

mentor's introduction

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Today's news is tomorrow's history. If it is difficult to understand today's news, it is proportionately more difficult to understand yesterday's news, last year's news, or the accumulated news of fifty years--particularly as filtered through the eyes and ears of hundreds of interpreters.

Compared with other aspects of the culture, American Art Education has a relatively short history and literary representation of the field has an even shorter history. Limited by their professional values and guided by theories prevailing at any particular moment, professional readers respond by embracing or attacking, thereby tempering and filtering the points made by the author. In the tradition of the Hegelian dialectic, the Art Education pendulum swings in a particular direction far enough to create a response pulling it back into the opposite direction; it then swings in the second direction until opposing forces are sufficient to return it to the first. In order to gain a comprehensive view of the pendulum of themes swinging throughout the lifetime of the Art Education profession, one must come to understand as many as possible of the forces at work throughout that lifetime, both intrinsic and extrinsic.

Nanette Carli has undertaken such a task. Understanding the urgency implicit in covering a topic before it becomes inextricably interwoven with peripheral disciplines, obfuscated by interminable and unresolved debates--too long to catalog, she has sorted, classified, and analyzed the internal and external forces at work in her field. Interested in clarifying confusing issues, she has sought the guidance of others who have preceded her in finding order in the growing diversity of themes within Art Education publications. Further, she has relied upon the insight and evaluation of colleagues representing a fifty year range of education and experience in the teaching of Art in the schools.

Encouraged by renewal of interest in historical study of Art Education, as evidenced through important new publications, and particularly through gatherings of Art Education historians at Penn State in 1986 and 1990 and in sessions of recent NAEA conferences, Nanette and other scholars who represent the new generation of researchers in Art Education, are making important contributions to a professional identity, complete not only in knowing who we are and what we think, but also in knowing how we came to

be where we are. Such knowledge is vital in making decisions about directions for the future of Art Education.