

Reals and Ideals of Accounting Education: Building Educational Leverages on Fundamentals

Yuji Ijiri and Shyam Sunder

“Now, what I want is, Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else.”

With these opening words from the mouth of Thomas Gradgrind, a doctrinaire schoolmaster, Charles Dickens set the stage for his harsh critique of pragmatic education in mid-nineteenth century Britain in his novel, *Hard Times for These Times*. The tension between liberal and pragmatic forces in education is not new. The more things change, the more they seem to remain the same.

In April 1959, the AICPA Council adopted thirteen resolutions on accounting education (American Institute of CPAs 1959). One of these established the baccalaureate degree as a requirement for the CPA certificate. Another stated that postgraduate education for careers in public accounting is desirable, and that as soon as it is feasible, postgraduate study devoted principally to accountancy and business administration should become a requirement for the CPA certificate.

Nearly thirty years later in May 1987, the AICPA Council approved a professional standards plan which included a requirement that applicants for membership of the AICPA after the year 2000 have 150 semester hours of education, including a baccalaureate degree or its equivalent.