

# Editorial

---

This issue (34-3) has two sections. The first is a special issue on Decision Making in Engineering Education using Learning Analytics. It is guest edited by Professors Miguel Ángel Conde González and Ángel Hernández García, to whom I am grateful for suggesting the topic and for the time and expertise they invested in guest-editing the special issue.

The second section has papers addressing various topics including: Motivation, Conceptual Knowledge, Project-Based Learning, Innovation, Entrepreneurship, Academic Performance, Design Courses, STEM, and Computer Architecture.

I wish to thank all the authors for their valuable contributions and I hope the readers find the papers to be interesting, useful, and thought provoking.

The Case Against Education is the title of a book published this year by the Princeton University Press. Author Bryan Caplan is a professor of economics at George Mason University, Virginia, USA. In a not-very-economical 395 pages Prof. Caplan puts his case against education. The book is written by an educated individual for educated readers to convince them that his and their education was useless, which in and by itself is amazing. However, the book should not be dismissed because of its title: it is the mark of an educated man to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it, as Aristotle said.

If the word education in the title was replaced, for example, by the school system, the current curricula, or the methods of teaching, it would not have been provocative. Many people agree that the education system (and for that matter any system) needs reform, although they disagree on why or how.

It was quite reasonable of the author to say: “Learning doesn’t have to be useful. Learning doesn’t have to be inspirational. When learning is neither useful nor inspirational, though, can we call it anything but wasteful?” If the word learning is replaced with schooling or lecturing the paragraph would be the opening statement for the Case for Good Education.

It was good of the author to make the clarification: “Does this book advise you to cut your education short, . . . Absolutely not”. The book, however, seems to advocate “the separation of school and state”. With less government funding, fewer people would seek higher academic credentials; thus the selection pool for employers is reduced. This would, the author claims, lead employers not to demand high education credentials. Education, in the opinion of the author, would then become more financially efficient. Various views, arguments and counter arguments, supported by his interpretation of data, are presented to try to explain the puzzle: if education is useless, why is it valued by employers?

Although engineering education is not the focus of the book, it was mentioned casually several times in a rather admiring tone in comparison with other areas of study. It is important that those who teach engineering be on their guard to maintain the good name of engineering. The public needs to know that it is important for engineering educators to be the decision makers, at least when engineering education is concerned.

Ahmad Ibrahim