

## Creating a Close Connection with Your Students

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## INTRODUCTIONS

Sandy Flint  
Learning Manager – Math Specialist

Lindsay Jarombek  
Learning Manager – Science Specialist

Kelly Legg  
Learning Manager – Special Education

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## About TRIO Wolf Creek...

- TRIO Wolf Creek  
Distance Learning Charter School
- [www.triowolfcreek.com](http://www.triowolfcreek.com)
- Located in Chisago City, MN
- A Charter School since 2001
- A Distance Learning Program  
since 1996



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## Types of Students Choosing Online High School Learning

- Teen Parents
- Students who have passed their graduation date
- Students who have not fit into a traditional school model
- Gifted Students
- Former home-school students

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## Types of Students Choosing Online High School Learning

- Students who work outside the home to support the family
- Students who have opportunities outside the home (modeling, competitive sports)
- Students with a medical condition
- Anyone who desires something different

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## Benefits to Students

- Flexible schedule
  - work full time
  - care for young children among other necessities for at-risk students
- Students feel a constant connection to staff
- Develop critical thinking and information technology skills
- Some Online Learning is very similar to the Independent Study model which is used at many ALC's across our state

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## Student Expectations

- 20 hours of school work at home\*
- 5 hours of school work in lab
- OTIS  
(Online Technology and Internet Skills)

\*Lab waiver – for exceptional students

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## Student Expectations

- Weekly Progress
  - Measured by completion
  - 10% per week

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## Communicating with Students

- One on one IGP (Individual Graduation Plan) meetings and goal setting meetings fuel how we communicate with each individual student at Wolf Creek
- Email (2 or more times each week)
- Telephone conversations
- On-site lab component
- Discussion boards and communication using our e-learning platform for course work (Class Server & Moodle)

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## Student Motivation: Five Key Processes That Motivate

Taken from -  
*Motivating Students Who  
Don't Care: Successful  
Techniques for Educators.* By  
Allen N. Mendler

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## Basic Beliefs About Motivating Students

- 1) All students are capable of learning when they have the academic and personal tools to be successful.
- 2) Students are inherently motivated to learn but learn to be unmotivated when they repeatedly fail.
- 3) Learning requires risk taking, so classrooms need to be safe places physically and psychologically.

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## Basic Beliefs About Motivating Students (cont.)

- 4) All students have basic needs to belong, to be competent, and to influence what happens to them.
- 5) High self-esteem should not be a goal, but rather a result that comes with the mastery of challenging tasks.
- 6) High motivation for learning in school most often occurs when adults treat students with respect and dignity.

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## Five Key Processes That Motivate

### 1) Emphasizing Effort

#### LEARNING MANAGERS FOCUS ON:

- Build on mistakes or partially correct answers
- Retake and Redo and Revise
- One improvement daily
- Prompt feedback
- Learning Contracts

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## Five Key Processes That Motivate

### 2) Creating Hope

#### LEARNING MANAGERS FOCUS ON:

- Create challenges that can be mastered
- Show students the benefits of achievement
- Develop goals
- Giving before getting

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## Five Key Processes That Motivate

### 3) Respecting Power

#### LEARNING MANAGERS FOCUS ON:

- Involving students
- Defer to the students
- Ask for opinions
- Use privacy, eye contact, and proximity
- Offer choices

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### Five Key Processes That Motivate

#### 4) Building Relationships

##### LEARNING MANAGERS FOCUS ON:

- Emphasis on the student
- Ask for feedback
- Send notes
- Compliment
- Share

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### Five Key Processes That Motivate

#### 5) Expressing Enthusiasm

##### LEARNING MANAGERS FOCUS ON:

- Showing love of teaching
- Showing love of your subject
- Lifelong learning
- Use humor

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### Special Education Best Practices

#### Case Management:

- Learning Manager/Case Manager model
- Weekly tracking by LM and student
- Student led IEP and Advisory meetings
- Bi-annual IEP and Advisory meetings

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## Special Education Best Practices

### Communication:

- Breaking down the wall
- Essential to building LM relationship
- Time out to learn about the person
- Check in regularly
  - Builds rapport
  - Better able to assist student in areas of need
- Clear & multi-modal
  - Follow-ups to conversations
  - Wikis, Blogs, MySpace, Facebook, etc.

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## Special Education Best Practices

### Communication:

- Consistent
  - Same day/time each week
  - Same information to parents and students
  - Document, document, document
- Guiding
  - Weekly plans
  - Provide a learning experience
  - Reiterate and refocus conversations & goals
- Build on strengths
- Celebrate successes!
- Self-advocacy

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## Special Education Best Practices

### Accommodations:

- Individual to each student and each course
- Assignment length & breaking down the steps
- Modality
- Final projects
- Assistive Technology

### Modifications:

- Differentiation
- Speaking v. Writing
- Research etiquette
- Done on a course level
- Accessible to all students

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## Special Education Best Practices

### Direct Instruction:

- The teachable moment
- Combination face-to-face and online
- Electronic resources
- Synchronous Technology
  - Chat, live meetings, video, phone calls
- Asynchronous Technology
  - Email, US Mail, worksheets, interactive lessons, blogs, wikis, discussion boards
- Providing Enrolling

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## Special Education Best Practices

### Creating Courses

- Be mindful of delivery format
  - Colors
  - Text size
  - Variation (pictures, videos, audio)
- Differentiate lessons
  - IodeStar
  - Asynchronous learning
  - PDFs easier to read

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## Special Education Best Practices

### Creating Courses

- Differentiate responses
  - Electronic projects
  - Tic-tac-toe board
  - More than just papers, PPTs & posters
  - Verbal v. written
  - Utilize the web
  - Writing about math

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## Special Education Best Practices

### Due Process:

- Utilize parents when possible
- Student-led IEP Meetings
- Student portfolios, e-portfolio and websites
- Phone or online meetings
- Conferences
- Post-secondary disability services
  - Student-led
  - Documentation
  - Flexibility

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## Looking for Online Classes?

- \*ISEEK:

The Internet System for Education and Employment Knowledge (ISEEK) is Minnesota's website for career exploration, education and training, employment and business information  
<http://iseek.org/sv/index.jsp>

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## TRIO Wolf Creek Distance Learning Charter School

[www.triowolfcreek.com](http://www.triowolfcreek.com)

Mailing Address: 13750 Lake Blvd., Lindstrom

School Location: 11725 Stinson Ave., Chisago City

Phone: (651) 213-2017

Fax: (651) 257-0576



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