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A Brief Discussion of the History, Role, and Function of the School Psychologist in the Former Soviet Union and Russia

Todd W. Knutson

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A Brief Discussion of the History, Role, and Function

of the School Psychologist in the Former Soviet Union and Russia

(TITLE)

BY

Todd W. Knutson

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DEPARTMENT
A Brief Discussion of the History, Role, and Function of the School Psychologist in the Former Soviet Union and Russia

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School psychology in the former Soviet Union and Russia had its beginnings as the field of Pedology which thrived in the early 1900s in Europe and in the former Soviet Union. School psychological services, in Western psychometric sense, have been virtually dormant since Pedology’s downfall following ideological conflicts with Communist leaders in 1936 when standardized testing was banned in the U.S.S.R. This paper sketches a brief history of school psychology in the former Soviet Union and Russia, outlines the educational system, reviews the Soviet research on mental retardation, and calls for the sharing of general information related to international school psychology. The current role and function of the school psychologist will also be discussed using translated Russian-language articles and the works of three American authors specializing in Soviet school psychology (H. S. Pambookian, B. Gindis, and I. V. Holowinsky).
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Chapter 1

Introduction

Historically, Russia evolved from a complicated web of political, economic, and cultural elements. Since the fall of communism and the break up of the Soviet Union, significant economic and political difficulties have continued to impair professions such as school psychology from expanding and coping with the economic and political realities of Russia in the 1990’s. However, recent literature has indicated that psychology in the schools is continuing to gain recognition as an aid in effectively educating Russian students. The international recognition of the applied profession of school psychology is on the rise accompanied by growth in professionalism, increased scientific research, improved training programs and cross-cultural research, as well as an increase in the supply of more experienced school psychologists (Dubrovina, 1992).

In present day Russia, school psychology does not exist on a large scale as a specifically defined profession. However, a number of sources written in the past ten years have outlined the current role of psychologists in the schools and have begun to represent the authors’ perceptions of the historical events, ideological realities, and positive developments that have affected the field.
Soviet, and now Russian school psychology, has been affected by political and ideological issues since its inception as Pedology in the 1920’s. On July 4, 1936, Stalin’s decree passed through the Central Committee banning the use of individualized psychological measures. This was the result of the movement blaming standardized measures for downplaying the importance of upbringing and instruction in child development (Pambookian and Holowinsky, 1987). Standardized testing and structured psychoeducational assessments have not made up the predominant role of the psychologist in the schools. This is one of the most significant factors setting Soviet psychology apart from the American conception of school psychology. Moreover, strict ideological and political concerns have been raised about the relevance and use of psychological testing. Medinsky (1954), a detractor, offered an indication of the views against standardized testing:

Intelligence and achievement tests were made with such calculations that the children of the indigent parents should appear as weakly endowed and nonachieving. Those tests claiming objective proof were in reality the means to enable the children of the bourgeois to continue their education and to
accept the children of toilers (Cited in Holowinsky, 1988, p. 127).

Holowinsky (1986b) also summarized Voitko and Gilbukh's (1976) work in direct opposition to psychological methods in use in the United States. Federal laws such as Public Law 94-142 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) have ensured that standardized individual testing must be completed in order to apply a psychoeducational label and qualify students for special education services. In general, the Soviet approach asserts that problem solving ability should be studied instead of strictly relying upon the comparison of resulting scores and related percentiles (Venger, 1984).

With M. Gorbachev's reforms in the mid-1980s, glasnost (openness) freed up media coverage, offered greater freedom of expression, and assisted in the move toward perestroika (restructuring). Perestroika served to remove the bureaucratic and centralized nature of political decision-making, further increased openness, introduced modernization by reformatting Russia's technological structure, and created a foreign policy centering around international interdependence. Gorbachev himself proposed that glasnost would offer a more open means toward the truth by instituting a government that would be more accountable to the people (Gorbachev, 1987).
On December 8, 1991, Belarus, Russia, and the Ukraine signed the Minsk Agreement verifying that the Soviet Union had ceased to exist. On December 25th of that year, Mikhail Gorbachev resigned as the president of the USSR leading to the creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Shoemaker (1994) said that all other republics had joined by October of 1993 except for the Baltic states. At that time the Commonwealth was the third most populous in the world and was made up of Russia and fourteen other republics (Cited in Haub, 1994). According to the Director of Information and Education at the Population Reference Bureau, Carl Haub, following the break up of the Soviet Union:

...the political and economic situation in the former republics has been chaotic. Pessimism has prevailed. Economic collapse, tied to political and social upheavals, has led to sweeping demographic changes. Gloomy economic outlooks have caused birth rates to plunge. The disruption of the political balance among ethnic groups has produced new migration patterns. The number of deaths has risen sharply in many of the former republics, most likely because of increased physical and mental stress
and deteriorating economic, health, and environmental conditions (Haub, 1994, p. 2).

According to Haub, the Soviet Union has been repeatedly devastated by demographic catastrophes including the loss of two million people due to the civil war between the years of 1919 and 1921, three million people from epidemics between the years of 1917 to 1923, and five and a half million people during the famines of the 1920s. During the 1930s ten million Kulaks (private farmers) died as a result of collectivization and fifteen million more died due to famines and purges. Then, as a result of World War II, an additional twenty million more individuals died. Because of the momentous changes in Russia and the Soviet Union, large scale political, social, economic, and ideological changes prevail even to this day. Haub predicts a significant population decline due to he economic and political upheavals that have caused a “gloomy economic outlook” (p. 2). This has caused a drop in the birth rate and foreshadowing fewer students in the schools. Subsequently, the schools are challenged to adapt by instructing children to fill more technologically-based positions in a fast-changing economic world economy (Haub, 1995).

The current status of school psychology in the former USSR has, along with all other aspects of Russian life, been directly affected
by glasnost and perestroika. "Indeed, glasnost has brought about a new awareness of the bitter history and the controversial present status of school psychology in the USSR, while perestroika offers the hope of new outlooks and promising developments in this domain" (Gindis, 1991b, p. 165). New information from outside the Soviet Union has allowed psychologists to speak more clearly and objectively about the limitations of the system of psychology in the former USSR. The Director of the Institute of General and Educational Psychology has proposed that it is time to reformulate the accurate history of psychology in Russia and the former USSR (Iagodin, 1991).

The importance of exploring the system of school psychology in the Soviet Union can be supported by a number of positions. While on-going systemic changes have occurred throughout Russia, new voices have called for a restoration of contact between East and West. In 1989, the Congress for the Soviet Psychologists’ Society declared strong concern in relation to the current status of psychology. In summary, Soviet psychology concluded that, in its current structure, the profession is ill-prepared to meet the new challenges of the socioeconomic reconstruction of Soviet society (“Roundtable”, 1990). The Russian psychological community is hungry for information and feedback on the use of particular models for psychological services.
Moreover, there is a natural interest of many foreign school psychologists to learn about the role of school psychologists practicing in Russia. Further, strong understanding of a particular model may offer excellent comparisons and a reference point for school psychologists in America. An evaluation of Russian psychology may offer new and different ideas, as well as specialized data based upon the works of Soviet psychologists such as Vygotsky and Luria. Moreover, the growing popularity of curriculum-relevant assessment and mediated learning in the United States has a preexisting research base in the Soviet Union. This may also be of interest to psychologists in the West.

I. Z. Holowinsky (1990), of the Department of Educational Psychology at Rutgers University, said that political restructuring has spilled over into the realm of Soviet psychology. The psychological journal, Voprosy Psikhologii (Problems of Psychology), an official publication of the Soviet Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, published a six-issue discussion on the views of fifty-three psychologists. The general consensus was that glasnost has spurred necessary review of past roles and functions in Soviet psychology as a whole, reiterating that "... as long as any branch of science, especially behavioral science, is constrained within the narrow dictates of a political dogma,
genuine free inquiry and progress are impossible” (Holowinsky, 1990a, p. 307). Holowinsky (1988) also noticed a significant increase in the international interest in psychology and education in the 1980s in the Soviet Union (Holowinsky, 1988).

The practice of school psychology in Russia may benefit from further in-depth appraisal of the historical traditions and events that have shaped its current form. An understanding of the conditions that shaped Soviet psychology may enable current psychologists to better understand why certain types of approaches were not instituted due to political differences. Holowinsky (1986b) noted that a cogent understanding of school psychology demands a review of historical trends, current circumstances, and the analysis of political, ideological, sociological, and educational positions. Moreover, he feels that past interest has been “. . . sporadic, not well focused and did not involve concerns of major professional organizations” (Holowinsky, 1986b, p. 38).

Past rigid ideological control, a lack of academic freedom, general isolation, confrontation with fellow researchers, and the simple fear of revising well established theoretical assumptions have all combined to formulate a system of psychology in need of up-to-date information. This information, specifically in terms of school
psychology, may be available outside of the former USSR. For example, "tried-and-true" methods of professional communication, preparatory programs, basic research findings, and even interdisciplinary corroboration would be a profound change for Russian practitioners (Gindis, 1991a).

Comparative research between systems of psychology that have been, for the most part, independent for many years may offer meaningful scientific exchanges. For example, Holowinsky (1990) argued that the United States (U.S.) and the Soviet approaches to researching mental retardation lack common ground in many areas. However, evidence supporting the findings of both can be found. Adler (1989) noted that the Russians are looking more favorably upon Western works in the last few years indicating that an expanded number of collaborative relationships and translations are needed. Moreover, exchanging differing theoretical approaches may offer fresh insights into clinically significant areas; especially in applied fields in Russia. Radzikhovsky (1989) wrote that there needs to be rehabilitation and restoration of psychoanalysis, moving away from strict adherence to Marxist methodology. I. V. Dubrovina, of the Institute of General and Pedagogical Psychology in Moscow, indicated that Soviet psychologists may be able to share their information and
knowledge on child personality development. The author also felt that, for new and experienced psychologists, it is beneficial to help them to view other modes of service delivery and directly view useful recommendations (Dubrovina, 1992).

The lack of international exposure for psychologists in the Soviet Union has been disturbing for researchers. Solso (1991) reported that following World War II psychologists were “sequestered both intellectually and physically” (p. 320) from western psychology. In a recent study it was predominantly found that in the last ten years, familiar Russian psychologists such, as Luria, Vygotsky, Pavlov, Sokolov, and Zeigarnik, were published in England, Canada, and the U.S.

Soviet psychology may offer research beneficial to current efforts in the U.S. Coles (1983) proposed that American definitions of learning disabilities have been essentially reductionist, unproven, and unable to derive sound theoretical understandings of the whole realm of learning theory on learning disabilities. He presented the theoretical work done by the Soviets. Their research has shown that neurological dysfunction can not adequately explain learning disabilities. Soviet psychology and specifically, L. Vygotsky’s “zone of proximal development” imply that learning (or intellectual processes) does not
cease at a certain point. It can be extended beyond one’s tested ability through instructional mediation and supportive guidance. Therefore, being concerned with all activity, Soviet psychology would tend to address social, environmental, biological, and historical information. Consequently, they would down-play the reliance upon standardized tests in order to determine individual differences that offer a relative score categorizing students. It is apparent that environmental assessment procedures and alternatives to diagnostic labeling are currently being discussed in the U.S. Russian psychological models may offer alternative research that may help guide clinical practice in the U.S. (Gindis, 1991b).

Psychology in the Soviet Union has been bound to Marxist philosophy. Radzikhovskii (1989) noted how Soviet academicians have, in the past, neglected to accept international sources and criticize "the West" as methodologically unsound. He continued stating that the current system in Russia seems to be fraught with veterans of the stagnant, bureaucratic system, educating current Soviet psychologists on theoretical ideals created only in Russia during the 1930’s and 1940’s. Therefore, an improved integration of information and ideas, in the past and in the future, may help psychologists in Russia and
It is the aim of this paper to determine the extent to which school psychologists exist in Russia and what role they have played or may play in the future. The study will summarize the available research by detailing the current role and function of the school psychologist in the Soviet Union and Russia. The summary will encompass the context of historical issues from the inception of psychology as a field under the guise of Pedology, to its current state in Russia. Analyzing the current psychological services available to the schools in the Russia may become meaningful in facilitating the development of school psychological services in Russia and in improving and expanding possible models throughout the world.

First, the prevailing situation in school psychology will be discussed. This will include a discussion of issues relevant to school psychologists such as: the history of Pedology, intellectual assessment in the Soviet Union, the diagnosis of mental retardation, and the educational system in the Soviet Union. An assessment of the current roles of school psychologist will also be examined.

Three main points of view including the work of B. Gindis, I. Z. Holowinsky, and the combined work of H. S. Pambookian and
Holowinsky will be reviewed and compared to construct a picture of the past state of affairs, current role, and future aspirations of psychologists in the schools in Russia. First, Pambookian and Holowinsky's (1987) initial work will be considered in relation to their general discussion of Soviet school psychology. Holowinsky's (1986b) more in-depth proposition viewing the underlying educational philosophies that helped to develop both American and Soviet/Russian professions will also be reviewed. This will be followed by Gindis' (1991a,b) papers that described the current approaches and historical roots of school psychology in the Soviet Union.

The final section will involve a summary and discussion of school psychology with implications for future research, an assessment of the literature, and implications for the study of international school psychology. Throughout the paper, there will be periodic comparison with the American conception of school psychology. In order to gain more accurate insight into the former Soviet system, the regular educational, special education and upper-level university training programs will be discussed. Later, the influential theorists and their theoretical proposals will also be briefly addressed, focusing on the development of Pedology and the work of Vygotsky.
Prior to 1991, the Union of Social Soviet Republics (U.S.S.R.) will be referred to as the Soviet Union. From 1991 to the present, "Russia" will be used to refer to the Russian Republic not including the individual republics that have seceded (Latvia, Estonia, Ukraine, etc.) Words in Russian will be italicized and at times parenthetically referenced adjacent to English translations.

A detailed discussion of other areas of psychology in relation to Russia and the Soviet Union, and the discussion of specific psychodiagnostic issues within Russia will not be addressed fully due to the limited scope of this paper. Refer to Appendix A for a list of related sources.

Chapter II

Review

The Crisis in psychology

Perestroika and glasnost have significantly impacted the development of education and psychology in Russia the past decade in Russia. Translated articles have appeared that relate the possible changes in the future. The editors of a recent series of articles in Voprosy Psikhologii [Problems of Psychology, Volumes 2-5, 1988] have asked readers to complete a questionnaire responding to the
recent trends in Soviet psychology. Questions included: “In your judgment what should the direction of restructuring of our science be in the direction of democratization and openness?” and “How in your judgment should the restructuring of psychology be conducted?”

Suggestions with respect to restructuring the current system have included the expansion of scientific discussion through improved communication both inside Russia and internationally. It has also been recommended that there be an increase in the development of applied psychology along with improvement in the quality and quantity of basic and applied research (“Restructuring”, 1988). Holowinsky (1989) indicated that the discussion seemed to be surprisingly candid. The general consensus, at the present time, was that Soviet psychology is ill-prepared to meet future needs. Additionally, some directly expressed concerns over the lack of professionals in certain areas of psychology. It is clear that the openness sustained as a result of Gorbachev’s glasnost has led to the beginning steps in perestroika which seems to be evident in the words of leading psychologists (“Restructuring”, 1988).

Prior to Gorbachev’s glasnost and perestroika, B. Lomov wrote an article in a 1982 issue of American Psychologist in which the desire of Soviet psychologists to develop contacts with foreign colleagues was
addressed. He insisted that their system is open to accepting graduate students and visiting professors. This would offer an excellent opportunity to foster friendships and share information (Lomov, 1982).

Vehemently, Radzikhovsky (1987) went as far as to say that all psychology in the Soviet Union should be entirely recreated. Mohun and Zhamkochian (1988) proposed that broad organizational changes are paramount in order to offer democratic organization of scientific groups, improve the level of applied training for psychologists, and increase the translation of foreign scientific works into Russian (Cited in Holowinsky, 1990a). Also, there is a need to increase the amount of dialogue between groups of researchers espousing different theoretical approaches. Brushlinsky (1988) noted that there has been little dialogue in professional journals between the followers of Vygotsky's cultural-historical approach (See Appendix B) led by A. N. Leont'ev and those following the views of S. L. Rubinshtein. Training psychologists, the quality of research studies, and the creation of new psychological institutes would also benefit the field. Some have even called for reopening the discussion regarding Freud through the re-establishment of the Psychoanalytic Institute. Interestingly, as late as May, 1989, bureaucrats were still refusing to print Freud's works. In a significant turnabout, some psychologists have even recommended that
Soviet psychologists be trained with psychodiagnostic instruments such as the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI), the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT), and the Rorschach Inkblot Test (Holowinsky, 1990a).

Etkind (Cited in Holowinsky, 1990a) called for the discussion of historical questions that remain in their history which would shed light on the question of pedology (Cited in Holowinsky, 1989). It is vital for psychologists to fight for the benefits of improved psychological services in order to attract the necessary economic resources and ideological change needed for restructuring to occur. International sources may be beneficial in terms of supplying financial resources for program construction and/or assistance in initiating international support networks.

**Psychology in the former Soviet Union and Russia**

According to Shchepkin (1989), the Soviet Union in 1988 had approximately 5000 psychologists, 1000 of which were located in Moscow (Cited in Holowinsky, 1990a).

The first psychological group, the Moscow Psychological Society, was formed in Russia in 1885. It predated both the American Psychological Association and the British Psychological Society by seven years. Moreover, there are four regularly published psychology
journals in the Soviet Union as compared to approximately 200 in the United States (Holowinsky, 1990b). Kozulin (1984) noted that V. Bekhterev founded the Psychoneurological Institute in St. Petersburg where a laboratory for child and educational psychology was formed (Cited in Solso, 1991). These figures give an indication of the limited professional communication available to the field of psychology in Russia. Before further development in school psychology may be feasible, remediation in this area will be an important first step.

Following the October Revolution in 1917 articles began to appear relating its effects upon the state of psychology in the Soviet Union. B. Lomov (1982) credited the following Soviet psychologists with the establishment of a Marxist/Soviet psychology: K. N. Kornilov, P. B. Bronsky, L. S. Vygotsky, D. N. Uznadze, S. L. Rubinstein, B. M. Teplov, B. G. Ananiev, and V. N. Mjasichev. In summary, there have been a number of research studies unique to Soviet psychology. Some of these studies address the nature of the mind, the role of social relations in the development of personality, and the role of labor in human development. Soviet psychology has examined how active involvement with one’s social surrounding is relevant to behavior. Furthermore, objective reality is viewed as that which is reflected in a
subjective manner through sensory processes (sensation, perception, imagination, thinking).

Solso (1991) reports that the lack of consistent psychological research and development in Russia since the 1930s can be, in part, related to the lack of economic support and basic resources faced by the Soviet Union’s Institute of Psychology (i.e., availability of photocopying, bond paper, telecommunication instruments, sophisticated laboratory equipment, etc.). The Institute became affiliated with the Academy of Sciences in 1971 which was an initial indication that the Soviet government was finally recognizing the legitimacy of psychology by its association with the Academy. The Academy of Sciences has developed natural, technical, and social sciences (including psychology) research areas. The following example was given in relation to a researcher’s response to a deadline for delivering a paper, “Well, they might not have accepted the paper anyway because we have no ‘bond’ paper and, even if they did accept it, I probably couldn’t get permission to travel outside the country” (Solso, 1991, p. 318). At times it has even been impossible to obtain the appropriate paper for submitting articles to western journals. Considering that full membership is a distinct honor, no psychologists had been deemed full members by the time of publication of Solso’s
article. Pavlov has been the only psychologist who was elected as a full member of the Academy, and he was recognized due only to his work as a physiologist (Solso, 1991).

**Pedology and a history of school psychology in the Soviet Union**

Psychological services directed at children in Soviet Union can be traced to the developments and research completed by Pedologists in the early 1900's. Pedology was described as the multi-disciplinary study of children's abilities that utilized empirical procedures to look at individual differences in abilities (Holowinsky, 1988). Standardized measures of intelligence and achievement were developed under the guises of Pedology. Luria (1928) referred to pedology as not necessarily child psychology or "... experimental pedagogy, but as the genetic science of the growth of the child" (Cited Holowinsky, 1988, p. 126). The field initially appeared as a result of the work of non-Russian theorists such as G. S. Hall, J. Baldwin, E. Meumann, and W. Preyer; and in Russia through the work of V. M. Bekhterev, G. I. Rosolimo, and A. P. Nechaev. It involved the combination of various fields. Pedologists felt that it depended upon biology, psychology, and sociology (Petrovoskii, 1978).

L. S. Vygotsky's work has influenced psychologists and educators alike in the former Soviet Union, as well as in western
countries. He is generally noted as the leader of the “cultural-historical” approach and the concept of the “zone of proximal development” (Gindis, 1991b). Holowinsky (1988) noted Cole (1978) who said that Vygotsky was blamed for advocating mass psychological testing. Leontiv and Luria (1956) felt that Vygotsky, at one time, had criticized the testing movement that came with pedology. The authors stated that his error was in not criticizing pedology as a field and by publishing articles in pedological journals. His experience clearly illustrated the effect of political ideology and the manner in which policy as a result of direct Soviet leadership has impacted psychology.

According to Holowinsky (1988), “Pedology occupied a considerable and distinguished place in the psychological literature of the Soviet Union of the 1920s. It became dominant in educational establishments, and in the professional literature” (p. 125). He wrote that the roots of the child study movement foreshadowed Pedology’s initiation. According to Spitz (1986), in the 19th century the philosophical inspiration of empiricism helped spur the child study movement attached to researchers such as Seguin and Itard (Cited in Holowinsky, 1988). The first pedological society was organized in Austro-Hungary with a group of teachers. A world congress was initiated in 1911 where 300 participants converged on Brussels,
Belgium. Between the years of 1913 and 1914, the *Faculté Internationale de Pédologie* was attended by 30 students from a number of European countries. It is interesting to note that V. M. Bekhtiairev (originator of the School of Reflexology) spurred the interest in Russia and in the Soviet Union following the Revolution.

According to B. Gindis, Stalin persecuted those involved with Pedology. Pedology was charged with “... stressing inborn individual differences and downplaying the importance of organized social influence in the upbringing of children” (Gindis, 1991a, p. 189). Gurevish (1982) felt that intelligence and achievement tests were said to have been designed to benefit the children of wealthy families (Cited in Gindis, 1991a). As a result, most studies in the schools and individual testing of children were halted, differential education was abandoned (although handicapped children had their own schools), and the study of psychology as a whole was interrupted. At the same time, psychoanalysis and social psychology were believed to cater to the “bourgeois” class and also hurt by Stalin’s actions (Petrovoskii, 1978). Kozulin (1984) stated that a number of pedologists and psychologists were accused of “ideological deviation” (p. 189). Some psychologists lost their positions while others were reportedly executed in labor camps (Cited in Gindis, 1991a). The literature in this area does not
expand upon these strong claims. As new information becomes more readily available in new Russia, it will be interesting to learn of the new developments.

Holowinsky (1988) felt that in the 1920s there was an interest for studies to meet the Communist Party’s “... need to develop a ‘new’ person, the builder of the Communist society” (p. 124). However, at the same time, a group of revolutionary psychologists (led by Kornilov, and later joined by a young Vygotsky-an eventual teacher and co-worker of Luria) moved to formulate a strict Marxist orientation towards psychology utilizing the communist ideal of dialectical materialism. This opposed traditional Soviet psychology which was represented through the work of Chelpanov, the director of the Psychological Institute of Moscow University at the time. He was targeted as a partisan of Wundt. Chelpanov opposed the strict behavioral approaches that revolutionaries used in relation to communist ideals which enabled Kornilov secure control of the Moscow institute in 1923. It is from this point the tide turned toward a more strict orientation around Marxist-Leninist ideology in relation to psychology.

Basov (Cited in Gindis, 1991b) described Pedology’s effort as an attempt to construct a interdisciplinary science of the child. Although,
Pedology was viewed as the beginning attempt at constructing the “science of education” (Pambookian and Holowinsky, 1987, p. 215), by the 1920s and 1930s it was perceived as encroaching on the establishment of the “Marxist science of children” (Petrovoskii, 1978). In essence, pedology had the effect of overshadowing the communist view and its reliance upon education and socialist up-bringing of children. Pedology came to be viewed as a pseudoscience.

“On Pedological Distortions in the System of People’s Commissariat of Education” was the title of a decree issued by Stalin’s government which banned the use of intelligence measures and other standardized tests (Petrovskii, 1978). Stalin’s apprehension about foreign influence had an impact on Pedology which was heavily influenced by foreign researchers. Stalin believed that it would be detrimental to the fight for communism. Consequently, Vygotsky was labeled as a “pedologist.” A prominent administrator of educational institutions and labor colonies, Makarenko, was able to utilize his political strength and to become the instigator fueling the fire against pedology. Holowinsky (1988) described Stalin’s favorable view of Makarenko’s educational philosophies. Makarenko maintained that individuals can be appropriately retrained and molded through the use of educational strategies. Stalin himself had built his political platform
on the notion that he would build a “new society” thus altering the behaviors and values of the Soviet people (Holowinsky, 1988, p. 127). Pedology was removed from the spotlight in terms of psychology in the Soviet Union. Their reliance on strict scientific measurement and approaches in relation to children did not fit with Stalin’s program.

**Intellectual ability and assessment**

Intellectual assessment is an area of significant concern to American psychologists. Since the early days of psychometric assessment, controversy has surrounded the use of measurement devises aimed at categorizing the intellectual level of individuals. Between the years of 1907 and 1917, sixteen American states had passed sterilization laws with concomitant goals of extinguishing recurrent mental retardation. Studies were also completed in the 1920s maintaining that the level of American intelligence was bound to decline given an influx of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe (Herrnstein and Murray, 1994). More recently Jensen (1969), in the *Harvard Educational Review*, proposed that remedial education programs would have little chance of succeeding because targeted populations had inherently low IQ scores. School couldn’t possibly make an impact due to the fact that success in school depended
primarily on having a high IQ score (Cited in Herrnstein and Murray, 1994). The recent controversy over the *Bell Curve: Intelligence and class structure in American life* (1994), by R. J. Herrnstein and C. Murray, has shown the continuing importance of and controversy surrounding the construct of intellectual ability. The Soviet Union and now Russia have taken a significantly different approach in their theory and assessment of intelligence.

The Soviet point of view can be illustrated by Z. I. Kalmykova (1982). The author detailed the inherent difficulties in assessing mental development in school children. The author recounts research undertaken to help decipher the determinants of general intellectual abilities and to accumulate general knowledge about mental development. Most Soviet psychologists believe that development occurs as information and experiences are collected and connections are made between pre-existing knowledge (Kalmykova, 1982). The resulting manner in which individuals effectively “systematize” and “generalize” information begins with smaller steps and proceeds to incrementally larger steps. The previous process leads to improved methods of acquiring knowledge. Kalmykova (1982) indicated that learning ability is influenced by the general accumulation of data which is then used to help solve problems. Soviet psychology, however,
would disagree with psychometric measures that rely on assessing learning ability with standardized procedures depending on scores. Kalmykova stated that this type of Soviet assessment is:

... unreliable since it reflects the results of intellectual activity and fails to take into account the way new knowledge is acquired (i.e., its self-sufficiency, ease, the speed at which knowledge is acquired). We think that learning ability, the capacity for acquiring new knowledge, is a more reliable index . . . A specific feature of thought, which distinguishes it from other mental processes, is its orientation toward problem solving and toward the discovery of knowledge that is new for the subject (Kalmykova, 1982, p. 58)

This productive thinking model is central to Kalmykova’s thesis and it relates to the idea that thought is geared around problem solving and the effective manipulation of novel information. Pre-existing information, the impetus or motivation to acquire new knowledge, and a problem situation help to determine an individual’s propensity to acquire new information. Individual tests, or problem solving tasks, that are not standardized have been created to measure individuals’ productive thinking and the ability to solve new problems.
The learning process is emphasized in an attempt to construct a psychodiagnostic devise that would enable practitioners to determine the relative stage of intelligence in children. Karpov and Talyzina (1985) performed a series of experiments that addressed the learning process. They believed that one of the factors impacting the development of psychodiagnostic tools was the lowering of the school-entry age to six years of age which increased the need diagnostic placement of young children. According to the authors, methods for determining levels of intellectual ability are needed along with specific criteria for establishing intellectual criteria based upon modern concepts (Karpov and Talyzina, 1985).

There are two central notions in the development of intelligence of children. The first is that children build upon previous knowledge as new actions bring qualitatively different consequences. The second aspect of the process of developing intellectual ability are children’s stages of thinking or sequences of stages, children progress along in thinking (Karpov and Talyzina, 1985). Karpov and Talyzina point that adolescents and adults do not consistently operate on a formal operational level at all times. The authors stated that it is difficult to fashion measurement devises that can accurately determine an
individual’s intellectual level in relation to the relative thought stage (Karpov and Talyzina, 1985).

Due to the strong behaviorist tradition (Reflexology) in the Soviet Union and the ideological notion to mold new “communist people” in building a communist society, the idea of labeling individuals with IQ measures did not appropriately fit Soviet policy.

Mental retardation

In the Soviet Union, individuals with mental disabilities are generally viewed in terms of two separate categories. The first is referred to as umstvenno otstaly and refers to those who tend to be “intellectually backward” or mildly mentally deficient. The other category is generally referred to as oligophrenia, which is mental retardation that can be directly attributed to neurological complications or injury. The system of classification for mental retardation which, overall, maintains that “... mental retardation is associated with diffuse maldevelopment or defects of the cortical hemisphere that leads to the pathological inertia of the central nervous system (CNS)” (Holowinsky, 1990b, p. 211). The Institute of Defectology of the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences (Pevzner, 1973; Savchenko, 1980) delineates five types of mental retardation.
(a). Diffuse maldevelopment of the cortical hemispheres without serious neurological complications;
(b). Cortical defect with impaired perceptual abilities;
(c). Various defects of auditory, motor, and other sensory modalities;
(d). Cognitive impairment with psychopathological behavior;
(e). Relationship to mal-development of the frontal lobes, with behavior similar to that seen in pathological disturbance of the personality and motor spheres.

(Cited in Holowinsky, 1986a, p. 388)

The Soviet criteria, as established, only classify .5% to .7% of the general population, whereas use of the AAMD system of classification 2% to 3% (Grossman, 1983) of the population is recognized. These statistics offer significant data illustrating the important differences between Russia and the U.S. Further, the lack of psychometric data for the diagnosis may inhibit the reliability of placement in appropriate educational programming. Holowinsky stated that many students are not oligophrenics due to the lack of standardized testing. This may also reduce the effectiveness of inter-professional communication when referring to the relative signs and symptoms of separate individuals.
Soviet research on mental retardation, especially school-based research, would be a beneficial addition to Western researcher.

**Soviet educational system**

Following the October Revolution in 1917, the newly empowered Communist Party, under the leadership of V. I. Lenin, established a number of goals for the system of education. According to the party platform, the first and foremost objective was to transform the system away from one that tended to promote barriers to social movement between classes. Communist ideology viewed education as a bourgeois tool. It was proposed as the impetus that could foster the movement needed to ensure the transcendence to a fully communist society (Panachin, 1982). Lenin, in 1913, said:

Only by radically remolding the teaching, organisation, and training of the youth shall we be able to ensure that the efforts of the younger generation will result in the creation of a society that will be unlike the old society, i.e., in the creation of a communist society (Cited in Panachin, 1982, p. 448)

The primary goal of the party, at the time, was to reduce illiteracy. The All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for the
Liquidation of Illiteracy was created in 1920 under the control of the People’s Commissariat for Education. Adult schools and texts were published in a variety of languages. In another part of the bureaucracy, the Council of People’s Commissars began to issue decrees that broadly reorganized the system of education around socialist principles.

All private schools in the Soviet Union were eliminated, separation between church and state was mandated, and free tuition was offered and coeducational schools were created. All schools were state run and centralized under the Ministry of Education of the USSR. Smith (1983) noted the significant strides that have occurred in the Soviet Union. Prior to the Revolution in 1917, there was approximately a 75 percent illiteracy rate and a general educational enrollment of about 10 million students. As of 1983, the Soviet Union was educating roughly 50 million children each year and were close to being a literate population. Significant inequities were present in the Soviet schools with ill-equipped and poorly staffed rural schools. These schools have been frequently out-performed by the specialized math academies in urban areas with the most up-to-date educational materials (Smith, 1983).

The main purpose of education in the Soviet Union was to educate students about the principles of Communism and the socialist
way of life (Holowinsky, 1986b). The world view stipulates that there are a number of separate societies in evolution prior to the final destination of Lenin’s “communist society” (Pearson, 1990, p. 22).

The authors evaluated the educational system in the Soviet Union. They proposed that, overall, it has been distinguished by its “. . . continuity, uniformity of requirements, and centralism in planning and administration” (p. 209). In the Soviet Union they described education as being compulsory with children attending school for approximately 5-6 hours, 6 days a week, for a decade. Non-Russian republics were reported to have some freedoms to teach native-language classes with a native-literature component as well (Pambookian and Holowinsky, 1987).

Pambookian and Holowinsky (1987) cited both Kairov (1963) and Zimin’s (1977) work to show that education takes steps to instill a communist approach and philosophy towards work. “Children also should acquire a spirit of collectivism, friendship, internationalism, and mutual aid based on socialist ideology and humanism” (Cited in Pambookian and Holowinsky, 1987, p. 210). Courses are regularly taught in the standard subjects of science, mathematics, social studies, humanities, art, music, and physical education. Zimin (1977) reported
that school, life, and work have been intricately connected to provide a workable life education in Lenin's beliefs (Cited in Pambookian and Holowinsky, 1987).

Teachers are trained at pedagogical schools, institutes, and universities throughout the Soviet Union. In 1980 there were 426 pedagogical schools and 200 institutes and universities (Panachin, 1982). The regular education program for elementary school teachers includes the teaching of general instructional methods, school hygiene, and psychology. Secondary level teachers have taken selected courses on sociopolitical, psychoeducational, and specialized areas. Every five years some 2.5 million teachers completed in-service training at one of the Institutes for the Improvement of Teacher Qualification.

Pambookian and Holowinsky (1987) also wrote that to honor their teachers within the Soviet Union, two national holidays are observed. Teacher's Day is held on the first Sunday of October and The Day of Knowledge is observed on September 1.

Pambookian and Holowinsky (1987) detailed the immense nature of the Soviet education system. Between the years of 1980 and 1981 they reported that nearly 44 million students were educated within regular education, over 3 million were taught in vocational-technical schools, and almost 5 million in specialized secondary level
schools. Moreover, preschools and nurseries enrolled some 12 million students annually. The Soviet government has also supported education with a large percentage of its budget. Hutchings (1983), for example, indicated that in 1979 of all funds directed at “... education, health, physical culture, social security, state social insurance, and aid to single mothers ... a 41% share” (p. 212) was contributed to education (Cited in Pambookian and Holowinsky, 1987). The authors also made special effort to relate the importance of special schools teaching English, physics, and those instructing gifted and handicapped students.

Holowinsky (1986b) described two sections of auxiliary schools in the Soviet Union where handicapped students are instructed. Individuals attending an auxiliary school are expected to attain an eighth-grade level after 12 years of school. Within the auxiliary school system there are two levels, primary and advanced. The typical primary level student generally has difficulty recognizing letters, reading, often has no concept of numbers, and tends to be “disoriented within the environment” (Holowinsky, 1986b, p. 389). At the advanced level, students are able to write, read letters, have some concept of numbers, and are generally well adapted to their environment. Holowinsky goes on to explain that children are placed
into special auxiliary schools after failing two or three consecutive years of schooling (Holowinsky, 1986b).

An article in the Soviet Review, a translated journal article from Sem’ia, which is a publication of the V. I. Lenin Soviet Children’s Fund. One article clearly illustrated the state of education in the Soviet Union from the point of view of those guiding change. At the time of publication, Gennadii Alekseevich Iagodin was the chairman of the U.S.S.R. State Committee for Public Education. He viewed the problems in education at a similar level to the economic, social, and political difficulties that coexist. The concept of perestroika has impacted the field of education resulting in the introduction of new statutes and congresses to address the realignment of goals and procedures. The Provisional Statute on Secondary Schools was initiated, however, due to pressing economic and political issues, the Supreme Soviet Committee for Science, Public Education, Culture, and Upbringing and the All-Union Council for Public Education both failed to provide broad support for the changes. Along with the new freedoms of expression, the voices of the people seem to be beginning to effect reform efforts. One change on the horizon may be non-compulsory education. For example, Iagodin notes that a large number of teachers believe that “compulsory education” (Iagodin,
1991, p. 78) should be eliminated and that resources should be directed towards those interested in receiving an education.

Iagodin provided interesting commentary on the student support procedures that have been utilized for a distractible and/or behaviorally challenged students.

If a youngster is a little more restless or distracted than average, they send him to the medical-pedagogical board. The first time, as a rule, the board does not make any decision, but then the youngster comes in a second time within a month, then a third. The people sitting there are thinking. ‘This is the first time we have seen him, all we know about him comes from documents, but the teacher deals with him every day, so she knows better than we.’ But once a normal youngster is placed in a school for defective children, it’s the end of him. Even if he is not feeble-minded or mentally deficient, he will quickly become so (Iagodin, 1991, p. 82).

This example clearly illustrates the challenges facing the Russian system of education in terms of establishing a system that fairly evaluates the capabilities of handicapped students. He perceived the problem as
going beyond simply reading and writing, towards meeting the psychological needs of the children and encouraging in them the ability to be lifetime learners. However, few research studies available have proven the extent of such claims.

**School psychology in the former Soviet Union and Russia**

**Hagop S. Pambookian and Ivan. Z. Holowinsky**

In 1987, Pambookian and Holowinsky wrote an article entitled *School Psychology in the U.S.S.R.* which was published in the Journal of School Psychology. This work outlined and lead the small group of American summaries that followed on Soviet psychology in the schools. The article detailed the current status, history, and training of school psychologists as well as the educational structure in the Soviet Union. Up to that time, there had not been such complete coverage on the topic.

In the Soviet Union psychologists are generally trained at Universities and within the Institute of Psychology of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences, the Institute of General and Pedagogical Psychology of the U.S.S.R., the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, and in the D. N. Uznadze Institute of Psychology.
Pambookian and Holowinsky, at the time of their 1987 publication, felt that school psychology was not a distinct discipline in the Soviet Union. They viewed the profession of school psychology as a doctoral-level specialty that stressed educational psychology as opposed to mental health issues. Psychologists participated in research directly within the schools utilizing their training in developmental and educational psychology.

Psychoeducational assessments in the Soviet Union are generally viewed in a negative manner and standardized national testing is not the norm in the Soviet Union. These methods can be traced to the previously mentioned decree, "On Pedological Distortions in the System of People's Commissariat of Education" which banned the use of intelligence measures and other standardized tests (Petrovskii, 1978). However, within the schools naturalistic experiments have been completed that have helped to provide a great deal of information for research studies. Holowinsky (1990b) referenced Grigonis’ 1987 study that looked at incidental visual memory among 35 2nd grade children in an auxiliary school. Also, Holowinsky (1990b) cited a study by Ponariadova (1979) that looked at 196 children with developmental delays on how they performed on various types of attention measuring devises. Furthermore, Vavina and Kovalchuk (1986) studied Russian
language issues with mentally retarded students and found that there is a need to improve how language skills are taught (Cited in Holowinsky, 1990b).

Pambookian and Holowinsky utilized a study completed by Umanskaya (1977) regarding a typical preschool evaluation done in regards to a student with delayed speech development. Essentially, the evaluation involved a battery of tests using the Seguin Form Board and a variety of smaller subtests which measured sorting according to form, size, and color, ability to differentiate between minor details in pictures, ability to synthesize part into a whole (similar to the Wechsler Scales object assembly), and the ability to construct of figures using small sticks. Pambookian and Holowinsky described the approach as being more qualitative. Standardized outcomes are not mandated as they are in many cases in the U.S.

The authors also mentioned that their research found a few references at attempts to create intellectual measures. Zambatsavichene’s (1984) use of over 100 verbal tasks grouped in categories measured the recognition of specific features, dissimilar concepts, logical relations, and generalization for children 7 to 9 years of age (Cited in Pambookian and Holowinsky, 1987). Likewise, other researchers showed that Soviet psychologists have recently looked

Educational psychology research in the Soviet Union has focused on improving teaching strategies, evaluating and improving educational curricula. The research, according to Bozhovisch (1978), has helped to create more scientifically-based learning conditions (Cited in Pambookian & Holowinsky, 1987). The authors quote Menchinskaya (1981) who indicated that psychologists in the Soviet Union attempt to, “... develop the psychological foundations for developmental teaching that form the personality of school pupils in accordance with the demands of our life, and the building of a Communist society” (Cited in Pambookian and Holowinsky, 1987, p. 216). Further, psychologists involved with education are important factors in helping teachers’ to understand that all-around development
in children includes the fostering of personality and social consciousness. The Soviet psychologist, Rubinshtein, has conceptualized that consciousness and personality continually develop during active involvement with one’s environment (Cited in Pambookian and Holowinsky, 1987).

Pambookian and Holowinsky illustrated that the activity within school, the relationships with teachers, and intellectual development can be directly related to the learning motivation created with active engagement in the educational environment. The authors strongly insisted that psychologists in the Soviet Union made significant contributions to the education of school children as educational psychologists. Their research consisted of classroom observations, experiments, and direct experimental studies on “memory, creative thinking, and motivation for schoolwork” (Pambookian and Holowinsky, 1987, p. 217).

School psychologists in the Soviet Union were not viewed by the authors as performing the same psychometric role as is present in the U.S. Furthermore, they felt that in consideration of the Communist party’s strong aversion to standardized assessment, the role and effectiveness of psychologists’ in the schools has not been limited. Pambookian and Holowinsky (1987) cited Davydov (1981) who called
for an increase in the role of psychologists in the schools. Davydov wrote that it was time to establish school psychological services in the schools as has been the case in other countries. However, the author indicated that questions regarding their role, function, and general organization need to be answered. Bozhovich (1983) also indicated a need for school psychologists. The author felt that efforts should have been better coordinated between educators and psychologists and that communication can be improved (Cited in Pambookian and Holowinsky, 1987). The authors then related the 1982 roundtable discussion held regarding the issue of school psychologists in the Soviet Union. A number of models referred to the opening of regional centers employing psychologists trained in educational, developmental and social psychology. Another discussed the importance of psychologists well-versed in education and others offered that these services could be obtained from university-based professionals.

Pambookian and Holowinsky felt that a number of qualitative changes would need to occur prior to large-scale initiation of school psychological services. First, additional training facilities for students of psychology should be created. Second, there was a need for Russian and other foreign language texts and journals in psychology. Furthermore, the research of non-Russian psychologists, and
psychoeducational measures (intelligence measures, personality tests, etc.) should be published in Russia. Professional communication between Western psychologists and Russian psychologists also warrants improvement.

Ivan Z. Holowinsky

I. Z. Holowinsky has been a professor in the Department of Educational Psychology at Rutgers University while writing a number of articles on international school psychological issues in relation to Russia. He was the co-author of “School Psychology in the U.S.S.R.” (1987) co-written by H. S. Pambookian. Prior to that he had written “School Psychology in the USA and USSR” which consisted of a brief comparison of the two systems and was not as comprehensive as his collaborative work with Pambookian. He has also written a number of articles on mental retardation research, and international perspectives on classifying cognitive disabilities.

Holowinsky approached the topic as a cross-cultural comparison of school psychology between the U.S. and Soviet Union proposing that the main difference between the two systems are the basic philosophies and goals. One of the main points he proposed was that the construction of the educational systems between the United States and the Soviet Union are contrary. Schools in the United States have
tended to be a collection of divergent regional traditions organized in a non-centralized manner. The Soviet Union, by contrast, contained no private schools. All schools were centralized and administered by the state. The curriculum tended to be rigid specializing in the teaching of Marxist ideals and the communist way of life (concepts such as “dialectical materialism”). Lenin intended that education is the “tool of the dictatorship of the proletariat” (Kozhevnikov, 1973, p. 9; Cited in Holowinsky, 1986b, p. 36).

American school psychology has been impacted by a number of factors including its beginnings at the Training School at Vineland, through clinical training programs with the Veterans Administration, and through the significant impact from federal legislation regarding handicapped children that passed in the early to mid-1970’s.

Soviet school psychology, on the other hand, has been impacted by the development of Pedology and the laws passed banning the use of standardized testing. It has not been until recently that the field has emerged as an important area of concern.

It is clear that an understanding of the socio-political background upon which the educational system is based impacts how both American and Soviet school psychology have evolved. The American system of education is significantly diverse as are the types of training
and even the roles that school psychologists pursue. There are a number of options in terms of what type of degree one could obtain and in what areas of specialization are available.

Holowinsky's views on the goals and aspirations of the system surrounding a particular field are vital. The fact that the Soviet Union's goals were to construct an educational system to meet the needs of Communist society differ drastically from the American system. He believed that it was built to help the individual achieve to his or her fullest potential, function in a democratic society, and free-market system. Holowinsky offered that both the Soviet and American approaches hold important links and are coping with similar issues.

The round table discussions held in the early 1980s point to the notable comparisons held between the two school psychological programs. Many of the same issues including whether psychologists in the schools should be professional psychologists or professional educators were discussed. Moreover, suggested training programs discussed contained many of the same courses and areas of study deemed important by American school psychology training programs (understandings of developmental psychology, general education,
special education, counseling, abnormal psychology, family dynamics, and school law) (Holowinsky, 1986a).

**Boris Gindis**

B. Gindis wrote an article entitled "Professional School Psychology in the Soviet Union: Current status, problems, and perspectives" which was published in *School Psychology Quarterly* (1991). He wrote about the benefits of understanding Soviet school psychology, the differences between U.S. and Soviet school psychology, and in relation to the current perspectives, and possible future applications of the field.

He submitted three reasons for the study of Soviet school psychology. The first was to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of Soviet society through analysis and consideration of the dramatic political and economic changes in the Soviet Union. He felt that school psychologists may simply be interested in the roles psychologists are involved in abroad. To summarize, knowledge of this type may offer a strong point of reference and understanding of our own professional functioning. Finally, our own experiences and frustrations may motivate us to seek out new ideas and program implications available in other areas.
The author want on to evaluate the differences and similarities between Soviet and American school psychology agreeing with Bardon’s (1983) view that U.S. school psychology has developed from a clinical background emphasizing the analysis of individual differences. He utilized Pambookian and Holowinsky’s (1987) findings that Soviet psychology in the schools has stemmed from educational, developmental, and pedagogical fields of study. Moreover, Gindis cited Bevan (1981) who said that the cause for growth in American school psychology was due to the increase in federal legislation allowing for federally funded special education for handicapped students. According to Vlasova (1984), assessment procedures for these students has been limited to “no more than an auxiliary method of differential diagnosis” (Cited in Gindis, 1991a, p. 187).

In terms of school psychology, Gindis referenced numerous Russian and American sources in light of the current perspective of school psychology in Russia. Learning disabilities, as a concept, have been rejected in the Soviet Union. Akimova, Borisova, and Kozlov (1989) noted that there is not a strong psychometric tradition in the former Soviet Union. Further Butenko (1988) asserted that psychotherapy has not existed until recently as a non-medical concern (Cited in Gindis, 1991a). Gindis continued, arguing that most guidance
in the schools has been completed by youth groups such as the “Young Pioneers” and the “Young Communist League.” The young pioneers was the beginning of children’s indoctrination into the communist party line and is a co-educational youth group for children between the ages of 9 and 14 (Smith, 1983). (See Appendix B for more information)

Gindis described the current status of school psychology in the Soviet Union which, from the author’s perspective, has been directly impacted by the role of pedology in the mid-1930s. He said that school psychological practice did not become prevalent until the mid-1980s. Gindis summarized Dubrovina (1988) who said that psychologists were used in residential treatment schools for special students and in medically-oriented children’s centers in urban areas. Also, the position of “chief school psychologist” was given by the State Committee on People’s Education (the body in charge of education in the Soviet Union) in order to administer the growing number of psychologists in the schools (Dubrovina, 1988). Gindis evaluated the presence of school psychology through journal articles and the discussion in the 1982-1983 editions of Voprosi Psikhologii that clearly illustrated the goals, objectives, and concerns of the psychologists in Russia.
Gindis described that a number of significant challenges faced school psychology in Russia. To begin, the author had concerns with the lack of structured licensing, certification, and/or the presence of a strong professional organization. Further, with ill-defined job specifications, the profession may be subject to “numerous legal, moral and professional questions” (Gindis, 1991a, p. 190) within the profession. Also, the lack of a professional organization, Gindis insisted, has neither given the field a set of established standards for conduct nor helped to fight for professional rights in the country. Other considerations include the lack of professional journals for an accumulation of research (with only four probable publishing sites available.

Russian school psychologists have generally utilized a “dynamic assessment” approach. Throughout the years numerous “psychological experiments” have been utilized in order to investigate specific psychological functions. These tests often mirror subtests prevalent in American psychometric traditions such as, “Koh’s cubes, Seguin’s formboard, picture arrangement, etc.” (Gindis, 1991a, p. 193). The author, however, noted a number of differences beginning with the lack of national standards that would enable for statistically sound comparisons to be made in figuring significant individual
differences. Further, Gindis proposed that the notion of utilizing national standards or timed testing for use with handicapped individuals has been generally looked down upon by Soviet and Russian practitioners. Problem solving strategies are assessed through the use of individual testing situations. The behavior of the test administrators is also significantly different than that shown by American psychologists. Mutual interaction between psychologists and testee’s is desired. Gindis quotes Rubinshtein (1979) for an indication of assessment procedures utilized that tend to follow Vygotsky’s concept of the “zone of proximal development.”

The most important information is received in the process of mutual performance and following analysis of how much and what kind of help has been proved to be sufficient for a child in a problem-solving situation (cited in Gindis, 1991a, p. 193).

In terms of the future of school psychology, Gindis interpreted the available Soviet literature and proposed two distinct models of future development: Clinical and educational. The clinical model most closely resembles the American approach. Psychological diagnosis is made based upon testing, counseling, and mental health consultation. Gindis maintained that given the Soviet Union’s historical background,
attempts at establishing a clinical approach have been ineffective in establishing school psychological services. On the other hand, the educational model is said to be more curriculum-based and subject-related as opposed to standardized approaches. Labels are not frequently utilized and Gindis indicated that the question of “special education” generally falls under the auspices of the medical profession. The school psychologist, in this model, appears to be a consultant making recommendations in light of school-related difficulties in learning and towards school adjustment. Dubrovina (1988) wrote that school psychologists often promote an understanding of psychology. This “educational” approach would be of interest to those within the American system looking to implement more curriculum-based measures and or a non-labeling system that would work to offer children individual services based upon the problem-solving tradition.

Chapter III
Discussion

A discussion of international school psychology would not be complete without a rationale for its undertaking. Why should we care about another country’s system of school psychology? Certainly the main purpose of the previous work was to address the literature
available on school psychological services in Russia. However, the indirect message should be the benefits of understanding foreign approaches to school psychology. In my estimation, there is extremely valuable information available in the former Soviet Union. Almost a closed system for decades, there are however, distinct psychological theories unique to the former Soviet Union (e.g., Vygotsky’s “cultural historical” approach, Soviet research on mental retardation, and even the non-traditional approaches to psychological assessment focusing on “process” rather than “product” techniques). For some, it is relatively interesting for some to learn of colleagues working in far-away places with both similarities and differences in the populations with whom they work. I am certain that many urban school psychologists in the U.S. may have a lot to talk about with a colleague working in the large metropolis of Moscow.

As school psychologists, we must be open to a fair evaluation of all data available. In evaluating cross-cultural subjects, as the present study attempts, the reviewer must be cognizant of the significant differences in the political and social make-up. Soviet psychology has, of course, had indubitable ties to the Marxist political structure as the banning of standardized testing and disbandment of Pedology have shown. Even into the 1980s, Central Committee regulations and
Congresses of the Soviet Union’s political structure impacted the guiding tenets of articles in the top psychology journal in the Soviet Union. Matyushkin and Kuz’mina’s (1983) article in Voprosy Psikhologii proclaim, in “patriotic fashion,” that given the current state of the Soviet Union, educational psychology must work to develop a system that:

... must overcome the traditional approaches to study of the psychology of the abstract individual and turn to study and development of the psychology of the new man of the era of developed socialist society, which is not just a distant ideal, but has become a reality in our time (p. 7).

One clear, yet indirect, message that comes across is that American psychology is indeed fortunate to be immersed in a socio-political system that has long enabled freedoms of scientific expression to exist in a decentralized structure. If only to view the unfortunate circumstances that Pedologists and other scientists whom were purged during Stalin’s reign, endured; as American practitioners, we may glean a fresh perspective on the scientific tools at our disposal and the opportunities available. Freedom of expression, financial backing for basic research, diverse training programs, and extensive scientific
communication through professional journals and organizations have not been obtainable in other programs.

From outlining the limited scholarship in relation to school psychology in the former Soviet Union, there are a number of considerations that Gindis, Holowinsky, and Pambookian all have proposed. One of the major points evidenced in all three papers was that school psychology in Russia has not, until very recently, become a distinct field. To this day the research supplies us with very few arguments indicating that it indeed is an effective professional field at the current time. There are no specific certification requirements and little if any professional communication fostered by a professional interest group. Moreover, no evidence appeared in relation to the existence of any ethical guidelines as well.

I would agree with Gindis’ (1991) assertion that an unbiased history of Pedology in the Soviet Union, using the most recent archival information available, has most likely not been written, much less translated into English. It is recommended that an unbiased report of the abuses against psychologists be constructed in order to set the record straight and process any available historical lessons. Moreover, with the continued opening of historical archives and government sources it would be beneficial to up-date the statistical data on
psychology and education in Russia in the 1990s and correct any misinformation released in the past. Of the sources available many of the Russian sources were written in the 1970s and early 1980s. In consideration of the fast rate of change, up-to-date information will help with the credibility of the arguments made. Certainly, more direct and plausible arguments for the establishment of school psychological services in the schools may be assembled.

Studies that track the development of psychology training programs and their graduates would be beneficial to further evaluate the rates of change in relation to socio-political and economic events in Russia. Moreover, a number of Russian researchers would benefit from translated professional works from the West written in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Also, American researchers and program coordinators may continue to benefit from translated works from Soviet psychologists such as Vygotsky and Luria which may offer substantial evidence to back established theories and/or to provide impetus for change in a particular direction.

As both Americans and Russians cope with similar school-based problems such as truancy, lack of academic motivation, and issues involving the practicality of psychoeducational assessment, the accumulated knowledge on both sides will undoubtedly increase the
workable knowledge leading to more informed decisions. For example, Holowinsky (1990b) points to Soviet research in mental retardation that has supported U.S. findings.

In my view there are three keys to developing school psychological services in Russia. First, there needs to be drastic improvement in terms of communication between invested psychologists both in Western countries and in Russia. For example, a professional groups such as the International School Psychology Association and the National Association of School Psychologists may be able to supply financial, material, and labor resources to contribute to an international effort at discussing what types of services would help children in Russia and what philosophical methods would be appropriate. Second, I would agree with Gindis who asserted that it would not be appropriate to simply mimic a Western system of psychological services in the schools. The unique history or psychology in Russia along with the financial, political, and social issues should be considered in order to create a strong program. Third, in order to foster increased dialogue, Russian psychologists may want to continue to utilize resources such as the translated journals available (*Russian Social Science Index*, *Soviet Psychology*, etc.). Western psychologists may be able to offer assistance through the procurement
of the tangibles and intangibles needed for Russian's to publish in reputable journals.

Gindis also felt that Russian psychologists should not rush to create national norms. The nontraditional, assessment methods can lead to more appropriate qualitative analysis leading to better diagnostic decisions, overall (Gindis, 1991b). Marston (1989) related that standardized measures may have a number of advantages over curriculum-based measures including: lower cost, specific data to aid in decision making and special education programs for handicapped youth, and legal trends demand nontraditional methods of assessment. Again, Russian models may provide guidance on the use of interactive assessment procedures.

Future services in Russia may resemble a combination of the two approaches most similar to the program proposed by Dubrovina and Prikhozhan in 1985 in Voprosy Psikhologii. The three-levels of their proposal include preventative action through proactive education and consultation, specialized psychometric diagnosis, and remediation through the use of a combination of educational and psychological tools. A psychologist in a nonadministrative position, would be based at an individual school while psychological support offices would be
placed in local areas to provide support for school-based personnel (Cited in Gindis, 1991a).

Shchedrina (1988) noted some discouraging news in regards to the up-and-coming field. "Ready to be adopted on a widespread scale, school psychology seems to stew in its own intellectual juices, a condition which has seriously hindered the development of the science and the profession" (Cited in Gindis, 1991, p. 17). As Holowinsksy suggested, "... as long as any branch of science, especially behavioral science, is forced to function within the narrow dictates of a political dogma, genuine free inquiry and progress are impossible (Holowinsky, 1978, p. 189). Soviet and now Russian psychology has shown the beginning signs of a transformation on the forefront. Most indicators from the available literature point to the recurrent economic, political, and social factors as hampering modernization of the psychological approaches taken in the Soviet Union. It will be interesting to see whether psychological services in the schools will be viewed as a "tool" for change for the children of the new Russia.
References


Roundtable (1988). [Restructuring in Psychology: Problems and Means of Resolving]. *Voprosy Psikhologii, 1*, 5-18; *2*, 5-17; *3*, 5-19; *4*, 5-14; *5*, 5-17)


Appendix A

Bibliography of related sources


A collection of reading from Soviet journals (pp. 29-44). White Plains, NY: International Arts and Sciences Press.


Marxism-Leninism

To facilitate the discussion of school psychology in Russia some concepts and terms need to be defined. K. Marx proposed a “scientific” socialism or the notion of Communism that would free society from the inherent problems of a capitalist society. In effect, the labor of man is central to the creation of wealth, however, the vast majority of wealth and its positive aspects is under the control of capitalists (the Bourgeois class). The working class (proletariat) endure poor living conditions and substandard wages which was especially evident during the late 1800s and early 1900s. Marxism-Leninism proposed the notion of “dialectical materialism.” From this point of view history is a “continuous struggle between opposites” (J Gunther, 1957, p. 157). For example, there would always be the on-going battle between the proletariat and bourgeois classes. Marx believed that economics (the idea of “materialism”) was the “prime motivation in all human affairs” (p. 157). The eventual class struggle would lead to the evolution through separate systems (from Capitalism to Socialism and eventually to Communism). In order to reach such heights, certain
features were necessary such as the dictatorship of the proletariat, the disbandment of religion, and the collectivization of wealth/human resources (Gunther, 1957).

Collectivism

The concept of collectivism (kollektiv) will be viewed as the Soviet instilled sense of, "... individual desire and personality submerged in the broader group—whether that group is a row of schoolchildren, a department of factory workers, a scientific institution, or the entire nation (Shipler, 1989, p. 71-72)." Collectivization refers to the wide-scale de-privatization of farming into large state run enterprises which were met with strong opposition in the 1920s.

Vygotsky’s cultural-historical approach

Marxist philosophy proposed that humans are the “tool[s] of production” (p. 125) in the evolution towards a full communist society. Holowinsky (1988) noted that Vygotsky was the primary influence in Soviet-Marxist psychology who initiated an historical approach towards psychology and the study of child development. Defects in development, according to Vygotsky, signal “a disturbance of the social form of behavior” (Holowinsky, 1988, p. 125). The cultural-
historical approach explains children’s behavior as social in nature.
Vygotsky emphasized that the psychological development of the child takes place within the realm of the child’s interaction with adults. What the child cannot do alone, he may be able to do with an adult’s help. This interaction determines children’s further development. Vygotsky believed that what a child can do today, with help from an adult, tomorrow he will be able to do alone (Holowinsky, 1988, p. 126).

The zone of proximal development provides a baseline of what children can do without assistance. What children can accomplish with the help of adults gives an idea of a range of possible behaviors possible for that individual child.

Young Pioneers
The children learned a sense of responsibility to the collective, discipline, and participate in group activities that promotes civic duty. For example, the story of a popular communist hero, Pavel Morozov, has been taught in the group. Pavel was a 14-year-old who reported his father for hiding grain from the collectivization effort in the early
1930s. Tragically, the boy was murdered by fellow farmers who were against the collectivization effort. He has been celebrated since then as a martyr. Similarly, in the classroom Soviet education participates in a system of “self-discipline” in which certain students are deemed the “zvenovoi” for the day. Their duty is to report on the misbehavior of other students. The Soviet’s have also used a system called the “sheftsvo” where stronger students help the weaker ones with their school work (Smith, 1983).