OpenStudio - encouraging a ‘create, curate and share’ mind-set

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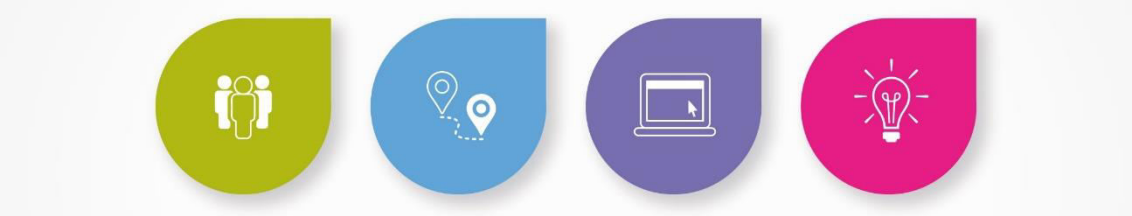
The Open University

Who we are

The Open University



Our mission is **to be open to people, places, methods and ideas**.

We promote educational opportunity and **social justice** by providing high-quality university education to all who wish to **realise their ambitions and fulfil their potential**.

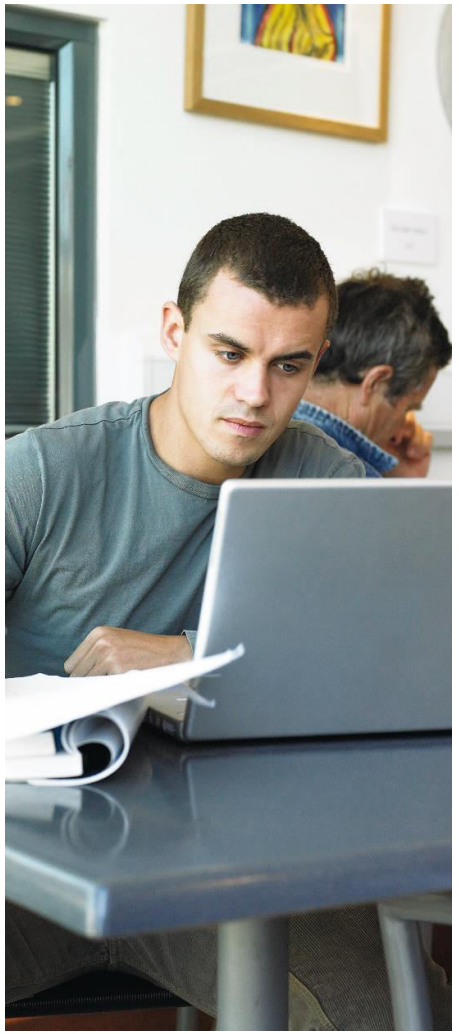
University of second chance

- 175,000 students = 175,000 stories
- ‘Non-traditional’ students: study part-time from home (or work, train, prison, submarine…)
- Life challenges

The problem of distance

Distance learning is complex

- Isolation, loneliness
- Self-motivation, resilience
- Engagement, easy to drop out
- Flexibility and support through technology



The journey

The big idea

- Started with a ‘glint in the eye of an academic’
- Could we replicate the benefits of working in a physical design studio in an online environment?
- And could we offer things a physical studio couldn’t?

Design studio

Could we recreate the creative, collaborative vibe of a design studio… in a digital space?

Why DIY?

- The safe space of a walled garden
- No surprises
- Confidence in data use
- This didn’t exist anywhere else

Iterate, iterate, iterate!

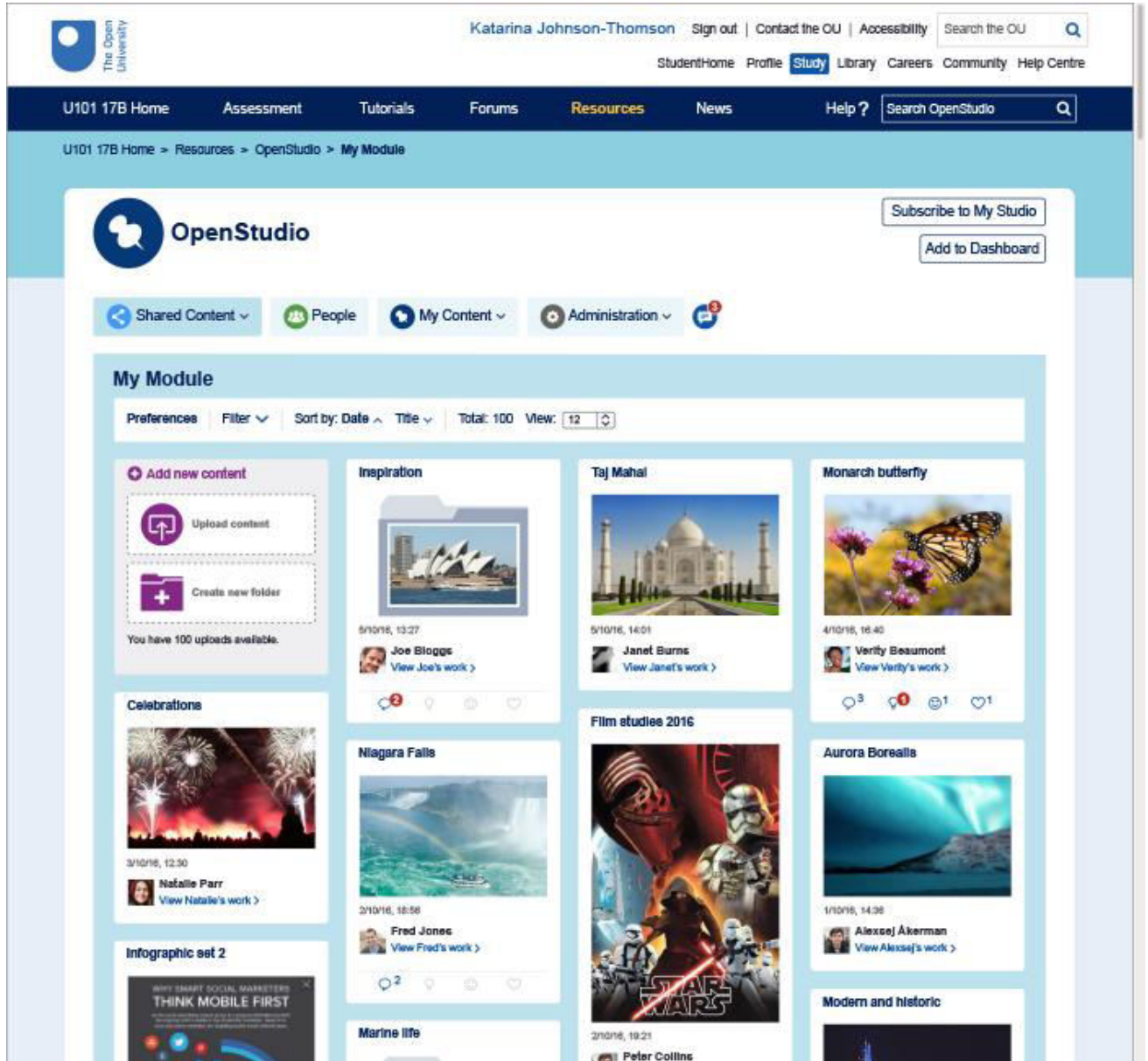
- Rich heritage of creating digital tools to enhance learning experience
- Built a lo-fi model to pilot, received feedback, iterated – rinse and repeat!
- Proved worth but functionality confusion and sub-optimal UX
- Secured strategic funding for professional quality platform with bells and whistles

OpenStudio

Key learning concepts

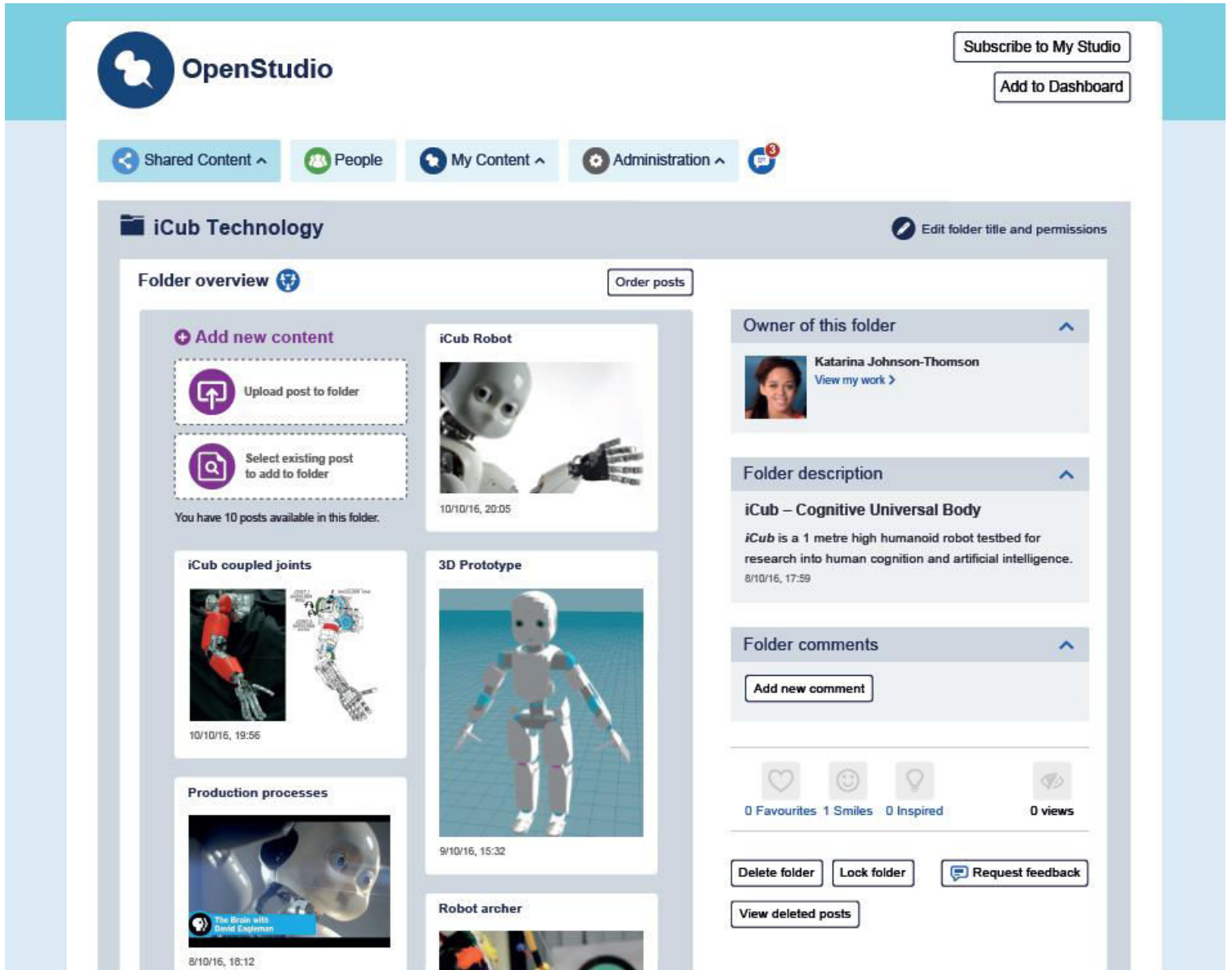
- Presentation of personal content
- Curation of content
- Sharing and discussion of student-generated content and social learning
- Activity-led formal assessment

Share your work (or not)



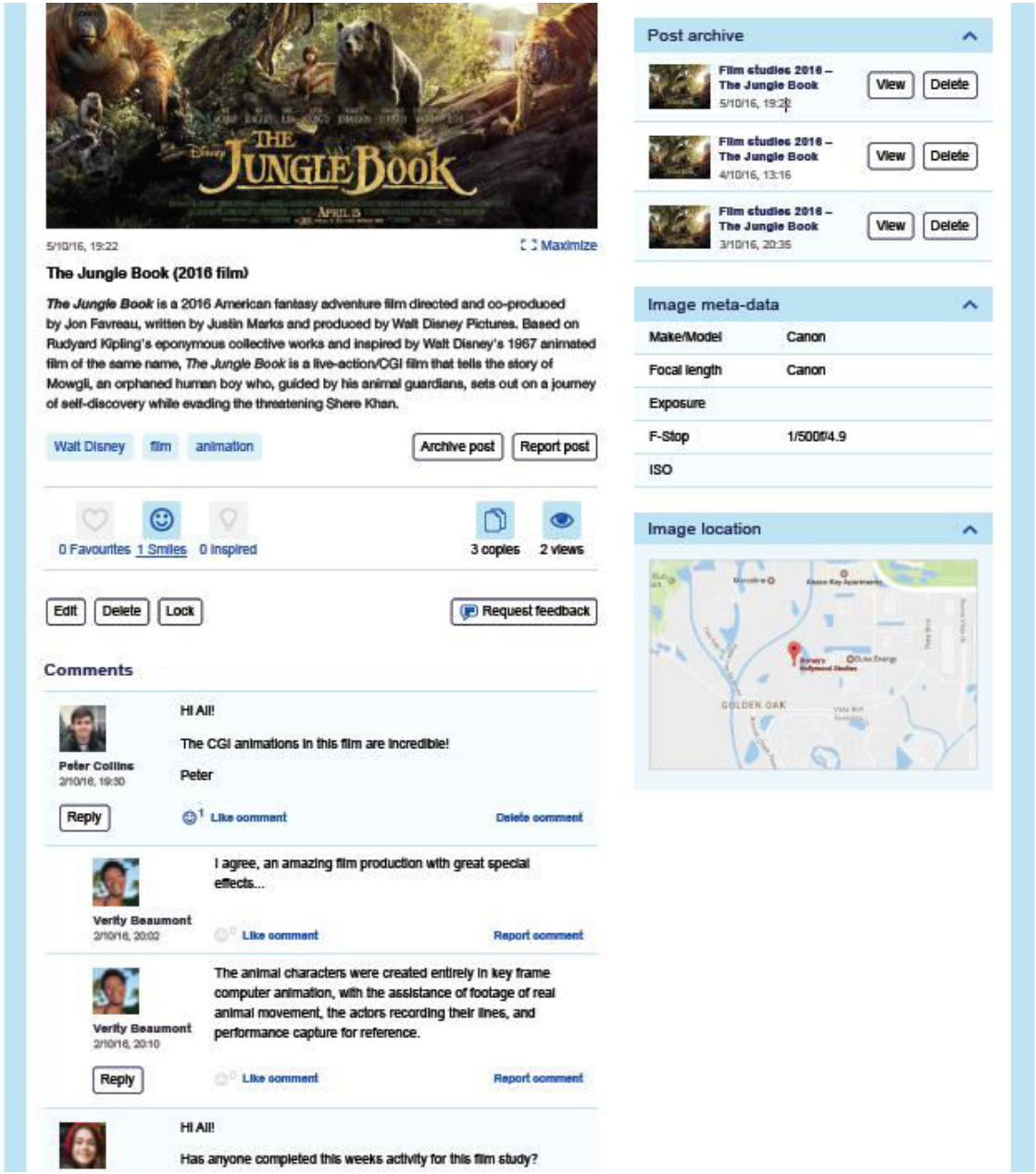
- A range of content can be posted
- Your work or the work of others
- Work in groups
- Decide who you want to share with

Become a curator



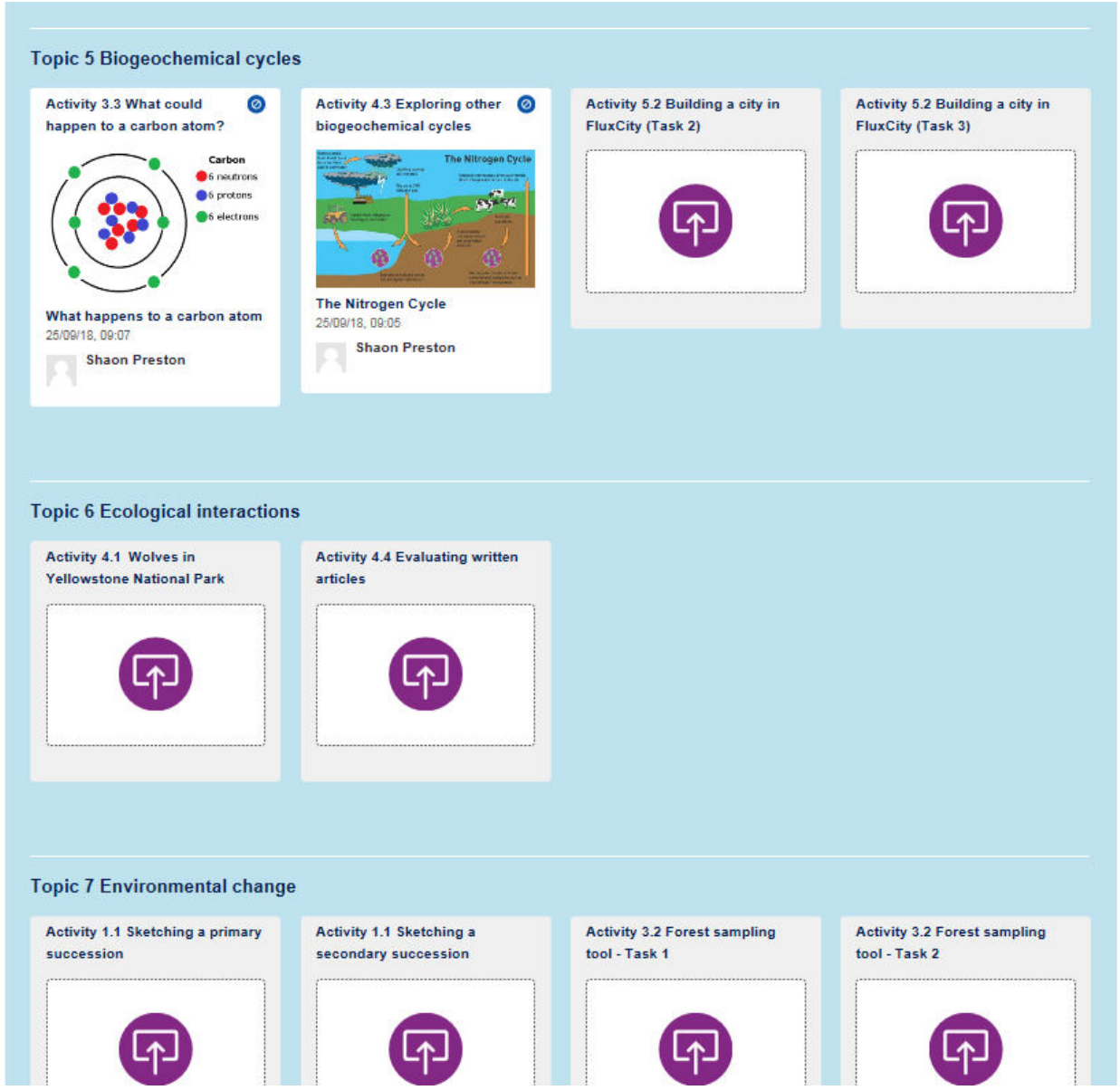
- Set up themed collections
- Develop a portfolio over time, or hold an in-house exhibition
- Curate the work of others
- Collate experimental results

Improve > Share > Discuss > Improve > Share >



- Ability to discuss, comment, feedback in rich media
- Versioning allows students and tutors to see development progress
- Global reach of courses allows for a wider pool of demographic input and viewpoints

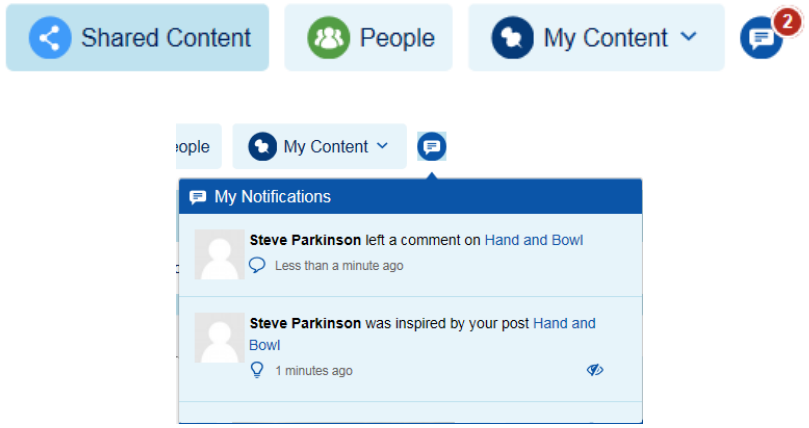
Formal Assessment



- Module teams can have pre-set slots that will hold the output of an activity learners are asked to complete
- Slots can be summative or formative
- Slot locking for formalised assessments

Encourage Interaction

- Social interactions



- Social media style notifications ensure students don't miss the chance to interface

- Progress bars motivate use

Impact and success

Would you recommend us to a friend?

- Long term impact on learning gains hard to measure
- We try to avoid ‘success theatre’

Usage as a proxy for impact…

- 80 instances of OpenStudio in 2019
- Over 40,000 students have actively used OpenStudio
- Over 250,000 posts so far.

Feedback

We ask our students what they think…

- "*Fantastic software, so user friendly and it looks so good too.*"
- "*OpenDesignStudio was invaluable in aiding my confidence and skills through feedback from my peers.*"
- "*I enjoyed using ODS to see what the other students were up to and compare how we all did the activities.*"

Research

But of course, we're a university, there's always research to do…

- "Social engagement in OpenStudio at level 1 is linked to the gaining of confidence, skills development and student success."

- "Social learning mechanisms represent one of the oldest and most natural pedagogies and online studios, one of the newest forms of human interaction, offer novel opportunities in which such learning can take place."

Recognition

Shortlisted for several national awards including the Learning Technology Awards and Guardian University Awards

The future

Share the love?

- We are releasing OpenStudio to the Moodle community.

- Available on GitHub initially: https://github.com/moodleou/moodle-mod_openstudio
- Will include student, staff, and technical guidance

Summary

OpenStudio is about people

OpenStudio is not about automated chat bots, blockchain, AI, VR, AR, big data, deep learning...

OpenStudio is about real, heartfelt human interaction.

And it’s time we shared it.

Thank you!

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