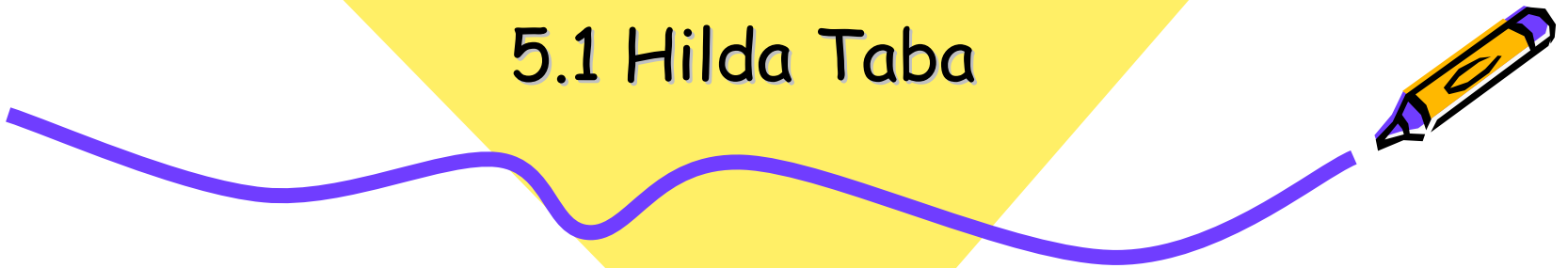


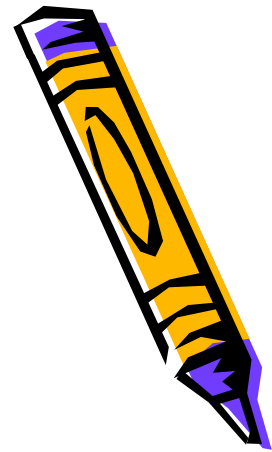


Current Conceptions of the Function of the School

5.1 Hilda Taba



Hilda Taba



- 1902-1967
- Major influence in curriculum theory and practice
- Observed relations between students and teachers
- Wrote books and guides on improving intergroup understanding in schools
- In this excerpt, she addresses the function of a school as a preserver of heritage, and as an instrument for transforming culture



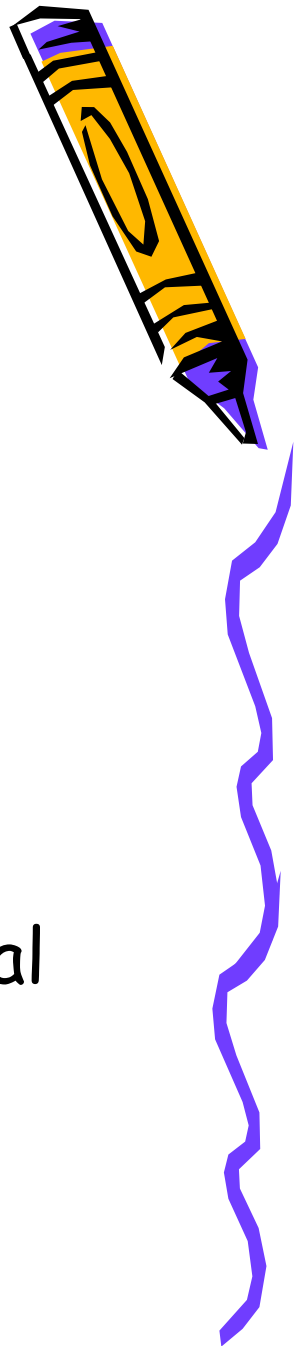
Function of a school

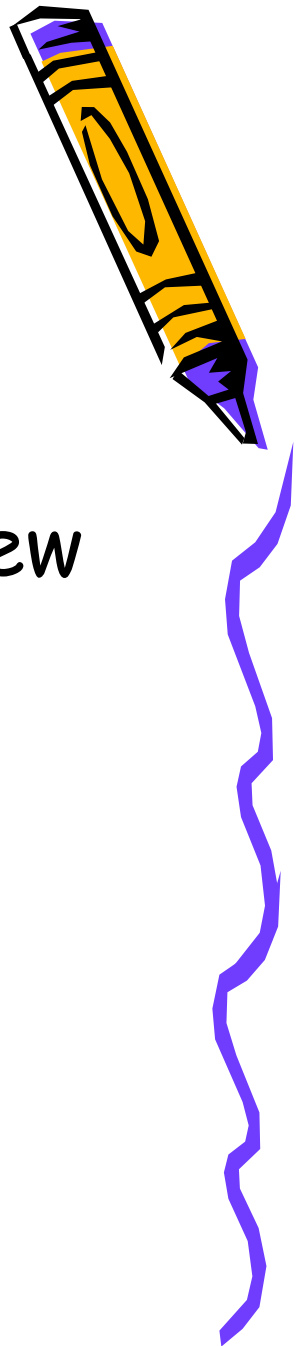
- There is no agreement on what the function of a school is
- The debate lies in freedom versus control, and change versus tradition
- Although there is debate on the function of a school, there is little disagreement on the importance of education



The role of education

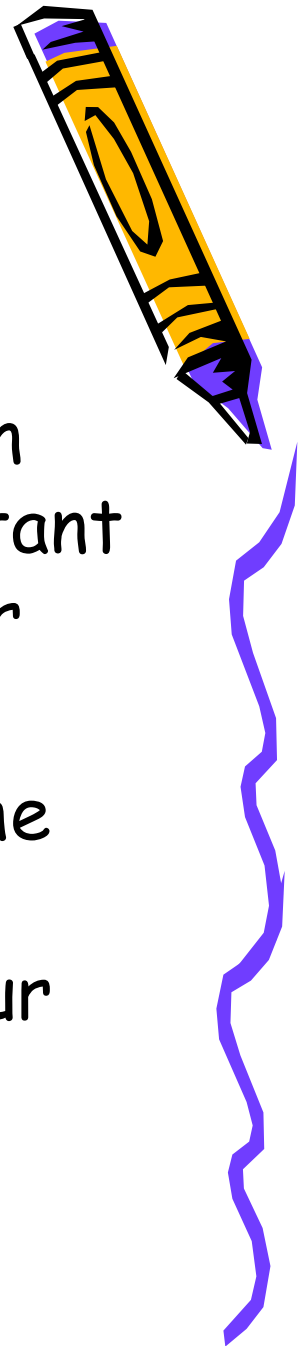
- Traditionally, Americans have felt that education holds many powers, including:
 - reducing poverty
 - preventing children from crime and delinquency
 - promote well-being of the individual
 - welfare and stability of the state





- What do you think these “powers” tell us about American society's view on public education?



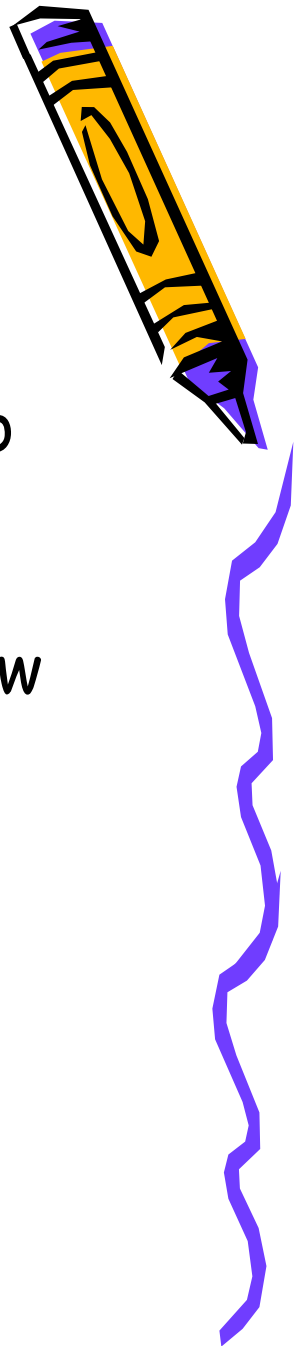


- These “powers” show that the American public sees education not only as important influence for the individual, but also for society as a whole.
- Some criticize this because they say the strength of our enemies is a result of their education, which coincides with our “weakness” as a fault of our education.



"Trends" and changes

- Education seems to be "overly sensitive" to public opinion, which causes changes in curriculum
- These changes are like trends that "swallow and annihilate the preceding one with an almost unbelievable discontinuity in theoretical thought (Schultz, 121).
- The debate of the function of schools is rooted in this relationship of education to society



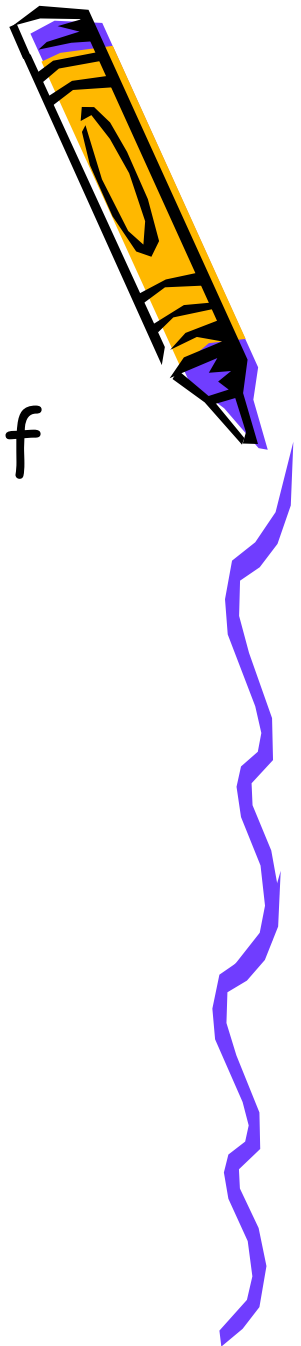
Function of the school

- Schools are created for the learner's reproduction of knowledge, attitudes, values, and techniques that have cultural relevancy.
- Schools are seen as responsible for the continuity of culture by inducting the students into the culture



Think.

- Do you see education as an agent of change, or do you see education as preserving functions?



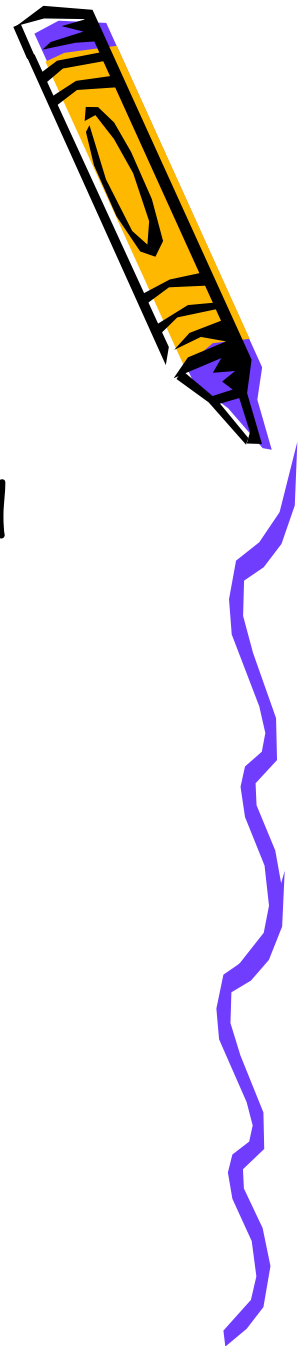
Education as preserver and transmitter of the cultural heritage



- Since all cultural traditions have roots, cultural continuity is possible only if education passes on truths, and preserves the heritage.
- Harvard Report on General Education
- Use the past to clarify the importance of the present

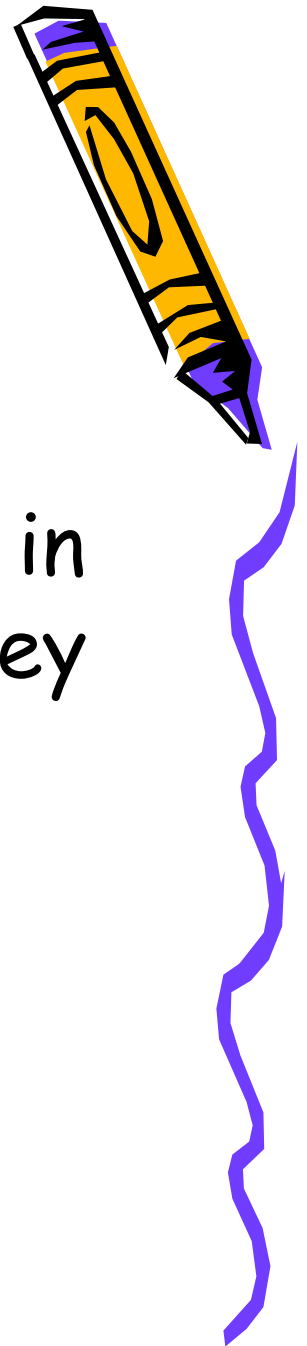


Chief function of education



- Function is develop one's rationality and the understanding of eternal truths revealed by these rational faculties
- Learning should be concerned with the first principles included in the classic tradition, called the essentials- the greatest rational content should have priority- liberal arts and humanities

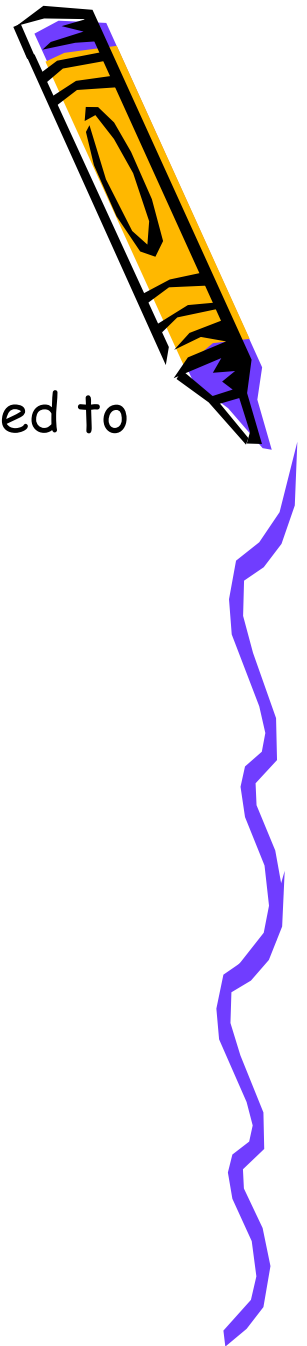




- Education must transmit these universal and eternal truths found in the classical literature because they are our main cultural heritage



Not education, but training



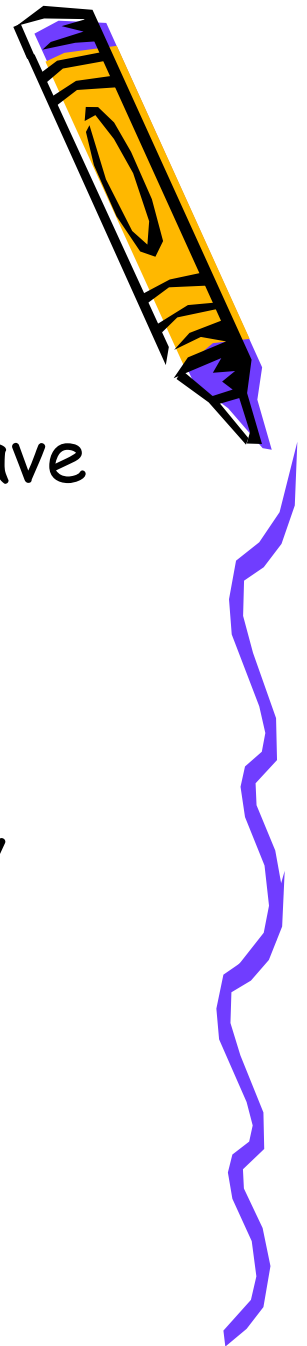
- Technical subjects and vocational education is considered to be training, not education
- Debate on Intellectual development
- Three Points of Stress- why the function of schools is based on the transmission of cultural heritage
 1. -stresses the understanding of principles and the ability to handle and to apply complex ideas,
 - to make use of a wide range of accurate knowledge
 - to command the means of effective education





- 2.) Hierarchy of subjects - intellectual training is possible only by centering the educational effort on basic skills and disciplines
- reading, writing, arithmetic on lower level... logic, history, philosophy, math, science, art, and philosophy on higher levels)
- 3.) Rejection of certain current functions of the schools, such as education for democratic citizenship, for moral values, and for the ability to deal with social problems

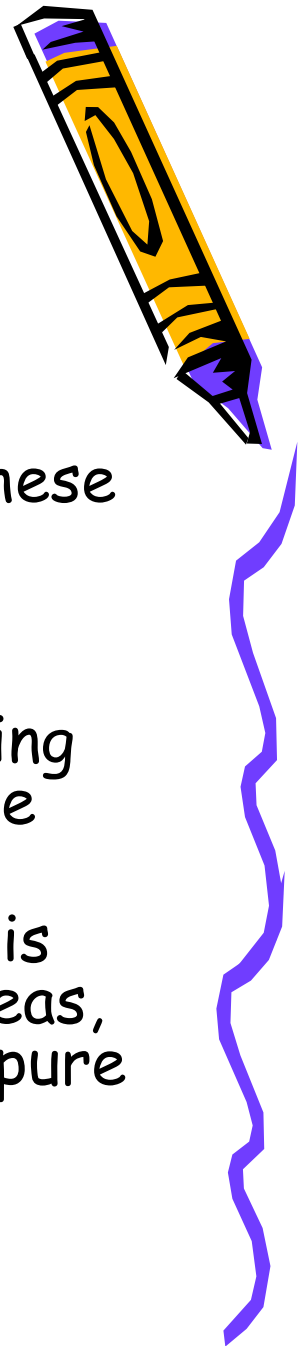




- References Bestor, who says "modern education suffers from an enormous extension of functions which schools have no business in assuming.
- Job training is the problem of industry
- Training in culture traits, mores, and ethical systems is the job of the family and church
- Schools should not be concerned with social conditioning



Criticisms of Education as Preserver of Cultural Heritage



- Men are rational and truth is everywhere, so education should be uniformly addressed to these truths and exclusive to the task of developing rational powers.
- Modern social analysis may indicate a greater break with tradition than most people are willing to admit, so teaching "outdated wisdom" can be dangerous.
- Having the liberal arts as a sole way to wisdom is contradicted by the developments in these areas, such as the practical application of theory of pure thought.



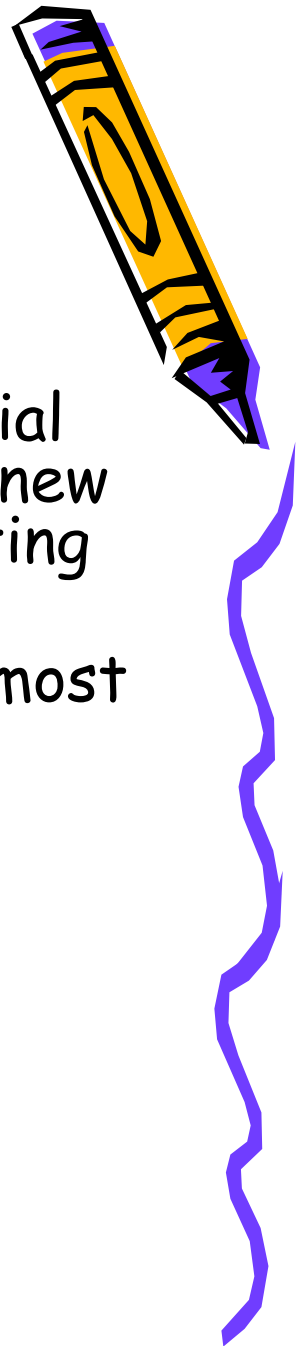
Education as an instrument for transforming culture



- Education plays a creative role in modifying and reshaping the culture
- Education and public policy are intimately related
- Progress in Education is limited without progress in public policy, and vice versa
- Belief in the power of education to deal with problems of culture, such as preventing poverty, etc.



Horace Mann and Dewey



- Mann- relationship between education and social problem; effort to use education to fashion a new American character out of a "maze of conflicting cultural traditions" (126).
- Dewey- education as a social process and the most effective instrument of social reconstruction; education shapes individuals who then shapes culture.
- Social responsibilities of the schools to meet current social needs, priorities in curriculum (essentials)



- Emphasis on changing society by changing individuals
- Shaping school programs according to perspectives of the changing society
- Leads to an emphasis on problem solving in the social sciences
- Function of education as an instrument for social change through gradual reform or planned effort
- All decisions about education should be made within the context of the society



- Fundamental responsibility for training in the culture's essential values and loyalties
- "If a society and culture are changing, it is the task of schools to play a constructive role in that change" - education must place its aims to changing conditions (ie. Rapid change in modern technology)
- In order for the schools to change with culture, they must also change the materials being used.
- Education is a moral undertaking- begins and ends with value decisions...selects which parts of culture, what wisdom, which values, what ideals to transmit to the students.



"Reconstructionist"



Task of educators is

- to analyze the social trends
- to discern the problems society is facing
- to speculate on the consequences of the current social dynamics
- to project the values and the goals in order to maintain democracy



Education Transforms Culture



- Educators must pay close attention to social forces and the educative effects
- Curriculum must be based on the building of "social goals"- making public policy
- Total educative impact of the school must include changes in beliefs, personality structures, and social arrangements



Think again.

- Now, which do you believe?
- Education as preserver of cultural heritage

Or

Education as instrument for
transforming culture

