

Countries to compare: Russia, the USA, the UK

1. What is similar/different about them? What is better or worse from your own perspective?

Similarities (summary):

- ☑ emphasis on the incorporation of multicultural education, with a focus on promoting cultural competence and addressing the diverse needs of students from different backgrounds (e.g., *intercultural programs in Russia or at least the compulsory subject “Intercultural Communication” in the curriculum*).
- ☑ in class teachers’ training (e.g., *in the UK, observation-participation practice as TAs; in Russia, observation and participation practice each semester*).
- ☑ addresses the integration of technology in education, recognizing its potential to support teaching and learning (e.g., *our educational program is conducted with the use of technologies and distance learning, so do many teaching training programs in the USA*). But I would say it’s become widespread everywhere in the world after the pandemic :)

Differences

Criteria	Russia	the USA	the UK
Certification and Licensure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● required for public educational institutions ● degree in teaching or linguistics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● required; ● varies widely across states ● university-based programs or alternative ones (e.g., teach for America) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● required ● PGCE ● QTS is needed in England and Scotland only, it doesn’t exist in Wales or Northern Ireland
Curriculum and Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● centralized (e.g., ФГОС - federal state educational standard) ● a strong emphasis on subject-specific knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● decentralized (different for each state) ● balance between subject knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● something in between centralized and decentralized ● may vary as well (e.g. differences in qualifications)
Teaching Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● a more traditional (restricted) approach to education (e.g., students can’t choose extra classes) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● student-centered learning ● differentiated instruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● more student-centered than in Russia, but less than in the USA ● inquiry-based teaching methods

Policy and Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • federal government policies • local governments are restricted in actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • federal, state, and local policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • policies may vary in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland
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The conclusion to be drawn: despite a wide range of differences, cultural awareness, teacher training based on observation and participation, as well as structuring programs remain similar. In my opinion, all systems have their own pros and cons. Nevertheless, teaching methods are far more advanced in the UK and the USA than in Russia because Russia puts emphasis on standardized testing systems and fixed curriculum (no flexibility), which restricts teachers in their actions and doesn't develop critical thinking skills of students.

2. Which system gives teachers more legal protection? How?

The UK: Teaching Regulation Agency within the Department of Education (governmental) -> responsibility for the regulation of the teaching profession (misconduct hearings and the maintenance of a record of teachers, trainee teachers) -> high level of legal protection from the government

The USA: Teachers Act -> Alliance of Concerned Teachers (non-governmental) -> campaigns for rights of teachers and other education workers -> main rights and obligations are defined by Teachers Act, protection provided by ACT

Russia: Federal Law on Education No. 273-FZ -> outlines the basic rights of the participants of educational process -> no organizations (neither governmental, nor non-governmental) to protect teachers' rights -> current low level of legal protection

The conclusion to be drawn: The UK and US systems give teachers more legal protection than the Russian system. However, it is planned to amend federal legislation in the future in order to give teachers more legal protection. Hopefully, it is attainable because there are plenty of cases when teachers faced challenges, some of them were shared with me by my friends who work in the sphere (e.g., parents-teacher conflicts).

3. Which system gives teachers more freedom in designing lessons & planning contents? Why? How?

Excerpted from the table with differences (with some more detailed information added):

Curriculum and Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • centralized (e.g., ФГОС - federal state educational standard) • a strong emphasis on subject-specific knowledge • standardized testing system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • decentralized (different for each state) • balance between subject knowledge • state standards but with flexibility • implementation of Common Core 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • something in between (differences between England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland) • the National Curriculum sets out the framework of objectives and content that should
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> teaching plans are created in advance and confirmed 	Standards has aimed to provide a consistent framework while allowing for creativity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> be covered within this framework, teachers have the freedom to develop their own lesson plans
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The conclusion to be drawn: while each country has its own approach to granting teachers freedom in designing lessons and planning content, the USA and the UK generally provide more autonomy in this regard compared to Russia. This reflects differing educational philosophies, cultural influences, and the degree of centralization within each country's educational system. Example from personal experience, especially common for trainees, lesson plans are to be confirmed by senior teachers in advance, there's a need to stick to the proposed plan during the lesson without making any changes during the lesson according to students needs.

4. What would you like to implement in your classes that is not currently available in Russia? Are there any other systems of education from which you would like to put into practice something in particular?

Firstly, I would improve legal protection and teaching policies. It's a priority because it's impossible to elaborate on proposals to the system without providing sufficient protection for the main participants of the educational process. Secondly, I would make the system more flexible, e.g. both in the USA and the UK there are some national standards for planning and curriculum, yet flexibility is allowed within the proposed frameworks, which reflects the value placed on teacher professionalism. What's more, this approach aligns with the belief that teachers are best positioned to understand the needs of their students and tailor their instruction accordingly

As for other teaching systems, probably it would be the Singapore teaching system. Singapore's education system prioritizes the development of critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills, which isn't developed in Russia because of standardized testing.