**STEM + Leadership: Building Thinkers & Changemakers**

OELC’s STEM + Leadership programs are designed for elementary students to explore Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math through the lens of teamwork, communication, and creative problem-solving. Students develop transferable skills that they need to meet the demands of today’s global economy and society.

OELC can customize your STEM education in our unique outdoor setting at Camp Couching or bring STEM to your school. We can offer 1, 2 or 3 day programs at both our camp location or at your school.

**Why STEM + Leadership?**

Our programs blend **curriculum-connected STEM challenges** with OELC’s long-standing focus on **youth leadership development**, creating immersive learning experiences that build:

* Critical and creative thinking
* Collaboration and group decision-making
* Resilience and confidence
* Curiosity and real-world application
* Strengthens social-emotional learning

It will also:

* Offer an experiential learning opportunity in a vibrant, outdoor environment, led by experienced educators and facilitators at our Camp Couchiching location in Longford Mills or can be delivered in-school
* Empower young minds through hands-on exploration and real-world leadership
* Introduce younger students to SHSM-style programming early
* Support transitions from elementary to high school
* Aligns well with Ontario’s new career studies curriculum and de-streaming goals.

**Why STEM + Leadership at OELC Works**

1. Problem Solving Meets People Skills: STEM challenges naturally involve trial and error, experimentation, and iteration. OELC's leadership focus adds to the human side of problem solving—communication, team dynamics, decision-making, and resilience. Students learn that innovation doesn't happen in isolation.
2. Authentic Roles Build Real Skills: The use of our role cards (Team Lead, Designer, Communicator) mirrors real STEM careers (Project Manager, Engineer, Analyst). It gives kids a taste of industry structure in a safe, supportive way. These roles also support cross-curricular goals: *oral communication, reflection, critical thinking, and equity* (rotating leadership means everyone has a voice).
3. Leadership Skills in Action: At every step, students take on rotating leadership roles and reflect on how their decisions affect their group’s success. They leave camp or the school classroom with more than STEM knowledge - they gain voice, agency, and confidence.
4. Outdoor STEM = Learning That Sticks: OELC’s environment adds meaning and memory to STEM. It’s hands-on, sensory-rich, and engaging—especially for younger learners. The outdoor setting strengthens SEL (Social-Emotional Learning)—confidence, empathy, self-awareness—which are often underdeveloped in traditional STEM settings.
5. 21st Century Skill Alignment: Both STEM and Leadership target collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, and communication—the “4Cs” at the heart of modern education. But OELC also nurtures courage, voice, and community-building, which round out students as ethical, inclusive leaders.