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Extended School Time: Impact on Learning and Teaching

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Abstract: This paper presents and assesses the effects of an Extended School Time project (ESTp), with a working day of 8 contact hours, that aimed to develop the students as a whole in its academic, artistic, sport, social and human dimensions. Based in active and integrated pedagogical practices, the project promoted the integration of knowledges, curiosity, sense of criticism, creativity, sharing solidarity and the conviviality of students. This project was applied to a 6th grade class with 20 pupils (11.2±0.68 years old). Using a qualitative methodology, 13 semi structured interviews were applied to 3 types of participants: 6 pupils, 5 parents (42.6±4.54 years old) and 2 teachers (60±4 years old), in order to analyze their perceptions regarding the project. Results show that each group valued different aspects of the project. The pupils valued activities that emphasized challenge, communication, creativity, and autonomy, as well as activities of academic continuity. The parents focused mostly on the occupational component of Extended School Time (ESTp), and the teachers on its effects on social and self-development of the pupils. This development was reflected in an improved peer-to-peer relationship and in a greater sense of belonging to school. The convergence verified in this ESTp, between cognition and the artistic, social and sport education, sought to promote the main goal of the School, an instruction that promotes a global (including multicultural and universal) development of the pupils' capabilities.

Keywords: *Full-time school, integral education, lower secondary education, qualitative research.*

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Introduction

The extension of school time for Primary Education has been in place in Portugal since 2006. This paper presents and assesses the effects of an Extended School Time project (ESTp), which was conceived for the lower secondary education level. The application of this project in a 6th grade class (11 and 12-year-old pupils) resulted from a teachers' group initiative. This project was submitted to the school's management board for appreciation and approval, having been implemented in school year 2018. On the premise that school is for all, this educational experience took place in a state school, without restrictions in the access to the school day extension. In accordance with the norms regulating the attendance of EST in Primary Education, all the parents and pupils of this class were given the chance to decide which complementary educational activities they would like to attend, from a set of offers. This increase in the length of stay at school solves, to some extent, the lack of time and support that families suffer in the assistance to their children, acting as a social support network. However, despite the advantages this project may bring in this regard, its main aim was to contribute to the students' integral education by providing complementary activities (academic, artistic, civic and sportive), in order to build a culture based in humanistic, scientific and artistic values (Ministry of Education/General Directorate of Education, 2017; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2016). With this project, we expect that students will discover new interests, cultural horizons and sharing of experiences. The context of this approach should be based in active methodologies that promote the alignment of contents with artistic expressions. (Cañabate et al., 2019).

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Equally important, is the chance to minimize the social inequalities among the pupils included in this project, as a consequence of this varied and free offer. This was a free project developed in a state school that must promote equity.

By proposing activities of academic, artistic, sportive and social nature, this project promotes a greater sense of belonging at school and increased academic engagement (Shaffer, 2019).

It is intended that this Extended School Time project (ESTp) based on extracurricular activities can improve the academic confidence of students, their social development and sense of well-being at schools, as well as acting as a facilitator in the development of interpersonal skills and social norms (Chan, 2016; Stuart et al., 2011). The fact that this type of extracurricular activity is optional creates a favourable environment for the development of free initiative and social skills (Balaguer et al. 2020; Hirsch et al., 2011).

Being aware of some constraints already identified in the Curriculum Enrichment Activities in Primary Education, such as job insecurity conditions of the teaching staff, and the insufficient curricular and pedagogical coordination (Fialho et al., 2013), we aimed to mobilize human resources who shared this holistic view of education and who also felt motivated to join this experience within the school staff.

To accomplish this project, the increase in school time allowed the development of skills, in a ludic learning approach, in the subjects of Portuguese Language, Mathematics, and English, in Study Room and in activities that promote aesthetic sensibility (Dance and Drama), Active Citizenship, and Sports (Rowing, Sailing, Canoeing).

Literature Review

Full-Time School

Full-time school is the popular and institutional concept used to identify EST practices since 2006 in Portugal. It is based on extending school time for pupils, representing an update to the traditional schooling based in compulsory contact with the formal curriculum, by proposing an optative contact with other formative areas such as foreign language, Sports or Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), the completion of homework proposed in formal classes or the extension of academic learning by tutorial teaching.

As in other national contexts, change in the educational functions of schools have included the interplay between the needs of families and the original aim of pupils' education. This recent tendency has been enhanced by known benefits of school-family partnerships (Lynch & Baker, 2005), but also by the social suggestion that schools include the provision of new services and, thus, incorporate additional tasks or even actors (European Commission, 2004). This social function has consequences to the characteristics of particular projects, also indicating that its assessment must include this dimension.

Adding to this social function, EST practices may be justified with the benefits, to pupils and schooling, that arise from extracurricular activities, either connected with formal curricular domains (by extending it), with noncognitive skills or with other educational domains not present in the compulsory, formal curriculum. Participating in extracurricular activities seems to be associated with higher grades, motivation, and school completion rates (Bohnert et al. 2010; Feldman & Matjasko 2005).

Extending school stay presupposes, in many cases, the promotion and implementation of extracurricular activities. These are, in its essence optional and normally do not cause any type of entropy to the formal curriculum. According to Hansen et al. (2003), artistic activities promote the adolescent's adjustment as well as the participants' self-knowledge, self-discipline, and artistic talents. Additionally, sport activities play an important role in the prevention of risk behaviours, and develop the academic and social component of students. (Darling, 2005). According to this, artistic and sport extracurricular activities promote self-efficacy in academic competence (Balaguer et al., 2020; Im et al., 2016).

The advantage of participating in multiple activities, in opposition to participating in a single one, lies in offering to students a greater diversity of learning experiences, interaction with adults and the creation of a broader network of peers (Bohnert et al., 2010; Vandell et al., 2015). This is particularly important, as it recognizes the educational relevance of EST projects supported in a diversified extracurricular offer.

A critical variable in such dynamics is the optimization of available instruction time. UNESCO (2010) considers that extending the academic load may bring benefits to the teaching-learning process, giving more time for teachers to: a) consolidate apprenticeships, like reading, writing, oral expression, and critical, mathematical, and scientific thinking; b) use ICT as learning tools; c) teach a second language; d) develop the aesthetic sensibility; and, e) promote healthy lifestyle habits, such as finding spaces for recreational activities and physical development that recognize not only the importance of taking care of their own body, but also the value of playing and of social coexistence.

However, the extension of the academic working day is not enough to ensure an integral education. In fact, an ESTp should become a public policy for all, with pedagogical principles, where the teaching of native Language and Mathematics is not separated from Social and Emotional Education, as well as from Citizenship Instruction (Gadotti, 2009; Galian & Sampaio, 2012). It is desirable that EST facilitate a quality and integral education that would allow to

reinvent school, starting from a differentiated academic curriculum, with trained teachers that conduct complementary activities with their students, for their human development (Yus, 2002).

There are several contributions that associate educational achievement with the increase of the available instruction time. Harnischfeger and Wiley (1976) confirmed that students had greater academic results in schools where they received more instruction. Walberg (1981) considers that quantity and quality of instruction are two defining factors in educational attainment. In the same way, Gijsselaers and Schimdt (1995) highlight the relevance of variables extrinsic to the student or the class as affordances to learning. In fact, the positive relationship between the extent of instruction time and academic achievement was particularly significant in students from families with low educational levels and in students from the immigrant second generation (Fairbman & Kaplan, 2005; Lavy, 2010; Patall et al., 2010).

In order to mitigate this apparent inequality of opportunities, there has been a focus on the extension of the school day in Latin and Central America, being implicit that the additional time that children spend at school is filled with curricular workshops, to promote a more globalizing education and the development of skills in the long term.

On a comprehensive approach to PISA 2009 data, Lavy (2015) and Rivkin, and Schidam (2015) emphasize the relevance of extending the instruction time in the student's academic achievement. This causal relationship depends on the quality of instruction, class involvement, and ratio between instruction time and acquisition of knowledge (Rivkin & Schidman, 2015). The increase of instruction time should be used efficiently, given the high costs associated with it, in order to improve the quality of teaching and class management (Andersen et al., 2016; Gromada & Shewbeidge, 2016).

The importance of extending instruction time is not well established in the literature, however. Cuban (2008) and Gimeno (2009), for instance, are critics of the extension of the school day (Full-Time School), underlining that there is little to no proven connection between lengthening the school day and academic achievement. Paro (2009) refers that the extension of the school day may function in a logic of pedagogical work replication and, consequently, multiply the pre-existing problems. Woessmann (2010) analyzed 16 German provinces and López-Agudo and Gutiérrez (2018) compared different Spanish Autonomous Communities with distinct teaching loads in 3 subject areas (Native Language; Mathematics, and Science), and both studies concluded that instruction time had no influence on the students' academic achievements. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2014) mentions that the 10 countries with a longer instruction time have shown more modest results in Mathematics in PISA, compared to the 10 countries with a shorter instruction time. According to the same organization, the way this time is applied in the curricular contents, is far more important than the total instruction time.

In short, it seems that there are other processes and requirements that underlie the main benefits of extending the instruction time— a school model in which self-learning is promoted with the teacher assuming an advisory role. It must be a school that encourages curiosity, critical thinking, creativity, the adjustment of theory to practice, integration of knowledge, sharing, solidarity, and coexistence.

The Assumptions of Active Methodologies

In agreement with the criticisms made to the simple extension of instruction time (Cuban, 2008; Paro, 2009; Woessmann, 2010), the working day of 8 hours in a school could not, in our view, be either mandatory, or simply replicate the curricular knowledges and the traditional pedagogical models in the classroom. This workday should provide educational experiences in the social, artistic, cultural, and sports scope, where play, pleasure, and apprenticeship go hand in hand.

The inspiration in active methodologies, such as Vigotsky's (2001) collaborative learning and Freinet's (2004) autonomy pedagogy is clear, in which educational practices depict an opportunity for the renewal of today's School. Specifically, it is desired that the teacher's pedagogical intervention is not restricted to passive guidance in what concerns the educational practice, but rather is actively and participatively involved in the class dynamics. The school should not assign a passive, receiver role to the students (Houssaye, 1966, as cited in Trindade & Cosme, 2010). It should create instead favorable conditions to develop their creative potential, by stimulating the emergence of original ideas and a more intervening and reflective attitude (Robinson, 1999).

A more holistic, dialogue-based, inclusive, and Universalist school, must "open" its classroom doors, by building bridges for the several contexts and school spaces, in order to contextualize instruction and integrate knowledge. The child who understands the reason that legitimizes the acquisition of a particular knowledge, will have greater interest in having access to it (Dewey, 1979) and this interest increases when the affective dimension is present in the teaching-learning process. There is only learning when understanding and affection is present.

Methodology

Extended School Time Project - features

In accordance with this educational philosophy, considering the human resources available in the school and the needs perceived by the pupils, an ESTp was created for a 6th grade class of Lower Secondary Education during the academic year of 2018/2019.

The Project comprised activities of optional attendance, complementary to the formal curriculum. It was composed of a component related to the formal academic curriculum, such as study rooms and workshops linked with school subjects from each curricular area, although without the need to follow the programs. Instead, the approach was made in a more ludic and creative manner, through discovery. According to Trindade and Cosme (2010), more creative and dynamic approaches facilitate learning. The other component was linked to artistic and sports practices. The artistic practices were not offered by the school curriculum and were proposed in the project, providing some diversity in the range of skills stimulated. This diversity in extracurricular activities is in accordance with what Bohnert et al. (2010) and Vandell et al., (2015) claim. In sum, the intention was to look at School as a place to develop the different pupils' skills, which would imply coordination between academic and non-academic knowledge in an environment of discovery of the self and of the world. This commitment is part of UNESCO (2016) recommendations for a more eclectic, inclusive and holistic school.

Specifically, the activities proposed were related with the areas of Mathematics, English, Creative Writing, Dance, Drama, Rowing, Sailing, and Canoeing, which basic features are presented below.

Mathematics workshop used games as learning facilitators. A playful practice of mathematics that distances itself from the abstract and decontextualized references of reality motivates the student and unblocks fears that many times are associated to the teaching of this subject area (Grando, 2004; Kishimoto, 2000).

English teaching aimed to be mostly practical. Different authors (Yousaf et al., 2017; Richards, 2006) suggest the Communicative Language Teaching methodology, where language teaching aims to stimulate communication through linguistic interaction, and the use of learning activities to apply language in both in and out of the classroom contexts (Nunan, 1991).

With the Creative Writing workshop, writing was seen as a process that continuously (re)built itself, aiming to obtain a final outcome which could be improved on a continuous basis and to profit from reported educational benefits (Babayigit, 2019; Mendes et al., 2018). In line with Kearns (2009), this kind of practice should avoid excessive competitiveness and criticism between pupils, moving the workshop dynamics away from errors or failures. In this regard, Silveira (1991) highlights the importance of the teacher in instigating processes of textual disinhibition in students which, in our perspective, allows the pupil to take more risks and write more extensive and creative texts.

In Creative Dance classes, it was expected that body and movement represented the language to express meanings, ideas, and emotions, where students explored and found their movement with the goal of communicating something, thus developing a body language with expressive and creative features (Mendes et al., 2019).

In Drama sessions, through the dramatic game we intended to create an escape to self-expression and help the development of imagination and artistic awareness. The dramatic game develops awareness and social awareness (particularly through role play), benefits speech fluency, self-knowledge, self-esteem, self-discipline, and self-confidence (Scher & Verrall, 1987).

Sports sessions in outdoor contexts, where nautical sports are included, have a strong social, environmental, educational, and physical impact (Eigenschenk et al., 2019). Autonomy, rule abiding, mutual help, and environmental awareness are attitudes and behaviors highly valued in sports like rowing, sailing, and canoeing.

The experience of group living, of collaborative work, of putting oneself in someone else's position that acting implies, helps the pupil to take self-responsibility, to develop emotional intelligence and learn to solve problems, to self-decenter, to understand and accept differences, to be more supportive, and therefore to choose for dialogue rather than violence. Ultimately, as mentioned above, it helps the pupils' overall education, promoting a humanistic and proactive culture.

The ESTp consisted of a daily schedule from 8:30 to 17:10. Eight complementary classes were assigned to the 32 available time slots projected for the 6th grade curricular matrix, with a total of 40 teaching periods. This project was structured in three intervention axes: a) Academic; b) Artistic; and, c) Sports. The Academic axis consisted in three workshops - Creative Writing, PlayMaths and English+ - and three periods of Study Room (cf. Table 1). In the Artistic axis, Creative Dance and Drama workshops took place. Finally, the Sports axis offered nautical sports, namely Rowing, Sailing, and Canoeing.

Table 1. Class timetable in full-time school

Timetable	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
08:30-09:15	Mathematics	History	Portuguese	Portuguese	Music
09:15-10:00	Mathematics	History	Portuguese	Portuguese	Music
10:20-11:05	Portuguese	Physical Ed	Science	English	Mathematics
11:05-11:50	Portuguese	Physical Ed	Science	English	Mathematics
12:00-12:45	ICT	Civic Ed	Mathematics	History	Science
12:45-13:30	ICT	English	Mathematics	Lunch	Physical Ed
14:00-14:45	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Visual Arts	Lunch
14:45-15:30	Drama and Dance	ESL Portuguese Vs Creative Writing	Nautical Sports	Visual Arts	ESL Mathematics Vs PlayMaths
15:40-16:25	Drama and Dance	ESL Portuguese Vs Creative Writing	Nautical Sports	ESL English English +	ESL Mathematics Vs PlayMaths
16:25-17:10	Nautical Sports	Study Room Vs Multimedia Design	Nautical Sports	Study Room	Study Room

Legend: ESL – Extra Support Lessons

Intervention Plan

Workshop attendance was negotiated with both the students and their parents or legal guardians, based on their performance level. Students who were proposed to attend to extra support lessons (ESL) in Portuguese, Mathematics, or English were not eligible to attend the workshops. The majority of students attended study sessions, however.

The students were always instructed to start by doing their homework, and clarify any questions they had, as well as to organize and establish their study period.

Regarding PlayMaths workshop, the teacher used practical daily situations and playful activities to teach the academic contents, continuing the work already under development in the curricular Mathematics.

The English+ workshop gave greater importance to assisting students in doing their English homework. In articulation with the head teacher, the workshop also aimed to continue the classroom work.

Regarding the artistic axis, Creative Dance and Drama workshops were coordinated with the Creative Writing workshop and subject areas of Civic Education, Visual Arts, ICT, and Physical Education. Starting from the short story of Afonso Cruz (2016), «Déjeuner sur l'herbe com alguém a afogar-se» («Déjeuner sur l'herbe with someone drowning»), who addresses the issue of indifference and the refugee crisis in Europe in a metaphorical way, students who attended Creative Writing rewrote the dramaturgical text to have it staged and presented publicly.

In order to obtain this final result, Drama, Dance, Canoeing, Creative Writing and Education for Citizenship and Development teachers worked alongside on a dramaturgic project to present to the students and then discuss it altogether. This project was called “Don't pretend you're not seeing, learn to behave like a human being!”.

This interdisciplinary work explored drama and movement games, and was concluded with its presentation to the education community on 13 June 2019, where students interacted in an artistic and integrated practices context. The convergence of Dance, Drama, Creative Writing, Music, and Arts, as well as the initiatives regarding the refugees' issue allowed the students to become more aware of the risks of indifference towards this humanitarian tragedy. In order to build the characters and help students gain more empathy towards the others, several community-directed initiatives were developed, particularly: a) on the 28 January 2019, the Holocaust Memorial Day was celebrated with an artistic performance by the students. This performance served to draw attention to the need to be active towards the protection of Human Rights, by drawing a parallel between the Holocaust and the refugees' humanitarian crisis; b) a multicultural get-together with students from different countries, including refugees. This event, “School as a multicultural space”, took place on 3 April 2019; and c) an initiative to raise awareness about the refugees' crisis. It was conducted by an actress, who does voluntary work in refugees' camps in Greece.

In the Creative Dance workshop students explored and discovered their own movement with the aim of transmitting something, developing, thus, a body language with expressive and creative features, experiencing the interpretation of Dance, making movement (to dance), creating movement (to come up with), and sensing movement (to note), (2018). Six sessions (90 minutes) took place in the 2nd Term, with the aim of leading students to discover solutions for the challenges proposed in the short story, by exploring and manipulating the elements of dance, such as levels, body parts, small and large movements, body shapes, trajectories, displacements, fast and slow movements, getting closer and moving away, in pairs or individually, light and heavy, among others (Cone & Cone, 2005; Monteiro, 2007). The subsequent sessions, in the 2nd and 3rd term, took place in coordination with Drama.

In the Drama workshop during the 1st term, students explored the body and the surrounding space, different ways of displacement, played cooperation and confidence games with the purpose of creating group cohesion, explored the

object as an inductor, verbal and non-verbal language, improvised individually and in group, from inductor situations. At the end of the 1st term, students watched animated short films from UNICEF about the refugees' crisis. These movies triggered the debate about Human Rights and initiated the construction of the performance at school in the Holocaust Memorial Day.

The following sessions were headed by the Creative Dance workshop and, at the end of the 2nd and 3rd terms, the sessions were joint in order to stage the text rewritten by the students in the Creative Writing workshop.

Regarding staging, it is important to mention that the opportunity to use the texts written by the students, after conversations with the actress, constituted an excellent exercise to develop empathy.

The sports axis served the main purpose of providing sports instruction in Nautical Sports to all the participants. Being a reference school in this sports area, the best use of the existing material and human resources was made, with the intention of broadening the practice of Nautical Sports to the school population. Additionally, and to include a social environmental framework to the sports practices, the convergence with the Project EcoMuseu do Mondego, was made. Sixteen students participated regularly in the nautical activities, divided equally among each sport. Students' commute to the nautical center was made autonomously and always by public bus.

The Class Logbook (Mendes et al., 2018a) was used to promote a daily reflection for the students. This activity demanded that students write about their daily life at school. Each day, a student, chosen alphabetically, would have the privilege of beginning this literary journey. The student who wrote on the Logbook, would present it on the next day, preferably in the first class in the morning.

Research Goal

The inquiry of students, parents or guardians, and teachers was conducted in order to achieve two goals: a) assess the program's impact on pupils involved and, b) know participants' (students, parents and teachers) perceptions about this ESTp.

Sample and Data Collection

This EST project was developed in a suburban public school, composed by 500 pupils ranging from 5th to 9th grade. 20 students attending the same 6th grade class of the 2018/2019 academic year (9 boys and 11 girls; 11.2 ± 0.68 years old), 5 parents (42.6 ± 4.54 years old), and 2 teachers (60 ± 4 years old) participated in this project. It is important to refer that 40% of the pupils were object of official Social Support. To this study, 13 participants (6 students, 5 parents or guardians and 2 teachers) were interviewed.

The 6 students were selected using a stratified probabilistic sampling technique. Three groups were created: G1: students with two or more negative marks; G2: students with one or zero negative marks and a global average below 3.7 (on a scale from 0 to 5); G3: students without negative marks and a global average over 3.7 (on a scale of 0 to 5). One student from G1, three from G2 and two from G3 were interviewed, as well as their parents. Only one parent from G2 was not interviewed. Regarding the teachers interviewed, both were part of the class council and participated in the project conception and development.

Data Analysis

The Project was assessed based on a qualitative approach, where the opinions of the students, parents or guardians, and teachers were collected through semi structured interviews.

Semi structured interviews

The content analysis technique (Bardin, 2008) was used with QSR NVIVO software (Version 9). The use of free coding aimed to characterize the opinion of the several participants, both on the whole (total of interviews) and specific (for each participant), through the presentation of the most referenced indicators, considering the number of interviews [Sources (F)] and the number of references [Text Units (UT)].

Validity was ensured according to the recommended steps in the literature. For content validity, a group of experts was consulted as described and recommended by Litwin (1995). Intra and intercoder reliability was tested with Cohen's Kappa (Fonseca et al., 2007). Prior to categorization, coders were submitted to a training protocol, following the methodological recommendations of Hill and Hill (2002). Intercoder reliability was 97.52% and intra coder reliability was 98.51%, therefore classified as excellent.

Procedures and Formal Ethical topics

Data collection took place in the school premises between 17 and 20 June 2019, where each participant was interviewed individually. The interviews were conducted by a specialist (co-author of this study) but not participant in

the project. Participants were required to sign an Informed Consent form, expressly accepting to participate in the investigation. The parents or legal guardians signed an informed consent at the beginning of the academic year, accepting their children's participation in the Project.

This project was approved by the School's Pedagogical Council.

Findings / Results

Table 2 shows all Text Units (TU=787) coded for each different activities. Divided by intervenient category, 353 (43.4%) TU are from the interviews to the students (S), 297 (36.5%) to the parents (P), and 162 (19.9%) to the teachers (T).

Table 2. Description of results by subcategory

	Students		Parents		Teachers		Total		TU
	Negative valuation (TU/%)	Positive valuation (TU/%)							
<i>Project (general)</i>	36 (12,9%)	43 (15,4%)	18 (6,5%)	77 (27,6%)	14 (5,0%)	91 (32,6%)	68 (24,4%)	211 (75,6%)	279
<i>Class division</i>	8 (9,1%)	22 (25,0%)	21 (23,9%)	20 (22,7%)	8 (9,1%)	9 (10,2%)	37 (42,1%)	51 (57,9%)	88
<i>Solidary activity</i>	0	70 (64,2%)	6 (5,5%)	22 (20,2%)	0	11 (10,1%)	6 (5,5%)	103 (94,5%)	109
<i>Creative Writing</i>	0	32 (58,2%)	0	20 (36,4%)	0	3 (5,4%)	0	55 (100%)	55
<i>Workshop PlayMaths</i>	2 (12,5%)	7 (43,8%)	0	7 (43,8%)	0	0	2 (12,5%)	14 (87,5%)	16
<i>Workshop English+</i>	1 (100%)	0	0	0	0	0	1 (100%)	0	1
<i>Workshop Study</i>	0	14 (70,0%)	0	6 (30,0%)	0	0	0	20 (100%)	20
<i>Room Dance</i>	0	12 (63,2%)	2 (10,5%)	5 (26,3%)	0	0	2 (10,5%)	17 (89,5%)	19
<i>Workshop Drama</i>	0	17 (32,1%)	17 (32,1%)	19 (35,8%)	0	0	17 (32,1%)	36 (67,9%)	53
<i>Workshop Nautical</i>	0	48 (56,4%)	0	36 (42,4%)	0	1 (1,2%)	0	85 (100%)	85
<i>Sports Logbook</i>	5 (8,1%)	19 (30,6%)	0	14 (22,6%)	0	24 (38,7%)	5 (8,1%)	57 (91,9%)	62
Totals	52 (37,7%)	284 (43,8%)	64 (46,4%)	226 (34,8%)	22 (15,9%)	139 (21,4%)	138 (17,5%)	649 (82,5%)	787 (100%)

The results show that the project had an overall positive evaluation, with more positive (TU=674; 83.0%) than negative (TU=138; 17.0%) appreciations.

Regarding the opinions about the Project as a whole, we found differences between the types of participants regarding the most valued items. For example, students highlighted aspects related to the opportunities created for learning. Additionally, they also highlighted the possibility the Project gave them to continue the academic activities. (e.g., *I increased my study and made a greater effort; it helped me to become increasingly interested in the contents; I did my homework over there, which helped me a lot*); the parents or guardians focused more on the occupational value of the Project (e.g., *he spends a great deal of time at home "stuck" to the cell phone and to the computer... with this project, he spends more time at school and in sports*), and on its effects in the improvement of school/teachers-students relationships (e.g., *the teacher-student relationship is much closer now*); the teachers' narrative highlighted the effects on the students' personal and social development (e.g., *when these students get in touch with other kinds of people and other ways of learning, they end up being better citizens; they become more proactive; they have a different attitude in social terms*).

Among the activities that integrated the project, Solidary Activity (TU=103; 94.5%), Creative Writing (TU=55; 100%), Nautical Sports (TU=85; 100%), Study Rooms (TU=20; 100%), Logbook (TU=57; 91.9%), Dance (TU=17; 89.5%) and PlayMaths (TU=14; 87.5%) were the most positively highlighted by the students. The category where more mixed feedback occurred was Class Division, with 42.0% of answers considering the methodology as non-beneficial (TU=37) and 58.0% considering the opposite (TU=51).

Discussion

It is natural that different positions in the educational process correspond to different opinions about the most prominent aspects of the very same experience. Even so, there is a consensus around the contribution of the Project for the improvement of the relationships between students, school and peer-to-peer relationships: students (e.g., *it's very significant that people are helping all the time; I've spent more time playing with my colleagues; friendship; spending more time with my friends was a good thing.*); parents: (e.g., *it created links of friendship and find things between them that were unnoticed*); teacher: (e.g., *I think there is more unity; to create links among the class*). *Being with colleagues* in an environment of *support from the teachers* is a key determinant for motivation to accomplish the school work (Alonso-Tapia, 2006; Skinner & Pitzer, 2012). It seems clear, therefore, that the Project contributed to the way students feel about school.

Despite the importance given to peer-to-peer relationship, students and parents also valued the workshops of higher cognitive involvement: Creative Writing, *PlayMaths*, and study Rooms, the Arts workshops, Creative Dance, Drama and equally the Sports offer. This type of diversity of activities allows for a greater number of learning experiences, supportive interactions with adults, and broader networks of peers (Balaguer et al., 2020; Vandell et al., 2015). Specifically in Creative Writing, students described this workshop as a challenging, collaborative and creative activity (e.g., *the teacher use to give us texts and challenges; it was some sort of food to help us express ourselves in a better way; the moments when we were all together, as a family; it was very amusing to write; at school we can be always imagining whatever we want to; to express that in a sheet of paper is something that I love; I've discovered that I could write creative stories very easily; in the beginning I was nervous, but then I realized that I could do it easily; we had to write texts and that was cool; it was a good idea because it made us think; we had to organize the ideas so we could write it in the text*). From these statements, it is clear the importance given to the writing process itself and to the textual disinhibition, as they were in Mendes et al. (2018a).

The *PlayMaths* workshop sought a balance between teaching fundamental contents and the ludic game or even the gamification of some academic practices, meeting the recommendations of Grando (2004) and Kishimoto (2000). This dynamic is expressed in several statements of the students (e.g., *the teacher really explained the things; helped me a lot in mental calculus*) and from a parent (e.g., *the student loved PlayMaths; liked the teacher; mathematics was essential for mental calculus; the challenges proposed in mathematics; the way the teacher helped her; mathematics was taught in a funny and ludic way*).

The Study Rooms were equally valued by the students (e.g. *it helped me have the homework done; because of it I would have more time to do things that I like; it helped me improve my scores; in the afternoon we had more time so the teacher could explain more calmly*), and the parents (e.g. *in the afternoons I had time to do some homework or even to clarify doubts*), emphasizing that this kind of support allowed, on the one hand, to clarify doubts in a context of a greater proximity with the teacher and, on the other hand, would free the student from school work by the time he/she came back home.

In the artistic field, the role of Dance, as an enabler of body language with expressive and creative characteristics (Mendes et al., 2018), was highlighted mainly by the students (e.g. *it helped me feel things in a different way; to control my mood; I loved to dance; to do movements with the body that in our imagination we thought were not possible*). Drama raised the same interest and increased self-awareness, creativity and artistic awareness in students (Scher & Verrall, 1987) (e.g., *drama and dance were my favorites; many of us were the closed type and drama awoke our creativity and the way of expressing ourselves*). As advocated by Hansen et al., (2003), these artistic extracurricular activities improve adolescent adjustment, as well as the participants' self-knowledge and self-discipline.

In relation to nautical sports, it was interesting to note that the parents (e.g., *taking the bus was good for their autonomy... nowadays we over-protect our children*) and the students (e.g. *I increased my autonomy; I was less afraid of the river; I never saw myself canoeing, but with the practice it became easier; it helped to be less afraid of water; it was good so we wouldn't be closed indoors stuck to the cell phone*) associated the value of sports practice to the gain of responsibility in the aquatic environment and autonomy in commuting. The Sports Extracurricular Activities also improve the social and academic abilities of the young (Darling, 2005).

Although not a workshop, the Logbook was a project that joined students, parents, and teachers. Students showed great interest, enthusiasm and sense of responsibility for the written and spoken report of their experiences at school (e.g., *for me it was something very special; I felt relieved; I wasn't well and I expressed my feelings and felt relieved; it's an emotional release; it was something good; it helped me to write better and to approach important topics*). The parents or guardians (e.g., *that is cute; after some time, when they grow old, it will have a great value; I felt autonomy in her because of the logbook*) and the teachers (e.g., *it makes them being focused; I thought it was a very positive idea*) also appreciated the value of this project for the students' autonomy and for the class environment.

Along with the cognitive, artistic and sports components, this project also worked the social dimension with the students, based in Afonso Cruz's short story. The students (e.g., *I was able to understand the kind of life of the refugees; it's really bad that they are far from home in order to survive; we should try to make the difference and do good things for*

other people, we get a different perspective of life; we shouldn't focused only on ourselves), but also parents and teachers recognized the importance of fighting indifference and of a greater social awareness in the work developed in the various workshops. It is common to restrict education only to school and to perpetuate its claims of individualization, when education has always been social (Caride et al., 2015).

The aspects that contributed to negative attitudes towards the Project as a whole were equally related to its academic component and its impact on the students' workload. The parents focused more on a global evaluation of the school context, asserting that these activities implied more curricular work (e.g., *much more boring for the students because of a great number of classes; it will lead to little time for the children to play; the workload used to be lighter*). This indicates that projects should engage with more active and ludic learning methods. This is also the main point of teachers' perception, who highlight the importance of these projects to include less directive pedagogical practices and include teachers that embrace a pluridirectional idea of learning and who are capable of developing methods consistent with it (e.g., *I think that should exist a selection, since not every teacher has the abilities for this kind of projects; this kind of projects needs teachers who do their best for it*). But the students are the ones who better state the risks of extending their presence at school, claiming that work overload, particularly when it is merely an extended repetition of the work already existent in the curricular subjects (e.g., *sometimes I'd prefer to be at home because I get tired; because of the work I don't spend that much time with my father, and sometimes he had some time off and I had to be at school; I would run out of time to do homework*). In this context, and according to Mendes et al. (2018b), a school working day of eight hours may, in some cases, cause fatigue to the students.

Therefore, it is important to deepen this apparent contradiction that raises essentially from the students' narrative: they accept the importance of the Project on their learning process. However, they also highlight the negative consequences of an excessive focus on these tasks and, importantly, the kind of methodologies employed. This fact was more evident in the English+ workshop where the sessions' dynamics did not promote communication and linguistic interaction, as mentioned by Nunan (1991) and by Yousaf et al. (2017). Due to the fact that this workshop was merely an extension of English in its curricular form, it was not regarded as interesting, since both students and parents did not mention it on their testimonies.

In line with this importance of methods, the issue of class division arose in the narratives. Some tasks required that the class had to be divided in smaller groups to benefit their management and viability, or simply to meet the formative needs of the students (in the case of Study Assistance). This process was valued in an ambivalent way. All interviewed participants expressed criticism regarding the student's lack of autonomy, i.e. students could not decide for themselves which activities they would attend and this led to complaints regarding the alleged lack of equity and sense of justice in several decisions that put students with equal rights performing different activities. For example, students with greater difficulties in the curricular subjects were directed to activities that would complement or help them improve – this is the argument used by the students (e.g., *each student was in the area in which it had more needs; the best ones would go to the workshops, while the students with more difficulties would go to Study Assistance, this way they could benefit of more help; the students with more difficulties needed more assistance... it's obvious that we would like to be together, but there was no problem*), and the other interviewed actors, to value positively the introduced distinction, and is the pedagogical argument for its implementation in school. This reveals that the main aim of the Project, as a curricular complement was accepted, but also that the understanding of its potential as a learning tool is essential for its acceptance as a mean of ensuring the students' involvement.

Conclusion

Following Ehren and Visscher (2008), it is not expected that complex, systemic changes in school settings arise solely from isolated, episodic initiatives. Despite this, we must also be aware of the effects of such initiatives on people's mobilization to work creatively (Rozimela, 2020) and foster multidimensional learning opportunities that transcends formal curricular contents, as well on the meaning that pupils attribute to the social environment of their schooling experience. These aspects are important if we consider that changing schools involves the direct participation of students, teachers and parents (Fullan, 2007) and that change is connected to creativity and trust among actors in educational process (Davies, 2013).

This ESTp was broadly accepted by the three types of participants. The pupils praised mainly the content opportunities, valuing the activities that enhanced challenge, creativity, autonomy and expressiveness. However, they did not appreciate the mere extension of traditional instructional practices. Parents appreciated the role ESTp had in managing pupils' leisure time and the impact it had on the relationship between school/teachers/pupils. Nevertheless, they also noticed that this approach demands more time at school, hence the need to adopt less directive and more dynamic pedagogical methods in the subjects. Teachers highlighted the relevance of this project for the social and self-development of the pupils, but they also drew attention to the need of a different approach of the curricular subjects, less expositive, more empathetic and innovative. The connection between active or dynamic pedagogical methods and school change seems obvious, as previously stated by Hopkins (2000), who argued that the way learning is organized can make a big difference for pupils' learning capability and self-esteem.

The participants' perceptions were "tuned" to value peer-to-peer relationship and activities that enhanced greater social awareness. Also, this may be linked to the specific nature of the tasks, that involved active engagement from pupils to connect to real world problems, such as multiculturalism, a growing social issue that schools' actors must be aware and address (Karacabey, et al., 2019).

The convergence verified in this ESTp, between cognition and the artistic, social and sportive education, sought to promote the main goal of the School, an instruction that promotes a global (including multicultural and universal) development of the pupils' capabilities (UNESCO, 2016). Moreover, the increase in the time students stay in school must be accompanied by a change in teaching practices.

Recommendations

Considering the testimonials of all agents involved in this educational project, it is desirable that the teaching process would be more student-centred, adopting strategies such as project methodology, contextualization of teaching, collaborative learning, the inverted classroom or the gamification, among others. Achieving these constructivist practices will require motivated and committed teachers to these types of practices. Along with this willingness to work with these more challenging practices, it would be important that teachers would be previously trained in this pedagogical area.

Another aspect to fit in the ESTp is the resetting of school timetables. Students need a balanced relation between learning and time to be with their peers, that is, intercalating learning time with informal moments of peer relationship. Regardless of how challenging the cognitive, artistic and sportive activities are, the students also need "free time" within the school timetable, to choose whether to do with it.

Limitations

One of the main limitations of this study is the sample size. Adding to this limitation, and despite the assurance of anonymity for all participants, they may have presented responses conditioned by the social desirability of answers, particularly in the teachers' group.

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