Many educators struggled to make their curriculum clear. If students and their parents don’t understand the focus and purpose of a curriculum, then engagement is almost impossible.

When we review district, school, or state curriculum documents, we find that the approach for conveying information on the curriculum is overwhelmingly not invitational; rather, the tone is typically officious and often burdensome. The message is teacher- and system-centric: These are the content, standards, and proficiencies we will cover while you sit in the room with your teacher. Units are often designed in silos rather than with deliberate and transparent connections between previous or subsequent units. If the student cannot describe the connections between units—if they cannot tell the story of a course across the school year—then they are likely to be detached from the learning.

When curriculum designers shift to a more direct, accessible approach, not only do learners gain clarity, they become motivated. To that end, the writing style should be inviting and discursive, with prominent visual cues that encapsulate the essential concepts or big ideas the unit will address.