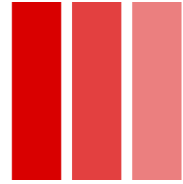


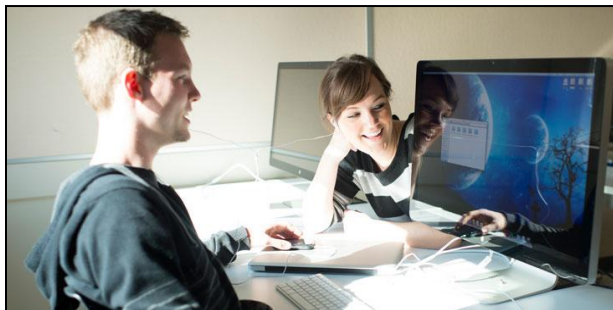
ELGIN FREEDOM LEARNING CENTER

A Self-Directed Learning Community



Imagine this:

Public schools are failing your children and you have been looking for alternatives. You have scheduled a visit to a small learning center to determine if it is a good fit for your kids. As you come in the front door, you find you have to pause for a moment while three students, instruments in hand, are signing out to go to a nearby studio for their music lesson. Once they clear you are able to take your first look around. It is a busy, yet inviting space. Directly ahead of you and to the right, large windows allow natural light to stream in. In front of them is a comfortable-looking lounge area with a long couch and a couple of chairs surrounding a low table on three sides. A group of students, laptops and tablets out, are animatedly working on a project. On the far wall is a screen that displays schedules, announcements, and examples of student work on a rotating basis. Further to the left along the far wall is a media table where another student is making a presentation to several younger students. In another area students surround a worktable constructing items for an upcoming Makers Fair that you recall seeing an advertisement for. Activity seems to be everywhere, yet not everyone is engaged in the same thing. You cross to the far corner of the room and pass through a doorway to another area with a large conference table surrounded by comfortable chairs. The students there are planning the logistics for a trip they will be taking to a museum nearby. A woman with a visitor badge works with them, but she is in the role of an advisor rather than an instructor or leader. To the left is a kitchen area where an older student is directing several younger ones in preparing a meal for them all. Another lounge area with a large-screen monitor dominates another section of the room. There, several students are engaged in a movie while another is reading a novel. A door opens out into a back courtyard area where a few more students are around a table under a canopy working on college and scholarship applications. Two more students are working in raised garden beds harvesting some various greens to accompany the meal that is being prepared. A middle-aged gentleman, who is the only other adult



you have seen so far, comes up to you and introduces himself as the director of the learning center. So many questions flood into your brain, but the biggest seems to be “why is the teacher not teaching?”, followed closely by, “how do you make this all work?” It definitely doesn’t look like any school that you are used to seeing.

Welcome to Elgin Freedom Learning Center. This is a place where education is reimagined. It is a learner-directed, self-paced program where students can get individualized attention and have an opportunity to pursue their passions and dreams. Here you will not find grade levels, strict scheduling, testing, grades, bells or hall passes. Here, learners interact with other learners of all ages and adults alike. Here, the learner is free. Free to learn what they want, how they want, and when they want. They have the freedom to know, freedom to do, and freedom to be.



My name is Sam Long, an educational consultant and twenty-year veteran classroom teacher. And I want to build a learning community.

Why not a school? Well, first, it would be silly to call it a school when it's being built on the principles of "unschooling". Second, a community is everything that a youngster needs that school is not.

A community is a place where everyone has a voice versus being ruled over. A community nourishes the spirits of both learners and educators by freeing them from mindless bureaucracy. A community thrives on the exchange of energy, affection, and inspiration. A community builds lasting relationships. A community is both diverse and inclusive. A community doesn't force its members into false competition through testing, ranking, numbering, and filing. A community is a place of cooperative endeavor. A learning center is a community.

Our learning community will be built on learner-directed principles that research has shown time and time again to increase student motivation, engagement, and most of all success. Our community will encourage learners to take ownership of their own education, and propel them on the path to becoming life-long learners. Our community will be built on the inherent inquisitiveness and natural curiosity in every learner. We learn by experience. And we learn by doing. It's the natural way in which human beings are wired, and it's how we learn up until the point that we start "school".

I am looking to build a self-directed learning community in Elgin, Texas and would like to begin enrollment for Fall 2023. If you would like more information about self-directed learning, many resources can be found at www.ephesuseducation.com/articles. Or please contact me directly via email at samuel.long@ephesuseducation.com or through my website: www.ephesuseducation.com/contact. I will be holding an informational meeting in the near future, and I would enjoy your being a part of it! Please sign up to join in. Together let us create a positive educational experience for kids!

