



SEARCHLIGHTS & SUNGLASSES

# LEARNING LAYER

## Skills to open many doors

The American Association of Colleges and Universities wanted to know what companies look for in a good employee. Desired skills included the ability to find, organize and evaluate information from a variety of sources, effective communication and an aptitude for analyzing and solving complex problems. Employers wanted colleges to emphasize those skills, reported a study commissioned by the association.

### Student activities at three levels:

**Flashlight:** Look at the study and think about what [journalism skills match employers' desires for quality employees](#). Make a list of the skills you're being taught. Are there any you aren't getting at your school? Are you learning how to communicate, evaluate information and solve problems using digital tools?

One of the most important yet overlooked skills for journalists is basic math, especially applied to [data journalism](#). Journalists once assumed they could avoid dealing with numbers, but in reality, it's a part of [everyday reporting](#). Are you taking any math courses to prepare for this? How far does your knowledge of math extend?

How important do you think [math](#) is for a career in journalism? How about [coding](#)?

**Spotlight:** Would cross-campus partnerships help students develop these in-demand skills? What kind? Are you among the 250,000 people using [NewsU.org](#) or the two million using the supplemental learning system [Lynda.com](#)? Should such learning tools be standard?

**Searchlight:** The books [News, Improved](#) and [Newsroom Training, Where's the Investment?](#) discuss news industry attitudes about training. Unfortunately, journalism employers historically have spent .4 percent of payroll in training, while the average American business invests more than five times that amount. Does this put pressure on universities to deliver better-educated graduates for that field? What's your view? Are any scholars studying this? Try typing the phrase "newsroom training" into [Google Scholar](#).