

# Journalism meets the needs of the 21st century skill set

Skills students master through a strong and responsible journalism program immediately address the educational standards important to 21st century learners. Even for those students who do not pursue a career in journalism, student media programs cultivate the civic involvement and community awareness effective schools strive to foster.

## Resources:

- **Journalism Matters**  
[http://www.naafoundation.org/upload/foundation\\_pdf/journalism-matters-exec-summary.pdf](http://www.naafoundation.org/upload/foundation_pdf/journalism-matters-exec-summary.pdf)
- **Dear Students: Even if You Don't Read a Newspaper, You Should Still Work at One**  
[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/michael-koretzky/dear-students-even-if-you\\_b\\_626295.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/michael-koretzky/dear-students-even-if-you_b_626295.html)
- **Building journalism skills**  
<http://jeapressrights.org/2008documents/2008ResponsibleJ/index.html>
- **NCTE standards for English/language arts**  
<http://www.ncte.org/standards>
- **Poster of principles for practicing responsible scholastic journalism**  
[http://jeapressrights.org/2008documents/2008ResponsibleJ/2008images/2008Posters/masterphrasing2.pdf](http://jeapressrights.org/2008documents/2008ResponsibleJ/2008ResponsibleJ/2008images/2008Posters/masterphrasing2.pdf)

Journalism and student media programs enhance the quality of education in school communities while providing essential skills to those directly involved as student journalists. Coverage provided in student media fosters meaningful discourse on topics that may not be covered elsewhere, establishes a public record of activities and events in the school and demonstrates scholastic media's social responsibility role to its various publics.

“Journalism should serve the public in many important ways, but it can only do so if its practitioners have mastered an increasingly complex body of knowledge and specialized skills. Above all, to be a responsible journalist must involve an informed ethical commitment to the public. This commitment must include an understanding of and deep appreciation for the role that journalism plays in the formation, enhancement and perpetuation of an informed society” the World Journalism Education Association's Declaration of Principles states.

Journalism students should not only look at theoretical concepts of media's role in a democracy. They should also look at making decisions for their publications while they demonstrate self-discipline, show responsibility to the truth and meaning of their reporting, apply ethical principles and assess of their work. These real-world skills will prepare them for college and the workforce and enhance their media literacy skills.

These skills will also increase a community's awareness of media literacy.

Scholastic journalism's value transcends traditional classroom walls. Because student journalists actively pursue topics of importance and interest to the school and local community, valid discussion of important topics often occurs, resulting in better-informed communities

Court decisions sometimes reinforce journalism's value.

“The government has a compelling interest in educating all of its citizens. Education of the citizenry is and always has been a preeminent goal of American society. Reaching back through the collective memory of the Republic, the fundamental importance of education in the design of our system of government rapidly becomes clear. Article III of the Northwest Ordinance states in part: ‘Religion, morality, and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged.’

In *Yoder*, the Supreme Court adopted Thomas Jefferson's often expressed belief that education was a “bulwark” against tyranny. “Thomas Jefferson pointed out early in our history, that some degree of education is necessary to prepare citizens to participate effectively and intelligently in

open political systems to preserve freedom and independence.

“Further, journalism education prepares individuals to be self-reliant and self-sufficient participants in society,” from Murphy v. State of Arkansas, 1988.

Finally, scholastic journalism continues

to be on the technological cusp. Because student media often tell stories in a myriad of ways – using pictures, text and graphics to enhance content and delivery – it embraces the most recent technological developments. Journalism is indeed a subject area for the 21st century.

## Skills journalism students need

In *Preparing Students for the 21st Century*, The 1996 report from the American Association of School Administrators, 55 leaders in education, business and government were asked to address what students would need to know, be able to do and the behaviors they would need to have to thrive during the next century. Here are their responses:

### 1. Oral and written communication skills

Writing for an audience of their peers is far different than writing for their teachers. Students are more motivated to do their best when writing for a broader audience. One-on-one oral interviews lead to people skills not fostered by other classes.

### 2. Critical thinking, reasoning and problem-solving skills

Students must decide on topics of interest, discuss ways to cover them accurately, completely and within time, legal and ethical restraints.

### 3. Being self-disciplined, acting responsibly, applying ethical principles, and setting and assessing goals

When students make decisions applying ethical and legal principles of responsible journalism, they learn real-world applications for these principles.

### 4. Skill in the use of computers and other technologies

Media today are dependent on the use of computers and other communication technologies, and using these develops skills students will use in future education and employment.

### 5. Job success skills, including good interpersonal and human relationship skills and the ability to work as part of a team

Staffs must work as effective teams to produce student media within deadlines, budgets, legal and ethical considerations. Meeting with sources and conducting interviews develop interpersonal skills.

### 6. Adaptability and flexibility

Because school media are produced in real time, they must adapt to changing circumstances.

### 7. Conflict resolution and negotiation skills

Conflicting views and other restraints lead to real-life situations where these skills develop.

### 8. Being able to conduct research and interpret and apply data

All stories must be researched and the data collected must be condensed into media formats. Research is usually done in oral interviews, developing skills lacking in other curriculum.

### 9. Knowledge of other languages – being multilingual

Although some student media have sections in other languages primary to some of their students, media must consider the diversity of their audience and choose stories that will appeal to them.

### 10. Comprehensive reading and understanding skills

Obviously, develop media that can be read and understood by wide-ranging audiences.

