

BRIEF RESEARCH REPORT

Productivity of Educational Psychologists in Educational Psychology Journals, 1991–1996

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The scholarly productivity of educational psychologists, indexed in terms of the number of papers published in professional journals in the field was the focus of this investigation. Five journals considered to be among the “core journals” in the field and, thus, those in which educational psychologists are likely to publish their scholarship were examined for the years 1991–1996. Both institutions (i.e., universities) and individuals were identified. The top-rated institution, in terms of educational psychology productivity, was the University of Maryland and the most prolific individual contributor to the journals was Herbert Marsh. The findings partially replicate several previous productivity studies in psychology and educational psychology. The most productive scholars in the field include both seasoned, established leaders in the discipline, as well as younger individuals who are making their mark. © 1998 Academic Press

Scholarship productivity, indexed in terms of the number of papers published in professional journals, has long been an indicator—albeit a controversial one—of institutional quality. Previously, investigators have examined faculty productivity in fields as diverse as adult education (Blunt & Lee, 1994; Rachel & Sargent, 1995), law (Ellman, 1983); and reading (Johns, Ary, & St. John, 1986). A number of such investigations have been conducted in psychology (Cox & Catt, 1977; Howard, 1983; Howard, Cole, & Maxwell, 1987; Howard, Maxwell, Berra, & Sternitzke, 1985; Levinson, Barker, & Lillenstein, 1994; Webster, Hall, & Bolen, 1993) and, specific to the topic of this paper, educational psychology (West & Hoerr, 1985; West & Rhee, 1995).

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Cox and Catt (1977) investigated the productivity of psychology faculties publishing in the APA journals. They found that the leading contributors to the *Journal of Educational Psychology* (JEP) from 1970–1975 were, in rank order, the Universities of Illinois, Wisconsin and Minnesota, Florida State University, the University of Texas-Austin, and Stanford University. Similarly, Howard et al. found the top contributors to JEP during the years 1976–1985 were UCLA, Illinois, Minnesota, the Universities of California at Berkeley and Santa Barbara, and the University of Pittsburgh. West and Rhee (1995) used a number of criteria to determine institutional rankings. Productivity was indexed by number of publications from 1983 to mid 1990, number of citations in the Social Sciences Citation Index from 1972 to mid-1990, external funding awarded during academic year 1989–90, and number of editorships of top journals. Institutions were also ranked by prestige, as indicated by rankings of Holmes Group deans in several colleges of education.

West and Rhee found the top institutions in educational psychology to be the University of Illinois-Urbana/Champaign, Stanford, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Michigan State, UCLA, Minnesota, Texas-Austin, and Maryland. There was a significant correlation between productivity and prestige rankings, $r = .69$. Despite this positive association, Cox and Catt (1977) demonstrated that productivity is a more objective measure of programs and institutions than is institutional reputation.

The modest shifts in rankings over a 15-year period likely reflect methodological differences in determining rankings. The collection of studies cited above also verify that the scholarly productivity of individual educational psychology faculties remains relatively stable, despite the inevitable changes that are likely to occur within a given department (e.g., individual faculty members moving into administrative positions, retiring, being replaced—or not replaced—by new, junior faculty, or moving to other institutions). Obviously, prestigious universities are much more able, and likely, to replace departed faculty with individuals who contribute to the high levels of scholarship which are characteristic of these institutions and which keep them ranked among the top programs.

The study reported here was conducted to take a somewhat different look at the productivity of educational psychologists by focusing on a select sample of five educational psychology journals. These journals were selected because they are specific to the field of educational psychology. Although our primary interest was in regards to identifying productive educational psychology faculties, we also determined the most productive individual educational psychologists whose work has dominated the journals that we examined. We also wanted to determine the topics and issues being investigated by these and other educational psychologists.

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