

Editorial

This issue, 35-3, includes papers that address various topics in engineering education including: Student Success, Leadership, Project-Based Learning, Building Information Modelling, Gender, Laboratory Evaluation., Motivation, Assessment, First Year Students, Entrepreneurship, Virtual Learning, Major Selection, e-Portfolios, Engineering Graphics, Conceptual Misunderstanding, Employability Skills, Flipped Classroom, Faculty Development, Mechanical Engineering, Information Technology, Manufacturing Engineering, Engineering Dynamics, Software Engineering, and Fluid Dynamics.

The contributions are by authors from numerous countries including: South Africa, USA, Botswana, Spain, Switzerland, UAE, Mexico, Brazil, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Turkey, Belgium, and Malaysia.

I hope the readers find the issue useful and inspiring and I wish to thank all the authors for their valuable contributions.

The way we write changes with time. The choice of words and phrases changes for a variety of reasons; for example, to express new ideas and discoveries, to describe innovative artifacts, or to simply impress and attract attention. There are words inspired by the technology of the day. Fusion among various disciplines and cultures could also lead to new phrases as well as metaphors that become their own phrases or words. The use of acronyms, excessively at times, is another trait of some current communications, not only the written but also the spoken.

Engineering education has its share of modified words and clichés. The word multitasking is overused and in vogue now. It is particularly amusing when misused by a distracted student who is unable even just to multitask. Stakeholders, real world, buy-in, take-away, and stickiness are examples of words that changed meaning to replace existing unambiguous words. Hands-on, career-ready are becoming clichés used by some engineering colleges to attract students in addition to invoking words such as robots and intelligent along the way. There are many more examples of such contemporary modified usage of words.

Should engineering educators be conscious of or concerned about the use and misuse of words? Words are tools; they have the ability to make communications, including technical writing, interesting and colorful but also could lead to boredom and mistrust. They could clarify and they could mislead. Words and phrases that we coin or choose to use have, in turn, an impact on the way we think and act. “We shape our tools and thereafter our tools shape us” as said by Marshall McLuhan. We need to adopt new expressions judiciously.

Ahmad Ibrahim