

1981 1982 1983 1984 1985 1986 1987 1988 1989 1990

Twenty Years of HSA and HPT

For 20 years HSA has been a presence in the learning and performance support field. Recently, we sat down with boxes of memorabilia from our many projects (well over 1,000) and sifted through artifacts and photos we had accumulated in our professional journeys. Toward the bottom of the first box, along with a photo of ourselves, we discovered some old programmed instruction booklets we had produced on culling vegetables and cashing checks. Thumbing through the pages, we reminisced about how much has changed in HSA and HPT (Human Performance Technology). On the instructional delivery side, we have lived through programmed instruction; teaching machines; synchronized slide-tape shows; filmstrips; broadcast instructional television programs beamed down from airplanes; self-instructional audio and videotapes; multiimage (complete with 27 synchronized projectors); interactive videodiscs; intelligent tutoring systems; computer-based and computer managed instruction; multimedia; telelearning; distance learning; distributed learning; e-learning; virtual classrooms; knowledge management.



facilities for retained carcasses to application of electronic warfare countermeasures. An audiovisual training module on Parents as Partners in Teaching Handicapped Children that we had developed years ago rekindled memories. We wished we had the equipment to view it once again.

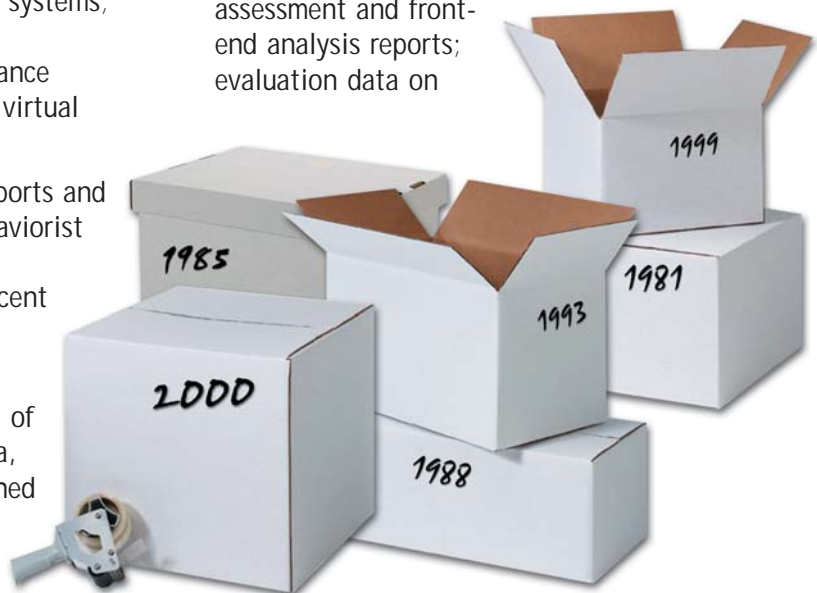
The Learner Controlled Instruction systems we had built for railway car trackers and retail store buyers delighted and amazed us. While at first they looked dated, once we re-immersed ourselves in the content, we discovered that their freshness still remained.

We also came across a box of games and simulations - a poem in a structured, yet highly illustrated and playful format that helped kids learn to use the pocket calculator (You Can Count on Me!) as they discovered things around their homes. In the same box was a large gameboard designed for the Navy to maintain proficiency on Collision Avoidance Regulations and a flexible simulation game to teach railway signal maintainers technical content.

As we strolled through HSA's historical corridors, we began to notice increasing traces of HPT's influence in HSA's project work—greater presence of job aids; more frequent needs assessment and front-end analysis reports; evaluation data on

Our archeological findings revealed reports and presentations that fervently preached behaviorist principles and then cognitive information processing models. We even ran across recent materials based on constructivist theory.

We were struck by how much we had evolved, both as a company and as a field of professional practice. With great nostalgia, we reviewed some of our linear and branched programmed instruction courses on topics ranging from preparation of post-mortem



performance rather than just learning; examples of work process and environment redesign; on-job support systems; policy and procedure manuals.

As we approached the present, we noted how technologically sophisticated our projects have become. We observed more client solutions involving both learning and performance support systems. From a local mom and pop organization similar to those run by so many of our colleagues 20 years back, HSA has evolved along with HPT to become a presence on the global stage.

Strangely, we found very few tangible artifacts in the most current boxes, even though our projects have grown to encompass blended solutions that seamlessly combine a number of learning and performance components. We then realized that so many of HSA's projects are virtual and don't necessarily fit into boxes anymore. Now, we work more with virtual clients spread out over thousands of miles and virtual HSA teams that appear to effortlessly deal with this virtual reality to create solutions that exist in a virtual world.

Resealing the boxes, we sat back and examined a recent publicity photo of ourselves. It told a great deal about us, as well as about HSA and the HPT professional territory where we have chosen to reside. We saw more gray hair, more wrinkles and, perhaps, a greater maturity. But we also noticed something about the deep fundamentals. Looking closely, we perceived the same two people, just with more mileage on them. We realized that despite 20 years of change, we and every member



of the HSA team are still focused on and dedicated to helping organizations and their people achieve performance results that both value. And HPT is still concerned with engineering the most effective learning and performance systems.

Surrounded by boxes filled with traces of our professional past, we gazed at both photos and realized that we had come to the same conclusion. Like the clothes and the grayer hair, a lot has changed for us, HSA and HPT: new technologies; new tools; new market conditions; a broader playing field; a wider range of solutions; more demand for performance data; more virtual team projects. Yet beneath it all, what has remained untouched is the importance of clearly identifying desired performance outcomes, of basing our efforts on what science and organized knowledge has demonstrated as effective, of thinking and working both systemically and systematically, of making use of all means and methods to produce verifiable, valued results, and of demonstrating the value of our efforts to all stakeholders - clients, learners/performers, customers, shareholders and society.

While staring at these photos and at one another, we understood that the changes, while remarkable, have only been on the surface. Underneath, the fundamentals still hold true.

Thanks for sharing in a great 20 years with us.

Harold D. Stolovitch

&

Erica J. Keeps

HSA Principals
and the entire HSA family



1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001