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# Human Resource Development Quarterly: In the Beginning

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Happy 20th birthday to the *Human Resource Development Quarterly*! The first issue of *HRDQ* appeared in January 1990. I had invested almost four years in getting this first research journal in human resource development (HRD) to become a reality. Others joined in along the way. The beginning of *HRDQ* was a tangled journey and worth every ounce of effort.

Until January 1990, our fledging academic discipline had no research journal, no research methodology handbook, no secure academic home (we were imbedded in other departments and disciplines). There was no Academy of Human Resource Development. Pursuing all four of these fronts became the core strategy for advancing the HRD profession as a recognized academic discipline. Establishment of a research journal was the first priority.

The Human Resource Development Research Center at the University of Minnesota hosted the original *HRDQ* planning work and the first eight years of its publication. In the planning stage of *HRDQ*, there were a number of naysayers who did not believe there was enough research going on in HRD to fill a quarterly research journal.

Also in the planning stage, a number of organizational partners were entertained. Being a member of the American Society for Training and Development Research Committee and having established their successful theory-to-practice monograph series was the springboard for American Society for Training and Development involvement. Thank you, ASTD. Having published books through Steve Piersanti, who was then the president of Jossey-Bass Publishers, was the entrée to Jossey-Bass as the publishing partner. Piersanti has influenced the HRD profession more than you can imagine. His support of *HRDQ* is just one major contribution made to HRD. Thank you, Steve Piersanti and Jossey-Bass.

Other potential partners came and went, including the University of Minnesota. Originally it was to be the permanent home of *HRDQ*, with the



editorship rotating through six HRD-related faculties. As the legal contract began taking shape, the dean of the College of Education balked. HRD was getting ahead of other college academic programs that he favored. Thus *HRDQ* policies and procedures were altered to allow it to rotate to editors at other universities. The cover design was then modified, by removing “University of Minnesota” and adding the editor’s name. My colleague Gary McLean served as the associate editor the first four years and then became the editor. Thank you, Gary McLean.

The Academy of Human Resource Development was founded three years after *HRDQ* first appeared. It took a few years more to create a revised contract making the academy and ASTD co-owners and sponsors of *HRDQ* along with Jossey-Bass.

As part of the original contract, ASTD agreed to offer *HRDQ* as one of its member options. The number of ASTD members choosing *HRDQ* as a member option—without having seen the first issue—was over 1,700. Everyone was astounded.

The first *HRDQ* editorial was titled *Experience: A Questionable Teacher* (Swanson, 1990). The thrust of that editorial was:

1. You only get better at what you want to get better at.
2. Nothing of value gets easier or better through experience alone.
3. Without seriously studying and reflecting on our profession and without developing sound theories to explain and challenge our practice, we will continue to repeat our experiences without learning from them.
4. Research to the rescue!

Research—pursuit of new knowledge and its dissemination—is the soul of academia. In getting this noble journal work accomplished, there are two essential ingredients beyond the intellect, passion, and tenacity of the scholar-contributors: (1) a process of blind review of manuscripts by multiple respected scholars, the heart of research integrity; and (2) active and engaged editorial boards made up of senior scholars, essential to research journal operation and advancement.

Research is the soul of any respected academic discipline. Research journals are the primary vehicle for displaying scholarship in a discipline. They are the single most important anchor if any discipline is to be honored, protected, and celebrated. To lose the integrity of its journals is to lose the soul of a discipline. In that the Academy of Human Resource Development has the privilege of sponsoring four research journals, the most important work for the academy is to proactively protect, support, and celebrate its journals. Something else is in second place; I am just not sure what it is.

## Reference

Swanson, R. A. (1990). Experience: A questionable teacher. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 1(1), 1–4.

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