

EXTERNAL INDEPENDENT KNOWLEDGE TESTING IN UKRAINE
FROM A HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE

by

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Abstract

This historical and qualitative inquiry investigates recent educational reform in Ukraine. On Tuesday, April 22, 2008 more than half a million Ukrainian high-school graduates were ordered to take an external assessment of student achievements. The new assessment model was named the External Independent Knowledge Testing and replaced the traditional forms of high school exit—entrance to higher educational institution exams in Ukraine. These changes in assessment strategies in the Ukrainian educational system illustrate the global trend of replacing diverse forms of national examinations with standardized multiple-choice assessments that can be scored by machines and could be viewed as a new page in the history of educational assessment. Educational assessment has become one of the most significant areas of research in the United States. It is not only a prominent issue in education today but also one of the most controversial issues in contemporary educational science. The debate is concentrated around the question of what purpose educational assessment serves. A growing body of international research suggests that educational assessment is a new mechanism of social and political control aimed to legitimize social inequalities. Thus, the primary goal of this study was to investigate what kind of changes the External Independent Knowledge Testing in Ukraine was expected to bring to Ukrainian society and whether the initial results of the reform were consistent with what was expected. Data was collected by means of interview,

survey, and examining Ukrainian publications. The data revealed that the recent changes in traditional practices of assessment in Ukraine were aimed at serving much broader social purposes than those identified by Ukrainian policymakers. Under the guise of improving the quality of Ukrainian education and fighting corruption in higher education, the educational reforms in Ukraine are implementing an undetected new form of social and political preferences through education and testing. Thus, the reform helps new Ukrainian nobilities legitimize their status through the new system of exercising control over Ukrainian education.

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If there is any constant in the social world, it is power, the pursuit and exercise of which in its myriad different forms underpins the fabric of society and stability of its institutions.

- Patricia Broadfoot

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

Background

Educational assessment has become one of the most significant areas for researchers in the United States (Broadfoot, 2007; Gordon, 2008; Filler, 2000; Whitford & Jones, 2000). It is an international phenomenon (Broadfoot, 2007) that has become a prominent and controversial issue in contemporary educational science (Broadfoot, 1979, 1996, 2007; Gipps, 1999; Glazer & Silver, 1994; Shepard, 2000). It is difficult to find a country in the world today that does not use some sort of formal examination. Recent international comparative research conducted in the United States reveals a common trend of replacing diverse forms of national examinations with multiple-choice assessments that can be scored by machines (Morrison, 1996, Broadfoot, 2007; Sozonenko, 2007). Changes taking place in the Ukrainian educational system illustrate this global trend.

External Independent Knowledge Testing

On Tuesday, April 22, 2008, at 11:00 a.m., more than half a million Ukrainian high-school graduates were ordered to take an external assessment of student

achievement for the very first time in the history of Ukrainian education (Tabachnik, 2008). This assessment was named the External Independent Knowledge Testing.

To take the test, graduates were required to register before March 1, 2008. The External Independent Knowledge Testing was conducted in every region of the independent country of Ukraine. According to the Ukrainian media, 34,758 classrooms were equipped and set up for the testing according to the requirements outlined by the Ukrainian Ministry of Education. These requirements specified, for example, that every classroom be equipped with no more than 15 school desks. The distance between these desks had to be at least one and a half meters (almost six feet), and every student had to have a separate desk. A number was assigned to each of these auditoriums. Every desk also was marked with a number, along with the first and last name of the person who was assigned to sit there during the assessment (NEWSru.ua.: Україна).

The day before testing each of these auditoriums was checked by the testing committee representatives together with representatives of the educational facility where the classroom was located. For security purposes, emergency exits were sealed in the buildings where the External Independent Knowledge Testing was to be administrated. On April 24, 4,200 sealed containers with testing materials were delivered to the auditoriums. Public safety and protection of the materials were the responsibility of 8,000 police officers.

More than 6,000 public observers monitored the event. They represented parents' societies as well as educational organizations. More than 80 social and parents'

committees sent representatives to ensure that rules and requirements were followed.

Central monitoring of the testing was carried out by the citizens' union, "Opora" (support), the Electoral Committee of the Ukraine, and the Center for Testing Technologies and Quality of Education (NEWSru.ua.: Украина).

Requirements for Participants

To be admitted to their testing facility, students were required to have an invitation and a passport to prove their identity. They had to bring two black ink pens and were allowed to have a small bottle of water. They were advised to arrive at the location of their assessment forty-five minutes prior to commencement of the testing at 10:15 a.m. At the entrance they were required to show their passports, and then they had to find their last name in an alphabetical index and the number of the auditorium to which they were assigned. Finally, they had to find the room and the seat that were assigned to them.

If a student discovered a problem with how the test was administrated, he or she was required to submit a written petition at the place and time where the External Independent Knowledge Testing took place. The petition had to be addressed to the Head of the Regalement Committee of the Regional Center of Evaluation of the Quality of Education and delivered to the executive representative of the educational facility where the testing took place. Under the regulations, the petition had to be submitted before the participant exited the facility. A written reply had to be delivered to the petitioner no later than five days after the petition was submitted.

Content of the Test

Ukrainian students were allowed to take tests in 11 subjects: Ukrainian Language and Literature, World Literature, Ukrainian History, World History, Mathematics, Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Geography, General Economics, and General Political Science. However, two of those subjects, Ukrainian Language and Ukrainian Literature, were required for every participant and one more subject test was chosen as an elective, depending on the requirements of the university a student was planning to attend. All tests were scored as computer-based, multiple-choice assessments. This year (2008) students were allowed to take tests not only in Ukrainian Language but also in Russian, Crimean-Tatar, Hungarian, Moldavian, Rumanian, and Polish (NEWSru.ua.: Украина).

Testing and Ukrainian Universities

A certificate with the results of the test provides graduates with the ability to apply for entrance into any Ukrainian university of their choice. Beginning in 2008, the Ukrainian universities only accepted prospective students who obtained certificates from the Center for the Independent Testing. Therefore, people who graduated from secondary schools in previous years also were given the opportunity to participate in the Independent Testing. However, students who did not complete these tests did not have the right to attend institutions of higher education until after they had taken the test and obtained the certificate.

Graduates who decided not to take the test were required to pass traditional school graduating exams for their traditional Certificate of Maturation. Students who were not

satisfied with their External Independent Knowledge Test scores were allowed to take the traditional exams as well.

2008 Testing in Ukraine from a Historical Perspective

The years between 1991 and the present brought sweeping, and in many cases, radical educational changes for all Central and Eastern European countries (Janmaat & Piattoeva, 2007). New approaches to education, new types of schools, and new institutional structures were developed. Cerych (1997) notes that, “much of that development means a certain restoration of past (pre-communist) educational patterns and forms and/or adaptations and assimilations of external (mainly Western European) trends” (p. 75). However, the implementation of the External Independent Knowledge Testing in Ukraine is a rather unique event not only in the history of Ukrainian education but also in the history of formal educational assessment in the world. The uniqueness of this educational reform comes from two sources: the motivation behind implementing external testing and the public reaction to the implementation.

I began this study with the goal of examining the process of reform currently taking place in Ukrainian education from a historical and international context. I was interested in identifying the motives behind the implementation of this new Western style testing in the Ukrainian educational system to assess high-school graduates’ achievements and the outcome of this innovation. The first chapter of this study is organized according to the following sections: (1) statement of the research problem, (2)

research questions, (3) definition of terms, (4) limitations of the study, (5) significance of the study, (6) researcher's perspectives, and (7) organization of the study.

Statement of the Research Problem

The phenomenon of educational assessment became of prime interest to me during my first semester in graduate school at Kansas State University. The assessment models I was familiar with as a student and later as a teacher in the Soviet/Ukrainian educational system were rather different compared to assessment strategies within American schools. Therefore, I spent considerable time looking at the past and the present of educational assessment, trying to understand the role that assessment plays in education.

In reading articles by Ukrainian educators and policymakers who developed the External Independent Knowledge Testing in Ukraine, I discovered that they point to the history of development and implementation of standardized testing in the United States as a scientific basis for the assessment reforms within Ukraine. For instance, Sozonenko, in her 2007 article "External Independent Knowledge Testing as a Factor in Development of the Modern School" (Зовнішнє незалежне оцінювання як фактор розвитку сучасної школи) sees ideas of American psychologist Thorndike as an inspiration for the Ukrainian innovations. This discovery motivated me to explore the development of assessment models within the United States and to determine how the history of assessment in America was presented in U.S. educational science. I describe my findings regarding the history of assessment in American education in part one of Chapter 2.

The history of education in Ukraine followed a completely different path than that of American education. It does not have many similarities to educational traditions of other European countries where assessment practices similar to those in America have been used for some time. I will address the history of Ukrainian education in the Chapter 4. Everything I previously knew about education in the former Soviet Union and all my findings regarding the history of Ukrainian and Russian education led me to believe that standardized assessment is a foreign phenomenon for Ukrainian education. Nevertheless, the present reforms in Ukraine show that it is moving toward adapting this Western style of testing instead of developing its own national examination models based upon the traditions of Ukrainian education. Thus, my goal was to explore why educational science in Ukraine disregarded the voices of scholars who warned that “the concept of educational measurement is a myth” (Broadfoot, 2007, p. 29), and instead followed the popular rhetoric. I wanted to know the kind of changes the External Independent Knowledge Testing in Ukraine was expected to bring to Ukrainian society and whether the initial results of the reform were consistent with what was expected.

Research Questions

To help focus the collection of data during research, I developed the following primary question: *What was the purpose of the recent change in traditional practices of assessment of the achievements of secondary school graduates in Ukraine?*

The following sub-questions further guided the research:

1. What forms of assessment were used in Ukrainian schools before 2008?

2. How have social and political changes in Ukrainian society influenced reforms in the educational system of Ukraine?
3. How have western educational trends influenced the development of new testing practices in Ukraine?
4. How did Ukrainian policymakers formulate reasons for educational reforms in Ukraine?
5. How did Ukrainian citizens evaluate the purposes and the results of the first external testing?
6. What changes in Ukrainian society took place as the result of implementing the External Independent Knowledge Testing?

Definition of Terms

The following terms have been defined in relation to their use throughout this study.

1. Assessment – “the process of gathering evidence, and interpreting that evidence in the light of some defined criterion in order to form a judgment” (Harlen, cited in Broadfoot, 2007, p. 4)
2. Norm-referenced assessment – describes a student’s performance relative to that of his or her peers (Hamilton, 2003)
3. Criterion-referenced assessments – “a student’s performance is described according to some fixed level of performance” (Hamilton, 2003, p. 29)

4. Social control - the ability of social and political groups and institutions to enforce rules and conditions upon other social groups. Critical social theories recognize the repressive nature of social control and presume that social control “creates, maintains, and intensifies social divisions within the population, protects elite interests and advantages” (Meier, 1982, p. 37).
5. “Corruption – impairment of integrity, virtue, or moral principle” (Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 2006, p. 281). In the context of this study, I define *corruption* as the dysfunction of a political system or institution in which government officials, political officials, or employees seek illegitimate personal gain.

Limitations of the Study

The main limitation of this study is that the research topic is a recent event. The testing under investigation took place last spring in Ukraine. Therefore, scholarly research on this topic is not yet available. The material for this research was collected primarily from Ukrainian newspapers and from recent online publications. As such, it could lack or exaggerate some facts.

The second limitation comes from the fact that Ukraine is still a developing country with regard to technology. Not every educational establishment in Ukraine has a website. The available websites often are not very well maintained nor regularly updated.

A third limitation of this study is that the research was conducted from outside Ukraine. Therefore, I relied on the help of Ukrainian volunteers/my friends and family members to distribute the survey among people they knew through their everyday activities such as their neighbors, friends, members of the church community, and so on. The data then was delivered via e-mail. It is possible that during the process of translating from Russian or Ukrainian to English, there were unintentional misrepresentations of eyewitnesses' ideas. The same applies to data collected through telephone conversations. All information was delivered in Russian or Ukrainian and translated by me to English.

Finally, I view the fact that I am an English language learner as a limitation of this study. Eisner (1998) states that all people know more than they can tell and tell far less than they know. My ability to make public what I have come to know is restricted not only by this universal problem but also by my English skills. I feel that the limitation of my second language proficiency still hinders my ability to use English as a tool to represent the world around me.

Significance of the Study

As stated previously, assessment has become one of the most significant areas of interest for researchers, educators, policymakers, and parents worldwide. This interest may stem from the fact that during the last decade educational assessment has become a prominent part of teaching and learning. Everything we do today in classrooms, from daily activities to “national and international arrangements for monitoring standards,” is

influenced by educational assessment (Broadfoot, 2007, p. 3). As Broadfoot (2000) states:

Like colonialism before it, the activities associated with educational assessment and testing have steadily advanced during the twentieth century to a point where, at the present time, there can be no country and no mainstream school that is not subject to its sway nor any pupils, teachers or families who do not accept its importance. (p. ix)

However, formal educational assessment is not only a prominent issue in education today but also one of the most controversial issues in contemporary educational science. The debate is concentrated around the question of what purpose educational assessment serves. There are many educators who believe that educational assessment is “the principle vehicle for advancing the processes of teaching and learning” and that in the future it will be “increasingly concerned with the improvement of teaching and learning” (Gordon, 2008, p. 4). Such advocates explain that educational assessment can serve multiple purposes including educational improvement, increasing effectiveness of teaching and learning, and curriculum reform (Morrison, 1996, p. 187).

At the same time, another group of scholars and educators remember that from its inception, assessment was and continues to be a social practice and a social product that represents “the desire to discipline an irrational social world” (Broadfoot, 2000, p. ix). Scholars in this camp believe that educational assessment is the modern tool for “structuring social hierarchy” (Broadfoot, 2000, p. x). They recognize educational

assessment as a new mechanism of social and political control with a purpose to legitimize social inequalities. As Filer and Pollard (2000) state:

Sociological discourse of assessment presents insights into the fact that, as well as having educational purposes, assessment fulfils a range of political and social functions within modern society. These wider functions are concerned with social differentiation and reproduction, social control and the legitimizing of particular forms of knowledge and culture of socially powerful groups. (p. 8)

Gipps (1999) expresses a similar belief reflecting: “The purposes assessment has served in society in the past as well as the role it plays today is driven largely by social, political, and economical forces” (p. 356). Broadfoot (1997) views assessment as “one of the most political aspects of education,” explaining that by political she means issues of “social power and control” (p. 122).

I view implementation of the External Independent Knowledge Testing in Ukrainian education as the latest development in the history of educational assessment. In exploring this event, I critically examined the role assessment was intended to play in Ukraine. My goal was to discover what Ukrainian educators, policymakers, and the general public see as the purposes of the External Independent Knowledge Testing of 2008 and how successfully those purposes were fulfilled. Additionally, this research is intended to create discussion in the field of American educational science about assessment as a social and international phenomenon.

Researcher's Perspective

Another limitation of this research comes from my personal bias against formal norm-referenced or criterion-referenced assessments, such as standardized tests of achievement or objective tests. Research I conducted while in graduate school during Fall 2007, Spring 2008, and Fall 2008 helped form my perspective that assessments in which candidates are compared with one another or evaluated in relation to a standard foster competitiveness among students, discriminate against certain groups of individuals, and may negatively affect students' self-esteem.

Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 is the Introduction of the present study. The chapter includes the background of the issue at hand, purpose of the study, significance of the study, research questions, limitations of the study, definition of terms, researcher's perspective, and the organization of the study.

Chapter 2 provides the theoretical framework focusing on the history of educational assessment within the United States, purposes of assessment as defined by American and Ukrainian educational researchers, and a sociological account of assessment. Chapter 3 explains the methodology of the research, describing the methods of data collection and analysis. Chapter 4 describes the history of Ukrainian/Soviet/Russian education, presents the research findings, and provides answers to the questions outlined in Chapter One. Chapter 5 provides analysis and interpretation

of findings and draws conclusions about the findings from the study, provides implications for American educators, and outlines recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2 - REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The first section of this literature review provides a brief outline of the history of educational assessment within the United States. The second section examines purposes of assessment as stated by U.S and Ukrainian educational researchers. The third section provides a sociological account of assessment.

Assessment as “the product of earnest attempts of prior generations to meet the conditions of earlier time” (Glazer & Silver, 1994, p. 394)

Why would I include an outline of the history of educational assessment within the United States as a part of this study of changes taking place in the Ukrainian educational system? Almost every Ukrainian article I researched includes some information about assessment history and practices within the American educational system and propositions to utilize some of the American assessment models for the sake of the Ukrainian schools. For instance, Landsman (2007) describing international models of assessments, states: “Although, there is a great variety of different forms of exit-entrance tests in the world, American experience of testing is the most interesting and useful” (p. 19). Another Ukrainian educator, Sozonenko (2007), states that the history of the educational “testology/тестологiї” starts in the United States at the beginning of the twentieth century and calls American psychologist Edward Thorndike “the pioneer of the first educational tests” (p. 80). Therefore, it was necessary for me to trace the history of assessment in the U.S. schools through the eyes of American educational researchers in

order to find out what makes the experience of the American educational assessment so appealing to the Ukrainian educators and policymakers.

History of U.S. Educational Assessment

Formal educational assessment as we know it today is only a little over a century old. Broadfoot (2000) calls the history of the development of educational assessment “a remarkable conquest” (p. x). This scholar states:

From its modest beginnings in the universities of the eighteenth century and the school systems of the nineteenth century, educational assessment has developed rapidly to become the unquestioned arbitrator of value, whether of pupils’ achievement, institutional quality or national educational competitiveness. (p. ix)

This hegemony of assessment might be explained by the commonly shared belief that it is possible to measure human achievements and even abilities with the help of scientific technology. Standardized assessment procedures and techniques are expected to provide parents, educators, and public officials with “undeniable evidence” of success or failure of educational efforts (Filer & Pollard, 2000). The hegemony of assessment in the United States has been challenged by neither the proven fact that a student’s performance “in any given assessment situation will almost inevitably be affected by a range of influencing factors – emotional, circumstantial, psychological and social” (Broadfoot, 2007, p. 28) nor the fact that any form of judgment of the performance by an assessor is subject to influence by factors such as personal values, political beliefs, emotions, circumstances, and so on. Complicating factors such as those just mentioned have not

hindered the spread of educational assessment throughout the world. An explanation of this phenomenon has yet to be found and, according to Broadfoot (2000), “is more than overdue” (p. ix). Perhaps the addiction to assessment in the United States can be traced to its place in American history.

Documented history of the standardized assessment of achievements in the United States begins in 1845 with the Boston general examination created and implemented by Horace Mann and Samuel Howe (Glazer & Silver, 1994; Kilpatrick, 1992). As Glazer and Silver (1994) explain:

The assessment of achievements in American schools began as early as 1845, when the Boston School Committee, under pressure from Horace Mann, the state commissioner of education, instituted a comprehensive survey of pupils’ attainments to justify the appropriations provided to them by the state of Massachusetts. (p. 401)

The educational system in Massachusetts of the 19th century began “as loosely-structured village schools” (Tyack, 1967, p. 6) inherited from the continental past. According to Tyack (1967), first settlers’ schools were “serving the needs of a homogeneous, slowly changing rural society, largely instinctive and traditional, little articulated and little formalized”(p. 6). However, around 1820 the agitation for educational reform began. Demographic, economic, and organizational changes taking place in the American society made people involved in education believe that school should be adapted to the new complex society. These people were thinking that

traditional means of control over school systems should be changed. They wanted to establish “a network of communication that would convey information and directives and would provide data for planning for future” (Tyack, 1974, p. 28). This network will make it easier to control schools and help turn schools into an effective tool of “transforming the pre-industrial culture – values and attitudes, work habits, time orientation, even recreation–of citizens in a modernizing society” (Tyack, 1974, p. 28). However, despite the fact that common school reformers in Boston did all possible to organize the classrooms into a unified system, the public education system in the city still existed as a random collection of village schools. The old schoolmasters resisted centralization because they were getting their jobs and autonomy from the decentralized system. In order to break the resistance of schoolmasters and construct a new coherent educational system, Mann needed “positive information in black and white”(Caldwell & Courtis, 1924, p. 7) to support his fight against the Boston schoolmasters. The results of the Boston general examination created and implemented by Horace Mann and Samuel Howe provided the champion of American education with the information he needed. The information was “a surprise and disappointment” to the schoolmasters (Caldwell & Courtis, 1924, p. 7) but helped Mann in his struggle against “inefficient”, old methods in Boston schools. But did the data collected by means of the first American assessment of achievements help to improve education in Boston? My research yielded no publicly available data that would demonstrate improvements took place as the result of the assessment. Caldwell and Courtis (1924) state: “The survey held the attention of the

public for a few short weeks and of schoolmen for a few months longer” (p. 8). The researchers claim that recommendations of the report were gradually put into effect; however, in reality there is no objective data to indicate that any of the changes had a positive effect on improving educational outcomes. Despite a glaring lack of objective proof of its effectiveness, the reform was recognized in American society, however, as “the dawn of a new era” (Caldwell & Courtis, 1924, p. 7). This new era predicted by Horace Mann materialized fifty years later in the works of Joseph Mayer Rice, who in 1897-1898 “once again proved the value of the comparative examination” and psychologist Edward Thorndike, “following along the same path, developed a scientific scale for measuring an educational product” (Caldwell & Courtis, 1924, p. 8). Thorndike began his career in educational psychology during the industrial revolution at the turn of the 19th century. This time not only brought radical economic changes but also dramatically reshaped existing practices of educational assessment. The new industrial society began an extensive search for an acceptable and efficient technique of “selecting individuals in the context of growing social mobility” (Broadfoot, 2007, p. 20). From this point forward, educational assessment played the increasingly important role of a powerful tool for social selection.

According to Shepard (2000), the social efficiency movement of the United States in the early 1900s became one of the forces that helped develop the new industry of educational assessment. Those who advocated the theory of social efficiency claimed that by applying modern principles of scientific management, intended to maximize the

efficiency of industrial factories, the outcomes of educational institutions could likewise be improved. John Franklin Bobbitt, a leader of the social efficiency movement, believed that “a primary goal of curriculum design was the elimination of waste and it was wasteful to teach people things they will never use” (Shepard, 2000, p. 4). Therefore, it became critical to predict an individual’s future role in society and thus determine the kind of training that was best suited for the individual.

The advent of psychometrics—the science claiming that an innate intellectual ability could be measured—was used by the supporters of the social efficiency movement to justify “the massive industry of selection devices that has subsequently grown to dominate education around the world” (Broadfoot, 2007, p. 21). To make formal assessment acceptable to those involved, teachers, students and parents, the instruments were tightly regulated and policed, relatively easy to use, and resistant to criticism relating to potential bias and favoritism. As Broadfoot (2007) reflects, the assessment had to be quick, easy, defensible and cheap. Today’s assessments, “in the form of multiple-choice, machine-markable, standardized tests, would provide even cheaper, more convenient and apparently more efficient means for achieving the same end” (Broadfoot, 2007, p. 22).

The efficiency movement was responsible for more than the creation of standardized testing. Behaviorist learning theories and objective testing both came as the result of the search for a more efficient approach to education and, as previously mentioned, are closely connected with the name of Edward Thorndike. According to

Shepard (2000), Thorndike “was both the originator of associationist learning theory and the ‘father’ of ‘scientific measurement,’ a name given to him by Ayers in 1918” (p. 5).

Thorndike viewed learning as the accumulation of stimulus response associations. In his model of teaching and learning, “the curriculum is seen as a distinct body of information, specified in detail, that can be transmitted to the learner” (Gipps, 1999, p. 374). Thus, according to Thorndike, the role of assessment is to check whether the learner received the information.

Thorndike believed that assessment should be used “frequently to ensure mastery before proceeding to the next objective” (Shepard, 2000, p. 5). According to Thorndike’s behaviorist learning theory, teaching and assessing possess the same or nearly the same characteristics. Therefore, it is no surprise that Thorndike and his students are commonly recognized as the founders of the “objective” test, which Shepard (2000) calls “the single most striking feature of achievement testing in the United States from the beginning of the century to the present day” (p. 5).

Thorndike’s ideas profoundly influenced subsequent developments in the history of American education. Describing the role Thorndike’s works played in the history of schooling in the United States, Lagemann (1989) states: “One cannot understand the history of education in the United States during the twentieth century unless one realizes that Edward L. Thorndike won and John Dewey lost” (p. 185). While Dewey believed the value of teaching should be measured according to how much interest for continued learning it created in learners, Thorndike wanted to reduce human beings to objects easily

manipulated and measured by means of scientifically proven practices. Thorndike offered to give American society the “positive information in black and white” regarding how effectively American schools worked. Dewey, on the other hand, asked Americans to accept the fact that reality is uncertain and always subject to change, and consequently information in black and white does not exist (Caldwell & Curtis, 1924, p. 7). Unlike Thorndike, Dewey viewed education as an art more than a science.

Perhaps Thorndike’s ideas to develop a scientific scale for measuring an educational product were easy to comprehend and cheaper to implement and, therefore, more readily gained acceptance in the minds and hearts of a great number of American schoolmen. Whatever the case, over time the idea of using a standardized assessment of achievements to measure and improve educational outcomes had become so popular and so widespread within the country and around the world that standardized assessments became the only valid method of obtaining information on how well schools work. Alternative views were pushed aside, and educators chose to forget that standardized tests help to achieve social and political goals in the name of educational ones. Silently and steadily assessment established its hegemonic role as the schools, like the factories, became more focused on the efficient process of generating a well defined product. The concept of school rearing creative thinkers and minds thirsting for the challenge of the problems that had not yet been identified was not efficient and simply too hard to quantify.

For some reason, this side of the U.S. history of assessment never was of interest to Ukrainian educational researchers and never was introduced to the general public in Ukraine. Therefore, Ukrainian educational policymakers conflated the issues when they use Dewey's (1929) and Roger's (1994) ideas to describe the aims of the new Ukrainian school (i.e., life-long learning, individual approach, education based on interest and cooperation) and then implement Thorndike's behaviorist learning theory to allegedly achieve these goals.

Purposes of Assessment

Many contemporary U.S. scholars in the field of education believe that assessments used in schools at the beginning of the 21st century are still a product of early 20th century thinking (Gipps, 2000; Glazer & Silver, 1994; Gordon, 2008). According to such scholars, assessments continue to be highly influenced by prevailing beliefs in the fixed nature of intelligence and the perceived limited educability of some groups of individuals, such as immigrants from certain areas of the world and the descendants of slaves (Gordon, 2008). At the beginning of the 20th century, these views were influenced by the fact that society did not need a large number of individuals with advanced education and was able to offer only limited opportunities for schooling. The function of education was to transfer "knowledge, skills and values to those thought to be capable of benefiting from it" (Gordon, 2008, p. 3). Thus, according to Gordon, assessment served to classify, predict, and sort. Gordon goes on to note that "by the end of the 20th century assessment was under the heavy pressure to serve the purpose of

governmental accountability” (p. 4). In addition, assessment was promoted as “the vehicle for advancing the processes of teaching and learning” (Gordon, 2008, p. 4).

Laura Hamilton (2003) points out how the purposes assessment serves within U. S. education has changed since it was implemented in Boston in the mid–19th century. She states that the test of 1845 was aimed to provide “efficient measurement for large number of students to facilitate comparisons across classrooms and schools” (p. 27) and thus to monitor school effectiveness. During the years of World War I, testing became a tool of selecting individuals into programs or instructions. During the next three decades, according to Hamilton (2003), the purpose of testing was to assess the competences of students and to evaluate the effectiveness of educational programs and curriculum. During the following years, Hamilton (2003) continues, the purposes for which tests were used changed dramatically:

The creation of the National Assessment of education Progress (NAEP) and the enactment of the original Title 1 legislation led to the first formal uses of tests as monitoring devices and may be considered the precursors to today’s widespread use of tests as tools for holding educators accountable for student performance. (p. 27)

Hanson (2000) describes two purposes that assessment serves in education today. The first is “to assess at what proficiency level people have completed a course of study or how well they have mastered a skill” (p. 69). The second is to predict future behavior.

Hanson states that when assessment is used for prediction, it becomes an instrument of social efficiency:

Instead of wasting time and energy in a cumbersome process of trial and error, testing enables prediction of who will do well and poorly in what parts of the race before it is run. Test information about people's intelligence, personality, moral character and habits enables placement of them in positions where they can be optimally effective both in terms of their contribution to society and their sense of personal achievement and self-worth. (2000, p. 69)

Hanson further argues that use of assessment for prediction is capable of doing much more than measuring the abilities of individuals, it is actually capable of transforming and constructing the very fabric of these individuals, not only simply measure his or her abilities. The scholar states that by assigning students to categories like gifted, slow learner, average student, assessments influence people to think of themselves accordingly.

The American fixation on assessment as the yardstick for measuring progress in education was reinforced by others in the international community. Task Group on Assessment and Testing for England and Wales (1988) identify the following purposes of assessment:

- Diagnostic assessment to identify students' learning needs.
- Formative assessment to support and encourage learning.
- Summative assessment to identify learning outcomes.

- Evaluative assessment which is directed at assessing the quality of provision in institutions and in the system as a whole (cited in Broadfoot, 2007, p.6)

There is no real surprise that the European adoption of rhetoric from contemporary scholars in the United States would eventually spread to Ukraine.

According to Ukrainian researcher Sozonenko (2007), assessment serves the following purposes in Ukrainian schools:

- Diagnostic function—helps to evaluate students' needs and make a decision on how to meet those needs.
- Educational function—gives the base to improve teaching and learning.
- Learning function—helps student to systemize his knowledge.
- Organizational function—helps positively affect organization of the educational process and improves teachers' work.

The above researchers see assessment as having only educational purposes with an occasional emphasis on projecting employment opportunities. However, a growing body of educational research indicates that educational assessment serves purposes in society today that go beyond grading, selection, and accountability (Broadfoot, 2007; Filer & Pollard 2000; Gipps, 1999). As Filer (2000) states: "Educational assessment fulfils a wider range of functions within modern society than is generally recognized" (p. 7). The social functions of educational assessment are discussed in the next section.

Assessment as a Tool of Social Control

Foucault (1974) believes that the real task of a critical researcher

in a society such as ours is to criticize the working of institutions which appear to be both neutral and independent; to criticize them in such a manner that the political violence which has always exercised itself obscurely through them will be unmasked, so one can fight them. (p. 171)

In this section, I follow Foucault's recommendation and look critically at the social institution of education, using Bourdieu's (1993) theory of cultural capital.

Pierre Bourdieu, in his theory of cultural capital, argues that the position of any individual in society depends on the amount and forms of resources, or capital, he has inherited or obtained through constant social exchange (Laureau, 2003; Olneck, 2000). Positions within a society vary in power and privilege. In order to attain a position that provides greater access to privilege and power, the individual has to possess special forms of cultural capital. According to this theory, educational institutions serve as a market where different forms of cultural capital (e.g., particular knowledge, linguistic behavior, styles, dispositions, modes of thought) gain or lose their value by means of "the myriad of formal and informal acts of evaluation that schools enact" (Olneck, 2000, p. 320).

There is no serious debate that schools today are known to perpetuate these produced-by-schools distinctions between different forms of the cultural capital which prefer those norms that are favorable to the dominant class. This phenomenon is taken for granted because schools in almost any society present themselves as "neutral and

independent” (Foucault, 1974, p. 171). Explaining how schools play the role of “cultural authority,” Olneck (2000) reflects:

The school is one of the critical sites where forms of cultural capital are produced, transmitted, and accumulated, and where dominant systems of classification and evaluation are inculcated. This is accomplished within the schools when they obscure the very character of cultural capital and the processes of its reproduction. Meritocratic ideologies are presumed to account for systematic variations in academic performance. Reigning methods of organizing, instructing, and assessing students are represented as intrinsic to and solely instrumental for teaching and learning. Within this context, cultural capital is recognized (i.e., perceived and honored) as legitimate competence, whereas its arbitrary and class based character is simultaneously misrecognized. (p. 321)

Assessment, according to Bourdieu, plays the main role in the process of producing distinctions between individuals. Bourdieu and Passeron (2000) recognize that in addition to the strictly educational function it claims to play, assessment performs additional social functions of “academic selection and hierarchization” (p. 152). Expressing academic values and implicit choice of the particular educational system, educational assessment gives higher value to certain types of knowledge and certain ways of presenting this knowledge; in this way, assessment becomes the most efficient tool of reproducing the norms of the dominant culture and protecting the base of power (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2000). The assessment as an educational tool itself has the ability

to implicitly prefer one educational system over another and express a hierarchy of academic values that perpetuates hegemony.

Looking at Ukrainian education and the reforms in assessment strategies taking place within Ukrainian schools, one can observe that Ukrainian officials do not try to hide the social and political purpose of the innovation. From the very beginning, the External Independent Knowledge Testing was presented as a tool that would help fight corruption. However, I analyze the Ukrainian assessment model using the lens of the theory of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 2000) in order to find out (a) whether the social aim openly claimed by Ukrainian officials was the only one behind the reform and (b) whose interests are served by the educational reform.

The next chapter explains the methodology of the research, describing the methods of data collection and analysis.

CHAPTER 3 – METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology that I used in the study. The chapter is organized into the following sections: (1) method of research; (2) data collection; (3) data analysis; and (4) summary.

Qualitative Research Design

Gay, Mills and Airasian (2009) state:

All educational inquiry ultimately involves a decision to study or describe something—to ask some questions and seek an answer. All educational inquiries necessitates that data of some kind be collected, that the data be analyzed in some way, and that the researcher come to some conclusion or interpretation. (p. 6)

When I started my research, I decided that it would be qualitative by design. Reihl (2001) defines qualitative research as a scientific inquiry that analyzes data “in nonmathematical ways to understand the world on its own terms” (p. 116). Creswell (2008) states:

Qualitative research is a type of educational research in which the researcher relies on the views of participants; asks broad, general questions; collects data consisting largely of words (or text) from participants; describes and analyzes these words for themes; and conducts the inquiry in a subjective, biased manner. (p. 46)

Eisner (1998) argues that any form of describing, interpreting, and appraising the world deals with its qualities and therefore should be called qualitative. Eisner suggests that even when quantification or scientific experiment is employed, they deal with the different qualities of the world. Eisner states:

All empirical phenomena are qualitative. The difference between ‘qualitative inquiry’ and ‘quantitative research’ pertains mainly to the forms of representation that are emphasized in presenting a body of work. The difference is not that one addresses qualities and the other does not. (p. 5)

Gay, Mills and Airasian (2009) defined qualitative research as “the collection, analysis, and interpretation of comprehensive narrative and visual (i.e., nonnumeric) data to gain insights into a particular phenomenon of interest” (p. 7).

Contemporary literature about educational research explains how differently qualitative research, and more traditional quantitative research based on positivistic methodologies, view “the nature of knowledge and the role of the persons in the world, the nature of the research enterprise, and the role of the researcher” (Reihl, 2001, p. 116). While traditional researchers believe that there is one right answer to everything that is waiting to be discovered by means of specific methods capable of predicting that fixed-for-all-time-generalizable-to-everyone-answer, scholars conducting qualitative inquiry hold opposite beliefs. For instance, McNiff & Whitehead (2006) assert that:

- There is no one answer. Knowledge is uncertain and ambiguous. A question can generate multiple answers or more questions.

- Knowledge is created, not discovered. This is usually a process of trial and error. Provisional answers, and the process itself, are always opened to critique.
- Any answer is tentative, and opened to modification. Answers are often incommensurable and cannot be resolved. People just have to live with the dissonance and do the best they can. (p. 27)

Gay, Mills and Airasian (2009) argue, that qualitative research does not accept the philosophical assumption that the world is stable, uniform, and coherent and therefore can be measured and predicted. On the contrary, these scholars assert that qualitative researchers believe “all meaning is situated in particular perspective or context, and because different people and groups often have different perspectives and contexts, the world has many different meanings, none of which is necessary more valid or true than another” (p. 7).

Data Collection: Sources and Techniques

According to Gay, Mills and Airasian (2009), qualitative research utilizes following sources of qualitative data: (a) observations, (b) questionnaires, (c) phone calls, (d) personal and official documents, (e) photographs, (f) recordings, (g) journals, (h) e-mail messages and responses, (i) informal conversations. The researchers recognize: “Clearly, many sources of data are acceptable, as long as the collection approach is ethical, feasible, and contributes to understanding the phenomenon under study” (p. 366). In order to make the data collection ethical, the application for approval was submitted to

the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and approval of the research was obtained (see Appendix A). All participants enter the research of their free will and received an explanation of the nature of the study and any possible dangers that may arise as a result of participation.

The data for the research was collected using the following sources: (1) historical publications and my personal records, (2) survey, (3) informal conversation, (4) phone calls, (5) e-mail messages.

Historical publications and my personal journals

When I started my research, I did not really understand that in trying to conduct qualitative research I was, in fact, looking for an outcome that would be positivistic by character. I had only the goal to look at a specific innovation that was implemented in the educational system of one country and find the specific, true answers to questions about why this innovation took place and how it affected the whole system of education in this particular country (and, perhaps, the history of education from a comparative perspective). I was thinking that conducting interviews and collecting opinions would give me responses that I could use to predict the correct answers that would survive the trial of time.

When conducting the research, I realized that in order to understand and explain this particular event in Ukrainian education, I needed to go back in time and look at it “within a longer term historical narrative” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 19). I had to find the place for this particular form of educational experience within the continuity of

Russian/Soviet/Ukrainian education. I agreed with Clandinin and Connelly (2000) who said the following about historical perspective:

Locating things in time is the way to think about them. When we see an event, we think of it not as a thing happening at that moment but as an expression of something happening over time. Any event, or thing, has a past, present as it appears to us and an applied future. (p. 29)

Therefore, I decided to go back in time and search through my memories, the personal journals I kept during my studies in the university in Ukraine and other historical accounts in order to reconstruct the historic backdrop for this study. This historical perspective helped my understanding and my ability to explain the phenomenon under investigation in the larger context of the history of Ukrainian education. Thus, my personal memories and historical accounts by American and Russian historians became the first sources of my data.

In telling the history of Ukrainian education, I realized that the way I see it today differs significantly from the perspectives I held ten years ago. In some ways, my current views are completely opposite from what I used to believe during my study in a Soviet University in the 1980s. As Clandinin and Connelly (2000) state: “We know what we know because of how we are positioned” (p. 17). My understanding of the history of Ukrainian education and the reforms it is currently undergoing comes as a result of (a) my education in both the Soviet Union and the United States, (b) my experience as a

Ukrainian teacher, (c) my Russian cultural heritage, (d) my life within American society, and (e) my interest in sociology of education.

This self discovery continued during the process of collecting responses to my survey.

Survey

The survey responses were the next source of the data that I collected. As I stated previously, the survey was conducted with the help of my friend in Ukraine. She works in the central cathedral Orthodox Church in city of the Izmail with a population of 100, 000. She distributed the questionnaire among people who attended church services from October 2008 through January 2009. All respondents volunteered to participate in the research.

The survey included questions about respondents' educational background, age, and opened –ended questions about educational reforms in Ukraine, the purpose and impact of these reforms on Ukrainian educational system and Ukrainian society. The survey questions are in Appendix B.

Informal conversation

While the majority of my research participants were Ukrainian citizens who continue to live in Ukraine, I also interviewed one Ukrainian exchange student, who I met at Kansas State University. I asked him to tell me his opinion on the situation in Ukraine and his view of the Ukrainian educational reforms. Our discussion took place in one of the coffeehouses not far from campus in late November 2008. This exchange

student-participant gave me his permission to use the information I obtained during our informal conversation as another source of data for my research.

Phone calls

Another source of data I used in the research was telephone conversations I had with former colleagues and friends in Ukraine. These phone conversations took place during the months of November and December 2008. These respondents acknowledged that the information I obtained could be included in my research.

E-mail

Survey questions were sent via e-mail to a few of my friends who are still living in Ukraine. One of them wrote me a long e-mail response explaining her feelings and understanding of the reforms taking place in Ukrainian schools instead of answering the survey questions. I used her e-mail response as another source of data. This was an unexpected but informative source of data that developed during my research.

Data Analysis

All respondents had their own beliefs, which represented not only their personalities but also their position in society and time, their education, their working and life experiences, and their political and religious beliefs. It was impossible to predict those responses and, to me, it did not make much sense to average them or represent them in terms of the “opinion of the majority” because, as Eisner (1998) reflects:

Each person’s history, and hence world, is unlike anyone else’s. This means that the way in which we see and respond to a situation, and how we interpret what

we see, will bear our signature. This unique signature is not a liability but a way of providing individual insight into a situation. (p. 34)

Thus, I decided to give each of these “individual insights” a place in my research.

In addition to the personal accounts I collected using the survey, my personal interviews, correspondence and the data I obtained by examining documentation in Ukrainian periodicals and scientific publications, I added my own perspective on the Ukrainian educational reform. The basis for my decision to include my own perspective is derived from what Eisner (1998) calls “educational criticism”(p. 114). Educational criticism, according to Eisner, is rooted in the practical tradition of art criticism, or the “art of saying useful things about complex and subtle objects and events so that others less sophisticated, or sophisticated in different ways, can see and understand what they did not see and understand before” (p. 3). Following Eisner’s line of thought, I believe that education critics are trying to make sense of contemporary issues within the field of education by using the act of reconstruction. By means of educational criticism, I hoped to come to know the complexity and nuances of the process taking place in Ukrainian education, so I could make informed judgments about the value of these reforms.

I understand that just as any piece of art could be interpreted in many different ways, an interpretation resulting from educational criticism “is never incontestable,” there always can be alternative interpretations of the educational reconstruction (Eisner, 1998 p. 86). Educational criticism, like any type of critical interpretation, needs to be viewed as tentative (Cladinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 31). Thus, throughout this research I maintained

the perspective that “other possibilities, other interpretations, other ways of explaining things are possible” (Cladinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 31).

By presenting in this research the accounts and insights of different individuals, data from Ukrainian periodicals and research articles, and my own critical perspectives, I approached this contemporary issue in Ukrainian education by means of “many languages competing for truth from different vantage points” (Kim, 2006, p. 5). By giving each of these “vantage points” room in my research, I tried to overcome the intolerance for alternative points of view that Dudley-Marling (1996) calls “the most egregious feature of the rational mind” (p. 111).

Summary

In this chapter I explained the methods of data collection and analysis I employed in order to understand the phenomenon under study. My research is qualitative by design; inclusive of multiple and diverse data sources; and analyzed as a critical interpretation to support my educational criticism. Chapter Four will describe the history of Ukrainian/Soviet/Russian education, discuss the research findings, and provide answers to the questions outlined in Chapter 1.

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CHAPTER 4 - VOICES FROM THE PAST AND PRESENT

National system of education, as well as national literature, art and political life, are the outward expression of national character and tradition, as determined by historical development and geographical and socioeconomic situation. Even the most radical revolution eventually finds its balance by adjusting new ideas to national traditions and economic environment.

- Hans, 1949, p. 114.

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I think it is impossible to explain and understand reforms and changes in contemporary Ukrainian education without taking into account when and how the system was built and what forces influenced and shaped its present day philosophy and practices. Therefore, in the first part of this chapter, I describe such influential forces from the historical perspective. The second part of the chapter is devoted to testimonies of Ukrainian citizens about External Independent Testing and its impact on Ukrainian education and society.

According to Karier (1986): “History is not the story of man’s past but rather that which certain men have come to think of as their past. One may read a particular *interpretation* of a historic period but never *the* history of that period” (p. xvii). Therefore, I will not even pretend to tell the history of Ukrainian education. I cannot separate this history from the history of my life and the lives of my friends and relatives. The history presented here is a history of the educational system that created me as a person, the history I have learned about as a student in the Soviet university system, and finally the history I have had an opportunity to reevaluate as an American scholar. In

rethinking the history of the Ukrainian educational system, I hoped to trace back to the source of the changes taking place in today's Ukrainian school system so that I could understand myself the roots of those changes, before I attempted to explain to others what current purposes they aim to fulfill.

My native country of Ukraine obtained independence in 1991 after the Soviet Union, a powerful, strong, and scary force, and to the rest of the world an "evil imperia," fell apart over the course of a couple months like the famous Colossus of Rhodes. The years preceding this historical event and the years following it are still very hard to describe because of the day-to-day changes and challenges that dominated every sphere of our lives. Despite the fact that sweeping changes took place in the social, economic, and political arenas of Ukrainian society soon after 1991, the Ukrainian educational system only recently broke away from the long established educational traditions of the Soviet Union. The Soviet school system, as I was taught in a Ukrainian university setting, and as numerous American scholars have observed, was inherited from pre-revolutionary Russia (Gerber, 2000; Hans, 1949; Janmaat, 2000; Judge, 1975; Morison, 1983). Hence, I thought it would be useful to start from the beginning, from the time when the first Russian schools opened and the first Russian educational philosophies were developed.

First Steps

According to Black (1979), from the very beginning Russian education was established "as a means of creating loyal and acquiescent subjects of the state and faithful

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followers of Orthodoxy” (p. 15). Further, Black states that the first evidence of educational efforts in Russia could be found “as far back in Russian history as the time of Vladimir I” (p. 15). Johnson (1950) seems to agree with this statement and argues that in 988 A.D., the year that Russia was converted to Greek Orthodoxy, Vladimir I mandated that “intentional child offspring be permitted to commence on study books”(Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles/Полное собрание русских летописей, 1846, p. 51). However, both researchers came to the conclusion that the first systematic educational programs were developed in Russia as late as the 16th or 17th century.

My own knowledge of the history of Russian education, which was formed in a university of the Soviet Union, began with the famous *Domostroi*, the 16th century household guide. This historic document was not an official government document but was treated in Russian society as such. In this document, the family was assumed to be an institution of the state and the father was recognized “as an autocrat at home, with the obligation to manage his estate within his means and to raise his children in the best interest of the crown and Orthodoxy” (Black, 1979, p. 16). When my university professors evaluated the document, they emphasized that the *Domostroi* was the first attempt to express the Russian ideal of good citizenship and good parenting. Black (1979) calls it “the first in a series of state sponsored catechism on life and living which culminated with Catherine II’s *On the Duties of Man and Citizen*” (p. 16).

The largest part of the document was devoted to giving specific guidance to parents on how to rear their children at home. The 16th century Russian youth was

expected to fear God and to be obedient. Parents were obligated to give their children an elementary education that included basic reading, writing, and religion, but obedience was the main virtue a child was to possess. These educational ends, *Domostroi* suggests, should be reached through fear (Black, 1979, p. 16). Loving parents were expected to punish their offspring frequently so that their souls would be saved. Although teachers were available for parents who could afford to pay for their service, *Domostroi* gave guidance to parents who were too poor to employ a teacher for their children.

Yet as Johnson (1950) points out, while students' duties were described precisely in 16th and 17th century Russian writing, there are few references to teachers' qualifications, duties, and obligations. Johnson cites 19th century historians who, describing schools of the 16th century, reflect:

The . . . teacher, it seems, when it was necessary to read or write, did not like to go over twice what was said; he favored the birch rod or a cuff on the head, believing it thus easier and quicker to recall knowledge to the mind of the forgetful student. (p. 14)

Therefore, the suggested educational methods at the dawn of the Russian schooling system were the birch rod and the leather lash, with the main goal of producing obedient citizens for the state.

In 1632 the famous Kiev–Mogila School was founded, and in 1687 the Slavonic-Latin-Greek academy at the Zaikonospassky monastery was established. Those schools were opened by Orthodox brotherhoods and led by Orthodox Fathers who “recognized a

need for an organized program of instruction” (Black, 1979, p. 17). Black notes: “the learning process was a strict one and its purpose was to inculcate in Muscovites a monastic-type sense of virtue, which involved absolute obedience to church and state, and the relegation of one’s own free-will to a position where it could not contradict those institutions” (p. 18).

It is very interesting to me that I cannot recall even one instance during my entire career as a student in Soviet university of seeing the name of the Orthodox Church in my books on the history of Russian education. Soviet power could not admit that the Orthodox Church played such a significant role in founding the educational system that the Soviet Union inherited. In the Soviet Union, this old system was put into the service by the “new order,” and the basic concept of this system, the “complete subservience of individual to institutional needs” (Black, 1979, p. 18), was never questioned and obviously worked very well for those who claimed to have built a new society.

Tsar-Reformer and Education

The next big step towards present-day Ukrainian education was made by Peter the Great, the Russian czar who “throughout the Imperial and much of the Soviet eras . . . enjoyed ‘super hero’ status” (Hughes, 2002, p. 635). He was one of the only czars whose memorials survived the Soviet era. From my history classes in secondary school I got the impression that Peter was the only human among the dozens of Russian monarchs, who always were pictured as cruel and self-centered monsters. This exclusive position of Peter the Great in Soviet interpretation of Russian history could be explained by the similarity

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between his agenda as a Russian ruler and political goals of the Communist party (Zajda & Zajda, 2003). Both had the vision of Russia as a powerful nation on a worldwide stage.

Our history books called Peter the “Tsar Reformer,” prizing his contribution to the building of the Russian Empire. According to Black (1979), Peter’s greatest desire was to see Russia among the major European powers, and his “first aim for education was to create a class of educated bureaucrats, for he was aware that only through an increase of knowledge could Russia obtain political power and material prosperity” (p. 23). Peter believed that education was an efficient tool for preparing citizens for state service (Black, 1975; Johnson, 1950; Pares, 1949).

In 1701 Peter established the School of Mathematical and Navigation Sciences in Moscow. My university professors claimed that it was the first non-classical school in the world. This educational institution was intended to prepare naval officers, engineers, architects, and teachers of mathematics. Matthews (1983) states: “The Soviet education always was profoundly vocational in its orientation. The concept of schooling as something intended merely to broaden the mind, or satisfy the individual’s personal needs, is deeply foreign to Soviet practice” (p. 10). The schools opened by Peter the Great could be viewed as the beginning of the vocational orientation of Russian, and later Soviet education.

Johnson (1950), describing schools opened during Peter’s era, reflects that most of them “were of purely vocational, or even ‘narrow-specialty,’ character” (p. 34). For

example, The Moscow School of Mathematical and Navigation Sciences aimed to prepare students exclusively for the Azov Sea Fleet. The “cipher schools,” which were opened in 1714 throughout the empire for sons of the Russian noblemen, were designed to provide the government with workers acquainted with mathematics, geometry, and some other sciences useful for the ongoing program of military and public construction (Johnson, 1950). Special schools for the children of soldiers, “garrison schools,” prepared students to become officers. Thus, “the government looked upon its tasks in the affairs of public education from the utilitarian point of view: it opened only those schools which prepared specialists it required” (Chekhov, 1923, p. 17).

Although all Peter’s educational reforms and innovations were aimed to educate children of the nobility and clergy, it seems important to note that Russian nobility were not enthusiastic about Peter’s educational ideas. Pares (1949) states:

By Peter’s orders, schools were to be established in all the chief provincial towns; the curriculum was modern and utilitarian; it included reading, writing, arithmetic, geometry, and fortification. It was only by incessant threats that even a beginning in this programme could be achieved. Where the schools did exist, the gentry evaded in every way sending their children to them. In more than one case students fled from school wholesale; but Peter was inexorable. (pp. 203-204)

To defeat the ignorance of Russian nobles’ sons, Peter established the compulsory state examination for all well-born youths. The noble offspring were required “to pass

basic oral examination before they could marry, become officers, or be considered legal adults” (McClelland, 1979, p. 6). This examination was the first instance of using formal testing as a tool of social control in the history of Russian/Soviet/Ukrainian education. It was the first, and as we will see later, definitely not the last.

I think that it is important to highlight a few educational ideas that were expressed during Peter’s reign:

1. Women should be instructed to be good wives and have some basic knowledge because they are the ones who leave a lasting impression upon young boys who, in turn, become servants of the state.
2. Education must be a monopoly of the state.
3. History and philosophy are as important as practical sciences.
4. Severe punishment is the best means to make children learn and be obedient.
5. Children of peasants under ten years of age should be instructed in reading and writing because, as ‘having learned to read and write, they will not only conduct more intelligently the business of their lords, but they will also be useful to the government/ А егда грамоте и писать научатца, то они удобнее будут не токмо помещикам своим дела править, но и к государственным делам угодны будут.’ (Pososhkov, 1724)

Some of these ideas found their way into school practices during Peter’s era, and some a few decades or centuries later.

During the years following Peter's death, a few important pedagogical events took place. Peter's daughter, Elizabeth, under the pressure of M.V. Lomonosov, opened the University of Moscow in 1755 along with the two gymnasiums.¹ The gymnasiums were aimed to supply Moscow University with Russian students. It was emphasized in Lomonosov's writings that the main purpose of those schools was to train Russians for service to the state. Although prior to this time all education was conducted mostly in the German or English language, these educational institutions became the first Russian institutions in which Russian became the language of instruction and a subject of study. Since 1768, "all subjects except philosophy, which was taught in Latin, were conducted in Russian" (Black, 1979, p. 49). As far as teaching methods, instructors in gymnasiums were required to lecture, explain, and only then examine students using oral examinations. The promotion from class to class was possible only after pupils had learned fully the material prescribed in lower class. The graduates were accepted to the University of Moscow after being examined by university professors.

Catherine the II

When Catherine the II inherited the Russian crown, the idea that all Russian schools should become centralized under state control was the focal point of her educative instruction (Указ) of 1767. The instruction ordered that, "for the benefit of the fatherland," state controlled schools should be built in every town, patriotism should

¹ A secondary school preparing for higher education at university.

be the main purpose of educational efforts, and each social class should receive a special training (Black, 1979, p. 49).

During Catherina's reign, an educational revolution took place when the first school for girls was established in 1764. The first and the very famous school for women was The Institution of Noble Girls (Институт благородных девиц) at the old Smolny Monastery in St. Petersburg. I knew the name of this educational institution well before I began researching the history of Russian education in the Ukrainian university. That this school was the first Russian school for girls had nothing to do with its fame. In fact, that noble girls were educated there always was mentioned with a bit of sarcasm in my history classes. Rather, its fame had to do with the fact that on November 7, 1917, Lenin chose that place as the command center for the Social Revolution. According to Soviet historians, Lenin led the revolutionary masses of soldiers and sailors from Smolny, making it the center of the epic and, in most parts the untrue story, of how the "Great October Revolution" was implemented by Bolsheviks. However, until now it never occurred to me that the educational revolution that took place in Smolny in 1764 was an equally important event in the history of education, as the Bolshevik revolution over a century and a half later was in the political history of my motherland.

The Institute of Noble Girls had two divisions: the first for the well-born girls and the second for the daughters of the middle class (Johnson, 1950). The curriculum "for both divisions required four years and had certain studies in common such as Russian, foreign languages, arithmetic, geography, and history; but the noble girls studied courtly

manners, while those of lesser birth took household management and domestic sciences” (Johnson, 1950, p. 44). Unlike all other schools in Russia, all teachers in this educational facility were women. In 1766 Catherina had another revolutionary idea—to employ female teachers in the Cadet Corps, the institution for noble boys, established in 1732 by Count B.C. Munich, the leading military adviser of Empress Anna. The Empress Catherina revised the rules of this institution and included one headmistress and ten female teachers to look after the noble boys aged 5-9 years (Johnson, 1950, p. 45). However, only male teachers were permitted to deal with boys in the age groups of 9-12 and 12-15 years.

Catherina understood that Russia desperately needed some kind of systematic instruction in order to modernize. Therefore, in 1782 the Commission for the Establishment of Public schools was organized. The Commission aimed to create a system of free elementary and secondary schools using the Austrian Public School System as its example. The Commission had to start with the translation of Australian textbooks “for the benefit” of Russian school. However, it is necessary to point out that the ideas included in these textbooks, as was so often the case with any idea borrowed from Western Europe, had to be examined and corrected “to make [them] coincide with the laws of our Orthodoxy and . . . with the circumstances of the citizens of our empire ” (PSZR, cited in Black, 1979, p. 133). Comparing the Austrian school system with the Russian system of public schools, Black (1979) states: “The obvious contributions made by Austria to the evolution of public schooling in Imperial Russia should not be allowed

to cloud the fact that their differences remained significant” (p. 150). Catherina’s school system was much more secular in nature than that of Austria.

Some historians of education, such as Johnson (1979), see Catherina’s educational innovations as the beginning of “a new era in Russian pedagogical thoughts” (p. 62). By contrast, my university professors believed that the main concern of the great Empress was to protect Russian autocracy. Black (1979) seems to share their point of view and states:

Catherina had been faced with the dilemma which was to continue to perplex her successors, that is, how to educate Russians on the one hand and to leave autocracy impregnable on the other. Like those who followed her on the throne of the Russian Empire, she solved the problem by compromising her principles on education and by doing her best to see that it could not create disloyal subjects. Thus, schooling tended to remain a preserve for service nobility and bureaucrats, and the masses remained illiterate, kept in place by their own ignorance and superstition. (p. 151)

Catherina at first was determined to use Western progressive pedagogical ideas to educate all her subjects. But peasants’ rebellion movements in her own country and revolutions in France and America were major factors that led her to become a proponent of the rigidly state-controlled school system. Her successors were determined to carry on her legacy and retain control over education throughout the 19th century.

Education in 19th Century Russian Empire

In general, Russian education in the 19th century followed the patterns developed in the era of Catherina the Great. Nineteenth-century Russian monarchs, unlike Peter the Great who was “blissfully unaware of the threat to political stability which accompanied the widespread importation of western ideas and institutions” (McClelland, 1979, p. 9), recognized that materialistic and democratic ideas from the West could have a serious impact on Russian social order. Therefore, beginning with Catherina’s son, Alexander I, who in 1803 put schools under the control of the new Ministry of Popular Enlightenment (Министерство народного просвещения), every Russian monarch “continued expansion of the educational system, but endeavored to counteract its dangerous potentialities by impregnating it with an official ideology glorifying Orthodoxy, autocracy, and Russian nationality” (McClelland, 1979, p. 10). The Russian monarchs continually tried to find balance between the idea that education might bring dangers from within and the idea that lack of education would cost Russia its foreign security.

Both Peter the Great and Catherina the Great had favored a small number of elite schools for noble offspring (rather than education for rural and urban lower classes), trying to educate people who were less likely to be unhappy with their social status. In the 19th century, the Russian system of public education followed the same tradition, offering “opportunities to each one to receive that education which would correspond to his mode of life and to his future calling in society” (Uvarov, cited in Brower 1975, p. 73). In other words, Russian schools were designed to protect and preserve the status quo

in Russian society and provided no chance for upward social mobility for the children of the lower classes.

Russian officials of the time were convinced that “the difference in the needs of the different estate and conditions of people leads inevitably to an appropriate delimitation among them of the subject of study” (Uvarov, cited in Brower, 1975, p. 73). Thus, from Russian state officials’ perspective, the single-class schools in rural areas fulfilled all the educational needs of rural peasant youths. In the urban areas, the six-year schools appropriately served the needs of urban lower class children. There was no chance for the graduates of either of these types of schools to enter the institutions of higher education.

To summarize, when considering the educational advances during the 19th century, it seems fair to say that Russian autocrats tried to utilize Western pedagogical ideas and practices in ways that would maintain the social order in the country and reproduce generation after generation of subjects loyal to the Russian empire.

Education before the Revolution of 1917

I find it difficult to talk about this particular period in the history of Russian education. The information about this historical period that I acquired during my first three years at the Soviet university, prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union, was in a sharp conflict with even the information I learned during my two last years at the same university. When I revisited this era in Russian education during the course of this research, I found that American scholars find the period confusing as well. Johnson

(1950) states, “The period constituting the last quarter-century of Tsardom is so complex in its educational ramifications that it cannot be handled adequately in the same chronological manner as most of the previous periods have been” (p. 172). Some American scholars call the changes in Russian education during the last 25 years before the Revolution “impressive;” one such scholar, Bowen (1962), reflects:

The schools offered a wide variety of curricula to an ever-increasing number of children from all social classes, and the ministry, after centuries of struggle, had become all powerful. Four types of primary schools existed, and the secondary schools, for their part, were also well advanced. They had been opened to all, regardless of social class, and ...it seems that the peasant children really did, in some measure, attend them. (p. 22)

Johnson (1950) emphasizes the complexity of this period, noting that every progressive change in education at this time was downplayed by negative tendencies. For example, the expansion of elementary education came at the same time as the campaign of Russification, nationalism, and clericalism. The increase in secondary school enrollment was accompanied by a descent into mysticism and superstition, and, while growing in number and in enrollment, institutions of higher education were losing in regard to their moral and intellectual standards.

Sutherland (1999) points out some of the problems that existed in Russian education before the Revolution:

1. No provision for passing from elementary education to secondary school and then into higher education.
2. No provision for a comprehensive system of education for the majority of the population.
3. No provision for instruction in the language of the national minorities.

Ewing (2002) argues that in the 1890s, Tsarist government expanded Russian mass education as a part of an overall “modernization” of Russian society. However, the conservative forces in the state bureaucracy and provincial landlords were pushing for more conservative policies in education, especially after the 1905 revolution, when many professionals including teachers joined workers and peasants in open opposition to the monarchy. Ewing states:

The restoration of order following the revolution resulted in more conservative policies in education, including mass dismissals of activist teachers, yet the broader commitment to popular enlightenment remained and was even renewed by expectations that a more educated society would be less prone to outbreaks of violence. (p. 5)

Liberal factions of the Russian public were actively involved in the discussion about the future of Russian education. Most liberals denounced the vocational character of Russian education and state control over schools. McClelland (1979) states the following:

They [liberals] thought that the further development and expansion of the educational system was vital to the future of Russia not because it would produce trained personnel, but because it would produce harmoniously developed individuals capable of fulfilling the ‘high national purpose of awakening and renewing the country.’ (p. 31)

McClelland (1979) goes on to note that in June of 1905, the All-Russian Union of Teachers at its founding congress issued a statement calling for the following reforms:

1. Integration of the entire school network so that the general educational schools at the secondary level will be a direct continuation of the primary schools.
2. Introduction of universal, free, and compulsory primary education, and of free secondary and higher education.
3. Abolition of compulsory religious instruction.
4. Establishment of curricula featuring general education and freedom of teaching.
5. Freedom to teach in the native tongue of the local population in all types of schools.
6. Transfer of responsibility for the administration of public education to organs of local self government, elected on the basis of a universal (without discrimination concerning either sex or nationality), equal, direct, and secret

ballot, and to social groups organized according to the principle of nationality.

(p. 32)

It seems to me that Russian aristocracy, at least a large part of it, was willing to meet the terms of the liberal teachers. In 1914 Count Paul Ignatiev was appointed as a minister of Public Education. He was well known in the Russian Empire as a liberal, and he quickly obtained a reputation for being a progressive politician. He was supported by a wide range of Russian citizens and therefore was able to initiate energetic reforms in Russian education. Most historians emphasize that the new minister was profoundly influenced by pedagogical ideas of John Dewey and “based many of his reforms on Dewey’s notions of the school and society” (Bowen, 1962, p. 23).

Ignatiev made tremendous efforts to decentralize the existing school system by handing more power over to local authorities. He believed that to be successful, the Russian education system should serve both public and private interests and meet the wishes of parents. He intended to offer more freedom to teachers who, according to his plan, were to become the center of the new school system and “must be placed in such a position as to be able to derive a moral satisfaction from his work” (Ignatiev, cited in McClelland, 1979, p. 23). Unfortunately, after only two years in office, Ignatiev resigned under the pressure of growing opposition to his reforms from high officials. According to Ewing (2002), by the outbreak of the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, “more than one half of Russian school-age children were enrolled in primary schools, yet the purposes and processes of education remained contentious issues” (p. 5).

Russian/Soviet Education 1917–1930

My history professors used to call the period immediately following the Bolshevik Revolution “the time when the thousand year old dreams of humanity came true.” I prefer Sutherland’s perspective on this post-revolutionary period in Russian/Soviet history as “one of radical change, experimentation and considerable chaos” (1999, p. 7). Before the Bolshevik party came to power, they were proclaiming a policy of extreme decentralization of education:

The transfer of the business of education into the hands of democratic organs of local self-government; the removal of the central government from every kind of interference in the determination of school programmes and in the selection of teaching personnel; the choice of teachers directly by the people themselves and the right of the people to dismiss objectionable teachers. (Lenin, quoted in Counts, 1957, p. 83)

After the October Revolution, the new Bolshevik government started ambitious and radical educational reforms and programs that were consistent with their pre-revolutionary ideas.

Two decrees, those of December 1917 and October 1918, transferred all control of primary, secondary, and higher education to Narkompros and the People’s Commissariat of Enlightenment. From then on, all schools were to belong to the people, and education was to be free of charge, “accessible to both sexes and the whole system from kindergarten to university was to provide one unbroken ladder of basic, free,

compulsory, secular and undifferentiated education, of a nine-year course” (Sutherland, 1999, p. 8). I should note, however, that the Soviet government only many decades later fulfilled these decrees.

Bolsheviks proclaimed that revolutionary society needed new schools capable of preparing the new Soviet person, an active constructor of the communist future. However, as Lauglo (1988) argues, for a period of time education remained on the periphery of Bolshevik political concerns. During the period immediately followed the revolution and civil war, Bolsheviks were more concerned with their struggle for establishing the consolidation of power. At this point they did not worry about reproduction of the new social order they were trying to establish. Therefore, Russian “progressive” educators were “allowed” a few years of idealistic search for an entirely new system of education (Lauglo, 1988, p. 290).

They saw inspiration in the philosophical works of Western philosophers starting with Utopian socialists such as Thomas More and Tommaso Campanella and including later European thinkers such as Johann Pestalozzi and Robert Own. Russian educational innovators of this time took a great interest in American Pragmatism, which advocated a practically orientated curriculum. According to Callahan (1962), even the theory of scientific management in education was a topic of discussion in 1918 in the newspaper *Izvestia*. Soviet educators demonstrated a special interest in child-centered education and the educational theories of Dewey.

Some revolutionary educators looked to the works of the forerunners of Russian revolutionary thoughts. The educational ideas of Belinskii, Herten, Chernyshevskii, Pirogov, and Tolstoy greatly influenced the first decades of new Russian/Soviet pedagogy. In my textbooks on the history of Russian/Soviet pedagogy, the works of the thinkers listed above were called “the pedagogy of revolutionary democracy” and were referred to as the “Golden Age” of Russian pedagogical thought. Most of these individuals were more political critics and philosophers than educators, and they were mainly concerned with the social philosophy. However, their educational ideas need to be mentioned, if for no other reason, to illustrate the inconsistencies between principles of the ideal educational system developed by people considered “fathers of the new progressive education” and real picture of the Soviet system of education. Of course, each of these Russian thinkers had his own perspective on education, but the following are the key concepts of their theories:

1. Schools should be designed with the goal of challenging traditional forms of authority.
2. “Education should see in the child not a future civil servant, not a poet, not a crafts man, but a human being, which in the future may develop into any of these, without ceasing to be a man” (Belinsky, cited in Judge, 1975, p. 129).
3. Education should be for everyone and should inculcate “respect for the name of man . . . without any reference to him as an individual or to his nationality, religion or rank, or even to his personal dignity; in a word unbounded love

and unbounded respect for mankind even as represented by the least of its members” (Herzen, cited in Johnson, 1950, p. 230).

4. The masses should be educated to fight for the overthrow of the repressive regimes; once socialism is established, the masses must have general education so that they can improve their conditions of life.
5. The teacher should be a model for pupils to emulate and must assist in rearing a generation of free men who will resist autocratic authority.
6. Schools should abandon the system of grades, examinations, and rewards.
7. Schools should allow the child free expression of his or her individuality.
8. Education should be attractive, not compulsory.
9. The teacher should establish a relationship with the pupil that encourages the learner’s future desire to learn.

After learning the history of American educational philosophy through the course of this research, I concluded that Russian pedagogy of revolutionary democracy reflected American educational philosophy more than it did Russian pedagogical sciences. Russian socialist ideology and a few years of idealistic experiments in Soviet Russia inspired by Western progressive educators did not produce an entirely new “free” system of education and, as Ewing (2002) reflects, “remarkable innovations in theory” were followed by “fundamental continuities in [existing] practice” (p. 5). Lauglo (1988) holds the same belief about the early years of Soviet education and states: “No doubt, rhetoric and reality were far apart. Education policies should in these early years of Soviet rule be

mainly construed as intentions, rather than as having much force of widespread implementation behind them” (p. 289).

In explaining this discrepancy, most historians point to the economic devastation that accompanied the revolution and civil war that began in 1918. Sutherland (1999) reflects:

Shortages of schools, teachers and money to pay them, lack of buildings, fuel and even food rendered the implementation of the new philosophy impossible in the years immediately following the Revolution. The confusion and anarchy of the Civil War period forced Narcompros to abandon or postpone its aims in all but a few fields. (p. 8)

Besides the economic problems, the Soviet system of education faced a tremendous challenge resulting from the Civil War. Thousand of orphans who had lost or become separated from their parents during the war were homeless, hungry, and roaming along the Russian cities and countryside, engaged in gang activities, drugs, crime, and general corruption (Sutherland, 1999). Collectively, this group of Russian youth got the name of *беспризорники* (Besprizorniki), which roughly translated means “unsupervised.” Describing the life circumstances of this marginal group, Bowen (1962) writes:

Families were destroyed, homes completely demolished. Many millions of family groups were shattered beyond hope of any future reunion. And along with the war went a wholesale distraction of traditional values. Crime rose

alarmingly and the brutalization of human life and values came to be considered usual if not normal. Children suffered terribly in these events and the rise of juvenile crime was appalling. (p. 47)

Official Russian estimates of Besprizorniki in 1922 were approximately 7,000,000. The size of the problem made it obvious that some action needed to be taken in order to protect society and bring some sort of order and stability into the lives of these young people. One Russian educator, Anton Makarenko, became dedicated to finding a solution to the problem of Besprizorniki and developed educational ideas that profoundly influenced Soviet pedagogy and education. In the autumn of 1920, he opened a children's home for Besprizorniki near Poltava, called Gorky Colony. Makarenko wrote a very famous Soviet Union educational trilogy, *The Road to Life*, where he described the life and work of the Gorky Colony and shared his pedagogical beliefs. Among Makarenko's pedagogical ideas, the following were most prominent:

1. The idea of any individual psychology should be rejected; instead, social psychology should guide one's efforts.
2. "Education" and "socialization" are synonymous.
3. The individual is required to act in accordance with group demands.
4. Education is not the only aim of the school system. It is responsible for the vospitanie (upbringing) of the active and committed communist person.

5. *Vospitanie*² takes place only in the collective and through the collective.

Makarenko defines a collective as a group of people with the common goals and activities, with a certain structure of powers and responsibilities and a defined interdependent relationship between its members in the overall context of a communist society (Bowen, 1962; Godon, Juceviciene, & Kodelja, 2004).

Makarenko himself insisted that his specific method of “paramilitary control and importance of collective and discipline within the collective” (Southerland, 1999, p. 8) could not be applied in regular schools. However, his general ideas were very popular in the Soviet Union and widely applied to Soviet secondary schools and, according to Godon, Juceviciene, & Kodelja (2004), throughout the communist world.

As a student at the Soviet Pedagogical University, I spent so much time learning about Makarenko’s method and reading his works that I still remember by heart one of his very prominent statements:

[I] doubted the validity of the generally accepted views of the time, which maintained that punishment produces slaves, that one must give free rein to children’s creativity and rely on their self-organization and self discipline. I permitted myself to advance my firmly held belief that as long as the collective and the organs of the collective had not yet been created, as long as there were no traditions and the first skills of work and life had not yet been instilled, the teacher

² The term *vospitanie* in Russian pedagogical literature was defined as a combination of character training, political education, and moral training

has the right and the obligation not to refrain from coercion. (Makarenko, cited in Dobrenko, 2005, p. 227)

Inspired by this famous statement, thousands of Soviet teachers were not to “refrain from coercion” in their daily practices. While they did not intend to produce slaves, they also did not intend to produce citizens willing and capable of challenging authority.

Education in Times of Stalinism

From the very beginning, Bolsheviks and then Communists openly stated that education should serve political and ideological objectives of the regime. Lenin believed that educational work could not be separated from politics (Ewing, 2002,). In March of 1919 Lenin stated:

In the field of public education the communist Party sets itself the task of concluding the work begun by the October Revolution of 1917 of transmission the school from a weapon of the class rule of the bourgeoisie into a tool for the complete elimination of class divisions of society and a tool for the communist transformation of society/ В области народного просвещения РКПБ ставит своей задачей довести до конца начатое с Октябрьской революции 1917 года дело превращения школы из орудия классового господства буржуазии в орудие разрушения этого господства, как равно и полного уничтожения деления этого общества на классы. (Lenin, 1919, p. 222)

Stalin went even further and defined education in this way: “Education is a weapon, whose effect depends on who holds it in his hands and who is struck with it” (Stalin, cited in Govorok, 1977, p. 57). Thus, extraordinary politicization became one of the main characteristics of Russian education under Stalin’s regime.

The 1931 decree of the Central Committee of the Communist Party put to rest the debates about new educational methods and pedagogical ideas. The decree required Soviet schools to provide Soviet children with the “basic knowledge” they needed to succeed in higher education (Ewing, 2002). The teacher-centered pedagogy was admitted as the only method allowed in the Soviet school system, and the education of free builders of communism started to increasingly resemble the schools used to generate loyal subjects of the Russian Empire. According to Ewing (2002), “the Soviet curriculum increasingly resembled that of the pre-revolutionary school, except where communist instruction took the place of religious study” (p. 158).

The level of state control over every aspect of school life was unprecedented even by Russian standards. The system of numerical grades, one through five, came back into everyday educational practice in order to control pupils, teachers, and schools. Another step back toward traditional methods of evaluation was the reintroduction of compulsory examinations for all pupils.

During Stalin’s era, *vospitanie* became an important part of Soviet education. The term *vospitanie* in Russian pedagogical literature was defined as a combination of

character training, political education, and moral training. Explaining the term, Ewing (2002) states:

The definition of vospitanie in official educational discourse included the maturation of the child, the formation of the world view, the development of character, socialization into customs and habits of the established order, and the acquisition of knowledge and skills. 'Communist vospitanie' includes all of these goals, as well as more explicitly political 'requirements' such as loyalty to Party leaders, patriotic devotion to the 'motherland,' appreciation of Soviet achievements, and hatred for designated 'enemies.' (p. 192)

In general, vospitanie was the main tool to ensure the continuity of reproduction of social order in the Soviet Union. Soviet teachers were expected to use an official communist ideology to produce people capable of thinking and acting only in ways that conformed to the regime.

According to Dewey, whose ideas were so popular in the Soviet Union immediately following the revolution of 1917, "Education is the fundamental method of social progress and reform" and "the teacher is engaged, not simply in the training of individuals, but in the formation of the proper social life" (Dewey, 1897, p. 19). Soviet propaganda stated that socialism is the top stage of the progress and further social progress is impossible and, therefore, in Soviet society with already "proper social life," teachers were expected to simply train individuals.

Tomusk (2000) reflecting upon the goals of soviet education of this period states: “Communist regime had no need for philosophers nagging at its ‘philosophy’, but it needed teachers to preach the philosophy and teach the illiterate masses to read so they could read it” (p. 274). Higher education in this time was responsible for fulfilling the need of the Soviet regime for engineers and qualified workers who could build a strong military and industrial complex within the country to insure national security. Access to these professions was opened to youth from all groups of the Soviet society and, according to Tomusk (2000), “the various systematic measures were taken to facilitate social mobility” (p. 276). Some of those measures were, for instance, opened access to higher education to students from the collective farms or those who obtained few years of working experience on industrial factories. By implementing these types of practices, Tomusk (2000) further argues, the Soviet education not only facilitated upper mobility in society, it was “another way to avoid accumulation of cultural capital along the family line” (p. 276). While helping youth from collective farms and factories to improve their social standing, the Soviet regime was constantly moving away people with higher education qualifications to prevent any possibility of them converting their social and cultural capital into power and privilege. As the result of these practices the son of a humble peasant from a small village obtained a law degree in Moscow State University and became the President of the Soviet Union while a world famous opera singer and a nuclear physicist both spend their entire lives in Siberia.

Soviet Education from 1950s to 1980s

In 1958 Khrushchev introduced a new educational reform and brought to Soviet schools the policy of “socially useful work” (Krupskaya, 1928, p. 119). Every student was obligated to undertake some kind of productive labor. For instance, the youngest children in schools were involved in gardening or looking after animals; older students had to spend a certain number of hours in workshops. Finally, the university students had to complete two years of productive labor. Those innovations were not popular and were gradually forgotten.

At the same time, expanding heavy industry and the Soviet military industrial complex required an increasing number of highly trained and specialized workers. In order to meet this need, schools with a special profile were established (Sutherland, 1999). These new “special schools” used the same state curriculum as regular schools with a greater emphasis and more time devoted to a specific subject, such as physics, mathematics, foreign language, or sports. However, with the small exception of special schools, Soviet parents during the Khrushchev and Brezhnev eras did not have much choice in terms of education for their children. As usual, they had to send their children to the standard school in the area where they lived.

In standard schools children studied a basic, common curriculum of up to 36 hours a week. Each of the courses offered in any of these educational institutions had to go through the process of ministerial approval, and the actual content was prescribed in detail through centrally approved textbooks. At the end of the each year, students had to pass oral examinations, as the Ministry of Education prescribed obligatory examinations

in each subject in order for the student to be promoted to the next class or to graduate from the secondary school.

Matthews (1983), describing trends in Soviet schools of the Khrushchev/Brezhnev era, emphasizes the “remarkable conservatism” of the Soviet educational system and describes as follows his reference to the system as conservative:

I have in mind here: the didactic form of the lesson, involving the predominance of the teacher; rote-learning; adherence to standard texts; heavy courses; homework, rising to five hours a day in the tenth class; a system of examinations, which, though subject to some relaxation in 1959, is still regarded as the keystone of the system; and the fact that the general school is still not able to issue anything less than a full leaving certificate. Pupils’ conduct continues to be regulated by sets of rules which have not been greatly modified since the thirties, and standard uniforms are still obligatory. (p. 17)

Reading this observation, I cannot help but think about myself and my childhood in the type of educational facility described by Matthews. From the deeply hated by everybody school uniforms (black or brown dress with the long sleeves and an apron of the same color) we wore every day, to the dull textbooks and dark school classes and halls with busts and pictures of *dedyshka* (grandpa) Lenin and comrade Brezhnev watching our every step, everything was indicative of stagnation.

All our education was based on the Marxist-Leninist premise of historic materialism as the only reality and basis for explanations of historical change. Our

history teachers used Marxist theory to explain to us Russian history and to teach us to hate capitalism. They worked hard to make us believe in the Soviet Union's unique mission of leadership. The stories about ideal communist society in the future were not extremely convincing and were very confusing even for our teachers; therefore, they tried to stay away from the subject and never allowed any discussion of this matter.

Gorbachev and School Reforms

In 1984, when Gorbachev became General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the new Soviet School Reform proposal was introduced to the Soviet public. The proposal called for the improvement of polytechnic education by incorporating more efficient and up-to-date scientific training with the aim of developing thinking individuals with strong ideological and communist ideals. Some structural changes were proposed as well:

The period of primary school (classes one to four) was to be increased to give children better training in the basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic, and in the elementary labor skills. The incomplete secondary school would provide teaching of the fundamentals of science over a period of five years and during this time the task of general labor training of pupils would be completed. The tenth and eleventh classes would provide general secondary school, vocational secondary school or specialized secondary school. Those leaving secondary school at 15 would attend a vocational secondary school, as a rule, for three years, during which time they would learn a trade and complete general secondary

school. It would also be open for eleven class leavers to attend a vocational secondary school for one year, as an alternative to going to a higher educational establishment. (Sutherland, 1999, p. 32)

Besides structural changes, the proposal called for improvement of forms and methods of education, modernization and change of textbooks, and modernization of the training of teachers. School was now expected to form a good Soviet citizen who loved his or her country and respected working people (Sutherland, 1999). The labor training programs were implemented in order to improve vocational training and teach Soviet youth working skills. The specially organized enterprise/training centers had been opened all over the country providing students of secondary schools with opportunity to learn more about wide variety of professions. In January of 1985 a new computer technology course was added to school curriculum, and in April of the same year a new set of school rules for the behavior of pupils was created. However, despite all efforts to push the reform forward, the results were not impressive.

I graduated from high school in 1987 and, in reflecting upon my education, cannot tell much of a difference in the curriculum, teaching methods and practices, and general school life during my two last years of school. Yes, we got a new subject, computer technology. But we did not have a single computer in our school; therefore, it was quite a strange course with our teacher explaining new technology using only an old blackboard and a piece of chalk. I do not even recall having a textbook for this discipline. The class was simply a waste of the teacher's and the students' time.

The labor training programs were somewhat entertaining. First, the specially organized enterprise/training centers served not just one school; rather, pupils from different schools gathered in one classroom, giving us an opportunity to meet new people (an unusual opportunity in the Soviet Union). These centers offered a few different courses for high school students. There was a class on how to drive cars, another on how to sew, and yet another for those who wanted to learn how to speed type. There also were classes that involved interpreting or translating technical and scientific publications. On paper students could choose the course he or she was interested in taking, but in reality we all knew that only boys could take driving courses, only girls should learn to sew or type, and only students from prestigious “special schools” would be accepted to be a guide or translator. It was very similar to the American tracking system with a bit of sexual discrimination. Still, we loved it because it was bringing some color into our otherwise grey school routines.

By 1987 it was obvious that the school reform didn't work, and by the end of that year “the school reform was no longer an issue. Finally, the call for school reform was replaced by a call for complete perestroika, or restructuring, in education” (Sutherland, 1999, p. 36). In 1988 during the February Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, one of the Soviet leaders, Legachov, stated that it was time to eliminate inertia and dogmatism in Soviet schools, and that the time had come for a new philosophy of education built upon the principles of democratization and cooperation. He called for new educational establishments that would foster the atmosphere of mutual

respect and cooperation between teachers and students. He concluded his speech with the statement that party organs should actively promote the democratization of the educational establishments and constructive glasnost (freedom of speech) (Sutherland, 1999).

Soviet society in general, and educators in particular, agreed that the whole system of education in the Soviet Union needed a complete restructuring. The complete restructuring of the Soviet school system was only a part of the attempt at liberalization and democratization of the Soviet regime. But the political regime in the Soviet Union, as Karklins (1994) argues, was built on strict control over ideology; therefore, implementing elements of democracy such as freedom of speech (glasnost) and democratization of education without changing the nature of the regime brought down the whole Soviet political system.

Education in Ukraine 1989–2002: My Story

On August 24, 1991, the Ukrainian parliament adopted the Act of Independence, in which the parliament declared Ukraine an independent democratic state. The first presidential elections took place on December 1, 1991. As a Ukrainian citizen, I cannot say that we noticed any radical changes in our lives after the country became independent, besides the sharp downturn in the Ukrainian economy. The economic crisis, which is still one of the main attributes of Ukrainian life today, affected every aspect of life in Ukraine, especially during the first few years after the collapse of the Soviet

Union. With regard to education, changes were very slow in coming, decelerated by the economic situation.

The only noticeable change that took place pertained to the Ukrainian language. It is important to note that throughout most of Russian and Soviet history, the existence of the Ukrainian language as a separate language was denied, first by Czarist policy and later by Bolshevik/Communist policy (Janmaat, 2000). Since the educational reforms of 1804 in Ukraine, the Ukrainian language never was used as a language of instruction in secondary or higher educational institutions and was not allowed as a subject. This was very interesting and confusing to me, because the teaching of non-Russian languages within the Russian Empire was permitted everywhere except Ukraine.

Janmaat (2000), looking for the answer as to why Czarist policy refused to allow Ukrainian language, comes to the conclusion that, first of all, Russian elites generally believed that Ukrainians, or Malo-Russians (Малороссы translates to “small Russians”) were truly Russian nationals who, therefore, did not need their national language. Second, the Russian rulers feared that Ukrainian language could become the force that would consolidate Ukrainians as separate from the Russian nation and lead to their desire to independently choose their future. This possibility was especially frightening because of claims for the Ukraine territory from the Polish crown.

The prohibition against teaching in the Ukrainian language was lifted for a short period of time when the Bolsheviks introduced a new general nationality policy. Trying to win the loyalty of the non-Russian people and increase the strength and stability of the

new state, Bolsheviks encouraged nationalistic ideology, implemented the new educational policies called Korenizatsiia (Коренизация translates as “going to the national roots”), and aimed to stimulate use of non-Russian languages in education. Korenizatsiia was called Ukrainizatsiia - ukrainization within Ukraine and was rather successful, especially at the elementary level. Janmaat (2000) states that “ukrainization was a blessing for the Ukrainian language as it standardized the language’s grammar, spelling and vocabulary (an orthographic commission was set up to do so in the mid-1920s) and greatly stimulated its use” (p. 56).

However, the ukrainization fell short of its goals in higher education, and in official and government spheres the Ukrainian language never obtained the same status as Russian. According to Janmaat (2000), “state employees rarely used to talk to each other in the language, especially in the cities of the south and east,” and only a third of the Communist Party members considered Ukrainian as their first language even though they were Ukrainians by nationality (p. 55). But the Bolsheviks’ liberal nationality policy came to an end when Stalin consolidated power in the Soviet Union. The 1938 decree made Russian a compulsory subject and introduced courses in Russian culture and literature in all schools, while Ukrainian history and literature were gradually put aside (Kravchenko, 1985). In higher education, it was relatively easy to reestablish the predominance of the Russian language because almost the entire faculties of Ukrainian universities were Russian or had been educated in Russia.

During Krushev's time, the Russification of Ukraine was even more accelerated (Arel, cited in Janmaat, 2000). His controversial law of 1959 granted parents the right to choose the language of instruction for their children; therefore, the previous policy of having the language of instruction in schools determined by the national composition of the population was forgotten. In a situation where almost all higher educational institutions within Ukraine were using Russian as the language of instruction, the law of 1959 encouraged Ukrainian parents to enroll their children in Russian schools. Ukrainian became an optional subject in all schools. All subjects were delivered by means of Russian language, and Russian language and literature were still compulsory everywhere. Finally, Russian language and literature comprised a compulsory entrance exam in every Ukrainian university, and the rest of the entrance exams for all special subjects, such as history, physics, and mathematics were conducted in Russian.

As I stated previously, the changes in language policies that started in 1989 were rather dramatic and noticeable to everyone, especially for people of my generation. We had grown up in Ukraine learning to disrespect Ukrainian language in school and at home, and now we were forced to consider it the sole state language. The new 1989 law made Ukrainian language and literature compulsory subjects; students wishing admission to an institution of higher or special education from then on had to take a Ukrainian language entrance exam, and Ukrainian language became the language of teaching in all institutions of special secondary, professional technical, and higher education within Ukraine (VVRURSR, 1989, cited in Janmaat, 2000, p. 59).

My university professors were required to study Ukrainian language so that they could lecture us solely in Ukrainian. I could tell that this made my university faculty very unhappy, and by the end of my university term at least 30% of my professors had left the university and were looking for jobs outside the country. My peers considered most of them to be the best professors. We were disappointed and angry. Certainly, watching our mentors refuse to accept the new language policies did not help us to develop love and respect for the Ukrainian language.

We took the process of new Ukrainization as a political game aimed to establish a new power structure within the country. The area where I grew up was predominantly Russian speaking, so I had not heard much Ukrainian language. I used to see a lot of books in Ukrainian, but it never occurred to me to buy and read them. Therefore, like most people around me, I did not want to study Ukrainian language, especially when Ukrainian language became one of the required courses at the University.

When I came to school in 1994 as a young teacher of Russian language and literature, I discovered that the official names of the subjects I was teaching were Russian language and Foreign Literature. It was strange because this made me somehow feel that I had become a foreigner, too. The number of hours we devoted to Russian language was significantly decreased compared to the time when I was still at school. In general, everything pointed to the fact that Russian language as a subject had lost its central position in school curriculum.

Ukrainian became the language of school documentation, and our school administration used only Ukrainian language in their official conversations. I do remember one occasion when I had to call one of our assistants of the principal on her house phone. She answered the phone using Russian language. I recognized her voice and knew that it was she, but to be polite I introduced myself and asked if I could speak with so and so. She obviously was embarrassed for using Russian and told me, “Please, wait a second. I will call her.” After a few seconds she returned to the phone and greeted me, this time in Ukrainian.

Besides this change in language policy, everything else in Ukrainian schools of the 1990s was the same as it had been in schools of the Soviet Union. Stepanenko (1999) states, “Ukraine inherited an over-centralized unified school regime from the Soviet era. Introduced in 1934 throughout the USSR, this regime informed teachers in detail of the subject matter, by means of programs, and the textbooks to be used” (cited in Janmaat, 2000, p. 70). Teachers in Ukrainian schools still did not allow much independent thinking, parents were still denied any involvement in school life, and subject-centered curriculum still aimed to “provide children with real, solid, and systematic command of fundamentals of science, knowledge of facts, and habits of correct speech, literacy, math skills, etc” (Narodnoe obrazovanie v SSSR, cited in Ewing, 2002, p. 193). I would say that it became a bit more confusing, because our administration required teachers to spend a significant amount of time on *vospitanie*; if previously it was all about

inculcating pupils with Marxist-Leninist ideology, now we did not know what kind of worldview we were expected to develop in our pupils.

Very soon I became discouraged as a teacher and left school in 2000. I felt that I did not know what to teach or how. I began to feel that those who ran my country had decided that they did not need education any more. Perhaps that is why they withheld pay from all teachers for 9 months. I felt that it was almost embarrassing to be a teacher in Ukraine at the end of the 20th century. I was not the only person who felt this way at the time.

In the next part of this chapter, I will share the testimonies I collected from Ukrainian citizens regarding the latest developments within the Ukrainian educational system.

Voices from the Present

Clearly, it must be recognized that even with the deepest analysis, it would be difficult to change schools significantly. Schools are robust institutions.

- Elliot W. Eisner

[Telephone conversation with the principal of a secondary school in the Odessa region. November, 2008]

I want to tell you, Viktoriya Nikolaevna, that sweeping reforms were introduced to the Ukrainian education since 2002, when you left. Let's start with the structure of the school and the duration of the compulsory education. Do you remember, until 2007 we had 11 grades? In 2007 the elementary level was extended and now it consists of four

grades instead of three. Thus, starting from 2007 Ukrainian children are going to spend 12 years of their life in elementary and secondary schools. I think it is wonderful. Students at seventeen are not fully developed yet. One more year at school will protect them from some mistakes.

But I think that the biggest changes took place within the field of curriculum development. Schools and teachers are now expected to be the main agents of the curriculum reforms. The Ministry of Education offers schools a wide variety of curriculum and we can choose the one that is the best fit for the needs of our community. In addition, schools obtained an ability to develop their own curriculum as well. Yes, this is correct; any innovative school curriculum has to go through the process of approval by the Ministry of Education and I cannot provide you with the information regarding how long the process of the approval would take; however, I am pretty sure that it is not a difficult procedure. One more big change I want to tell you about is that the Ministry of Education encourages schools' transformations toward developing their own educational specialization. In this case, every school needs to incorporate the required components in their curriculum, including subjects that are mandatory for every school, and the second part – the subjects of specialization.

What do you mean “the course of study is still the same for all students”? I do not really know what “electives” mean. Are you asking me if our students have freedom of choosing what to learn? I still cannot understand what you mean... Well, let me tell you

that students have all freedom in choosing whether or not to participate in extracurricular activities. Is that what you were asking about?

What about Russian language? In any Ukrainian school, Russian language can be taught either as the compulsory foreign language or, if the school prefers, it can be the subject of specialization in this particular school.

As for the new subjects in the Ukrainian curriculum, I would point out that foreign languages became the emphasis of school curricula. Every school has to offer three foreign languages, besides learning Ukrainian. What else? Did you know that subjects like health education and environmental protection now have become compulsory?

The Ukrainian Ministry of Education keeps reminding us that development of alignment between secondary schools and institutions of the higher education should become a very important part of the today's Ukrainian educational system. We all are obligated to develop relations with the university or college and offer some special courses to students in order to make the transition from one level of the educational system to another easier for our pupils.

I want to tell you about one more thing. Do you remember how we were required to use only one specific textbook for our subjects? Everything has changed today! Now the Ministry of Education recommends what schoolbooks we should use, but teachers are given more freedom with regard to using textbooks. They can choose the ones they like

from a wide variety of recommended books. Yes, we still provide all students with free textbooks.

As far as teaching methods are concerned, we now are encouraging our teachers to enable students to discover and construct new knowledge instead of simply transmitting it from teacher to student. Children's interests should become the focal point of our pedagogical efforts. I always ask teachers in my school to treat each child as an individual providing individualized teaching. Being a principal, I demand that teachers love every student as their own child, which will help us to raise good, honest, and happy people.

The biggest change, in my opinion, in our education is implementation of the new grading system. The old five points system was replaced by twelve points. This system is divided into four levels: low – grades 1 through 3; medium – grades 4 through 6, satisfactory – grades 7 through 9; high – grades 10 through 12. I really believe that this system gives teachers a better chance to reflect real student achievement. Because of this, now teachers have a chance to provide more valuable and fair evaluation of the educational progress every student has made through the course of study.

Perhaps you, Viktoriya, heard that this year was the first year when an official standardized test was introduced in Ukraine. The test is called External Independent Knowledge Testing. I think it is very progressive, borrowing from the American educational practices. I think it will help us to move the emphasis from measuring a student's range of knowledge to assessing the competency skills acquired by a student,

and from concentrating upon the level of student failure to assessing the level of his or her accomplishment. We will get a chance to see the results of our work and our students will get an opportunity to realize the real picture of their educational level and build their plans for the future accordingly. The test serves as the end-of-school exam and it provides students with the opportunity to avoid traditional entrance exams required by every Ukrainian university. Although students have freedom in taking the test, I recommend all my students, regardless of their plans for the future, to take it. Why? I think it is interesting!

If a student wants to take the test, he or she has to submit a request for participation. I have gotten quite a few students who absolutely refuse the idea of going through the procedure; however, starting this year, Ukrainian university and colleges will not accept anybody without the certificate of the test results and, therefore, these students deprive themselves of the opportunity to obtain their higher education. Personally, I am very excited about this new assessment model. I think that the External Testing is the biggest and the most positive innovation within the Ukrainian education.

[E-mail from my friend, who is the parent of a girl who graduated in 2009. December, 2008]

You know, Vika, I have very conflicting thoughts about the External Independent Knowledge Testing of 2008. First, you know the real reason they came up with the idea. The policymakers hope that this type of examination will help to fight corruption in higher education. I just heard on TV that according to some research conducted by the

World Bank, Ukraine is an especially corrupt country. What do you think about this?

Looks like we are winning at least this competition! They say we are 99th out of 163 countries. I personally think we should be number one. Just look around—government is corrupt and tied to the mafia or somehow help their family businesses. All judicial officials accept bribes. Bribery has become a normal part of our everyday life. Corruption is everywhere, including higher education.

What is interesting about the corruption in higher education is that it is such an old problem in our country that the first politician who tried to fight it was Peter the Great. Do you remember his 27 instructions for the newly opened Naval Academy? He promised a corporal punishment to teachers and professors who would accept any gift from their students. But see, he wanted to punish the teachers. Our politicians want to punish our children for the professors' corruption.

Why do I think the testing is a punishment to us? Look, you know my girl. She always was the "straight A" student. She worked so hard for all her school years and today they are taking away all her accomplishments. It does not matter what did you do for eleven, now it's actually twelve years, just come and answer some stupid questions, which come from who knows where, and you are good to go. Besides, you know how differently children react on this kind of thing. Somebody might feel comfortable and collected, but knowing her, I can predict that she will be so nervous that she will never do well on this test. With her school grades, she could have gone to the most prestigious universities and competed to be funded by government admission. Where will she be able

to go with her External Independent Knowledge Testing's results? I do not know. I cannot afford to pay three to four thousand dollars per semester for her university degree if she would be admitted as a tuition-paying student. And, as you know, we still don't have a well-developed banking system that would provide loans for students to pay for their education, like in America. So, my intelligent kid never will get a degree, even though she is very capable and interested in further education.

Yes, I understand, we need to curse the corruption out of the educational system. I know all these arguments that corruption of higher education negatively affects the whole society and economy and raises a new generation of corrupt citizens, but why is it that my daughter and I are the ones who have to pay? Besides, nobody explained to us how they came up with the questions for the test. My daughter told me that, according to her teachers, the questions do not necessarily cover the same material as their textbooks, so how can I make sure that my daughter is ready for the test? To tell the truth, I am feeling frustrated over this entire testing thing. I do not understand it and, therefore, I cannot really accept the External Independent Knowledge Testing.

[Telephone conversation with my friend, a professor of pedagogy in one of the Ukrainian universities. December, 2008]

You know, it is a very difficult and confusing issue in Ukrainian education right now. First, perhaps you know that Ukraine is working on integrating our educational system into European educational space. This process of integration requires us to improve our education and create conditions for providing citizens access to quality

education in Ukraine. To meet these requirements the independent (external) testing for graduating was implemented. This new model of testing was used for the first time in 2006 when about 40,000 pupils participated in external testing. In 2006 pupils who passed the test could use the test results to enter any university of their choice or to pass traditional entrance exams required by a specific university. However, the majority of colleges' and universities' rectors were against the test. I know instances when some Ukrainian universities refused to accept students with the certificates of the test. In other universities, they made a rule that the test score of 96 out of 100 should be considered a "B" instead of the expected "A."

In 2007 the situation changed under pressure from the Ministry of Education. If I remember correctly, more than 100,000 pupils, about 26% of all graduating pupils, participated in external examination in 2007. So, in '07 some universities announced that they would accept only the External Independent Knowledge Testing certificates. I remember the article I read in the "Історія України" (*The History of Ukraine*) in December of 2007 where the head of the Ukrainian Center for Estimation of Education Quality, Igor Licarchuk, was talking about the results of the 2007 testing. According to this interview, there were no indications that some universities did not accept or discriminated against prospective students who wanted to use their test certificates. But at the same time, he admitted that only one third of the students who participated in external testing used their certificates of the test to enter the higher educational institutions.

Explaining why not everybody used their certificates, Licarchuk stated that there are a few reasons for this, but I remember only one he brought up. He said that perhaps the students who did not use the certificates were not satisfied with the low test results. He used the following example to illustrate:

More than 90% of Kiev's graduates took the test. Among the 1,760 students who graduated with the golden or silver medals [awards for the high grades and outstanding achievements in Ukrainian and Russian schools] only 55% used their test certificates, while the rest of the so called "outstanding" graduates were not satisfied with their test scores and therefore took the traditional entrance exams.

Obviously, the results of the external evaluation did not match the evaluation given to students by their schools. This inconsistency between school and test results made Licarchuk doubt the school system of evaluation, while many others saw the problem with the External Independent Knowledge Testing. However, the Ministry of Education claimed that the implementation of the external testing in 2007 was very successful and gave a new decree, according to which all universities within Ukraine now could admit students only based upon their test certificates.

If you want to hear my personal opinion, I do not believe that this model of evaluation is absolutely democratic and fair. Besides, I do not think it will help reduce corruption. I heard and read so many examples that prove that the reform did not decrease the number of corrupt educators who take bribes or the number of parents and students who are willing to pay for the admission to government-funded universities. Some data,

in fact, shows that the amount of bribes increased significantly. Additionally, the discovery of false certificates in some Ukrainian regions proves that corruption already has spread through external test officials, too.

I don't think that the standardized test will solve the problem of corruption in higher education. I agreed with the statement of one Academic of the National Academy of Sciences who stated that the corruption in Ukraine is a countrywide problem; hence, the fight against corruption should start with the independent testing of state bureaucrats and politicians. Although I would admit that corruption in higher education should be addressed, the first step toward solving this problem should be increasing the salary of the teachers and professors and other people engaged into working in the educational sphere in order to raise the prestige of this kind of profession and minimize the temptation of bribes.

[Conversation with a Ukrainian graduate student who is now attending an American university. November, 2008.]

I am a proud citizen of Ukraine. I am lucky to live in Ukraine in this great time. Our country is not even 20 years old and look at our accomplishments! We still have a lot of work to do and many obstacles to overcome, but who does not? At least we are moving in the right direction and we are moving fast.

Many Ukrainians realize that the face of the country is education. Ukrainian education is an important element of the country's social and economic life and an important condition of its further development. As the Ministry of Education states, the

aim of the state educational policy is to provide an equal access to high quality education to all Ukrainian citizens. In order to meet these aims, the whole range of educational reforms was introduced during last ten years. In my opinion, and I think that most Ukrainian citizens would agree with me, the most important achievement of Ukrainian education was introduction of the External Independent Knowledge Testing in 2008. The testing demonstrated that the Ukrainian secondary school graduates exhibited high and middle levels of knowledge. The external testing gives observers and parents an opportunity to see that graduates from schools located in cities and towns demonstrated a level of knowledge not much different than their village peers. All Ukrainian society accepted external testing as an important step towards improving Ukrainian education and also as a means to fight corruption in schools and higher education.

[21-year-old survey respondent]

I do not think that reforms improve our education. I graduated from school three years ago and know that school does not teach us skills that help us survive and succeed. We had to memorize so much useless, boring information! Every day I had five to six hours worth of homework. It was exhausting and pointless because even our teachers knew that there is no future for most of us. Many of my friends who are few years older are struggling to get any job. People with medical or law degrees are happy to sell produce in the farmer's market. To help the situations, something more than school reform is needed.

To be honest, I think that the testing actually helps people to get bribes. How many new people get power over graduates? How many of them do you think are not corrupted? I do not know. What I know is that now I can't go to a University with my old fashioned "Certificate of Maturation" that I got three years ago when I finished school. Now I need to pay money to take this external test if I decide I want to get a university degree. It looks like they are trying to protect the universities from students who graduated before 2008.

[30-year-old male lawyer, survey respondent]

I think that the quality of education in Ukraine leaves a lot of room for improvement and it is very important to make our schools better. We all know that continued economic development of our country and strengthening civil society in Ukraine depend on the quality of Ukrainian education. But I don't think that some of those reforms that are taking place in Ukrainian schools are actually improving our education. For instance, I know that the External Independent Knowledge Testing, as a part of these reforms, was implemented in order to satisfy the European standards and demands in education after Ukraine became the participant of the Bologna declaration in May 2005. However, this innovation goes directly against the state law. The law states that the certificate of maturation is the only legitimate proof of completed secondary education in Ukraine. Thus, refusing students who obtained the certificate of maturation but did not take the External Independent Knowledge Testing and do not have the test

certificate their rights to access higher educational institutions is against the Ukrainian law.

In addition, by giving test certificates the advantage of becoming the exclusive pass to access higher education, we undermined the rights of all previous generations of Ukrainian citizens to get a college degree, unless they participate in external testing. To make the situation even worse for the Ukrainian citizens but rewarding for the Ukrainian bureaucrats, they made test certificates good only for one year. Therefore, if someone was not accepted to the university the year he or she took the test, the next year the person will need to take it again—which means he or she must pay, providing thousands of new state bureaucrats with stable income.

Implementing of the External Independent Knowledge Testing not only did not comply with the Ukrainian law, I believe it actually lowered the quality of education in Ukraine overall. Instead of using the models of assessment that would require graduates to think creatively and demonstrate their abilities, the standardized test offers them just a few options to choose from. Very often they will pick the right answer just by exercising their ability to guess.

[43-year-old male banker, survey respondent]

The educational system we inherited from the Soviet Union needed to be reorganized in order to bring it in line with European and, hopefully, international standards to improve our competitiveness. Kremen's [a head of the Ukrainian Ministry of Education] ambitious school reforms which are transforming the old Soviet inherited

system of 10 years of schooling into a 12-year system of elementary lower and secondary upper education seems to me very useful. But our national integration into European educational union requires more than changes in school structure.

First, something should be done to abolish corruption in our educational system. But how can one fight corruption in education when the whole country is corrupt? It is impossible until we change the character of the power in this country. Ukraine is ruled by the clique of oligarchs, enormously wealthy industrial managers, who are not interested in democratic changes. Our Parliament became dominated by the oligarchs long ago and they have used Parliament as a forum to protect their interests. But nobody seems concerned.

Our newspapers are screaming about the department chair in Lugansk who demanded that students pay his bills from the electronics store and yet never ask how members of our Parliament can afford all these latest four-wheel-drive models, from BMW to Mercedes, Porsche, and Lexus, in a country where salaries for members of Parliament range from 4,700 to 5,000 hryvnia, or \$935 to \$995 a month. This is the place where all reforms should start, and I think with something stronger than the standardized computer-graded test that the Ukrainian Ministry of Education introduced in 2008. Nether department chair in Lygansk nor oligarchs can be erased away with the help of External Independent Knowledge Testing. Maybe it works to improve evaluation of the high school graduates' knowledge. I am not sure; I am not an educator. What I know for sure is that corruption is not a problem that can be solved with educational innovation.

[19-year-old student of the local university, survey respondent]

Looking at my peers at the university I attend, I can tell that students from cities are much better prepared than the ones from rural schools. Although students from the rural villages obviously experience all sorts of difficulties keeping up with students from Odessa or Izmail, some of them claim to have gotten better scores on their test certificates than most of us. I am having a hard time explaining this paradox to myself, and it bothers me a lot because their test results let them study for free, while my parents have to pay for my education. So I have some doubts that the External Independent Knowledge Testing in Ukraine was 100% objective, as our Minister of Education claims.

Overall, though, I think it is a wonderful innovation. Before the External Independent Knowledge Testing in Ukraine was implemented, graduates had to take two sets of examinations: first at their schools to obtain the certificate of maturation and then at the university they want to attend. Now, it's only the external testing. However, if I ever decide to change my mind about my future profession, I will need to retake the test.

Summary

In this chapter I presented my critical interpretation of the history of Ukrainian/Soviet/Russian education from the time of Domostroi until the present when the new External Independent Knowledge testing was implemented. At the beginning of the chapter I reviewed research on history of Russian education by American scholars along with my own journals and memories to reconstruct the history of Ukrainian education. This historical reconstruction was necessary in order to address current

reforms in Ukrainian education, by looking not only to the event which took place in Ukrainian schools on April 22, 2008, but to its past and, perhaps, to its future implications. I then focused on the current state of Ukrainian education and the current reform movement in Ukrainian schools, through the personal stories of Ukrainian citizens I collected with the help of my friend who is still living in Ukraine. By doing that, I intended not only to describe the reforms in the Ukrainian educational system itself, but rather show the meaning that these reforms hold for Ukrainian citizens who are living through them and whose lives these reforms influence or attempt to influence. Analyzing these reforms as both social and personal events helped me to reveal the complexity of the issue and answer the research questions I stated in Chapter 1.

In Chapter Five I will draw conclusions about my findings from the study, provide implications for American educators, and outline recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 5 – ANALYSIS and CONCLUSIONS

In Chapter 4, I reconstructed the history of Ukrainian/Soviet/Russian education by putting historical accounts alongside the history I learned as a student in my Soviet university and reevaluated during the course of my life. To describe the current situation in Ukrainian schools, the reforms underway in the Ukrainian educational system, and how these reforms impact the lives of Ukrainians, I used the stories of Ukrainian people, collected by means of survey, informal conversations, telephone conversations and e-mail exchange. The findings I presented in Chapter 4 helped me to answer the research questions I formulated in Chapter 1. In this chapter I will share what I learned from my research, how that information helped me develop an understanding of this reform movement, explain the significance of the research and give some suggestions for future research.

Reforms in Ukrainian Education through Bourdieu's Theory

Looking at Ukrainian education using Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital, helped me understand that from the very beginning Russian/Ukrainian education followed a similar path as educational development in every country, and served as a means by which the ruling class or those in power could reproduce themselves. Russian educational institutions transmitted specific types of social and cultural capital from one generation to the next. This preferred social and cultural capital allowed those in power to legitimize their own system of values, while simultaneously hiding the real goals of self reproduction beneath the myth of the schooling as liberating force.

After the revolution of 1917, the self-perpetuating chain of old reproduction was broken. As Tomusk (2000) notes, “Since its very beginning, the Soviet Union tried to follow a radically different path—to develop a truly democratic and massive educational system, and prevent accumulation of cultural, or for this matter, any type of capital that could be converted into power” (p. 270). The Soviet educational system, aimed, first, to facilitate social mobility and, second, to make sure that people with higher education qualifications were continually moved away from the positions that would enable them to convert their cultural capital into power. It seems that in Soviet Russia, the best capital one could accumulate was not having any capital at all (Tomusk, 2002, p. 270).

One of the significant characteristics of the Soviet educational system was its goal to prevent the development of a new elite class. Only “average” citizens could be successful in such a state. Another goal of the Soviet educational system was so-called “ideological indoctrination” of pupils. Leaders of the Bolsheviks’ revolution were aware that in any society educational system serves the “interest of the ruling class” (V. Lenin, 1918, speech on VSPP) and openly recognized that the school system within the new Russian state could not be left outside of politics. They did nothing to conceal their intention to use the schools to serve the interest of promoting the society in general. Krupskaya, comparing the aims of education in capitalistic and socialistic societies, states:

Both bourgeoisie and working class assign specific goals to schools. However, while the bourgeoisie view schools as a tool to obtain class domination, the

proletarians look at schools as the means to raise a new generation which would be able to bring class domination to an end. /И буржуазия, и рабочий класс ставят школе определённые цели, но буржуазия смотрит на школу как на средство классового господства, а пролетариат смотрит на школу как на средство воспитать поколение, способное положить конец классовому господству. (Крупская, 1923, pp. 142)

Therefore, from the very beginning Soviet leaders did not try to hide the ideological character of the new system of education. As for me, this was one of the most significant characteristics of the Soviet school system. The political and cultural changes were explicitly defined in Russian schools, while educational systems in other societies successfully obscure their social and ideological goals and represent themselves as an independent institution. As Ewing (2002) states: “the differences between Soviet and Western schools was not so much the distinction between ‘subjugation’ through ‘indoctrination’ or independent thinking in a ‘free society’ as it was a matter of the visibility of the ‘hidden curriculum’ ”(p. 193). The social and political intentions of the Soviet schools were always openly proclaimed as being in opposition to the United States. The pedagogical approaches and models of assessment in Soviet schools served well these clearly defined social and political goals of Soviet education.

After the Soviet Union collapsed, the last generation of the communist bureaucrats became “the main beneficiaries of the so-called revolution of 1980s and early 1990s” (Tomusk, 2002, p. 270). They successfully transformed their social capital into

economic wealth and political power. They became new Ukrainian oligarchs who, according to my respondents and Ukrainian publications, rule the present day Ukrainian political and economical spheres. They became new Ukrainian nobility, and as such, are now attempting to further legitimizing their status through a new system of education.

By implementing the new models of the exit /entrance assessment, they hold the power to assign strategic value to certain types of social and cultural capital. This special cultural capital is different than what Ukrainian citizens of previous generations traditionally had obtained in schools. Thus, the new Ukrainian power structure is attempting to control access to higher education and, consequently, restrict access to positions of power and privilege in Ukrainian society. Of course, this real goal of educational reforms, stated in such direct terms, would never be acceptable to the Ukrainian people. Accordingly, Ukrainian policymakers hide any such social and political purpose behind the implementation of the External Independent Testing of 2008 and other educational reforms through rhetoric about democratization of the Ukrainian schools and the fight against corruption.

Conclusion

After reviewing the literature and collecting the data via survey, informal conversation, telephone conversation, e-mail exchange, and examining documents, my conclusions to the questions posed at the beginning of this study are as follows:

Looking at the history of Russian/Soviet/Ukrainian education I came to the conclusion that External Independent Testing of 2008 was indeed the first instance when

standardized testing of achievement became a mandatory tool to assess the educational outcomes of students. This new form of assessment is replacing more diverse and traditional forms of evaluation such as oral examinations, written essays and other forms of evaluation designed for specific purposes.

The year of this proclamation of independence in the Ukraine brought educational reforms ostensibly designed to build a new educational system which would meet the needs of a new Ukrainian society. Ukrainian policymakers made a concerted effort to convince Ukrainians and the rest of the world that the rejection of past Soviet practices and building of a democratic future are the main goals of the current reform. These national educational programs identify the elimination of uniformity, decentralization and development of local autonomy as the central objectives of the new educational agenda (Національна Доктрина Розвитку Освіти/National Doctrine of Educational Development, 2002). In practice, however, the implementation of the new evaluation mechanisms such as external independent testing should be viewed as a return to the old centralized regime. This movement can be just as easily identified as an attempt to tighten state control over the educational system to levels of control that are even greater than what existed during the Soviet era.

It appears to be well accepted in Ukraine that the influence of foreign educational models has played a significant role in the unfolding of educational reforms within the country. After examination of many recent Ukrainian educational publications, I also concluded that the United States model of control over the quality of school performance

and educational outcomes had the greatest influence on the Ukrainian educational reformers. All documentation reviewed during my research and most of my survey respondents point to the American experience in the field of educational assessment as a starting point for the development of the new Ukrainian system of evaluation.

Although information on development of assessment in the United States became almost a required part of any Ukrainian research concerning the business of educational assessment, none of these researchers bothered to bring to the attention of the Ukrainian scientific community and/or general public the fact that educational assessment, and especially standardized testing, has become a very controversial issue in contemporary American education. From my personal experience, I have concluded that most Ukrainian educators and even a higher percentage of the parents in Ukraine are totally unaware of the criticism by recent research within the United States that challenges the ability of the norm-referenced and criteria-referenced assessments to measure educational progress and outcomes (Broadfoot, 2007; Filler, 2000). Likewise, none of the people I interviewed or corresponded with via the Internet were familiar with the theory that educational assessment can play a number of hidden political and social roles within a society.

According to the data I collected, Ukrainian policymakers have identified three main reasons for ongoing educational reforms:

1. Improving the quality of Ukrainian education.

2. Seeking “harmonization” with educational systems of currently existing member states of the European Union, in anticipation of Ukraine’s entry into the European Union.
3. Fighting corruption in higher education.

The data I collected indicates that most of respondents think that the external testing was implemented to fight corruption within the Ukrainian system of education. Some of the respondents believe that the innovation is aimed at improving Ukrainian schools. One respondent stated that it will help graduates and their parents to assess their educational achievements and make future plans accordingly. One also suggested that it might be implemented with the goal of discriminating against people who graduated before 2008.

The vast majority of the respondents did not identify any positive change in Ukrainian education or society that they believed would result from implementation of the External Independent Testing in Ukraine of 2008.

As for the primary research question: “*What was the purpose of the recent change in traditional practices of assessment of the achievements of secondary school graduates in Ukraine?*” From my research analysis and findings, my interpretation is—the real purpose of the recent change in Ukrainian assessment practices is much broader than is stated by Ukrainian policymakers and realized by Ukrainian citizens. The hidden purposes may be more significant than the stated purposes and have a greater long term influence on the political and social power structure of Ukraine. I believe that the reforms

in Ukrainian education and External Independent testing of Knowledge in particular are aimed at building the new Ukrainian state and securing political and social power for those who obtained it after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The new models of assessment assign a special value to the types of social and cultural capital consistent with the current Ukrainian ruling elite, while restricting access to higher education to people who possess different types of cultural capital viewed as dangerous to these elite.

My research took a much longer period of time than I expected. It made me look deeper inside myself and deeper into the historical and present circumstances of the country I call my motherland. I understand that the conclusions I have made may not satisfy other researchers who would examine the same issue. Perhaps, I would have seen the topic of my research differently a year ago, and perhaps I will have different ideas two years from now, because as Guba (1996) states, “Wherever we may have been in the past, we are somewhere else now, and surely will be somewhere else again in the future”(p. 121). However, the data I collected provoked many thoughts and ideas that I hope to expand upon in further projects.

Significance of Study

The research supported my preexisting belief that assessment fulfils a wide variety of social and political purposes in modern society. I believe that understanding this phenomenon will help me to become better educator, capable of seeing the influence of power in an educational system and developing my own pedagogical approaches

designed to challenge these influences by promoting a truly democratic teaching and learning environment.

In addition, the research facilitated my interest in the sociology of education in the context of comparative or international research. It would be interesting to follow the further development and implementation of External Independent Testing in Ukraine and track the changes in academic and public opinion regarding that testing. None of the scientific publications I was able to find regarding the testing indicated that the issue has produced any significant substantive discussion among the educational professionals in Ukraine. The materials I reviewed were published with the sole purpose of building positive public opinion about the new system of assessment. However, the lack of any explicit polemic works among Ukrainian educators could be explained by the absence of easy access to the Ukrainian academic journals via the Internet.

Suggestions for Further Research

Further research should be conducted in Ukraine by collecting the data within permanent Ukrainian universities. Examining test assignments and questions and comparing them with past and present programs of study in Ukrainian schools could produce valuable information that would either support or refute the theory that the new assessment model aims to minimize opportunity to obtain higher education for people who graduated from Ukrainian schools before implementation of the current educational reform. Finally, it would be very interesting to look comparatively at the process of the development of educational reform in Ukraine and other post—Soviet countries to find

out how similar social conditions in those countries influenced their specific educational reforms and practices.

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APPENDIX A
HUMAN SUBJECT APPROVAL LETTER

APPENDIX B
SURVEY QUESTIONS

PROJECT TITLE: EXTERNAL INDEPENDENT KNOWLEDGE TESTING IN
UKRAINE
FROM A HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE

1. Age.
2. Occupation
3. Education
4. What do you know about External Independent Knowledge Testing in Ukraine 2008?
5. What do you understand to be the reason for this reform?
6. Do you think that External Independent Knowledge Testing in Ukraine will improve Ukrainian education? If so, how? If not, why not?
7. How, in your opinion, will External Independent Knowledge Testing affect Ukrainian society in general?