by the clubs that I decided to deepen my studies on this topic.

This full-time high school has 1,750 students and an excellent infrastructure; it makes a significant investment in extracurricular activities and has maintained 83 clubs and associations for more than eight years. The school performs exceptionally well in arts and sports competitions, as evidenced by the trophy room filled with medals and numerous awards won by students in recent decades.

I sought to investigate the concept of extracurricular activity clubs and understood that they represent a form of active methodology (Bacich; Moran, 2018; Soares, 2021), since they place students at the center of the learning process. Active methodologies constitute one of the research and implementation axes of this international training program<sup>2</sup>.

In this type of teaching strategy, students occupy the center of the learning process, becoming protagonists in their own learning. They act as the main agents responsible for and deeply committed to their growth in an autonomous and engaged way. Extracurricular activity clubs are a means of advancing deeper knowledge, new practices, and socio-emotional competencies; therefore, they are active teaching-learning methodologies.

The approach used in extracurricular activity clubs focuses on collaboration and active participation, as they stimulate student autonomy, critical thinking, and emotional relationships. Furthermore, they enable the development of cognitive, relational, social, physical, and technical skills in different areas of knowledge.

My training experience in Canada made me realize that extracurricular activity clubs are an integral part of Canadian schools and schools in other countries as well, such as the United States. In Brazil, however, this is still a relatively new practice.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ganhandomundo.pr.gov.br/professor/2edicao>

<sup>2</sup> It is worth highlighting that Freire (2009) has long emphasized the importance of overcoming traditional, banking education and shifting the focus of learning to the student, through motivation, engagement and dialogue.

In the State of Paraná, where I work, extracurricular activities are still incipient initiatives in full-time schools. Nevertheless, I had never seen anything as grand and motivating for student protagonism and learning as the extracurricular activity clubs at the school visited in Toronto – something entirely feasible to implement and capable of positively impacting education in Paraná.

Therefore, I believe it is extremely relevant to research the theme of “extracurricular activity clubs.” First, due to the extreme scarcity of scientific works such as articles, dissertations, and theses focusing on extracurricular activity clubs in public schools.

Furthermore, extracurricular activity clubs are part of the teaching-learning curriculum of full-time schools in the State of Paraná and constitute a topic that requires investigation because of its current relevance, especially considering that only from 2019 onward did this educational modality gain strength with the implementation of the Paraná Integral Program.

Extracurricular activity clubs are considered active methodologies, one of the themes most discussed in theoretical classes by Canadian lecturers. Therefore, I am highly interested in deepening my knowledge about this fundamental teaching-learning strategy in students’ educational paths, aiming at their development as autonomous, supportive, and competent human beings.

## 2 DEVELOPMENT

The school where I work in Brazil follows the full-time education model (Brazil, 2014). Full-time education primarily aims to “expand school time, spaces, and learning opportunities through an integrated curriculum and a new pedagogical organization of school time” (Paraná, 2006), whose purpose is “the integral education of students, taking into account their specificities, history, and culture.”

The curriculum of Full-Time Schools (Brazil, 2024) seeks to promote students’ personal, social, and academic development; therefore, it goes beyond the standard model offered by schools operating only one shift per day. In these schools, pedagogical organization is structured according to extended school hours, focusing on the student’s integral development. This

educational model prepares students not only to understand knowledge but also to intervene actively and consciously in the contemporary world.

In addition to offering a more comprehensive curriculum, full-time schools also prepare students to become protagonists engaged with their own knowledge, providing them with meaningful learning experiences that contribute to the construction of their life projects.

Among the various strategies used in full-time education to ensure students’ holistic development, extracurricular activity clubs constitute one way of promoting students’ complete education.

Students in full-time schools should become protagonists, as this allows them to understand and intervene in the contemporary world, since this educational environment provides meaningful learning conditions in their school lives. Paro (2009) observes that Full-Time Education focuses on the production of culture and knowledge, considering that students can always complete and transform themselves, that is, become whole individuals.

Knowledge construction occurs through the integration of theory and practice, often by experiencing real situations related to students’ own existence. In this methodological path, teamwork is prioritized through cooperative and collaborative practices, while protagonism and autonomy are encouraged through the theoretical principle of “learning to learn.”

Active methodologies are teaching-learning approaches that emerge as an effective path for students’ integral education within a contemporary pedagogical context, grounded on four pillars: engagement, autonomy, collaboration, and reflection. According to Professor Lavaughn John, in a lecture delivered at Greystone College in Toronto during the Ganhando o Mundo Professor 2026 Program offered by the Paraná State Department of Education, teaching strategies understood as active methodologies aim to develop students’ critical awareness regarding what they have learned. They also seek to “develop skills that enable students to apply acquired knowledge in the real world,” as well as “reflective and humanistic abilities through contact with reality” (Lavaughn, 2026).

While studying this topic, I found that extracurricular activity clubs are active methodologies, one of the axes of the continuing education program in which I participated in Canada. Active methodologies are defined as “teaching strategies aimed at encouraging students to learn autonomously and participatively.” By grounding their practice in active methodologies,

teachers mediate knowledge through “tasks that encourage students to think beyond, take initiative, and engage in debates, making them responsible for the construction of knowledge” (Paraná, 2006).

When knowledge is developed through active methodologies, students are expected to develop not only cognitive skills but also social and personal competencies. Since teaching is “centered on students’ effective participation in the construction of the learning process,” students are expected to become critical, reflective, and interactive. Furthermore, they become agents of action and intervention in their own reality.

In this sense, activities based on active methodologies should stimulate contextualized engagement, interdisciplinarity, and problem-solving. Thus, the teaching process continuously focuses on action, reflection, and renewed action. Students become authors of their own achievements, but they do not think only about themselves; they develop a strong sense of social action and collaboration, caring not only about their own growth but also about others.

Teaching-learning is student-centered. Students are protagonists who actively participate in their own learning process. They act as “agents of social transformation, identifying real problems and seeking solutions”; they are curious, autonomous, and participatory in acquiring their own knowledge independently.

When working with active methodologies, teachers assume the role of mediators and facilitators of educational actions. The focus is not on themselves, but on mediating knowledge. Teachers maintain dialogue with students, supporting them in their learning experiences and encouraging them to assume active roles in their learning process. In this educational perspective, teachers are always open to actively listening to students, giving them opportunities to express themselves with empathy and enthusiasm.

Aiming at this student protagonism, extracurricular activity clubs are part of the teaching-learning curriculum as one of the pathways to achieve this objective. This teaching-learning strategy is part of everyday life in Canadian schools, as I witnessed during my stay in Toronto in 2026 during the Ganhando o Mundo Professor Program. In Brazil, however, and more specifically in Paraná, this pedagogical practice is still restricted to full-time schools and remains incipient.

Extracurricular activities refer to students’ free time outside regular classes, used to deepen their knowledge in topics of personal interest

with involvement and responsibility. They are always carried out during extracurricular hours and within the school environment itself. In the case of full-time schools, they take place during free time immediately after lunch.

Clubs generally focus on cognitive and curricular improvement, technology, science and innovation, cultural and sports development, or community service. Extracurricular activities can take different forms and address diverse interests, respecting each student’s profile, developmental stage, routine, and needs. Below are some of the main types of extracurricular activity clubs within each axis:

**Table 1 – Principais modalidades de clubes de atividades extracurriculares**

| Axes                                      | Clubs                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Technology and Innovation                 | Robotics, Gamification, Astronomy, Quiz Clubs, Artificial Intelligence, Programming, Digital Platforms, Influencer Tools, etc                                                                               |
| Arts and Culture                          | Theater, Music, Gastronomy, Manga, Painting, Photography, Makeup, Young Writers, Choir, Community Band, School Newspaper, Literary Magazine, Creative Writing, Marching Band, etc.                          |
| Sports and Recreation                     | Soccer, Volleyball, Basketball, Chess, Dance, Yoga, Table Tennis, Athletics, Gymnastics, Cycling, Martial Arts, Climbing, Swimming, Skateboarding, etc.                                                     |
| Cognitive and Academic Improvement        | Essay Writing, History, Science Fair, Public Speaking, Computer Science, Reading, Mathematics Tutoring, Literacy, Calligraphy, ENEM Preparation, etc.                                                       |
| Languages and Exchange Programs           | English, Spanish, Brazilian Sign Language (LIBRAS), Ganhando o Mundo, English through Digital Platforms, Agrinho English Competition, etc.                                                                  |
| Citizenship, Leadership, and Volunteering | Entrepreneurship, Scouts, Food Donation Campaigns, Nursing Home Volunteers, Diversity Clubs, Monitoring Executive and Legislative Powers, Student Council, Family at School Programs, Career Guidance, etc. |

Author, 2026.

By participating in extracurricular activity clubs, students can benefit from the development of several aspects of their education, ranging from cognitive to relational, emotional, physical, and technical dimensions. It is an excellent opportunity for them to develop important skills such as leadership, teamwork, organization, and communication.

Since participation is optional, students have the opportunity to identify their interests, strengths, and even weaknesses when choosing a club that best suits them, considering the benefits it may provide in the short or long term. Students may choose to participate in a club because they consider themselves skilled in that area, but also because they have little knowledge about the subject and wish to deepen their understanding. Thus, even the process of choosing a club becomes an opportunity for growth, as it encourages students to engage in self-reflection and identify both their potential and their weaknesses.

Clubs can provide students with creative and often enjoyable learning experiences. They may also offer cognitive activities aimed at deepening knowledge in specific subjects, particularly academic clubs, which can help participants improve their performance in exact sciences, humanities, or natural sciences. Chess clubs, for example, help students become more observant and control anxiety, while problem-solving clubs assist students in overcoming major challenges and enhancing logical reasoning skills.

In the relational field, the benefits relate to participants' identities. Since participation occurs in groups, teamwork encourages understanding differences and fosters a sense of belonging to a team or community.

Because club participation is based on areas of interest, these activities promote autonomy, as students themselves seek growth in areas with which they identify. The greater their self-management of learning and internal motivation, the greater their protagonism. Consequently, students tend to stand out academically and develop a more complete professional profile in the future.

Extracurricular activities may also be evaluated, and several aspects are included in rubrics related to students' participation in clubs, among which the following can be highlighted:

*Protagonism:* This occurs when students demonstrate initiative within the club, becoming leaders and positively influencing their peers. Their performance in facing challenges is remarkable and inspires the group.

*Intrinsic Motivation:* This occurs when students have a deep passion for the activity. They do not participate out of obligation, but instead demonstrate genuine interest and authentic involvement.

*Engagement and Commitment:* Students' participation occurs continuously within the club. They participate regularly over an extended period, demonstrating total commitment and responsibility throughout the entire process.

*Impact and Proactivity:* These are students who help not only themselves but also support classmates and their community in a proactive manner. Their work positively impacts other communities, nationally and even internationally, acting as transformative agents both locally and globally.

*Recognition:* When students' dedication results in such exceptional growth that they are honored for their merit through awards, medals, trophies, or honor rolls. They stand out due to their dedication and high level of participation within the club.

The methodology used in this study is formative intervention, since I seek not only to understand how extracurricular activities occur in full-time schools, but also to identify pathways for what they can become. In other words, I seek to produce knowledge that may (or may not) become a reference for a collective and that can be understood as true, although provisional due to its historical nature. I position myself in the research not only as an observer but also as an interventionist participant; therefore, this study benefits both me and the collective within my situational reality.

Raising awareness about the importance of implementing extracurricular activities may improve the conditions of the investigated context, as well as benefit other individuals who view schools as spaces for meaningful learning. Researching the entire context of this type of club benefits both participants and me as a researcher-interventionist, since the object of investigation is a whole social situation with situated problems.

Through engaged and protagonistic participation within extracurricular activity clubs, actions emerge in which students themselves become responsible for conducting and constructing collective knowledge. The qualitative gains go beyond knowledge itself because participating in a club may provoke social and emotional changes that benefit the collective, as participants acquire new perspectives regarding their future development.

The theoretical framework underpinning this study is the Change Laboratory. It consists of a set of concepts and principles developed in the 1990s, originally by researcher Yrjö Engeström at the University of Helsinki



in Finland, based on Socio-Historical-Cultural Activity Theory (Engeström, 1987, 1999, 2007).

The objective of this method is to contribute to developmental intervention, collaborative practices, and the transformation of perspectives and modes of action. It is not an objective or standardized method; on the contrary, it should be applied creatively and flexibly, though not in an improvised situation (Engeström, Sannino & Virkkunen, 2014).

Intervention through the Change Laboratory aims to assist everyone involved in negotiation processes through “a collective process of research, learning, and change guided by the systemic causes of experienced problems and the possibilities of reconceptualizing and reconfiguring the activity” (Virkkunen; Newnham, 2015, p. 53). In this research context, the activity is represented by extracurricular activity clubs.

In the Change Laboratory method, possibilities are “created and articulated by those whose lives are at stake” [...] “Knowledge of possibility is generated by putting activity and its knowledge into motion” [...] “exploring the past, present, and future in their mutual relations” (Virkkunen; Newnham, 2015, p. 22). This process requires participants to be willing to make efforts, become involved, experiment with the new, take risks, and seek creative solutions.

By participating in extracurricular activity clubs, participants are encouraged to leave their comfort zones and seek solutions to problems through engaged practices. By resignifying the role of clubs within full-time schools, participants construct new ways of mediating and acting and, therefore, expand learning. This movement of reconstruction and transformation of practice is called Expansive Learning (Engeström; Sannino, 2010).

The research followed the four stages of Expansive Learning within the Change Laboratory:

**Situation Mapping:** Virkkunen and Newnham (2015) refer to this moment as the questioning phase – not in the sense of asking questions, but of criticizing a situation accepted as truth, in which subjects recognize that something must be done to transform reality. At this stage, disturbances, dilemmas, disruptions, and ruptures are identified (Engeström, 1999). Questioning “triggers and motivates analysis” (p. 146).

During my visit to a school in Toronto, I began questioning my own practices and existing knowledge. Ideas emerged, and I started outlining actions and developing solutions to transform my reality regarding extracurricular activity clubs. The sense of necessity was so strong that I took the initiative to speak with the Canadian school principal to use that school environment as a practical model for my own school community.

According to the Change Laboratory, during the Situation Mapping phase, once individuals become aware of a problematic situation, they establish a commitment to development, and this action triggers Expansive Learning (Oliveira, 2020; 2022).

This awareness work on the importance of extracurricular activities for student development was based on the Change Laboratory, in which the research content was not previously known, but rather created from the visit to a school in Toronto. Observing this school was the germ that gave rise to my concerns, enabling me later to analyze my own reality based on Canadian inspiration and interpret the data (the clubs from the Toronto school and those from my own school).

**Situation Analysis:** At this stage of the Change Laboratory, individuals seek to identify problems from a historical perspective, investigating the roots that originated the problematic situation. Full-time schools with extracurricular activity clubs in their curriculum are relatively new possibilities within education in Paraná, and the implementation of these differentiated activities still generates uncertainty among those involved. Extracurricular activity clubs already existed in my local community, but in a very incipient way, and no one fully understood the importance of this pedagogical practice within the school environment. Despite my best intentions, I had not been able to act fully due to a lack of knowledge about the subject.

**Creation of a New Model:** This phase involves seeking possible solutions to overcome the current situation. In this research, overcoming occurred on two fronts. As a researcher-interventionist, I conducted a bibliographical study on the subject, despite the almost total scarcity of materials for awareness and deeper understanding. I also analyzed the framework of extracurricular activity clubs and associations at the school visited in Canada. This Expansive Learning process allowed me to share this knowledge with the individuals

involved in my institution. I organized meetings to raise awareness about the importance of extracurricular activity clubs and associations in my school.

During these meetings, I delivered motivational lectures about protagonism, self-motivation, and the importance of extracurricular activity clubs. I also presented the reality of clubs in Canada and their importance for students' academic and personal lives, including university admission. In addition, I held meetings with teachers, the pedagogical team, and club advisors with the aim of increasing their understanding of the role of extracurricular activity clubs and creating motivational panels regarding their importance.

The implementation of the research occurred through meetings with student groups, whether or not they already participated in clubs, because awareness regarding the role of clubs may lead students to perform more actively within them (for those already involved) and encourage self-reflection regarding their learning, motivating them to seek clubs aligned with their potential, difficulties, and aspirations.

Based on the acquired knowledge, we designed new experiments and created a new form of action, a new way of working derived from Expansive Learning. These actions occur through language within discursive communities and, together, transform into learning cycles.

**Concretization and Testing of the New Model:** After the creation of the new model, the fourth stage of the Change Laboratory methodology follows. In this phase, the new model is systematized and tested for evaluation and reflection regarding the new solutions. The positive and negative aspects of the new practice model are identified through detailed examination, considering both its potential and limitations (Oliveira, 2014, 2016).

This research is still ongoing, and we have currently reached stage four, which is the concretization of a new activity model. We know that the Change Laboratory methodology still foresees two additional phases: implementation of the new model and dissemination and consolidation of the project.

### 3 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

As a teacher working in a full-time school since its foundation three years ago, I became even more interested in deepening my knowledge about the topic of "Extracurricular Activity Clubs" after my training experience in Canada, where I had contact with schools whose successful club systems greatly impressed me. As a result, I decided to act within my educational community by implementing extracurricular activity clubs with the aim of promoting social transformation.

There, I understood that we need to improve our human relationships and that schools must become spaces of happiness. To achieve this, it is necessary to encourage students' autonomy and protagonism. Extracurricular activity clubs are one of the means of mediating student learning through engaged participation. Within clubs, students become involved with problems and are encouraged to seek solutions independently, acting as agents of their own knowledge (Oliveira, 2014, 2016). I sought to expand my knowledge about the research topic in order to act more effectively at the local level and raise the awareness of everyone somehow involved in this type of educational context.

As a researcher-interventionist, I initially knew very little about the reality of extracurricular activities within a full-time school. Knowledge was gradually acquired throughout the research process; in other words, knowledge was produced as the study unfolded, while the learning process developed through cycles of Expansive Learning.

The partial results reveal that there was a rupture with the initial situation, which was mentally and discursively expanded through the learning of new concepts. The visit to the school in Toronto served as a stimulus originating outside my local context and became the seed of my concerns regarding extracurricular activity clubs, as well as the establishment of a desire and commitment to break away from the initial situation.

This necessity led me to analyze the situation through the search for knowledge on the topic. Subsequently, I began to share this knowledge within my collective environment through meetings held collaboratively and aimed at promoting both formative and psychological intervention. This process enabled us to construct a new model of practice, that is, a new way of understanding extracurricular activity clubs, now with greater



awareness of their role within the teaching-learning process in the context of full-time schools.

This study made it possible to understand the great importance of extracurricular activity clubs as an active learning methodology and their potential to generate expansive learning, inspired by a Canadian practice, which can have a transformative effect on the reality of Brazilian schools, making participating students more engaged and protagonists of their own learning.

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