

Author's Commentary on "Student Publishes"

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This case attempts to raise issues related to publishing habits and standards. Indirectly, it points to topics such as mentoring and student concerns with professors. As the number of scientific journals increases, the effort required to track publications also increases. Most beginning graduate students almost immediately become acquainted with the "publish or perish" mentality. Publishing is crucial to academic survival in many ways:

- It is a means of demonstrating one's competence as a scientist.
- It is used as a criterion by funding sources such as private foundations and government agencies.
- In some cases, students must publish in order to complete their graduate degrees.
- Potential employers consider one's publication record after the graduate degree is completed.

Stevens, like most graduate students, is looking to his adviser for advice, which may be offered verbally or communicated to Stevens through actions. Stevens hopes to obtain guidance that will enhance his career possibilities, but his adviser's actions could also taint Stevens' view of the scientific and academic processes. To some extent, Stevens may feel betrayed by his adviser's misrepresentation.

Question 1 is intended to address the issue of multiple publications of the same data. This issue will increase in importance as scientists from different disciplines come together to perform research. That has been the case in instances where biology and medicine merge with engineering and physics, for example. More recently, fields such as human factors may involve educators, psychologists, and engineers. In research that relies on the expertise of all disciplines involved, would it be acceptable for the scientists from each group to publish the same paper in their respective journals? Some scientists argue that a researcher should know

where to find relevant papers and that data should be published only once. Others argue that publishing in different journals is the only mechanism for informing those outside a possibly small subset of a given discipline.

Question 5 probes the responsibility of the student and the professor. Stevens may be guilty of not knowing the rules of the publication process. One thing is sure: At a minimum, Stevens should have discussed the incident with other graduate students or faculty. It is not clear if he did. One would hope that eventually he would have a discussion with his adviser about the expectations for publishing. Professor Cordage's reasoning or motivation behind publishing the paper a second time is also not clear. Cordage may believe that he is acting in the best interest of his student by filling his resume with publications, or it could be the method by which he padded his own CV, and he figures it will help with future promotions. Either way, Cordage is setting a poor example for students by being dishonest with the students, journals, and possibly even his peers.