**Taking the arts digital to support a well-rounded education**

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While there is a growing recognition that the arts are central to a well-rounded education, schools have been slow to incorporating that into curriculum. Though the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) listed the arts and music as tenants of a “well-rounded” education, few [state plans](https://www.educationdive.com/news/few-states-recognize-the-arts-as-part-of-their-essa-accountability-plans/548843/) have formally included the arts in their accountability plans.

Jane Best, director of the Arts Education Partnership (AEP), said that while arts educators were open to exploring the possibilities that the law created, they remain unsure as to how to insert themselves into the conversation. The incorporation of arts in the classroom as a whole, she said, remains a “slow-moving” machine.

Still, there is [evidence](https://www.educationdive.com/news/report-arts-a-vehicle-for-teaching-sel-skills/556479/) that an arts educator can have many benefits. According to a report released last month by Consortium on School Research at the University of Chicago and Ingenuity, arts instruction could be a vehicle for teaching social-emotional learning skills. The report finds that arts included in the curriculum can help students develop self-management and self-discipline, interpersonal and relationship skills, and self-expression.

Blending art with soft-skills enhanced via technology can also provide compounded benefits.

According to [strategies](https://waset.org/publications/10001077/the-strategies-for-teaching-digital-art-in-the-classroom-as-a-way-of-enhancing-pupils-artistic-creativity) provided by the World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology, digital tools allow students to build artistic creativity and “enable old subjects to be treated in new ways” by blending traditional and newer approaches of learning. For example, through digital art, students can choose from a larger variety of colors more quickly and efficiently than in traditional drawing.

“By the end of the project, the students should have tangible proof of their expanded skills, and the teacher can ask them to choose the tool that has been most effective for their creative work,” the report said.

Critics of digital art in the classroom say that it “destroys creativity,” lacks a “human touch,” and leads to “instant art.” Proponents say technology does not threaten traditional drawing and tools, however, but should be viewed as an added strength that allows for more complex perception and expression. Digital art can also be an alternative avenue of expression for students who have poor traditional drawing skills.

[Research](https://waset.org/publications/10001077/the-strategies-for-teaching-digital-art-in-the-classroom-as-a-way-of-enhancing-pupils-artistic-creativity) shows students working with digital tools are more successful in developing their understanding, especially if working in collaboration with others. Digital drawing methods can also be used as a teaching aid, allowing quickness and clarity.