

# SKILLS FOR THE FUTURE:

## Designing the Future of Assessment



Carnegie Foundation  
for the Advancement of Teaching

### Preparing Students for Success

Since 1906, the Carnegie Unit or “credit hour” has served as the bedrock currency of the educational economy. It defines what “counts” as learning, shapes the nature of what is and is not assessed, and determines the basic organization of secondary and postsecondary education. It is increasingly clear that the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to succeed in the 21st century are not singularly demonstrated through time; yet we are currently stuck in a system that conflates time with learning—particularly in school—and ignores the many other ways students can gain valuable skills.

Further, while academic content knowledge is still required, it is no longer sufficient. There is a set of essential and durable skills necessary for success in the 21st-century economy.

We need to fundamentally rethink education—expanding our understanding of what learners need, innovating on how skills and knowledge are measured, and generating insights about the development and acquisition of these skills and how they can be communicated.

**“If we can build tools that see the unseen, that capture authentic representations of learning wherever it happens, the opportunity is to help propel and elevate, amplify millions more young people.”**

– Timothy Knowles  
President, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

### The Initiative

In April 2023, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and ETS announced a partnership to design a new suite of tools that measures, and provides actionable insights on, the set of durable skills that predict success in postsecondary education, career, and civic life—skills like collaboration, communication, creative and critical thinking, and persistence. In addition, we aim to capture learning wherever it takes place—in school, in extracurricular activities like sports or theater, in internships and apprenticeships, and on the job or while taking care of family members. The tools will provide insights throughout the learning process, giving students, families, and educators actionable information to help them continue to build skills over time. Finally, we are designing new records of skill development that can open doors beyond high school.



### What We Are Designing



Measure  
New Things



Measure Them  
In New Ways



Generate  
Actionable  
Insights



Create  
Skills-based  
Records

## Our Learning Agenda

This is an opportunity for innovation in myriad ways. We are trying out new technology-enabled modalities; designing short interactive experiences that are integrated throughout the learning process; capturing authentic work from programming both in and out of school; and learning alongside respected experts and experienced educators from across the country.

**“This is a fundamental paradigm shift from time-based to skill-based units of learning. Smarter assessments are the key to unlock the future.”**

—Amit Sevak  
President and CEO, ETS



## Our Partnerships

We are not the first to attempt to change the system. Since the beginning of the last century, we’ve seen innovations in education, but they remain on the margins and not in the mainstream. Our work is being done in collaboration with key contributors—including teachers, students, parents, education leaders, policy-makers, and communities. In addition, we will partner with employers as well as with postsecondary leaders from two and four-year colleges and universities.

We are currently collaborating with leading states to co-design and pilot a suite of tools to capture the durable skills and competencies—in tandem with disciplinary knowledge—required for success in school and beyond. State partners are engaged at each step of the process—from development and testing through implementation. **In 2025**, we will pilot tools with 5,000 students across five states, focusing on **three prioritized skills: collaboration, communication, and critical thinking.**



### Learn more

To stay up to date on the Skills for the Future initiative, scan the QR code or contact [sff.information@ets.org](mailto:sff.information@ets.org).

Here’s to learning together!



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