



SEARCHLIGHTS AND SUNGLASSES

LEARNING LAYER

Destroying journalism education to recreate it?

Consider the many changes in recent years at the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism: new degrees, classes, projects, centers. Students now routinely post their work online. Former Columbia dean, [Nicholas Lemann](#), remarks how “The main change in journalism has been the influence of the Internet, which has been great in every way except as regards the economics of mainstream news organizations.” That one big change is true throughout the developed world, [even in Australia](#). Graduates seeking journalism [jobs should be flexible about the type of company they work for](#) – not all news is provided by traditional news organizations.

Does that mean nearly everything about journalism education should be rethought?

Reflection and self-evaluation questions for teachers:

Flashlight: Consider these questions: What are the major roadblocks preventing change in your school? When was the last curriculum overhaul? How do new classes get approved? Is there an appetite for what the author calls “creative destruction”? Would change better serve students? Do you look to the industry for guidance on how to change? Or are you trying the new things that could lead the industry? Don’t just answer these questions for yourself: talk to a colleague about the issue.

Spotlight: In 2012, writer and media entrepreneur Jeff Jarvis (director of the [Tow-Knight Center for Entrepreneurial Journalism](#)) argued that [journalism education should do more](#) to keep up with new tools. How does your school teach new tools and skills? Does the idea of a “Brain Bar” to help with technical inquiries seem like a good solution? With the quickening pace of technological developments how can you better prepare students to be flexible and innovative?

Searchlight: From as far back as 1987, the [Oregon Report](#) called for a balance of professionals and scholars to improve “the dismal state of journalism education.” In 1996, [educator Betty Medsger published Winds of Change](#),

warning that journalism programs faced a bleak future without the input of experienced professionals. (She later noted that more than 50 percent of those winning major prizes never studied journalism.) Do you have professionals bringing fresh insights to your program? Are they adjuncts or professors? Which side of the faculty shows more reluctance to change, scholars or professors?

Extra credit: The Carnegie-Knight Initiative on the Future of Journalism Education funded a project by the Shorenstein Center called the Journalist's Resource. It bridges scholarly research and journalistic reporting. Consider: Does the scholarship from your campus make it back into the news industry? Should journalists and scholars routinely partner on research? How can your school get that started? Does your school have special study grants for applied research?