

## The Differences in Educational Practices in the USA and Kazakhstan

If you want your children to respect you, you must respect them first. The education you give them will affect their future as well as your own. An educated person is respected everywhere, but educating a child is not an easy task. But what kind of education should I give my child? Should I follow the educational model of Kazakhstan, where I was born, or that of the United States, where we now live? There are strengths and weaknesses in both countries' education systems. In an effort to resolve this issue, I will summarize some of the differences in the two educational practices. Specifically, I will explore the different relationships between teachers and students throughout school to show that each country uses these techniques to teach differently which results in different learning.

Teachers in Kazakhstan punish misbehaving students more often than in the USA. The punishment ranges from shouting to sometimes light slapping. This is the case with child care and elementary through middle school teachers. Even though I should have learned by now, I am not aware of the legality of corporal punishment in Kazakhstan. Here in the USA, a school administration often uses verbal warning, detention or suspension. In fact, most of the states in the USA have banned corporal punishment in public schools [1]. I do not believe in corporal punishment and have never been punished that way. But in my opinion, students in Kazakhstan respect and fear their teachers more than their peers in the USA because of the corporal punishment.

In the USA colleges and schools there is a great freedom with things students can do, except for a few common sense rules. You can say without hesitation “I do not know” when you really do not know the answer. But in Kazakhstan, it is a disgrace to admit that you do not know something and people avoid using those words. It will sound as if the person is illiterate and can cause them shame. In some universities and schools saying “I do not know” may even anger a teacher. This is because students in Kazakhstan usually are afraid of their teachers. As a side note, in my opinion, in the USA students pay their tuition and think that they are paying for the education they are receiving. However in Kazakhstan, during Soviet times, all students used to get free education paid by the government and it was a privilege granted to students by the school (owned by the government) and their teachers (government employees). These days, some students have to fund their education through their own means, but the mentality of the student-teacher relationship has not changed. Hence, even self-paid students assume education as a privilege and are afraid of their teachers.

The part of education in Kazakhstan that I like is the early exposure of students to math and science classes. As early as first grade, students start with arithmetic. They gradually proceed to algebra, geometry and calculus level math courses in later grades. Any student starting college is expected to have completed a calculus course. In my opinion, the early exposure to analytical thinking through calculus, geometry and science classes better prepare students for college education. In the USA, however, this is substituted with a huge selection of classes and opportunities students have access to. However, having an ability to choose may lead to the selection of easier classes.

I have not been in all parts of the USA, but wherever I have been, I have not seen schools that had a core curriculum in a language other than English. On the other hand, schools in Kazakh and Russian languages are present almost everywhere in Kazakhstan. In addition, based on the community size, there are many schools that teach in the native language of the minority group that comprises big part of any local population. For example, there are Uzbek schools in southern Kazakhstan and Uyghur schools in the East. In the last couple of decades, there has been growth in the number of schools that uses English and Turkish languages as their medium of instruction. Thus, people in Kazakhstan have an opportunity to get a bilingual education.

In conclusion, both education models have their advantages and disadvantages. In the USA, students enjoy a great freedom and the bounty of courses to choose from. On the other hand, students in Kazakhstan have more options for bilingual education and accelerated mathematics. My model school will have mandatory science and math classes but with a large number of elective courses to choose from and an option to choose the language of instruction. The schools should find the means to educate students to respect their teachers without corporal punishment.

## References

[1] Corporal punishment. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporal\\_punishment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporal_punishment)

[Undergraduate Diversity Conference Home](#)

[PWR Home](#)