Publishing with undergraduates

James Hartley

This short paper describe the author's experiences of publishing with undergraduates for more than 40 years: it discusses the advantages and disadvantages for staff and students.

Background

THERE IS A SMALL but interesting literature on the topic of undergraduates publishing academic works and related matters. Weber (2002) presents several accounts from different authors about various topics – such as undergraduates publishing papers, student journals, and publishing on the internet and via email. Other individual papers on students publishing in different subject areas have been provided by Bliss (2002), Jalbert (2008), and Payne and Monk-Turner (2007). Also, there are related texts for postgraduates on publishing before the thesis (Hartley & Betts, 2009) and on publishing from the thesis (Aitchison, Kamler & Lee, 2010; Harman, Montagnes & McMenemy, 2008).

In this note I address several questions arising from reviewing 23 of my publications with third-year psychology undergraduates between 1967 and 2014. These joint-publications were almost entirely based on student's third-year dissertations that I supervised – with the exception of Hartley (2002) and Withey et al. (2014). (Students at Keele spend about one semester in their third year on their dissertations, and they complete two – one for each of subject of their joint-honours degree.) As such these 23 publications represent a small number of the dissertations that I have supervised, and they form less than 10 per cent of my academic publications overall.

Here I want to raise some questions about the quality of these papers, and the advantages and disadvantages for students and staff in joint publication.

Questions arising

What is the quality of these papers? In early 2014 I was able to assess the number of times many of these papers had been cited. The data are shown in brackets after each reference. Where reported, the citation rates go from two to 88. This is pleasing but not wonderful. But it is nice to know that my first joint publication from 1967 is still being cited!

What about the impact factors of the journals where they are published? Most of these journals have low or very low impact factors for research in my field – and some none at all. (However, as I regard impact factors and citation rates as spurious measures, I am not too worried by this – see Hartley, 2012.)

What about their value for the students? Students seem to enjoy working on publications arising from their dissertation (although I do most of the re-shaping and re-writing). A publication looks good on their c.v., it gives them a sense of achievement and, possibly, it increases their attachment to Keele (see Hartley, 1998).

What about ethics? Note: I am cited as first author in 20 out of the 23 papers – except for the student authors of five of the seven chapters in Hartley (2002). This compares with 14 out of 16 for other more recent undergraduate project publications posted on one of our Department's noticeboards. Papers arising from PhD research, of course, normally have the student named as first author. In the present case most students chose their own topics for their dissertations but, in other groups, topics were sometimes provided by the tutors.

Advantages for academic staff

As staff we have to keep up-to-date with the literature in all of the fields that the students work in. We get practice at writing short articles (which is a skill). We can use these materials in lectures/tutorials to demonstrate that students can also publish. And today new technology facilitates the process.

Disadvantages

We have to check the contents, the appropriateness/correctness of the statistics, the citations, and we have to drastically shorten the dissertations. It is not unusual to find mistakes in dissertations that mysteriously escaped our eyes as internal examiners, as well as those of the externals. If an error is irremediable, then we have to give up thoughts of publication…

Conclusions

Publishing with students has both advantages and disadvantages – for the students and the staff. The process is time-consuming but much easier today with the advent of new technology. I believe that joint publication is a valuable activity for both.

Correspondence

Professor James Hartley
School of Psychology,
Keele University,
Staffordshire ST5 5BG.
Email: j.hartley@keele.ac.uk

References

Aitchison, C., Kamler, B. & Lee, A. (Eds.) (2010). *Publishing pedagogies for the doctorate and beyond.* London: Routledge.

Bliss, D.Z. (2002). Publishing with students: An uncontrolled variable. *Nursing Research, 51*(6), 345–346.

Harman, E., Montagnes, I., McMenemy. S. & Bucci, C. (Eds.) (2008). *The thesis and the book* (2nd ed.). Toronto: Toronto University Press.

Hartley, J. (1998). Why shouldn't students write their own textbook? A case-history in authentic learning. In J. Radford, D. Van Laar & D. Rose (Eds.), *Innovations in psychology teaching*. SEDA Paper 104. Birmingham: SEDA.

Hartley, J. (Ed.) (2002). *Readings for Psychology 203.* Keele University Library: BF365.H2

Hartley, J. (2012). We can't take impact factors as read. *The Psychologist, 25*(5), 330–331.

Hartley, J. & Betts, L. (2009). Publishing before the thesis: 58 postgraduate views. *Higher Education Review, 41*(3), 29–44.

Jalbert, T. (2008). Experiences in publishing peer-reviewed research with undergraduate accounting and finance students. *Journal of Accounting Education, 26*(3), 104–117.

Payne, K.B. & Monk-Turner, E. (2005). Collaborating with undergraduates: Obstacles and tips. *Journal of Criminal Justice Education, 16*(2), 292–299.

Weber, C. (Ed.) (2002). *Publishing with students: A comprehensive guide.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Withey, L., Fox, C.L. & Hartley, J. (2014). 'I cannot mess this up anymore': The experiences of undergraduates who withdraw and start again elsewhere. *Psychology Teaching Review, 20*(1), 78–89.

Appendix: Papers published with undergraduates (1967- 2014). Students' names in bold.

Withey, L., Fox, C. E. & Hartley, J. (2014). 'I can't mess this up again.' The experience of undergraduate student withdrawal and starting again elsewhere. *Psychology Teaching Review, 20*(1), 78–89.

Hartley, J., **Hickton, N.** & Betts, L.R. (2008). Exploring weaknesses in self-report data. *Research Intelligence, 104*, September, 22–23.

Hartley, J. & **Nicholls, L.** (2008). Time of day, exam performance and new technology. *British Journal of Educational Technology, 39*(3), 555–558. (7 citations: impact factor 1.313)

Hartley, J., **Brotherton, K.** & Betts, L. (2007). Does the Gap year boost academic performance? *Research Intelligence, 100*, August, 30–31.

Hartley, J., Betts, L.R. & **Murray, W.** (2007). Gender and assessment: Differences, similarities and implications. *Psychology Teaching Review, 13*(1), 34–47. (7 citations)

Hartley, J., Trueman, M., Betts, L.R. & **Brodie, L.** (2006). What price presentation? The effects of typographic variables on essay grades. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 31*(5), 523–534. (12 citations: impact factor 0.912)

Hartley, J. (Ed). (2002). *Readings for Psychology 203.* Keele University Library: BF365.H2. (**Chapters by D. Adams, J. Hirsch, R. Moran, S. North & L. Parkin**)

Hartley, J. & **Chesworth, K.** (2000). Qualitative and quantitative methods in research on essay writing: No one way. *Journal of Further and Higher Education, 24*(1), 15–24. (36 citations: impact factor 0.935)

Hartley, J. & **Johnson, M.** (2000). Portrait or landscape? Typographical layouts for patient information leaflets. *Visible Language, 34*(3), 296–309.

Hartley, J. & **Greggs, M.A.** (1997). Divergent thinking in arts and science students. Contrary Imaginations at Keele revisited. *Studies in Higher Education, 22*(1), 93–97. (14 citations: impact factor 1.036)

Hartley, J. & **Lapping, C.** (1994). Do mature students of psychology perform as well as traditional entry ones? An analysis of archival data. *Psychology Teaching Review, 1*(2), 76–81.

Hartley, J., **Brown, C.** & Michael, D.E. (1989). The effects of sex of speaker and listener on recall from a medical audiotape. *British Journal of Educational Technology, 20*(3), 191–199. (impact factor 1.313)

Hartley, J., Trueman, M. & **Rodgers, A.** (1984). The effects of verbal and numerical quantifiers on questionnaire responses. *Applied Ergonomics, 15*(2), 149–155. (19 citations: impact factor 1.728)

Hartley, J. & **Guile, C.A.** (1981). Designing journal contents pages: Preferences for horizontal and vertical layouts. *Journal of Research Communication Studies, 2*(4), 271–288. (4 citations)

Hartley, J., **Bartlett, S.** & Branthwaite, A. (1980). Underlining can make a difference – sometimes. *Journal of Educational Research, 73*, 218–224. (56 citations: five year impact factor 1.145)

Hartley, J., **Kenely, J., Owen, G.** & Trueman, M. (1980). The effect of headings on children's recall from prose text. *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 50*(3), 304–307, (33 citations: impact factor 1.313)

Hartley, J., **Goldie, M. & Steen, L.** (1979). The role and position of summaries: Some issues and data. *Educational Review, 31*(1), 59–65. (14 citations: impact factor 0.579)

Goodwin, A.R., Thomas, S. & Hartley, J. (1977). Are some parts larger than others? Qualifying Hammerton's quantifiers. *Applied Ergonomics, 8*(2), 93–95. (7 citations: impact factor 1.728)

Hartley, J. & **Marshall, S.** (1974). Some observations on the efficiency of lecturing. *Universities Quarterly, 28*(2), 225–235. (73 citations)

Hartley, J. & **Fuller, H.C.** (1971). Using slides in lectures: An explorative study. *Visual Education, 39*, 41. (16 citations)

Hartley, J., Holt, J. & **Swain, F.** (1970). The effects of pre-tests, interim tests and age on post-test performance following self-instruction. *Programmed Learning, 7*(4), 250–256 (14 citations)

Duncan, C. & Hartley, J. (1969). The effect of mode of presentation and recall on a simple learning task. *Programmed Learning and Educational Technology, 6*(3), 154–158. (2 citations)

Hartley, J. & **Cameron, A.** (1967). Some observations on the efficiency of lecturing. *Educational Review, 20*(1), 30–37. (88 citations: impact factor 0.579)