



ROLE OF THE CLASSROOM TEACHER IN ELF

The classroom teacher contributes to the success of the ELF program in many ways. The following suggestions for teachers may help ELF be most effective in the classroom.

Before ELF Starts in the Fall:

The ELF coordinator will distribute to all classroom teachers a schedule of ELF workshop topics and volunteer training sessions. Please look this over.

Meet with your team of ELF volunteers to get to know them and to explain any rules or codes of behavior you expect your students to follow.

Together with your team of ELF volunteers, schedule the ELF workshops in your classroom for the year.

Please consider ways in which you might extend the monthly topics into other areas of your curriculum, such as reading, writing, math or art. This is also an opportunity to determine how best to use children's ELF experiences to help students meet the state learning standards.

For Each ELF Workshop:

Discuss with the volunteers ahead of time how you will participate, such as leading small groups, helping to divide children into teams, helping with classroom management. Your volunteers will appreciate your suggestions and support in working with children of all abilities.

Please be there. The fact that you participate sends a message to the children that ELF is important. At times the volunteers will need your help with small group activities, classroom management, or outdoor explorations.

Outdoor experiential activities are most successful when done in small groups. Please plan on assisting your ELF volunteers by leading a small group of your students in the outdoor exploration of each ELF topic.

Help with logistics. If you can, outfit the children with nametags. Knowing students' names helps volunteers connect with the children and maintain control more easily. Also, you know the chemistry of your children and can help by dividing them into workable groups for the small-group activities.

Read the appropriate chapter in *Hands-On Nature* or the hand-outs that your classroom volunteers give you so you will know what's coming and can prepare the children, if you wish. Many ELF volunteers like to share their lesson plan outline with the classroom teacher before the in-class presentation.

Some schools videotape the adult workshops; you may want to review these prior to the in-class presentations.

After the Workshop:

Give feedback to your volunteers. We all need encouragement and constructive suggestions. If there's a problem you'd rather not bring up directly with them, talk with your school's ELF coordinator.

Follow up on the workshop with some activities or projects. Many classes keep ELF journals in which each child draws pictures or writes stories to review and think about what they've learned. Other classes write letters to their ELF volunteers telling what they learned or what activities they enjoyed the most. There are suggestions for additional activities and related children's books included with each ELF unit.