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Higher Education in Russia and America

The role of education in the modern world cannot be underestimated because it is necessary for the individual and for the development of the country. Today to get higher education or have a certificate which allows you to work in this or that sphere is not enough – you should be able to apply your knowledge in practice that is important for social and economic development.

In various rankings published in the West, Russian universities, as a rule, are not included in the TOP 100 leading universities in the world. However, it is well known that the graduates of Russian universities such as Moscow State University or Moscow Engineering Physics Institute are always welcome to work abroad. The list of such universities is not larger, however, it confirms that these rankings are quite arbitrary. But we have to admit that the top 50 universities in the global rankings are, as a rule, American leading research universities. They are Harvard, Caltech, Stanford, Princeton, Berkeley and Penn.

The education systems of Russia and the United States are quite different.

US university students have to make their schedule. They choose convenient time for classes and professors whose lectures they want to attend. As senior students make their schedule first, freshmen often have to get eight-hour morning lectures. In Russian, students cannot change their schedule whether it is convenient or not. But they get through all the pleasures and hardships of student life together, whereas in American universities you take classes with different students every time.

Many students in the United States prefer to get higher education away from home. However, about ninety percent of students live in the dorms. In the campus, they go in for sports, creativity and social activities. That similarity of interest unites American students. Russian students also often choose the university away from home. But in our country, a lot of students prefer renting a flat or room to living in dormitories.

The Russian system of education focuses on systematic development of students' knowledge whereas the aim of American educational system is to form an independent, self-determined personality.

According to statistics, American students study three or four subjects during a semester. Russian students are considered to be overloaded with study because the number of subjects they study is four times more than that in America.

In Russian students have 15 – 16 classes a week which is twice less than in American universities. It means that American students spend much more time for out-of-class work which plays an important part in education.

In America, higher education is very expensive – much more expensive than in Russian universities. One of the most important criteria taken into consideration is the cost of education. American students often get a job during their holidays or make money washing dishes in fast-food restaurants or doing some other work.

As for the assessment system, in the US students may get A, B, C, D or F marks where A means a constantly high level of knowledge and D – the minimum one. B and C are somewhere in between. To continue education after graduation from school, you must get A or B marks. In Russia, university students may get excellent, good, satisfactory or poor mark or just 'passed' or 'failed'.

Nowadays, it is difficult to do without higher education because any field of human activity requires certain skills and abilities. Students life is the best years for Russian and American students; it's time when our life greatly changes. That's what unites our countries.