

### The Nature of Publications in Academic Vitae

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Hayes (December 1983) presented data suggesting that the quality of the journals in which an individual publishes is a more important determinant of peer evaluations than is the sheer quantity of publications. Indeed, as he noted, his data suggested that large numbers of publications in low-quality journals may lower peer ratings.

Hayes's conclusions are unnecessarily morose. He implied—though, not surprisingly, he never openly rec-

ommended—that junior faculty members (some of whom, presumably, are his own gullible colleagues) should try to publish in high-quality journals as much as possible, even if they end up with fewer publications. But he might instead have recommended a simple practice that is consistent with his data and that many people follow anyway: Publish what you please, where you want to or are able to publish it, and then be selective in listing publications on your vita. Headings on vitae often read “recent publications,” “major publications,” and so on, to alert readers that they are seeing a sampling. The practice seems to me to be both efficient and ethical and, in light of Hayes's report,

to be in the best interests of the evaluatee. Some of the most outstanding academicians I know also have the shortest vitae. A simple rule may not be too far off: The more distinguished the individual, the shorter—in other words, the more *selective*—the vita.

As a minor point, counts may be more typical where it counts. If most of the people evaluating an individual's vita are in other subfields, journal titles and article titles may mean little; after all, vitae are often evaluated by administrators.

Hayes spoke of professional contingencies, but he may have neglected more fundamental ones. Professional journals are conduits for professional communications. One should pick them to reach the audience that is most appropriate to the advancement of the discipline.

#### REFERENCE

- Hayes, S. C. (1983). When more is less: Quantity versus quality of publications in the evaluation of academic vitae. *American Psychologist*, 38, 1398-1340.

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