



CURATING CONTENT IN ONE PLACE: TRANSFORMING CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT FOR EDUCATORS

WEST WARWICK PUBLIC SCHOOLS
WEST WARWICK | RHODE ISLAND

West Warwick, a small Rhode Island community of 30,000 residents just 15 miles south of Providence, has a much higher poverty rate and lower median income than surrounding communities. It is saddled with many of the same problems of urban districts, including chronic absenteeism, high mobility rates, and limited resources. The district has three elementary schools, one middle school, one high school, one alternative setting school that houses pre-school students, and an alternative education setting middle school and high school. With a vulnerable population and limited funds, WWPS needed a way to increase student, teacher, and parent access to district-created resources.

As WWPS's Director of Educational Reform, Compliance & Technology, Jim Monti was proud of the organic curriculum development model the district's educators, administrators, and content specialists used to create rich units of study designed to improve student outcomes. Compiled using Google Drive™ online storage service, the content incorporates a wide array of resources, including aligned websites, paid subscription resources (digital and print), open educational resources (OERs), examples of student work, video clips of instructional practice (teachers engaged in a particularly important part of the lesson), and differentiated resources.



“Collections served as a beacon cutting through the fog, taking what was once a soupy mess and giving it clarity. The beauty is in its simplicity. It’s all about curating anything and everything educators need in one place to meet the needs of PreK-12 students. Our district finally has a curation tool that’s easy to use, easy to revise, and easy to share with anyone who needs access to the resources.”

JIM MONTI

Director of Educational Reform,
Compliance & Technology
West Warwick Public Schools

OVERCOMING ACCESS AND BUDGET LIMITATIONS

But as rich and diverse as these resources are, access was challenging due to the limited curation capabilities of Google Drive™. Educators were wasting time, struggling with access issues, and frustrated by multiple logins. Documents were owned by educators and students across the district with a variety of permissions and rights for each document. As the person responsible for the curriculum development and implementation process, Monti admitted the chaos of curation kept him up at night. He and his team considered other possible solutions, but they were either cumbersome, costly or would cause drastic alteration of established processes. There had to be a better way.

The vision of a better way became reality in the spring of 2017 when the West Warwick Public Schools district participated in a Follett early adopter program for Collections by Destiny®, a simple solution that allows educators and students to curate everything they need – websites, audio, video, films, slideshows, documents, and photos – in one easy-to-access place.

“Collections was a game changer and helped me sleep easier at night,” Monti said. “It has had a dramatic effect on the curriculum development and curation processes in our district. It not only allows users to store any artifact in one central place with easy sharing and accessibility settings, it also makes it easy for teachers, administrators, librarians, and even students to create a curated collection of artifacts to meet any specified need.”

INSTANT ACCESS TO CURATED CONTENT ALIGNED TO CURRICULUM

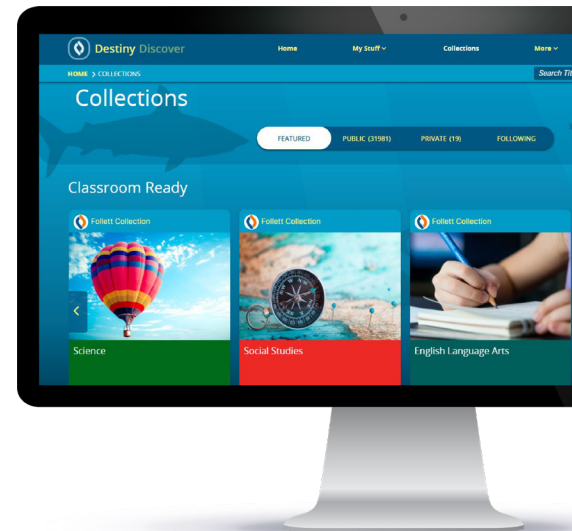
“Collections solved the district’s curation problem,” Monti said. “Individuals now can continue to work on documents within Google Drive and add them quickly to a collection. District-housed units of study are readily available to every teacher and substitute teacher in the district. Instead of worrying about which Google Drive folder a document is in, users can simply share a collection.”

Within the first few weeks of inclusion in the early adopter program, the district’s Library Media Specialists and Curriculum Specialists were providing curated collections aligned to the district’s units of study and sharing them with teachers, administrators, and support personnel across the district. Collections makes it easy to share curated resources with students via Google Classroom.

Teacher-created documents, web pages, video clips, OERs, and paid content are continually added and shared with students, educators, and parents using the tools provided within Collections.

“The district found, in Collections, the perfect complementary tool to the curriculum development process,” Monti said. “District-level staff can create shared collections that are automatically shared with employees once those employees are added to a specific group. New employees no longer need to wait for a colleague to add them to a shared document or folder. We finally have a systemic solution to a systemic problem.”

Today, the West Warwick Public Schools district uses Collections as a vital curation tool in the development



of rich units of study across curriculum areas. “With Collections in place, there is no need to worry about providing individual educators access to resources. Instead, educators can focus their energies on the real work – providing students with rich, engaging educational experiences. That’s the work, and that’s where the focus needs to be,” Monti said.

His advice to other districts? “You don’t have to look to the future or to an international, educational powerhouse like Finland to increase your ability to meet the needs of your students. Follett’s new Collections tool in its Destiny Discover suite is available right here, right now to help you better meet the needs of your educators and students.”