

ELO stands for "Extended Learning Opportunities"

This started as a small idea about 20 years ago. The original vision was to offer classes of an academic nature that would fall outside of what parents were teaching at home in their core curriculum. The concepts learned at ELO would be taught in an academic vain but the courses offered would be subjects that would run alongside the core academics, especially in elementary. We meet once a week from 8:30-12:30 on Wednesdays at Fellowship Bible Church. You must be a member of CHEC (Christian Home Educators Community) and we do have a statement of faith.

We offer classes from birth through 12th. In our Pre-K through 2nd grade, we have all unit study-based instruction with PE and playground time. These classes are usually supplemented with craft, story and some basic academic structure. No phonics, reading or math is the main instruction time.

We would expose the children in elementary classes (3rd - 6th) to social studies by offering classes such as states, presidents, explorers, inventors on a rotation but not a full year of history. We also can offer art, music (not necessarily teaching an instrument, though we have done a recorder class in the past), speech, current events, PE, etc. also on a rotation. The only classes we offer that could be replace core curriculum is the science. We use a textbook and do have labs and experiments and some outside class reading in all science classes 3rd-12th grades. We are not set up and do not wish to take the place of reading/phonics, math, complete social studies course, handwriting, bible, etc. that you would do at home with each child.

All sciences are taught from a biblical world view but in high school science classes, other theories can be explored through the curriculum. We use Apologia and Berean Builders textbooks.

That being said, as your child gets older, our classes become more rigorous and academic. We offer classes that can be used as core curriculum in the Jr High years such as Texas History, General Science, Physical Science, Writing, Speech, Geography, etc. Again, except for science, these classes are offered on a rotation. Students will be given more in class instruction and be expected to complete outside work as well. There can be quizzes over material presented as well as testing over book work and labs. These classes require a lot of participation from students in class and outside of class. Some homework is given and expected to be completed before the next class meeting.

In high school, we offer both core curriculum and extra classes that would be considered electives on a high school transcript. Core curriculum classes can be science classes (Biology, Chemistry, Forensics, Anatomy, etc) foreign language classes, government, speech, Bible class, etc. These classes will have work assigned that would be considered the hours needed to get a full high school credit. We also offer extra curricular classes such as Life Skills, Yearbook, Internships, etc.

These classes have less in class and out of class work and cannot be counted as a full high school credit but can be a half of a credit of electives on a high school transcript. The same classes, except for science, are not offered each year so that high school students can have a variety of choices each school year.

As we all know, each child in homeschooling can be a varying educational levels. This of course is taken into consideration at all ages and teachers accommodate accordingly. We do accommodate for special needs children from birth through high school. We have several families that are involved who have children with a wide range of special needs. Our goal is that all children are in the main classroom with their appropriate age and/or skill level. We do not have a separate program for them but teachers and students have always been very gracious and accommodating. Obviously, depending on grade level, expectations will fit the child's disabilities. With older special needs children, a "buddy" may be assigned to the child. This is another student that volunteers to help the special needs student in class. This system has worked very well! We do have a "resource room" that is designed for older students with special needs dependent on availability and specific need. This is a program set up and outlined by Kelly Buchanek. This is not a program that she teaches specific students all morning. More detail and a specific plan can be given once a family with special needs signs up for ELO. Again, we mainstream all kids in their age/skill appropriate classes. This is not like public school and since we know that some of homeschool because we have special needs kids, we are very accommodating to all kids no matter the learning delay. As of yet, we have had no issues with kids with special needs in classrooms.

We are considered an academic co-op not a social co-op. We do have times during the day to socialize through break times but while we are in class, students are expected to be under the headship of the teacher and in class participation and respect are enforced. Jr High and High school students sign contracts stating they will come to ELO prepared for each class and that their behavior is being closely monitored.

Also, classes that are offered are based on teachers we have available and appropriate student interest. There are so many amazing things we could offer at our coop, but we have to have a mom willing to teach the subject and students interested in the class.

That being said, as a homeschool co-op, we also share the responsibilities as moms. It takes all of us to ensure that ELO is run well and efficiently. Each parent involved is expected to teach, lead a class and/or be willing to jump in and help out. We do our best to ensure that you are in a grade level/age that you feel comfortable and are suited for. When you sign up you will be given a list of classes offered and then the option of listing your top 4 choices for classroom/grade.

ELO does take more time than just a normal planning week for your homeschool. The responsibility is shared among teaching teams and how that rotates is worked out among each team. The leadership of ELO does not tell you

how to teach but can provide past curriculum used if you are unsure how to get started. The idea of team teaching seems overwhelming to many that are not familiar, but as those of us that have been in ELO for many years know, it can also be very fun and rewarding!

We are all busy as homeschool moms! So if you feel like your schedule is such that you would not be able to put in extra time and effort to help teach in a class, ELO may not be a good fit for you.

ELO is a real commitment for all of us. Again, it takes all of us to ensure that all teacher and students needs are met. Each person is important from the nursery workers to the high school Science teachers! ELO meets 20 times a year and a full year commitment is expected.

We know ELO may not be a fit for everyone. Please feel free to email me with any questions elocheclongview@gmail.com.