



More education with fewer teachers?

As educational policy makers are promoting 21st century information literacy skills and [Common Core Standards](#), some high schools are cutting back on journalism and school library media teachers. In 2011, the national [Scholastic Journalism Census](#) reported on the student media landscape of more than 11,500 high schools.

Activities at three levels:

Flashlight: Students should do a short summary of the findings: Are the cuts in media teachers and librarians a trend? What evidence can you find? What are the reasons given for the cuts? What types of student media are lagging? Which students are more likely to go to school in places where there isn't as much student media?

Spotlight: View the classic Twilight Zone episode, [The Obsolete Librarian](#) and read the article on [The Disgraceful Interrogation of LA Librarians](#). Have students create a mock trial, role-playing the two opposing sides: State versus Librarian. What did the trial experience tell you about the value of information to democracy?

Searchlight: Can you find other studies that claim similar trends? Find statistics about where the cuts are happening; create an infographic explaining the information. Discuss: If the Common Core learning objectives of digital media literacy are not met, what does that mean? What happens to society if critical thinking skills lag?

Extra credit: Is “teaching to the test” a threat to the teaching of higher-order, critical thinking skills? Look at some of these links: [My Profession No Longer Exists](#); [UMass Lecturer Says School is Punishing Her](#); [Move to Outsource Teacher Licensing Process Draws Protest](#); [What Teachers Make](#), and from the Daily Show, [Teachers and Wall Street](#). For extra credit, try to find equally convincing stories in favor of standardized testing. Imagine you are an education reporter. How would you handle this story? Compose your thoughts in the form of a memo to your newsroom supervisor.