ISSN: 2278-4012, Volume:3, Issue:3, July 2014

# A Comparison between Education in the Vision of His Majesty King Abdullah II and Education in Hard Times

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Abstract: This study compares and contrasts education in the vision of His Majesty King Abdullah II and education in Hard Times by presenting both educational systems. Education in the vision of His Majesty King Abdullah II is very important and necessary. Every member involved in the educational system has a special and precious role that must be accomplished to reach the level of a well-organized educational system. Jordan, a country that lacks natural resources, is concerned and interested in its citizens' minds. His Majesty's vision emphasizes severalty, proficiency and encourages the investment of the human resources that are able to emulate actively, adapt with the requirement of the age and contribute in developing the economy. It ensures to employ the technology in education and conduct with informational and communicational technology to the extent that makes Jordan a local district and international active center. The vision of His Majesty is cleared through his contributions and innovations in education.

Education in Hard Times; Dickens dyes the division of Coketown School, where instructors are conveying something, but surely not knowledge, to the pupils. They are conveying facts and spreading the utilitarian system. The ease of Cecilia Jupe (Sissy) outlook in plain difference to the movingly scheming mind of her educator, Mr. M'Choakumchild and her school master Mr. Gradgrind.

**Key Words:** Education. Hard Times, Vision, Charles Dickens, Mr. Gradgrind, His Majesty

#### 1. Introduction

Being at school for twelve years and another four years for the bachelor's degree at university, involved in the educational system as a teacher, two years for the master degree, this good number of years forced me to think a lot about the title of my research paper. We live in a time of rapid change, I order to keep pace with the change we should improve our education. Recently, education has become an important subject to talk about by all layers of the Jordanian society, especially after the new social, economic, and technological developments concerning schools, teachers and students in Jordan. With the increasing number of population in addition to the political circumstances that the region passes through, people view about education has become different; to work in a career is much more important than being educated or not.

Education in the nineteenth century was restricted to certain genders and certain classes. In fact, it was limited only to rich children who would be taught in their houses and rich girls who were

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taught certain skills like singing and sewing (other skills were gender restricted. Math was not a subject to be taught for girls. The lower class, on the other hand, were labors. Children were forced to work and if they hand the chance to attend schools they would use slates instead of papers for papers were expensive. Slowly, things changed for poorer children too.

## 1.2 Questions of the Study

The following study aims to find answers for the following questions:

How does Hard Times conceptualize the Educational System in the Charles Dickens' era?

What is the Vision of His Majesty in Education?

Are there any similarities and/or differences between the vision of His Majesty and Dickens' in Education?

## 1.3 Aims of the Study

This study aims at exploring the similarities and differences between the vision of Charles Dickens and His Majesty in improving the quality of the educational systems in their eras.

## 1.4 Problem of the Study

Even though His Majesty has focused on the importance of education in the current century, his vision is not yet compared with other eras. This study therefore is a contribution to such a need.

#### 2. Discussion

The following discussion aims to compare the educational system in the vision of, Charles Dickens and that of His Majesty, by pointing the most important issues that are related to education, and that are considered to be the basic elements that include the process of education. In fact, both of them are noticed to share the following aspects:

#### 2.1 The importance of education

His Majesty knows very well the importance of education in raising the society; therefore, all his educational contributions focused on offering education for all, trying to wipe out illiteracy, using all new modern methods of technology in teaching and investing the human resources that are able to emulate actively, adapt with the requirement of the age, contribute in developing the national economy, employ the technology in education and conduct with informational and communicational technology to the extent that makes Jordan a local and international active center. Similarly, Charles Dickens believes that: If you would reward honesty, if you would give encouragement to good, if you would stimulate the idle, eradicate evil, or correct what is bad, education -- comprehensive liberal education -- is the one thing needful, and the one effective

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end. (Speech in Birmingham) He was very interested in education referring behavior, attitudes and prosperity to education and his work reflects a selected range of issues and institutions. He was a sturdy believer in universal, non-sectarian education. He neglected and criticized the type of education that was offered in his age. Therefore His Majesty and Dickens share the same ideas concerning education, although there is a great gap between both ages.

## 2.2 The purpose of education

Moving to the second point which is for what purpose is education? Why do we educate our children? In the vision of His Majesty education is a right for all human beings. It is to prepare our children for life difficulties, make them ready to face life, invest their brains, and develop their creativity for they are the capital of Jordan. As a result, our children will be able to raise up the economic level of Jordan and make it a center in producing clever, well qualified and organized outputs. Students who are well educated are ready to solve their problems in a good way and participate actively. On the other hand, the purpose of education in Hard Times was to produce machines or instruments believing in facts rather than creative human beings. Children who are described as vessels were deprived of the sense of being humans, without human feeling, and left their boy hood life and creativity away. Stuffing children's minds with facts is damaging, so is isolating the heart as a body organ exchanging it by a calculator that only knows two plus two equals four and nothing else. 13When given the chance to learn, individuals are authorized to subsidize fully to the growth their nations. Education assistances lay the basis for continued economic development.

Hard Times proves the clash of common sense against dry wisdom alienated from sentiments. Mr. Gradgrind, Mr. M'Choakumchild, and Mr. Bounderby against Thomas Gradgrind. Louisa, Sissy, Stephen Blackpool, and Rachael (the former represents the vicious sides of stony education, while the latter shows the virtuous and sensible protectors of human character.

#### 2.3Addressing Students

Moreover, the researcher finds that in every letter written by His Majesty to the students he begins it by, my dear students, my dear sons and daughters, and this is a great feeling to know that every student belongs to a great person or there is a great person that cares about them. A student feels he is an important person when the head of the pyramid calls him my dear son. Students go to schools in peace, knowing that they are in a place where safe, stability and protection are there, a place governed by rules that are to be practiced by all.

By contrast in Hard Times students are being called in 28numbers 'Girl number twenty,' said Mr. Gradgrind, squarely pointing with his square forefinger, 'I don't know that girl. Who is that girl?' Sissy deprived of being called Sissy she was to be called Cessilia. 9'Sissy Jupe, sir,' explained number twenty, blushing, standing up, and curtseying. 'Sissy is not a name,' said Mr. Gradgrind. 'Don't call yourself Sissy. Call yourself Cecilia. 'How tough was Gradgrind in depriving her of

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the name her poor father gave, 'My father as calls me Sissy. sir,' returned the young girl in a trembling voice, and with another curtsey. 'Then he has no business to do it,' said Mr. Gradgrind. 'Tell him he mustn't. Cecilia Jupe'. (Dickens,2002:3) The importance of calling the students by their names instead of numbers is that you are showing more respect making them feel that they haves a value, as Willemsen claims: When the professor engages the student in personal conversation, recognizes her by name, and seems to include her in the domain of attention, the subject matter seems more accessible. The nonverbal message goes out that the student is a part of the community of people who can do mathematics, statistics, chemistry, or whatever the subject is. (Willemsen, 1990:14) How a student facing a teacher or a principle like this could, would like to learn or go to school? What kind of education do you think as readers will she have? The researcher believes she will be sick in mind for this was a close result to Louisa

## **2.4 Education and Economy**:

Education is the key to hope and eradicating extreme poverty around the world. Social accountability and financial independence all stem from education. Education helps raising the economic status of the country. To meet the demands of the international economy, the Jordanian education system is gone under reform in order to compete at an advanced level.

Jordanian students are equipped with essential information about technology, in order to compete in the market palace. The Knowledge Economy Support Project aims to create students who are able to lead Jordanian by endowing them with essential technology knowledge.

His majesty believed in the importance of education for raising Jordan economic status. Comparing Jordan with Cocktown, in Hard Times, that suffered from bad economic circumstances clarified in the following quotation It was a town of red brick, or of brick that would have been red if the smoke and ashes had allowed it; but as matters stood ... It had a black canal in it, and a river that ran purple with ill-smelling dye... and where the piston of the steamengine worked monotonously up and down, like the head of an elephant in a state of melancholy madness. Inhabited by people equally like one another, who all went in and out at the same hours, with the same sound upon the same pavements, to do the same work, and to whom every day was the same as yesterday. (Dickens, 2002:19) From the description of Coketown it is easy to know that the economic status was very difficult and poverty spread all over. People needed to work day and night to get their daily bread, time was just moving and going on and workers were only to work without even thinking but, suffering to survive. This was the time for people to wake up and get ready and be educated to develop themselves, invest their skills and know the requirements of the stage. Instead of helping the students who face these difficulties children were forced to face a new kind of tough teaching ... This is a new principle, a discovery, a great discovery,' where most answers are dictatorial should be no ...'Of course no,' ... 9'No, sir!' is always the right answer to this gentleman. Gradgrind didn't even feel with the children financial difficulties instead of making them aware of the surrounding enviournment and the importance

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of education in improving themselves he guided their thoughts faraway to achieve what he called the 'great discovery'.

#### 2.5 Educational System:

The system of education in Hard Times is based on memorization and this is not accepted to be generalized as a method in teaching or in learning, because by that there is no place for thinking or imagination. How literature and language will be taught? How will poetry be written or spoken? This means we can never ever get something new but we will only keep learning and memorizing what was done without bringing anything new or our materials will be limited to history and science no time or place for imagination, no time for fancy or sport. What about health? Sport classes were not mentioned in Hard Times at all, creativity has no place. By contrast, education in the vision of His Majesty can perform its role and achieve its goals only if it could harmonize between theory and application. Education is not to stuff information but it is a means to make the character of the student and help him\her to think and be creative. Creativity is a base for development, therefore, was 32king Abdullah award for youth innovation and achievements for creative youth, who invent new things based on experimental researches born in their free liberal minds to think and imagine: "The young men and women of this region have incredible talent and energy and character. I can tell you, they can transform old realities - they can cross the divides – agree on justice - and share in the progress of our century. It is our job, here and now, to help give them the tools to succeed. It begins with your ability to inspire young minds to re-imagine the future.(King Abdullah Conversation)

As an outlet for young Arabs, KAAYIA provides students with the chance to excel through showing their stories of success. KAAYIA, in fact, supports students of all regions by all financial means. This award not only unravel students' excellence but shows a module for other students who are in the same age to flourish as well.

#### 2.5 Health and Education:

Increasing physical activity is a societal as much as it is an individual issue. It is well-known that appropriate regular physical activity is important in preventing many diseases. Moreover, physical activity enriches positive thinking, helps people enhance their productivity and effectively handle daily demands and emergencies. Studies have shown that physical fitness helps people enhance their productivity and effectively handle daily demands and emergencies. According to specialists, physical fitness enables people to build a healthy body and enrich positive thinking.

The project focuses not only on students of a certain age but all sectors in the Jordanian society as was instructed by his Majesty in order to establish a generation integrated with sports ( as inspired by President's Challenge in the USA). As an example of that the Ministry of Education

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established the Physical Fitness Project in schools to enhance the standards and quality of the Jordanian health awareness, through the Royal Health Awareness Society (RHAS).

#### 2.6 Teachers' Status and Role in Education

In Hard Times the teacher was a tool and the researcher sees that he was not given the chance to express his view and ideas because the scene that is related to school began with the words of Gradgrind: "NOW, what I want is, Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life....... You can only form the minds of reasoning animals upon Facts: nothing else will ever be of any service to them. This is the principle on which I bring up my own children, and this is the principle on which I bring up these children. Stick to Facts, sir!"(Dickens, 2002:1) The method that he is bringing up his own children is being practiced on bringing up the schoolchildren and this is absolutely wrong because whatever this method is and no matter how perfect it is we can't generalize any method in teaching because there are individual skills that we should put under consideration. Finally Gradgrind discovers his wrong method. But still the teacher was hired for this mission; his own personality was covered with what he was taught of facts as the whole educational system of the Gradgrind School was. In the view of

His Majesty the situation is different. In all of His Majesty speeches he points to the teacher as the good respected father that the whole society must respect, and this is a part of the letter His Majesty sent of "Teachers Day"

My Dear brothers the esteemed teachers: Peace be upon you and God's blessings. It is with great pleasure that H.M. Queen Rania and myself express to you how proud we are in your achievements, convey to you our sincere appreciation of your good work and congratulate every one of you on Teacher's Day which embodies your society's gratitude for your noble message and the importance of your role in the upbringing of generations and the elevation of the standard of humans' intellect, developing their capacity, fulfilling their creative capabilities and preparing them to be effective elements in building their societies, empowered to face challenges and conforming to the spirit of this age that is characterized by constant modernization and developments. We stand today saluting the nobility and greatness of your message and congratulating you on this Teacher's Day, assuring you of our support and looking to you as the reliable persons entrusted with the upbringing of our generations and directing them to the path of the future which is characterized by prevalence of knowledge, informatics, modern technology and how to best acquire and utilize it. Hence, the

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most prominent characteristics of the teacher in this modern age is that he is unique and unconventional; one who considers his differences with others as a source of informational riches, who practices innovative critical thinking and has the capacity and willingness for self, comprehensive and sustainable education, in his capacity as the supportive friend, the outstanding leader, the initiator, the interlocutor, the monitoring supervisor, the guide, the facilitator of the learning process, the role model and the counselor. His majesty ends the letter with promises to help teachers emphasizing on the great role that teachers play in the educational process. We will do our best to improve the teachers professional and living status, and to restore respect, appreciation and prestige to this noble profession. Suffice it to say to you, our brothers the teachers, that you are greatly honored by being the guardians of the principles, values and culture that formulate the nation's identity and the essence of its civilization; and that you are the ones who build the individual, chart the path of the future and pave the way for our generations to attain knowledge, science, modernization, development and the upgrading of the individual's life standard, refining his personality and enriching his knowledge and intellect. What profession, then, is more honorable than this profession of yours, which every human is honored to be associated with. Rania and myself look forward be incorporated, as of this day, in your ranks as proud colleagues of you. (Message of King Abdullah to teachers)

The researcher sees that the teacher's part is as a leader, an initiator, instructor, he is the controller of the class and the one who solves student problems. In fact, the instructor should (1) help students make their own decisions, (2) be able to establish a secure environment for this would enhance students' scores, (3) be a guide who show respect to his/her students and a module for students to follow.

This was the scene of the school of Gradrind which means that there was no use of any encouraging methods used in teaching, even no picture that may illustrate the lesson to the students and make it easier to understand and this is something that must be strange in the educational process of teaching, and the evidence was the discussion of papering' a room with representations of horses with its hard and tough results reaching the following question 9,'Would you use a carpet having a representation of flowers upon it?' Education is much easier with the help of the teaching aids such as cards, wall charts and so on. From the prospective of His Majesty things are different; His Majesty sees that the teaching aids are very necessary:

We have endeavoured earnestly over the past years to provide the right environment for the modernization of education. That

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was to be realized through empowering the teacher, developing educational curricula and activities, upgrading the pre-school educational stage, and building schools equipped with teaching aids, IT and new technologies that would provide an appropriate school climate for the teaching and learning process. (Message of King Abdullah to teachers)

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 $< http://www.pm.gov.jo/english/index.php?page\_type=news\&part=1\&id=4594>.$ 

His Majesty emphasizes the importance of using the teaching aids considering it a good educational complement, also ensuring the importance of continuous development for them. Every subject has a special teaching aid which might be different but using these is important for presentation, demonstration, and reinforcement and communication practice. Teaching aids can be categorized into four main types: visual, aural, audio-visual and language games. Each type of these aids has its own function .Some of them are more effective than other. Consequently, the teacher should be careful to choose the most appropriate aid that best serves his teaching intention.

#### 2.9 Vocational Education

As for the vocational and training education that the Gradgrind's school lacked, this supports his principles by believing in facts and leaving every individual skill. Vocational education and training develop students' practical skills. There are individual skills and level differences in knowledge and education, there is no one class in the whole world that contains only brilliant students who share the same and typical ability. The students who are weak in their studies also have their own opinions that should be respected, and life does not end if they are weak at school. This kind of students might be clever at something else; they might be good at drawing, carpentry, smithy and other careers which they could be creative in. Thus his majesty pays especial attention to this kind of teaching:

"We will also work to provide a stimulating and high level of vocational education to increase job opportunities for graduates, and guarantee them societal respect and new academic horizons".'(King Abdullah II Letters)

Vocational education and training in Jordan had its solicitude from the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Labor, there are many training course and schools that are established for this purpose, specialized for training students on different professions. Jordan has performed well in

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this training and many well qualified students have started a good business and there were many stories of success.

#### 2.10 Education Curriculum

When talking about education it is necessary to mention the theme of curriculum. Curriculums are important for all the pivots of education (teachers, students and administrates). The word curriculums pours out from the "Latin word for race course, referring to the course of deeds and experiences through which children grow to become mature adults" (Curriculum). Curriculums are either old or new. By analyzing both curriculums in the comparison between education in the vision of His Majesty King Abdullah II and education in Hard Times I found that the curriculum in Hard Times is based on the old one which is considered to be a failure, but the curriculum of education in the vision of His Majesty is based on the modern one. In Hard Times the school material was to answer correct or have the ideal answer. The interest was in the mind of the learner and what grades he\she had. The teacher is a tool for passing the facts into the students' mind, fill the vessels with facts. The aim of the students or learners is to answer correctly and get the teacher (Mr. Choakumchild) acceptance, the importance was on the theoretical aspects. In the vision of His Majesty the school material is to solve students' problems, cover their needs and should be integrated with other materials. The school is to prepare the students for life.

The teachers are privileged by being the protectors of the nation's identity and they are the ones who pave the way for the future. In fact they are the soul of knowledge and all sciences that would enhance the student's ability

The methods of teaching are various and their aims are to develop students intellectually. The student or the learner is the active person, the one who searches for information, a participant in getting knowledge. His Majesty is always of developing the curriculum which serves students needs and copes with developments. The importance of developing curriculum is not less than having or making one because whatever the curriculum is, if it is left to freeze without development there will be a time that it would be useless because it does not stop at a point, there are always needs for development and modern technology.

#### 2.11Students Stages

"We will also double our efforts to universalize pre-school education so that kindergartens will be available throughout the country" (Message of King Abdullah to teachers). His Majesty concentrated on the education of kindergarten and worked on universalizing it, for it is the base of the future education, believing that children in this stage have the right to dream, think, play and imagine. Children can learn best at early years if the curriculum is changed.

## 2.12 The importance of schools

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School is the place where good education is spread and school is the factory of education. The researcher sees that His Majesty and Charles Dickens share the same idea of the importance of the school in the educational process, therefore, Gradgrind was a representative of the importance of the school, so it was the place where he wanted to produce his new method and principle and it was the place where Charles Dickens began his novel, and it was the place where his majesty started spreading Amman message. Schools are not only institution were courses are taught, but places from which students can learn how to keep fit, how to pray, how to ask and request and other things. Therefore, schools are the place for creating scientists and a generation who knows ethics and laws. Such issues, in fact, cannot be learnt through reading books.

But schools could be a dangerous place if there were no rules that govern it, schools would be a frightening place if they were directed by one like Gradgrind, he couldn't guide and direct his two children, what about hundred of children, there would be a catastrophe if a new generation like Gradgrind students existed. There will be no place for students like Sissy to live in, there will be thieves, criminals and dangerous outputs who might make life dangerous. Gradgrind wanted to have a model school."MrGradegrind walked homeward from the school, in a state of considerable satisfaction. It was his school, and he intended it to be a model. He intended every child in it to be a model — just as the young Gradgrinds were all models" (Dickens, 2002:7).Gradgrind didn't have a sharp vision for the future; otherwise he wouldn't have started or worked on this method or strategy. It was an ultimate sorrowful end.

Louisa flees to her father and reveals the unhappiness she has felt since childhood, he softens as he realizes the mistakes he made in her education. Louisa stays with him, cared for by Sissy.3Stephen is brought out alive but dies on the way back to town. Before dying he tells Mr. Gradgrind to question his son, Tom, concerning the robbery. Tom, knowing that capture is close at hand escapes, with the help of Sissy, to a town where Sleary's Circus is performing. Thomas, Sissy, and Louisa meet him there and, after a last minute attempt by Bitzer to capture him, escape abroad, with the help of the circus folk, where he later dies in misery. Thomas Gradgrind abandons his inflexible demands for facts in favor of "Faith, Hope, and Charity."

## 2.13Special education:

In 1960's the first institution of special needs was founded. This institution was a great help for people of special needs. They granted people of special needs with the right to educate and attend schools and universities.

Now there are special centers in all the municipalities of Jordan that take care of students with special needs. Hard Times did not mention such students, the researcher believes that if they existed they would suffer a lot because in the Gradgrind system they are useless, he would suffer in teaching them because they need special care. Students of special needs cannot live in a world full of utilitarianism and based on machines which have no feelings but humans do.

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#### 2.14The Results of Education

Hard Times suggests that the educational system children get in their developmental ages would straight touch their mature lives. The results of the Gradegrind's system were criminals and victims. On the other side the results and the outputs of education in the vision of His Majesty is to create professionals that are ready to face life difficulties and present Jordan actively in all the fields, outputs that are armed with education.

#### 2.15 Model Schools

His Majesty vision is devoted to make the kingdom schools a model in terms of the number of students, efficiency of teachers and distinguished in their facilities. This is something great in education; to have distinguished teachers and a model number of students. There will be unique outputs of this process. In Hard Times Dikens criticized the education of the Victorian Age by presenting Gradgrind vision about a model school.

Fact is preached by the 29eminently applied Mr.Gradgrind, and his classicalinstitute, which explains one thing and that is facts, the 29 artistic topics are annihilated from the prospectus nonetheless subjects including inference, analyses and arithmetic are accented.

#### 3. Conclusion

His Majesty and Charles Dickens are close in their views towards the importance of education and its main aspects that develop this process and give it its good results. Charles Dickens indirectly points out the disadvantages of education of his age by criticizing it, vividly dramatizing and caricaturizing the situation (horses and flowers) leaving the reader to give his opinion by concluding what is the suitable method of education. His Majesty directs all his effort in pointing to what should be done toward education through his vision.

They both share the idea that education is a way for developing the society and individuals. It can enhance their abilities and sharpen their skills.

His Majesty and Charles Dickens share the point that education makes the person open-minded and assist 16one to comprehend a state, take the test and search for the ways to realize the aims. They both believed that good education gives a person a healthy individuality. They refuse the type of education that is based on memorization, dictation, and stuffing the mind with memory, because students of this type learn only what they are asked to learn. Students ignore their abilities to search and imagine, in this way students limit their knowledge. Instead His Majesty and Dickens called for education that is based on analysis, imagination, search and creativity. The rejection of Dickens for the type of education he received was presented in Hard Times by criticizing it, he presented the events in writing. Similarly, His majesty refusal for the memorization method of education is through directing the Ministry of Education to adapt the

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programs that develop the personality of the teacher and the student. Encourage them to be more creative, the King Award for Creativity is a good example. His Majesty and Dickens believe that the prosperity of a society depends on its education that is why Hard Times was written and the vision of His Majesty was given and the contributions were set out. Both characters are considered to be national and interested to make change in their societies. They believe that education is not a system for how to memorize facts or solve rote learning problems better. Instead it is a system for using all the offered abilities, for developing the character in order to divulge the existential value, and realize that value with infinite creativity. This goes side by side with education in the vision of his majesty. In Hard Times the situation is different, the educational system is based on memorization (memorizing facts), and this was the condition of learning in the Gradgrind's school. There was no place for imagination or creativity, students had to depend on others' experiences and just imitate blindly what was there and what others achieved. The educational system was dictatorial even with Gradgrind's own children, he was very angry to see them peeping through the hole into the circus, he was tough with them. Education means developments; we must not just stick to a method when it is wrong. In fact, we cannot in any way expect that education can improve our societies unless we go beyond the education system of the 18th century. So, it is a must to improve our education in order to be able to develop ourselves.

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