



**Higher Education in the UK and the USA since Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan:
Converging Models?**

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The student experience in the US and the UK: A depressing picture of decline?

Abstract:

This paper will start by considering the wealth of available evidence that would seem to paint a depressing picture of decline in higher education on both sides of the Atlantic. Drawing on recently published sources from the US and the UK, this paper will summarise the key data presented. 5 Whether it is grade inflation, hours spent studying, or evidence of instrumentalism, the claims are the same - a decline in the student experience, a decline in outcomes and a decline in standards. However, the paper will go on to question both the veracity and the interpretation of this data, and whether we actually have sufficiently robust mechanisms to reliably make such claims. Finally, it will also consider whether any problems that do exist are in fact special to the US and the UK, and 10 whether, rather than declining, some problems may actually have existed for some considerable time.