

# Short-listed entry for Formative e-Assessment



## Assessment is for Learning through Digital Technologies: e-Scape Scotland

Edinburgh University is working with LTS and SQA, to explore feasible, innovative methods of assessing performance, based on groundbreaking work of the Technology Education Research Unit, Goldsmiths. e-Scape Scotland enables learners to build real-time e-Portfolios of their design performance and teachers to provide formative prompts and feedback in text and / or sound. The project is school based and a successful working partnership with the school practitioners is central to the work.

The main thrust of this ongoing project is exploring the potential of the e-Scape methodology in classrooms where learning and 'Assessment is for Learning' is the primary concern.

- e-Portfolios provide a real-time, authentic account of learner's journey through an active learning task/design challenge.
- a series of software tools (including audio and image capture tools, drawings, video, mind-maps etc.) enable learners to present their story and its emerging ideas using a variety of media.
- prompts for self evaluation, target setting, peer evaluation and retrospective review are embedded in the activity design. Teacher feedback in text or audio is also provided digitally.
- the tools are available to learners where the real action is conducted - design studio and workshop - rather than be locked away in the confines of IT suites.
- the resulting e-Portfolios can easily be viewed to explore the detail of learners' work and identify aspects requiring teacher intervention and development to aid progression.



Figure 1: eScape authoring tool

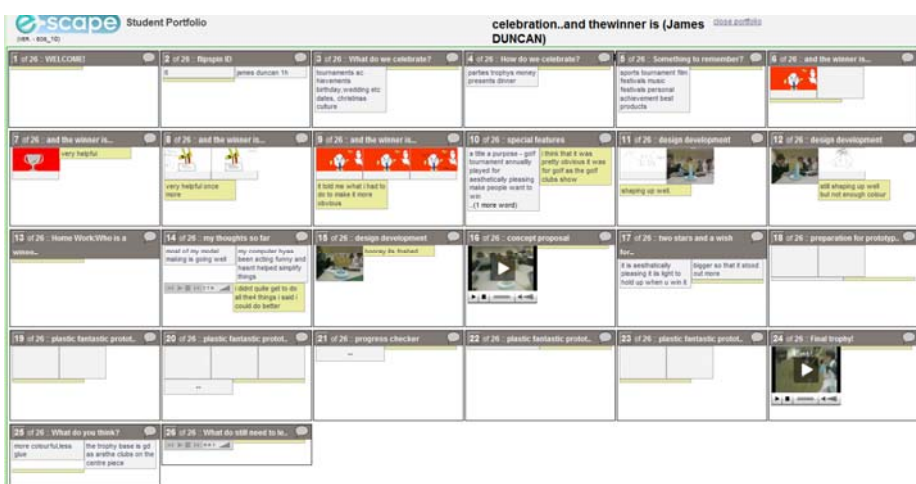


Figure 2: Layout of an e-Scape portfolio overview

The learning power of e-Scape arises through the ubiquitous scaffolding of project process skills that is possible through it. Materials (content) can be presented to learners – but more critically their process-based responses to these materials can be structured to support their performance, and this performance is 'hoovered up' constantly, dynamically, so that the emerging portfolio presents a real-time, authentic account of the learners engagement with the task.

The basic functionality of e-Scape pre-existed the Scottish e-Scape project – but this functionality was premised on the creation of portfolios for controlled assessment purposes in England and Wales. Having observed such assessments in action, it became apparent that the system provided an immensely rich vehicle to support formative assessment and that became the central design thrust of the Scottish project.

Additional functionality has been built into e-Scape to enable teachers to intervene and support thinking and learning – feeding back their thoughts, questions, challenges, suggestions to learners. Feedback can be as text/audio. This teacher feedback is dynamically linked into learners' portfolios and emerges as a part of the real-time account of the evolving e-Portfolio.

The design of the activity and the level of interaction between learners, the degree of reflection, writing, interviewing, video-making and so on is determined by the teacher who authors the activity and the subtasks therein. This e-Scape system supports creative learning and teaching. It is as creative and effective as the teacher who authors the activity. Therefore it is essential that the activity is driven by quality pedagogical thinking and not by the novelty of the system.