

**Education in France and in the United States:  
A Comparative Study**

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## Abstract

The questions discussed in this essay were born in my mind a year ago. I was an exchange student in the United States and I was puzzled by the fact that the university systems were so different, even though these two countries are part of The West. Then began a yearlong introspective search for answers.

After doing some academic research, I can explain the most memorable differences that I noticed. They are outlined in my three parts of this paper- the student/teacher relation, grading & evaluation and the perception of university students by the rest of the population. These three aspects of the university life were what struck me the most. The order of those three topics was chosen to go from the most concrete aspect of student life (interactions in the classroom) to the more abstract topic (the social role of graduates). I decided to analyze each through the scholarly lens, so that I may find a theory that may bring up explain the phenomena I was faced with.

The three theories that fulfill those obligations are as follows: World Culture Theory will be introduced in our survey of the field of International Comparative Education. It helps explain why the American and French university systems are similar, not only because they are in place in two Western countries, but also because these systems may be converging towards one standard. In our case, this means that American universities are paving the way in higher education, that they are considered to be of a higher standing.

Cultural Dimensions (as described by Geert Hofstede) will be introduced when our analysis of the topics mentioned above begins, as a way to go against World Culture Theory. It will serve to outline the differences between the two systems: I do not believe

that French Universities will evolve towards the current state or even the future state of American universities, nor do they mean to. The academic research that I have done will explain this further.

Functionalism will help support the work outlined by cultural dimensions, as it will explain that the cultural differences mold the two university systems. I believe that the structure of the university is adapted to the society it is part of. Functionalism will be discussed mainly in my section about the perception of university students by the rest of the population. Functionalism helps the students adhere to the standards of their society.

It is helped by these three theories that we will conduct a comparative study in education between France and the United States, at the university level. We will also first try to establish a survey of the field of International Comparative Education to introduce the subject matter.

### Literature Review- Comparative Education of France & the United States

When doing a comparison of university education in the United States and France, it is important to begin with a look at how they are founded and their founding principles. When Roger- Francois Gauthier & Margaux Le Gouvello (2010) discuss French education they state that it is:

[A]n educational prescription which is centralised not because of mere organisational choice, but as a constitutive reality created by history. What is taught in schools is not decided in schools by the actors. Rather, it is fixed and dictated to all education agents at the national level. By acting in this way, the educational system not only contributes to consolidating the French nation, as was done in the past by the armies of the kings and the Republic with other means, but it also represents a specific connection between education and politics (pg. 39).

This seems to differ from the approach towards education in the United States. Lisa K. Menendez Wedman (2001) points out that for the US, “the federal role in American education is weak, so frustrations about educational issues tend to be directed primarily at local authorities. Indeed, any discussion about American education must begin by highlighting the inherent tension between the principles of equality and liberty.” (pg. 79).

However, one can observe some similarities in the evolution of both systems, put into frame by the World Systems Theory, which states that all education systems are moving towards one homogenized way of educating. However, there are definitely still some distinct differences. As Alain Alcouffe & Jeffrey B. Miller (2010) write, “France and the US have very contrasting systems: the US system is very decentralized and the

French system is very centralized. France is now attempting to move towards a more decentralized system, but there will still be major differences in the two systems. The US higher education system relies heavily on market forces to influence outcomes. If the reforms in France are successful, the system will be more decentralized, but it will be decentralized within a hierarchical system" (pg. 1). This emphasis on the "market is a central element to the American education system. Education is often looked at as a commodity, which is subject to market forces. This is most evident in the cost of universities. In a comical, yet very insightful way, Matthew Henry Hall (2012), upon visiting France and learning about the higher education system, remarked, "For 174 Euros (about 228 dollars) any prospective undergrad in France can enroll in as many classes at a public university as he wishes for an entire year!" (pg.26).

This sharply contrasts with the US where education is much more expensive. According to the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development), "the cost per student in the US is a little more than \$25,000 per student, while the cost per student in France is just under the OECD average of \$12,000" (Alcouff, 2010, pg.3). However, it is also interesting to note, "the USA spends less on primary and secondary schooling but spends 17.2% more on higher education as compared to France (the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 1995). These data seem to indicate that the USA has a higher priority on attempting to facilitate higher education for more of its population" (Roach, 2005, pg. 92). This increased financial cost and subsequent government expenditures could be attributed to the inclusion of so many extra expenditures for US Students, such as athletic facilities,

student buildings, or extracurriculars. This difference is reflective of the difference in views towards the role of the university.

This is further reflected in the creation of learning objectives and curriculums. As Gauthie & Gouvello (2010) observe:

Nobody in France knows the rule for conceiving educational programmes, for there is no such rule (Raulin, 2006). Each Minister of Education, in each specific situation, advises, decides or gives his/her approval to a certain programme's development, entrusted to one proponent or another, and everything is generally kept secret. This means that we do not find the equivalent of what almost everywhere else is called a curriculum, or refer to a contextualised education planning, achieved in each school and directed towards pupils' learning over their entire schooling, including evaluation (pg. 77-78).

The American view towards who should hold the power is best encapsulated by Ronald Reagan in his 1984 State of the Union Speech, where he says, "we must do more to restore discipline to the schools; and we must encourage the teaching of new basics, reward teachers of merit, enforce standards, and put our parents back in charge ... Just as more incentives are needed within our schools, greater competition is needed among our schools. Without standards and competition there can be no champions, no records broken, no excellence—in education or any other walk of life" (Weideman, 2001, pg. 80). This approach filters down to the role of professors in the university.

### Student/teacher relations in universities

As an exchange student, the first aspect that came out of my informal comparative study between French and American universities is the relationship between students and teachers in university. This aspect of the university life differs greatly between the two countries of study. While doing some research on some of the reasons why, I came across Geert Hofstede's theory of cultural dimensions. K. David Roach, Myrna M. Cornett-DeVito, & Raffaele DeVito delve even more into the differences between American and French professors and the students perceived views of them. They name four dimensions useful to our study: power distance, individualism, masculinity and uncertainty avoidance (Roach, 2005, pg. 89).

The difference in power distance between the USA and France shows up in the teacher-students relationship. Grant (1990) notes that though the traditional separation and distance between French professors and students is warming and narrowing a bit, there are (Roach, 2005, pg. 92).

Hofstede's scale is particularly useful because it allows us to compare two cultures (a concept) on a numerical scale. It is important to note that no one score is any "better" than another. Rather, the scale allows us to add some nuance to a claim of individualism, by keeping those concepts in non-dichotomist terms.

Let's begin by looking at Power distance- the US scored lower on this than France (40 vs. 68) (Roach, 2005, pg. 92). In a culture that scores higher on this scale, a supervisor (but also a teacher) is considered as superior intellectually. In the opposite situation, the teacher or supervisor might be seen as learning or project leader, not as the source for all answers. The difference in score between France and the United States is

reflected in the student/teacher relationship in the educational systems. As Roach and others mention (2005), “the concept of regular office hours does not exist in French universities’ and that contact with the professors depends largely on the individual student’s initiative. This example further manifests the cultural power distance that shows up in instructional contexts” (pg. 92). I can draw from a personal example of one my university teachers in Nice, who has just returned from an assignment in the United States. She decided to instigate changes, such as the opportunity for extra credit, but also to implement office hours. Unfortunately, none of my colleagues understood why time should be taken outside of class to speak with the teacher, while some were even unwilling to spend more time on site than was needed. Interestingly, in French universities students are not accustomed to having the opportunity to evaluate faculty and classroom performance. If a survey was sent out, it would not influence the teacher's employment, which might have felt to the students like that no one would be held accountable.

Another way that the greater power distance in France could be seen is through the more formal *vous* used in French when referring to an individual of respect (as well as the plural second person). The English language does not have such a differentiation between addressing a respected member or someone of the same standing. This formal address is used in professional and formal contexts. Omitting the use of the *vous* pronoun (and using *tu* instead) would lead to disciplinary consequences, or at least to the teacher's irritation. On a similar note, the French professors do not attempt to maintain the personal connection that can be seen between American students and their professors because of a stricter separation of private and professional life.



In regards to individualism, it comes with little surprise that the US scores very high in this area, in fact the highest of any country (91 vs. 71) (Roach, 2005, pg. 93). This leads to Americans having a highly competitive nature, both in the classroom and with regards to education as a whole. Therefore, a teacher's input into a student's work as they build it is very important, to ensure the best quality of work possible. Just as “a key aspect of the organization of higher education in the US is competition among universities” (Alcouffe, 2010, pg.5), so is competition in the classroom itself, not between the members of the class, but compared to students across the nation.

The fourth dimension, masculinity is something that reflects how members of a culture interact with other members. For this, the US scored higher (62 vs. 43), which reflects the view of “Americans as being ‘ambitious, hardworking, competitive, confident, and direct’ while the French, having Latin roots, are more focused on characteristics such as perfectionism of style and manners, traditionalism, status and formality and creativity (p. 106). The French care more for their citizens (e.g., unemployed, homeless and poor) through supporting their social welfare system with higher taxes as opposed to Americans who rely more on capitalism and less on government” (Roach, 2005, pg. 93). In the classroom this is reflected by the approach toward educating individuals and the class as a whole.

France scored higher than the US on the dimension of uncertainty avoidance (86 vs. 46), signifying that the French are less likely to take unnecessary risks (Roach, 2005, pg. 93). This could be reflected in the way that a classroom is conducted. While teachers in the American setting favor group projects and constant participation overall, their counterparts in France choose lectures and a more top-down approach towards education,

probably because of the educational agenda. Indeed, the Ministry of Education states what is part of the *programme*, or the content that should be learnt by every student in the concerned year. This also extends to universities (most of them being public), where the curriculum has been designed nation-wide. The content-based teaching style reflects the fact that a student's strengths are reflected by his or her knowledge of content. Tests usually consist in assessing how much knowledge was absorbed during the semester, without meaning that critical thinking is not encouraged. This leads us to discuss grading and evaluation in the French and American university systems.

### Grading & Evaluation

When looking at the two different cultures of the US and France, one element that cannot be overlooked is the role of grades. First of all, the two countries use two different systems, with France using an out of 20 scale, and the US out of a 100 (with letter grades along the way). However, the differences in grading are not simply numerical, but also related to the value of a grade- high grade attribution is very uncommon in France, as it might signal that the student no longer has anything to learn from the teacher. This reluctance to give high grade increases as a student goes through education levels. In the US, it feels like a high grade is attributed as long as the deliverables of the assignment have been fulfilled (with hard work).

Matthew Henry Hall (2012) once again humorously reflects on the French grading system, when he states, “I did, somehow, discover that in France, degree inflation may be an issue, but not grade inflation” (pg. 27). A passing grade is not obtained by trying, but by demonstrating that the level expected of the assignment has been reached. Hall (2012) observes,

Teachers in America [...] are often servants to their students, and by that I mean the untenured ones, work like department store clerks, trying to sell unfashionable shoes, using the easiest texts, giving breaks on missed or late work, boosting grades. The American college student does not believe she is a student, but a customer of knowledge (pg. 27).

One can see this reflected in the way that many American students believe that they “deserve” a better grade or even by the use of bell-curve grading.

In France, one can almost never receive a 20/20 for a course. While Americans are trying to get high honors, so that they can graduate Sum Cum Laude or such, the French are trying to receive a 10 average to pass. It does not seem to matter what grade was obtained, as long as the qualification was gained. This could be linked back to what was mentioned earlier about the US's higher individuality and masculinity. A masculine individualistic society is much more about competition and "winning." Students want to know if they are "winning" in school. A teacher's job is to award passing grades to those who have a sufficient level, and not merely because they paid to get one. Grading for university students in France can also be impacted by the perception of the university's role in the French higher education system. Because university is already deemed easy, it cannot allow itself to give out high grades, as not to seem watered down. Indeed, university is deemed as the easier option when it comes to tertiary education. It competes with *classes préparatoires* (commonly called *prépa*) which call is to prepare students to take an entry exam to the *Grandes Écoles*. The latter are the pathway for the elite of the country to be trained (once again, a reflection of the greater power distance present in France).

This difference in grade inflation could also be reflected in graduation rates for the two countries. In a study by Nicolas Gury (2011), he states that,

The OECD has developed a survival rate indicator for post-secondary education: the number of graduates divided by the number of new entrants. France's survival rate of 54%, places it, alongside Italy and Sweden, at the bottom (the average survival rate for OECD countries is 71%) (OECD 2004). Research conducted in the United Kingdom (Johnes and McNabb 2004; Thomas 2002) and in the United

States (Desjardins et al. 2002) on other countries shows that dropout rates elsewhere also lie between 15% and 25% (pg. 51).

Gury (2011) goes on to observe that characteristics such as repeated grades, financial situation, and living situations also impact dropout rates (pg. 61). One interesting thing to note is that students who live at home are more likely to drop out. This is possibly based on the lack of adaptation to the university setting (Gury, 2011, pg. 61). The theory of functionalism helps explain the difficulty to get higher grade: because diploma inflation is such an afflicting issue, some teachers feel like it is their duty to make sure that only deserving students should pass. Teachers believe that they are preparing their students for real life (i.e. life outside of school) by teaching them excellence. Also, to go along the functionalist theory, the tiered educational system reflects the in-office tiered system. This system can be shortly explained- depending on what entry-level exam was passed, the person's rank in the office will differ. These exams give a status to the employee going from the C to A class.

As mentioned before, university is deemed easier than other tertiary routes. The dropout rate, but also the high-grade acquisition difficulty, allows us to discuss the position of university students within society as a whole.

### Perception of university students by the rest of the population

France is a country where students pursuing post-secondary education have a variety of different options. Helene Buisson-Fenet & Hugues Draelants (2013) note that:

Contrary to most of OCDE's higher education systems, in France the universities are not the core of elite professions: the main channel for education in Engineering, Management and Politics goes through other institutions called *Grandes Écoles*. Whereas the university is open to every owner of the baccalaureate, the admittance into these *Grandes Écoles* relies on a very competitive examination, following a selective 2-years training in a postsecondary preparatory class (*classe préparatoire*) (pg. 39-40).

In the US, there are not this many choices in the formal education setting, and university is seen as (pretty much) the only viable option. The American system is made up of three main groups: public universities, private non-profit universities, and private for-profit universities. However, France offers even more options. They have the *Grandes Écoles*, universities, as well as a variety of types of trade schools depending on the trait that wants to be learnt. There is a special school for hotel service and restaurant service, another type for more manual labor (plumber, construction) and another for services from the beauty industry. The US has some of these options, but there is much more of a stigma against the less academic ones. "Most well known universities are categorized as research universities, but less than 300 of 4300 institutions are listed in this category. Most students attend the 4000 other schools. Indeed, 44% of undergraduate students in the US attend the nearly 1200 two-year community colleges. This diversity is an important aspect of higher education in the US" (Allcouffe, 2010, pg. 4).

The *Grandes Écoles* are seen as elitist institutions. They are sometimes compared to the Ivy League schools where students from private boarding schools have advantages on admission over the rest of the population (Buisson-Fenet, 2013, pg. 41). Mark Pilkington (2012) explains the system quite well:

An idiosyncratic feature is the existence of a parallel system, namely *Grandes Écoles* that were first set up in the eighteenth century under Napoleon. These prestigious first-rate establishments were designed to train the future elite of French society (mostly engineers and statesmen), and continue to attract the best students (circa five per cent of the student population) of the country to date (pg. 40).

When H el ene Buisson-Fenet & Hugues Draelants viewed the *Grandes  coles* system they saw “The highly centralised, very Parisian character of the French elite education system is another element which must be emphasised in comparison to the North American situation, where the systems are quite decentralised” (Buisson-Fenet, 2013, pg. 42).

Another aspect that is different between the two systems is the cost. This outlines the fact that all universities are equal in France, while the reputation of the school in the US influences the cost of a semester at the institution. When looking for colleges, for France, the primary factor in choosing a school is the geographic closeness. Most students are financially supported by their parents, who will keep them at home so that no rent needs to be paid. This is due to the fact that working while in school is not a common occurrence; therefore students cannot afford to live on their own. Campus housing is only offered to students with (national) financial aid.

## Conclusion

Overall, France and the US have many differences in their university systems. I believe that those differences reflect the difference in the American and French cultures, as explained by the theories of functionalism and cultural dimensions. Because some people believe that the French system aims to imitate the American university system, I felt like I had to address some of the similarities between the two systems, while moving away from this theory.

Instead, my paper aimed at outlining some of these most striking differences. Those are reflective of the different approaches towards education, both on a political front (access to all and affordability) as well as in the classroom (power distance). Other differences are linked to the differing cultures, specifically as seen from Hofstede's dimensions. These explain why the systems were set up the way that they are in the two countries. A third component would be the role that universities play in the society as a whole- graduating from a university means two very different things in the two countries of study. All of the factors mentioned above make up the systems, and although one is not any better than the other, they are both important components of their respective countries.

This is why I investigated what I was most interested in finding out about- I wanted to identify patterns in what people (including me) have been going through exchanges between those two countries feel.



## References

1. Alcouffe, A., & Miller, J. B. (2010). A comparison of the Organization of Higher Education Systems in France and the USA. A Alfred Lerner College of Business & Economics University of Delaware Working Paper Series, 2010-01, 1-13. Retrieved October 18, 2014, from the EBSCO Host database.

### Abstract:

Countries have many different ways of organizing higher education. Because of the high costs of higher education, reform efforts, of which the Bologna Process in Europe is an example, are underway in many places. Even where explicit governmental reform processes are less important, economic pressures are bringing about changes. This paper compares the higher education systems in the USA and France. They have been chosen for our study because the problems of high achievement, reasonable economic costs and accessibility are shared values, but their systems are organized very differently.

### Theories Used:

Organization of Higher Education Systems, Economics of Higher Education, Goals of National Systems of Higher Education, autonomy of universities, enrollment in Higher education, higher education in France, higher education in the US

### Data Collection Method: Peer- Reviewed

### Summary:

This article focuses on the primary difference between higher education in the US and France, and the factors that contribute to these differences. It also goes on to explore how the respective systems may go on to evolve in the future.

2. Buisson-Fenet, H., & Draelants, H. (2013). School-linking processes: describing and explaining their role in the social closure of French elite education. *Higher Education*, 66, 39-57. Retrieved October 18, 2014, from the EBSCO Host database.

### Abstract:

In France, while schools are supposed to be sources of social mobility, as in any democratic society, it appears that children from privileged socio-economic categories are increasingly overrepresented in preparatory classes for the *Grandes Ecoles*. The French studies trying to understand elite reproduction have mainly focused on family inheritance overlooking the fact that social privilege is also mediated through institutions, as highlighted by the scientific literature on selective admissions in the US. Following such line of inquiry, this article aims to show how patterns of “school-linking processes” allow for social closure in France’s first-class higher education. It presents a comparative case study research which is both descriptive and explanatory in design. Results combine quantitative data to identify the secondary schools that feed the elite paths of three major high schools offering preparatory classes; and qualitative data in order to understand the strategies of these three major high schools to select their applicants. The findings suggest that access to French elite education is clearly shaped by school-linking phenomena but that the forms of these links depend on the preparatory classes’ geographical location and catchment areas inducing different types of strategies from the

selection committees. The conclusion highlights that these French specificities in terms of institutional linkages lead to different practical implications from those of US research.

Theories Used:

Grandes Ecoles, Preparatory classes (CPGE), School-linking process, Selection, Social inequalities.

Data Collection Method: Peer- Reviewed

Summary:

This article explains how socio-economic backgrounds play a role in educational opportunities for French youth (specifically preparing for the Grandes Ecoles). The article lays out factors that lead to this trend and possible ways that inequality can be decreased.

3. Gauthier, R., & Gouvello, M. L. (2010). The French Curricular Exception and the Troubles of Education and Internationalisation: will it be enough to ‘rearrange the deckchairs’?. *European Journal of Education*, 45(1), 74-88. Retrieved October 18, 2014, from the EBSCO Host database.

Abstract:

In France, it is always difficult to talk about education because compromises between passion and reality have led to a specific microclimate. The theme of the educational exception has become commonplace (Bossard & Perret, 2006). We will address it in this article according to its own logic by focusing on what we refer to as the ‘educational prescription’, i.e. all the norms which, mainly at the national level and in a centralised way, define what ‘must be taught’ in every primary and secondary school. We will study the ‘educational prescription’, not only because it is particularly evocative of the traditional philosophy of the French educational system, but also because it has recently been called into question by calls through legislative means and with relative institutional violence for a ‘common grounding of knowledge and skills to be mastered through the compulsory schooling’ (Ministère de l’Éducation Nationale, 2005; 2006), an idea which goes against the traditional philosophy of French education.

Theories Used:

French Education, education evolution, educational impact

Data Collection Method: Peer- Reviewed

Summary:

This article takes a look at the French educational system and helps to provide a foundation for the reasoning behind the current practices. It also goes on to raise the question of how future changes may be reflected in the system.

4. Gury, N. (2011). Dropping out of higher education in France: a micro-economic approach using survival analysis. *Education Economics*, 19(1), 51-64. Retrieved October 18, 2014, from the EBSCO Host database.

**Abstract:**

Through the use of event-history techniques, we will show that a duration framework is adapted to the analysis of higher education attrition. Our dropout model allows for estimates to vary over time. While some factors exhibit constant effects, like high school characteristics, other effects do vary from the first year to the fourth. Men and women do not generally exhibit the same dropout behaviour. Socio-economic background, and especially the parents' level of education, would appear to be influential only at the beginning of the university period. Results suggest that only well-targeted actions considering both the 'early leavers' and 'late leavers' could serve to increase the internal efficiency of French universities.

**Theories Used:**

dropout; event-history analysis; time-varying effects; graduation

**Data Collection Method: Primary****Summary:**

This article looks at the dropout rates in France and analyzes what may be causing the changes. It goes on to make some suggestion about possible changes to help decrease the rate.

5. Hall, M. H. (2012). French Higher Education: A Cartoon Essay. *change: the magazine of higher learning*, 44(6), 26-32. Retrieved October 18, 2014, from the EBSCO Host database.

Abstract: N/A

Theories Used: France vs. US Higher Education comparison

Data Collection Method: Primary

**Summary:**

Through the use of a cartoon strip, the author explains his findings on the differences between US and French professors upon his return from Paris. He reflects briefly on how these differences impact the 2 educational models.

6. Ledford, D. (2011). Is Race Neutrality a Fallacy? A Comparison of the U.S. and French Models of Affirmative Action in Higher Education. *Texas International Law Journal*, 46(355), 356-377. Retrieved October 18, 2014, from the EBSCO Host database.

**Abstract:**

This article will examine France's experiment with race-blind, class-oriented affirmative action in higher education, and discuss what we can learn from France for application of such a system in the United States. This article does not endorse or reject a race-neutral system. Instead, it examines a particular race-neutral system, pointing out features that might or might not translate to the United States given our recognition of the "diversity as

educational benefit" compelling interest, and concludes that a race-neutral system can be just as complicated as a race-conscious framework. The Sciences Po experiment shows us that it would be extremely difficult, given the history of race relations in the United States and the interrelation of race and class, to construct an affirmative action system that is race neutral and yet effectively addresses inequality of opportunity.

Theories Used: race neutrality, affirmative action,

Data Collection Method: Peer- Reviewed

Summary:

This article deals with the US's use of affirmative action and the impacts it has on education. The author uses France's methods as a contrast with the US, and as a discussion point for possible modifications.

7. Mortimer, P. (2005). FRANCE The Move Toward Distance Education in the University Sector. *The Quarterly Review of Distance Education*, 6(3), 233-241. Retrieved October 18, 2014, from the EBSCO Host database.

Abstract:

France is one of the most modern countries in the world and is a leading force in Europe (Central Intelligence Agency, 2004). With a population of just over 60 million people (July 2004 estimate), the median age in France is a low 38.6 years, thanks to strong government encouragement to have larger families. Life expectancy is 79, due to a sophisticated health and welfare system, the cost of which nonetheless bites into the French taxpayer's pocket. The tax burden in France is one of the highest in Europe: 43.8% of the national GDP in 2003. A highly literate and well-educated society, France's education statistics for 2003 show 12.1 million French children in primary and secondary education and 2.2 million students in tertiary education. Public expenditure on education is 5.8% of the national GDP (cf. United Kingdom: 4.4%). In the field of science and technology, expenditure on research and development is 2.2% of the GDP, compared with 1.9% in the UK (UNESCO, 2004). How well, then, is higher education in France coping with the advent of distance education? To answer this question, we first need to present briefly the path leading to higher education.

Theories Used:

Distance Education, Alternative learning, Continuing education.

Data Collection Method: Peer- Reviewed.

Summary:

This article looks at France's increased use of Distance education. It analyzes both the pros and cons that have come out of this alternative educational form.

8. Pilkington, M. (2012). The French evolution: France and the Europeanisation of higher education. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 34(1), 39-50. Retrieved October 18, 2014, from the EBSCO Host database.

**Abstract:**

In this paper, the salient characteristics of the French higher education system are examined in the light of its recent evolution and in the context of overwhelming Europeanisation trends. In spite of major weaknesses still hindering the performance of French universities, it is argued that following the recent wave of reforms, the country is well-equipped to face the numerous challenges of the global knowledge economy.

**Theories Used:**

Europeanisation; France; knowledge economy; reforms

**Data Collection Method: Peer- Reviewed****Summary:**

This article focuses on the way the French education system has transformed, specifically in the context of the Europeanization of things. It attempts to follow the trends and see where they may lead in the future.

9. Roach, K. D., Cornett-Devito, M. M., & Devito, R. (2005). A cross-cultural comparison of instructor communication in American and French classrooms. *Communication Quarterly*, 53(1), 87-107. Retrieved October 18, 2014, from the EBSCO Host database.

**Abstract:**

This study addressed patterns and influence of instructor communication in American (US) and in French classrooms. Significant differences were found for instructor use of power bases, affinity-seeking strategies, and nonverbal immediacy. Significant differences were found in student affective learning, cognitive learning, affect toward instructor, and ratings of instruction between the two cultures. In both cultures, however, student affect toward instructor, cognitive learning, and rating of instruction were significantly correlated with instructor affinity-seeking and instructor nonverbal immediacy. Likewise, instructor use of expert power was significantly correlated with student cognitive learning and ratings of instruction in both cultures.

**Theories Used:**

Instructor Power; Affinity-Seeking; Nonverbal Immediacy; Cognitive Learning; Affective Learning; Student Ratings of Instruction; Cross-Cultural Comparisons; America; France; USA

**Data Collection Method: Peer- Reviewed****Summary:**

This article looks at the different ways that professors are viewed in the US and France. Using Hofstede's system, the author examines how the different cultural factors play out in classroom interactions.

10. Weidman, L. K. (2001). Policy Trends and Structural Divergence in Educational Governance: the case of the French national ministry and US Department of Education.

Oxford Review of Education,27(1), 75-84. Retrieved October 18, 2014, from the EBSCO Host database

Abstract:

The world market, information technologies and the increasing influence of both supra- and sub-national organisations defined the latter part of the century. In the 1980s, many conservative governments responded to these new realities and pressures through neo-liberal market-focused policies, while centre-left governments in the last decade have sought to reconcile these ideas with the traditional Welfare State, a goal which has been labelled the 'Third Way'. The implications of these changes and ideologies for the governance of education have only begun to be explored. The aim of this article is to analyse in comparative perspective how the education ministry in France and the Department of Education in the USA are mediating their role against pressures for policy convergence. While it is evident that there is a significant degree of 'policy convergence' in terms of discourse and objectives between the two countries studied, this article seeks to understand if there is also a similarity in terms of processes and outcomes.

Theories Used:

Policy trends, government involvement, public education

Data Collection Method: Peer- Reviewed

Summary:

This article looks at the role the government plays in education in the US and France. It examines the differing roles, the reason that these current roles exist, and the impact they have on their respective systems.