



# INTEGRATING SCIENCE, THOUGHT, AND TECHNOLOGY: TOWARD AN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENT ENVIRONMENT

17/11/2025

## EDUCATION BEYOND THE CLASSROOM, HOW EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES SHAPE FUTURE LEADERS

**OMONOVA SHAKHZODA**

Student of philology faculty, Uzbekistan State World Languages University.

**Annotation:** *“Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn.” – Benjamin Franklin. This quote clearly underlines the importance of extracurricular activities in the learning process. It suggests that success, real understanding, and personal growth come not from passive, theoretical lessons but from practical and hands-on involvement. Furthermore, it emphasizes that extracurricular activities mainly focus on developing essential life skills, including leadership, teamwork, and problem-solving. However, in many countries, the traditional education system often overlooks the power of hands-on experience. This raises an intriguing question how schools and universities can balance theoretical and practical learning, where students gain not only knowledge but also an experience to build a strong background for their future. This article explores how important extracurricular activities are in shaping students success across various aspects toward excellence.*

**Key words:** *Extracurricular activities, Education, Leadership, Problem-solving, Critical thinking, Creativity, Financial constraints, Personal growth.*

**Introduction:** Education is often linked with classrooms, exams, and theories. However, extracurricular activities, including sports, music, art, excursions, volunteering programs, and debates not only help build social skills and connections but also enhance academic performance and develop leadership and responsibility. It is also considered a pathway to personal growth, especially when students are involved in group projects or teamwork. Therefore, they learn how to work together, manage their time, solve problems and handle responsibilities which are not taught in textbooks.

**Social media and misconceptions:** Furthermore, with the rise of social media among young people, a lot of misinformation has been spread. Many bloggers and motivational speakers are promoting the idea that formal education is insufficient for achieving success with the examples of the most successful billionaires, such as Bill Gates, who dropped out of Harvard University, Mark Zuckerberg, who also left Harvard University and Steve Jobs, who quit college, etc. Therefore, this has led to the belief that higher education is not essential to achieve success.

Here comes the question: is dropping out of education really the only solution to succeed. Although some people give credit to quitting school or university as the key to success, the

opposite is true in the real world. A few billionaires, such as Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg, and Steve Jobs, are exceptions, representing a very small percentage. According to studies, many of U.S. leaders, including billionaires, attended college. Thus, successful dropouts are extremely rare.

**Role of Universities and Clubs:** As for the example of Harvard, there are more than 450 student-run organizations, including athletic teams and a wide range of artistic, musical, political, and social clubs. These opportunities provide students with hands-on experiences for personal growth, leadership development, and building networks and friendships. Besides, extracurricular activities do matter in gaining admissions at top universities, such as the University of Oxford, Cambridge, MIT, and other world-renowned universities. Students with robust extracurricular profiles or CVs, or at least with 30% of public activeness, are more likely to be accepted. Consequently, prestigious universities do not overlook the real power of extracurricular activities or treat them as optional. However, they see them as the most powerful educational tools.

**Extracurricular activities in Uzbekistan vs. Abroad:** In addition to this, extracurricular activities in Uzbekistan also hold an essential role, but their structure and content differ from those in foreign countries. For instance, in Europe and North America, art, music, drama, sports, literature, design, and other creative disciplines, which enhance their imagination, thinking skills, and expressive abilities, are mainly carried out. As for Uzbekistan, extracurricular activities primarily focus on promoting cultural and national values. Therefore, national arts and handicraft clubs are mainly valued as far as they foster an interest in Uzbek nationality and identity. Moreover, sport and literature are also given great attention. Many schools and educational organizations arrange sport competitions and literature clubs, especially those focused on promoting a healthy lifestyle and understanding nation's literary heritage.

**Debates and Conferences:** Participating in debates and conferences is more than just an extracurricular activity. These activities not only provide real-life experience for students but also strengthen their communication skills and critical thinking abilities, which are particularly beneficial for job interviews, presentations, or even casual conversations. In debates or group discussions, students are often pushed to think on their feet. They must understand both sides of an argument and analyze situations from multiple perspectives, which helps them sharpen their problem-solving skills. Besides, during the class discussions, it is crucial to be a good listener and to respect opponent's points. This teaches them responsibility and the importance of listening before responding. These experiences make them good team players by promoting collaboration. In order to prepare for debates, students are required to research their topics deeply, which involves finding reliable sources and relevant facts to support their arguments. This process

develops strong research skills, which helps differentiate between credible and non-credible sources of information. These skills are important for shaping them into well-rounded individuals who are informed about the world around them.

**Challenges in Implementation:** Despite the clear benefits of extracurricular activities, challenges in implementing them can hinder the development of students. First and foremost, the main challenge is a shortage of resources and budget for schools and educational organizations to operate co-curricular programs. With limited budget allocations among competing priorities. For example, art programs need supplies, sports teams require valuable equipment, and IT or technology clubs demand up-to-date tools. These issues often become the first obstacles. Moreover, students often struggle with balancing co-curriculars and exam preparation as balanced schedules are not always set by schools or organizations. In that case, many students have to prioritize exam preparation or academic performance over these hands-on learning experiences. Examination-focused education systems often view these activities as distractions rather than complements to learning. Consequently, parents and administrators may reject these programs as they are seen to take time away from "serious" academic work. Additionally, overwhelming workloads are faced by teachers and trainers, leaving little energy for additional responsibilities. A lack of specialized knowledge can become a barrier when schools are ready to offer diverse activities but few teachers with relevant skills in coaching. A history teacher may excel in the classroom but cannot hold meaningful debate clubs for students, reducing opportunities for them to develop critical and analytical thinking.

**Solutions to Challenges:** Creative problem-solving and strategic planning are required to overcome these challenges. Schools and educational organizations frequently face financial challenges in implementing extracurricular activities, which is often the case in Uzbekistan. To address these issues, several measures can be implemented by the government. This includes finding financial sponsorships from local cultural clubs, businesses, or youth organizations to share resources and skills. Additionally, applying for grants or financial aid from foundations in order to support extracurricular activities. Costs can be reduced by reusing existing materials, sharing resources between organizations, and using free online platforms or courses. Furthermore, curriculum integration strategies play an important role in addressing time constraints by embedding co-curricular elements within regular academic programs. It is critical to strike a balance between academics and extracurricular activities. Teaching students how to manage their time and prioritize tasks contributes to their overall development. Balance does not always mean equal time for everything but rather ensuring that there is enough time for priorities. Moreover, schools and educational organizations should promote regular extracurricular activities that are aligned with academic calendars to avoid overlap. To address the belief that

extracurricular activities actually distract students from academic achievements, educators and administrators can organize meetings or seminars to demonstrate how these programs enhance academic excellence rather than reduce it.

**Teacher workload and training:** According to UNESCO's "Global Report on Teachers", many educators are suffering from excessive workloads, and a lack of guidance and support. It is believed that by reducing paperwork, and non-teaching tasks, and by freeing up their time, teachers can be more available to supervise extracurricular activities. In addition to this, educational organizations can arrange workshops or professional coaching to educate teachers and help them become specialist in their fields. Recognizing and rewarding teachers also contribute to their effectiveness and consistency, emphasizing teacher motivation and status. Thus, in order to deal with these workload concerns and excessive pressure on teachers, the government should offer targeted support to enable teachers to contribute to extracurricular programs effectively.

**Conclusion:** Extracurricular activities play an indispensable role in shaping the future leaders and well-rounded individuals, contributing considerably to both personal and academic growth. They equip students with many opportunities to nurture critical life skills that are not typically taught in classes, including leadership, time management and teamwork. Moreover, engaging in extracurricular activities should not be seen merely as a way to pass the time but for strengthening and gaining hands-on experiences for real-life challenges. As for the many successful individuals, such as Elon Musk, Bill Gates, and Mark Zuckerberg, they underline the importance of creativity and curiosity and problem-solving skills, which go far beyond classroom lessons. In spite of potential challenges, which arise mainly because of limited financial resources, heavy teacher workloads, and a lack of specialized trainers, the benefits of extracurricular participation far outweigh the drawbacks. Therefore, educational institutions and schools should prioritize the integration of diverse and inclusive extracurricular programs to promote comprehensive development.

### References:

1. *Extracurricular Activities: Success and Development of Communication Skills with the Role of Parents, Public and Home Work (Alisher Sabirov) — A study from Uzbekistan on the value of extracurricular activities in higher & secondary education.*  
(<https://scispace.com/pdf/extracurricular-activities-success-and-development-of-1efezp1s7q.pdf>)
2. *Organization of Extracurricular Activities in Primary Classes Abroad and in Uzbekistan — A 2025 article analysing the organisation of extracurricular activities in Uzbekistan vs abroad.* (<https://scientists.uz/uploads/202502/B.P.-16.pdf>)
3. *Significant Features of Organizing Scientific Extracurricular ... (Abduramanova D.V., 2020) — Study on student interest in extracurricular circles in Uzbekistan.*  
([https://ares.uz/storage/app/media/2020yil/Vol\\_1\\_Issue\\_3/718-722.pdf](https://ares.uz/storage/app/media/2020yil/Vol_1_Issue_3/718-722.pdf))
4. *Uzbekistan Education Sector Analysis: 2021 (UNICEF / UN) — Broader report on Uzbekistan's education sector including elements relevant to extracurricular & non-formal activities.*  
([https://uzbekistan.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/Edu%20Sit%20An\\_UNICEF%202022\\_0.pdf](https://uzbekistan.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/Edu%20Sit%20An_UNICEF%202022_0.pdf))
5. *Students Involvement in Extracurricular Clubs: Effect on Academic Achievement — Uzbekistan Case (Sardor G., 2025) — Recent research showing positive effects of extracurricular club involvement in Uzbekistan.*  
(<https://unipublish.org/index.php/conference-proceedings/article/view/32>)
6. *Extracurricular Activities in Professional ... Teaching Students Folk Crafts – Uzbekistan Example (Qodirov B.E., 2022) — Example of using folk-craft extracurriculars in Uzbekistan.* (<https://eipublication.com/index.php/eijmrrms/article/view/199>)
7. *National Review – Adult Learning and Education Uzbekistan (DVV International – Central Asia, 2025) — Review of adult and non-formal education in Uzbekistan, useful for broader context of extracurricular / non-formal learning.*  
([https://www.dvv-international-centralasia.org/fileadmin/files/centralasia/National\\_Review/National\\_Review\\_ALE\\_Uzbekistan\\_2025\\_EN\\_10\\_.pdf](https://www.dvv-international-centralasia.org/fileadmin/files/centralasia/National_Review/National_Review_ALE_Uzbekistan_2025_EN_10_.pdf)).