
A READING OF EMILY HANNO'S NEW PIECE

The skills that matter most may not look like test answers.

Using technology to see future
readiness in the making.

Emily Hanno / Overdeck Family Foundation

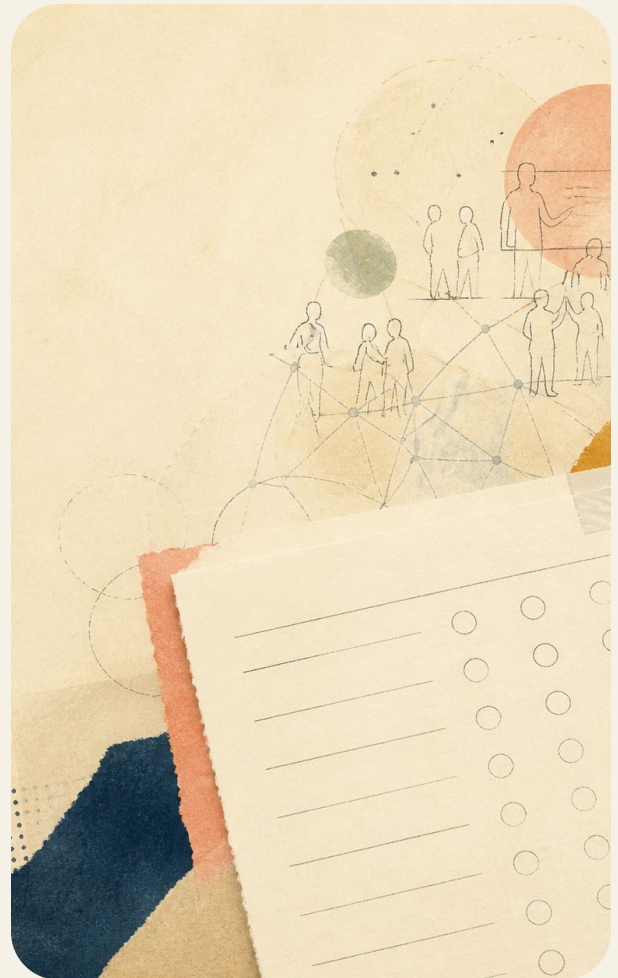
Spotlight On Evidence · August 19, 2026



THE MEASUREMENT GAP

We ask schools to build these skills then struggle to see them.

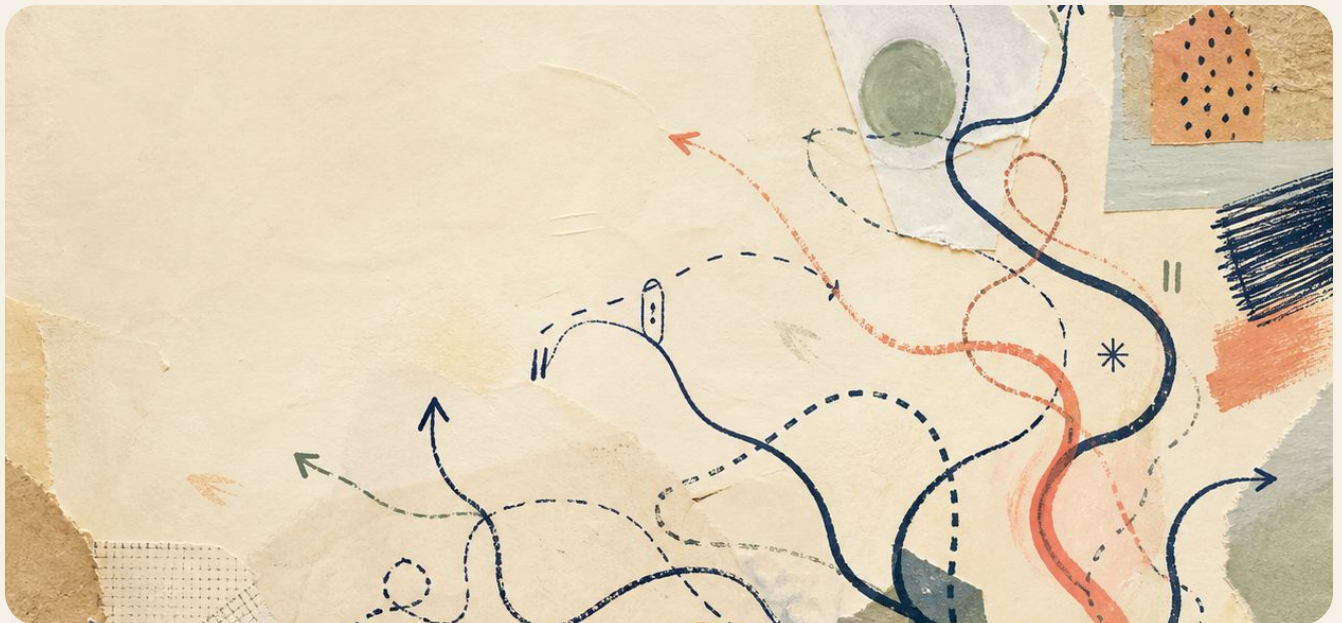
Cognition. Connection. Agency. Problem-solving. These skills matter for school, work, and life, but they rarely fit a single right-or-wrong item.



THE REFRAME

Technology can shift the evidence from answers to approaches.

Digital activity can show strategies, revisions, responses to feedback, explanations, and collaboration, sometimes without adding another assessment.

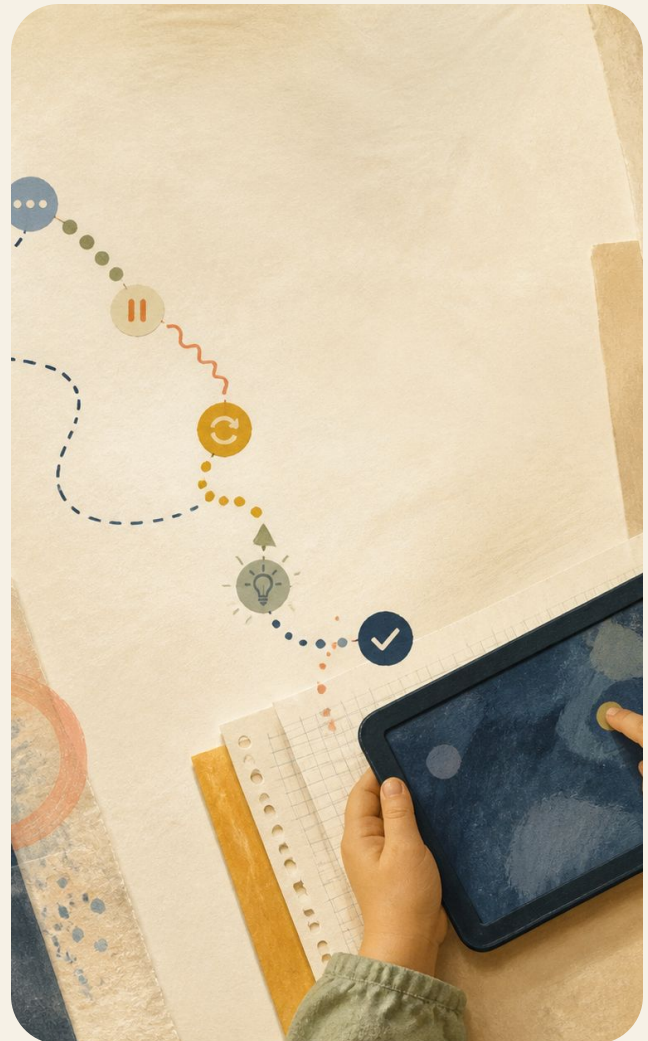


01 / LEARNING ACTIVITY

A click can be a clue to executive function.

In the Student Upward Mobility Initiative, MDRC explored whether ordinary metadata, response time, completion, and exiting, could signal how preschoolers focus, persist, and manage impulses.

Early findings linked several activity-based indicators with established measures of executive functioning.



02 / THINKING AS IT UNFOLDS

A spoken explanation can show reasoning as it unfolds.

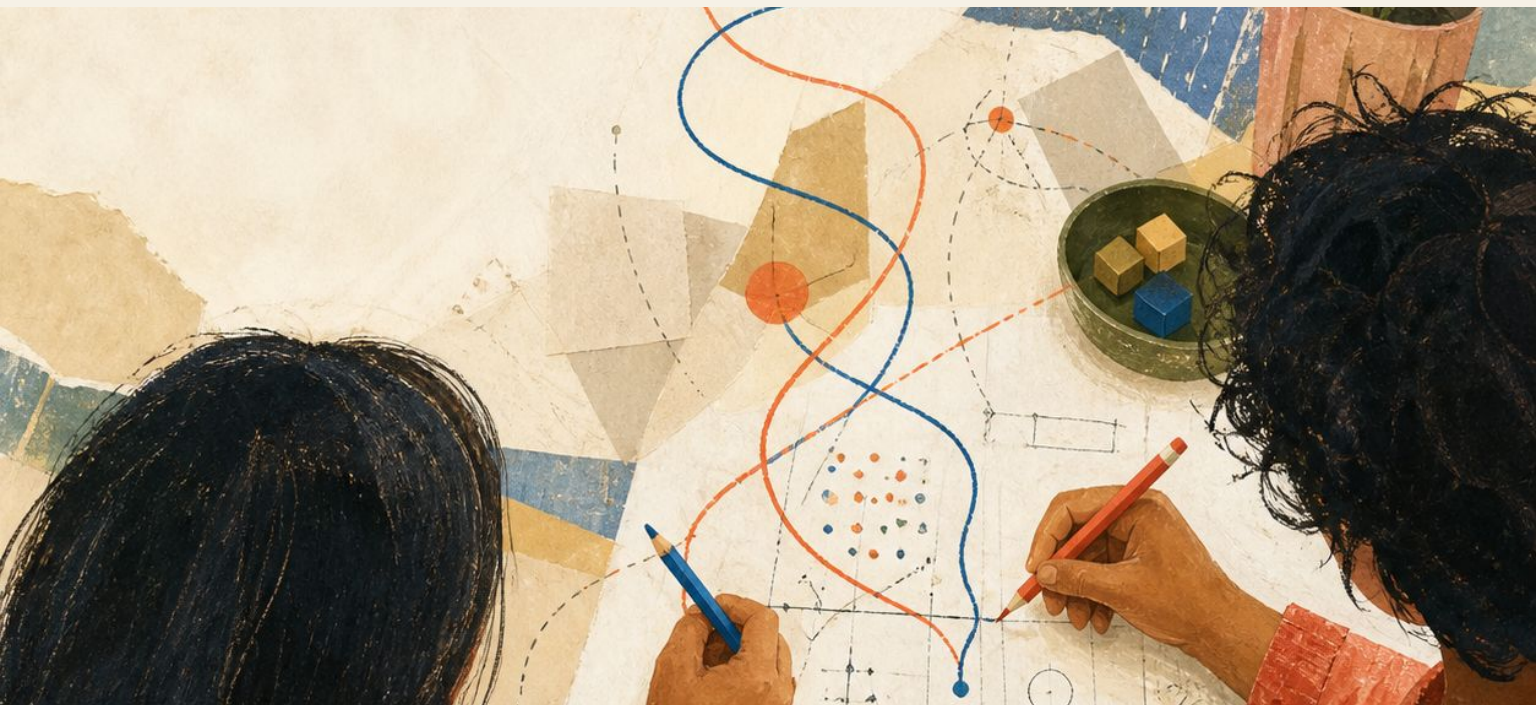
At Harvard Graduate School of Education, researchers are using large language models to examine the richness of young children's spoken responses, not only whether the answer is correct, but how they explain, question, and reason.



03 / LEARNING BETWEEN STUDENTS

Learning between students is evidence, too.

Overdeck's investments in OKO Labs and PeerTeach explore whether technology can capture communication and collaboration as students explain mathematical ideas and respond to classmates.



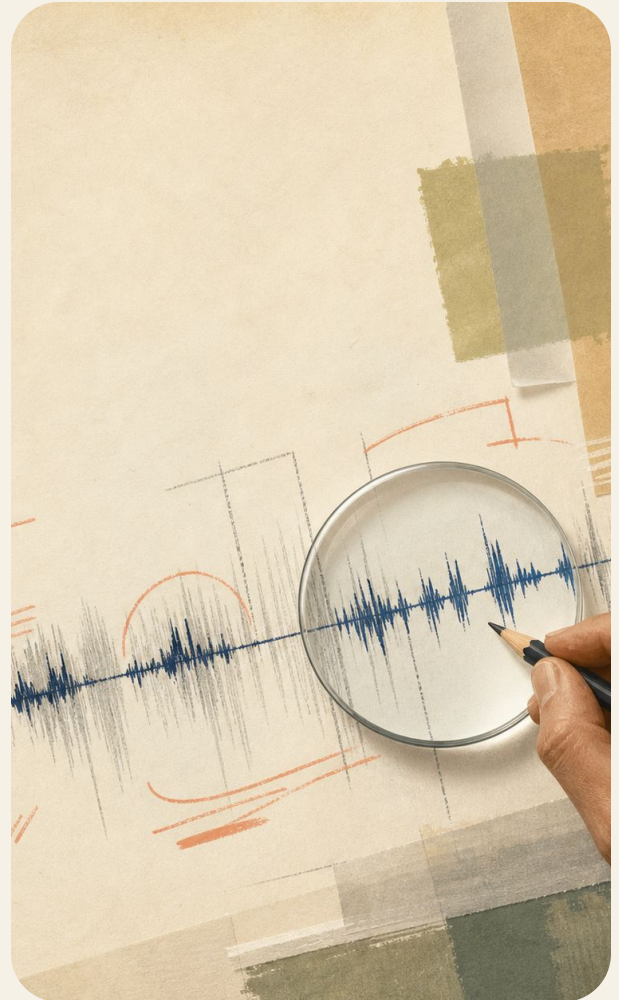
Source: Emily Hanno / Overdeck Family Foundation. Project details are described in the article.

THE TURN

A signal is not yet a score.

Emily's caution is the point: first validate the data, then validate the construct, then show that the insight can lead to a useful next step.

The goal is not to collect more data. It is to support better learning.



WHAT I APPRECIATE

The ambition and the restraint.

Emily's piece expands what we might count as evidence without pretending the field has solved measurement. That is a rare combination: curiosity about what technology can reveal, and care about what it should be allowed to claim.

[Read Emily's piece →](#)

Emily Hanno / Overdeck Family Foundation

