Danny Swerdlow believes in giving classwork meaning beyond just a grade. This year, he wanted to create a project that would motivate his students and engage their families. His plan? Start a newsletter for parents, and give ownership of it to the students. Almost immediately, he found that “students who typically didn’t complete assignments were eager to get theirs in on time.”

What made Danny’s class newsletter such an instant success? The idea for the project was sparked by a series of Sanford Inspire On-Demand Modules focused on building student motivation. Danny learned that conditioning certain student mindsets can, in turn, impact their desire to achieve. After completing the lessons online, Danny facilitated a session for his fellow teachers.

Danny’s school is seeing results across-the-board. One of his colleagues, a math teacher, tied a unit on graphing to an activity in which students tracked what motivated them throughout the day. Danny attests that “lessons on motivation are so relevant to what we are doing. There is so much that competes for student attention, so we’re constantly looking for ways to inspire students to learn.”

Danny Swerdlow teaches 7th grade English and is a Sanford Inspire Facilitator at University School of Nova Southeastern University.