



Before you decide to teach in the United Kingdom system, some thoughts from RRR teachers

Many UK schools will stream their students based on ability in each subject. For instance, a key stage three year group ('grades' 7 – 8) will have one 'top set' class with top performers in that subject, and every 'set' below that will need more and more support. This helps make differentiation easier, as sets are based on targets (below), and there are many resources pre differentiated to 'Higher, Middle, or Lower' target ability groups. You will also have the odd class that is full of motivated and engaged students, but it also means you will have the odd class that will need heavy support and may be frustrating to keep engaged at times.

Students are given performance target levels that are personalized to them. Secondary level targets are set based on primary school performance. They are designed to be inspirational and they can certainly motivate the students with high targets and academic ability. Unfortunately, there are also students who have very low targets, who may fulfill prophecy and be less motivated to do their best despite their actual potential in that subject.

Achieved Performance levels are heavily based on the final assessment of the year and one or two pieces of coursework in the higher year groups. The focus for educators is getting their students ready for the year end tests so that they can achieve their highest levels possible, get set higher, and generally have more options for courses or universities in the future. While we always push our students to do their best, this can be stressful for teachers who are professionally evaluated against their student's performance compared to a fixed inspirational target. It can also mean that students who don't 'test' well may never achieve levels that reflect what they actually know, and 'once-off' bad testing days can have major effects on their results.

You will probably be in charge of teaching more classes, but for fewer lessons per week. You may have a reduced planning load if you are fortunate to get multiple classes in the same year group and ability level. However, this can also cause it to take longer to establish positive relationships and build a class culture with students, and you may have more marking and preparation if you get a random assortment of sets in each year group. You need to be diligent and well organized or you may get overwhelmed while you adjust to the scheduling.

Understandable of all school systems, behaviour at some schools may be noticeably worse than what you have personally experienced. Students may not give you the respect you expect based on your status as teacher, and may seem harder to keep engaged and working. Even some otherwise highly rated schools may have classes of students who are difficult to win over.

More schools in general have adopted a traditional approach to learning. This is not the case for all schools, and we urge you to read the schools mission statements carefully to make sure their values reflect your own, or are ones you can adopt and incorporate into your teaching style.

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