



Benefits and Challenges of Publishing Undergraduate Students' Writing

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THE HONG KONG
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Outline:

Publishing undergraduate research and writing

Context: Hong Kong and PolyU

Our journal: Benefits and challenges

Best practices

Q & A discussion



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Publishing UG research and writing

Boyer Commission report (1998)	Pedagogical changes; Focus on real world results	Changes in scholarly publishing
Desire of students to publish	Pervasive digital publishing	Libraries <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Information literacy- Institutional repositories (IRs)- Open access

UG journals – some numbers

- “...**Emerging campus synergy** in support of UR, engaged learning and publishing” (Caprio, 2014, p. 150)
- **170+** undergraduate journals in the US (Stone, Benson & Beech, 2016)
- **1/3** of US institutions have 1+ online or print UG research journal (Kaitlin, as cited in Stone et al., 2016)
- **50% faculty-led / 50% student-run** in the UK (Walkington, Edwards-Jones & Gresty, cited in Stone et al., 2016)
- **Issues of sustainability: 50%+ with broken links/old current issue in 2009** (Weiner & Watkinson, 2014)

Rationale / aims of journals

- “Legitimate outlets for the **publication and celebration** of outstanding student research” (Ho, 2011, p. 2)
- **Promotion** of student research or **encouragement** of student publication (80% of journal missions) (Ng, Lari & Chan, 2017)
 - Low-risk opportunity to engage in scholarly writing and critical appraisal of evidence
 - Develop writing and critical thinking skills
 - Develop leadership and critical appraisal skills (editorial board) (Ng et al., 2017)

Student Journal Possibilities

Types and sources of writing	Management and editing*	Technology and hosting
Research / STEM, medicine, law, multidisciplinary, etc.	Faculty	Libraries
Senior thesis	Students	IT department support
Course or program	Mix of faculty and students	
Humanities & general education	* reviewers, editors, advisers, proofreaders, editor-in-chief	

Hong Kong



Hong Kong youth feel powerless in politics

Exclusion from city's policy development process has led to a fall in young peoples' outlook, according to a university study



遮打革命
HONG KONG
UMBRELLA
REVOLUTION

Insecure and uncertain, Hong Kong youth are struggling to cope with the transition to adulthood



For many Hong Kong students, over-drilling for exams denies them the joy of learning

When will Hong Kong realise that its exam-focused culture is failing our children?

PolyU, ELC and GE / WAC

Founded 1937; university status in 1994

QS rankings in 2018: 95th in the world / 27th in Asia

28,499 students:

- 16,355 undergrads; 10,101 post-grads; 2,134 sub-degree
- 80% Hong Kong; 18% mainland China; 2.5% international

English Language Centre:

- 90+ academic staff
- Teach compulsory first-year English & discipline-specific English courses

2012: implementation of General Education / Writing Across the Curriculum

- ELC teachers provide pedagogical support and individual feedback and consultations to students (> 5000 students, 20 assignment genres yearly)

The establishment of *Inscribe*

- An objective of grant to establish GE/WAC program

Rationale:

- Motivation for students to engage in WAC and writing
- Acknowledgement of students' GE writing
- Development of a writing community on campus

- Open access, multi-disciplinary, published yearly
- Focuses on GE and ELC courses
- Open call for submission & emails to GE and ELC teachers
- No funding; minor time-off compensation for Editor-in-Chief
- Faculty support: 6 reviewers, 6 editors, 6 proofreaders

Revolution: The Right Way



- By Anoushka Mahar, Accounting & Finance student
- Persuasive writing course offered by ELC
- Manifesto – a call to action
- www.inscribe.elc.polyu.edu.hk

Students' Top Benefits

1. Editing process / working with the editor (5/6)
 - “the more you edit the more you learn; it was something I really enjoyed”
 - “Meeting people who really enjoy writing”; “the interaction with the editor”
2. Learning / improving my writing (3/6)
 - “The best part was improving my writing skills”
 - “It added more to my arsenal of writing”
3. Finishing / satisfaction (2/6)
 - “When I finally finished, I felt very satisfied”; “when everything ended”
4. Confidence (2/6)
 - “Working with EIC and Editor... improved my confidence and interest in writing”
5. Enjoyment (1/6); Interest in writing (1/6)
 - “No academic deadline, no stress”

Students' Biggest Challenges

1. Language (3/6)

- "A specific paragraph. I kept editing it but it never seemed to be understandable. My audience was struggling to understand"
- "Choosing the right words. I have a feeling and I don't know how to express it."
- "...tiny but important words; how to recognise language errors"

2. Negotiations with the editor (2/6)

- "Getting your message across to editors who...share a different perspective"
- "The editor didn't teach this subject before... We had disagreements"

3. Negative comments from the editor (1/6)

- "The comments on the first editing draft... emotional barriers you try to overcome. 'Unclear', 'Can't picture that' – it feels bad"

Faculty Challenges

- Interaction with the students
 - “Being patient with the students”
 - “Writing is a very personal thing... students have to be open to quite objective and critical feedback and learn to be editors”
 - “Committing students to revise”
- Unfamiliar genres of writing
 - “Some texts are quite technical”; “specific, unfamiliar genres”
- Workload
 - “Proofreading can be quite tedious, especially references and citations”

Faculty's perceived benefits

- Publicity / promotion of ELC
- Showcase to the wider community (PolyU is more than vocational ed.)
- Motivating students to read and write
- “We become more aware of the students’ expression, awareness, writing and how teachers can help”

How more benefits can be realized:

- - needs more promotion outside the ELC
- - expand the profile and readership
- - embedded in a course
- - genre guidelines and vocabulary resources

Institutional Challenges

Cost, administrative and QC concerns (Walkington & Jenkins, 2017)

Costs	Administrative	QC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Funding issues, and showing the impact - Financial sustainability of the hosting service - Publication costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Lateral impacts” (Waye & Simpson, 2016, p. 2); faculty pressure and workload - Monitoring and oversight - Poor timing (semesters, graduation, summers) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sources of quality work - Students may need encouragement to submit - Systems of submission, editing, review

Institutional Challenges

Cost, administrative and QC concerns (Walkington & Jenkins, 2017)

“can seem like a never-ending, precarious project, without funds securely set aside to ensure its longevity” (Waye & Simpson, 2016, p. 2)

Conclusions

Inscribe is a unique and rich experience for students.

- Evidence of students' benefits
- Supports aims of the ELC and PolyU
- Wider benefits to student body unknown
 - Students whose scripts are rejected?
- Clearer perspective on possibilities and ways of overcoming challenges

Student Journals: Best Practices

- Broaden your view & consider different possibilities
- Sufficient resources to enable sustainability (Mariani, 2011)
- Involve the library (see Caprio, 2014 and Weiner & Watkinson, 2014)
- Carefully plan assessment (see Weiner & Watkinson, 2014 - Purdue)
- Embed publishing in the student experience
- Create scaffolding support for all phases of publishing (videos, guides)
- Learn from the literature

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Q & A

Discussion / Suggestions

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