The Handbook of Research and Policy in Art Education, which we have had the privilege of editing, marks a milestone in the field of art education. The initial forays into the teaching of art emerged in America around the middle of the 19th century. It was largely practical in orientation, a means through which girls might secure some of the skills that at that time were believed to define their gender. Art education also enabled manufacturers whose work depended on the design of their products to find able apprentices, trained in drawing, who could contribute to the success of their businesses. Even throughout the first half of the 20th century, the general orientation of the field was focused on matters of craft, on the making of the beautiful image, and on the development of creativity, especially in young children. What this hallmark handbook represents is an effort to bring together research and theory, policy and concepts that guide and give shape to what people in art education try to accomplish. It should not be said that there is a uniform chorus of opinion concerning what members of the field ought to embrace with respect to its aims and its content. There is, indeed, a healthy diversity. The section of the Handbook dealing with emerging visions describes some, but not all, of these competing orientations.

The Handbook also serves as a kind of assertion—an assertion that the field of art education has a body of scholarship to which prospective teachers of art and surely those aspiring to scholarship in the field should have access. This volume represents an effort to define some of the categories needing attention and to share with readers some of the ideas that researchers and other scholars have generated with respect to them.

Those familiar with other fields—such as the study of teaching, music education, the field of general curriculum—are aware of the fact that in these fields, research handbooks have already been published; some are in their second and third editions. In many ways, those fields have had a closer affinity to scholarship and research than has the field of art education. As we have indicated, the roots of art education are found in the practice of teaching arts and crafts, for arts and crafts served as the major models for teachers and scholars wishing to understand what might be done at the practical level. Theory and research were to come later. Research was not
a term that had high currency in the field. The first research journal serving art education on a national level was Studies in Art Education which was initially published in 1960. In a sense, in this Handbook the field proclaims its affinity to scholarship and takes its place among fields that take their scholarship seriously.

For many working in the educational community, such as principals and superintendents of schools, and parents and teachers, the idea that there is a body of scholarship around the practice of teaching painting or the creation of sculpture will come as something of a surprise if not a shock. In this sense, the Handbook is also a testimony to others that working in the arts in school, classrooms, out-of-school settings, and higher education, is not simply a matter of emulating prior practice—Although a part of it certainly is—but that it is built on reflection and the effort to understand how complex forms of thinking can be promoted. Thus, the Handbook can be considered a kind of mapping of some of the territory that art educators and others interested in visual art education might consider when attempting to understand the parameters of the field. If the map is a good one, it will change over time. Useful work in the field of art education not only describes the field as it is but also provides the material through which scholars can generate new ideas and new directions in which to travel. Tautologically speaking, the process of change is marked by change. We hope that the Handbook contributes not only to change but also to improvement.

It is also important, we think, to say something about what the Handbook is not. It is not a body of fixed conclusions. It is not a recipe book for how to do things. It is not a dictionary. It is a resource for one’s professional reflection. This reflection includes, of course, new ideas about any aspect of the field, ideas that have the potential to give it direction or to yield insights that deepen our understanding of what is teachable, learnable, and what can potentially be experienced in and through art.

In doing scholarship, especially in a field that embraces the idea that art is a distinctive and important form of human experience, there is a tendency in using technical language and high-level abstractions to lose sight of the concrete conditions that give professional activity in this field significance. In other words, it is possible to forget the art in the effort to understand the psychology. We assert this possibility as a caution because it would be a small victory, if victory at all, to lose the essence of the field by becoming preoccupied with ideas and policies that somehow forget that to which they are instrumental in the first place. In trying to understand art you have to keep the albatross flying while you study it. The paradox is related to the ability to survive dissection in order to understand what makes a life vital, whether that life exists in the presence of an individual or in the vitality of a field.

A word about the intended audience—like most editors, we hope this volume will be read by virtually everybody. Realistically, however, we know that is not going to happen. The main audience for this Handbook consists of scholars in education, particularly those interested in the social and individual factors affecting performance in the visual arts in whatever setting they happen to occupy. This population includes professors and graduate students, undergraduate students in education, and researchers in education in virtually all research fields for which the ideas examined and discussed in this volume are relevant. Increasingly, researchers in education are coming to recognize that there are many ways the world can be represented; all of the arts are among the ways people experience and know the world. Researchers are helping us understand how people use the arts to learn, experience, and see what otherwise may be obscure. Put another way, the times are receptive to an enlarged rather than to a reductive conception of the content and aims of education. In some ways, those in art education understood this before most working in other fields.
ORGANIZATION OF THE HANDBOOK: SECTIONS AND CHAPTERS

A Word About Beginnings

At a November 1999 meeting of the National Art Education Association (NAEA) Research Commission in Washington DC, Elliot Eisner suggested that a handbook for research and policy in art education would be an important contribution to the field. Professor Eisner convinced Commission members of the need for such a document and developed a proposal that was endorsed by the Commission and subsequently approved by the NAEA Board of Directors. Michael Day, a member of the Research Commission, was invited to serve as coeditor with Eisner.

Eisner and Day formulated section topics to include important issues while avoiding vagueness due to lack of specificity. This was by no means a simple task and might have been approached any number of ways. The categories for the six sections were intended not only to be broad enough to allow for creativity and innovation by the section editors but also to provide sufficient direction and a reasonable focus. During this process, the question was often asked: “What is being left out?”

It is difficult, if not impossible, to include every significant issue and topic in a publication such as this. Although the Handbook is broad and inclusive in its organization and intent, it is not comprehensive. Scholars will note areas of interest and import that are not addressed, research that is not reviewed, important references that are not cited, and discussions that are not included in this work. Hopefully, these shortcomings and unintended omissions (as well as 828 pages of scholarly writing) will serve to provoke discourse and motivate discussion. We invite and welcome critical response to this effort, particularly as such discourse results in improved efforts to fulfill the needs of the research and scholarly community with interests in the field of art education.

Roles of the Editors

Following formulation of categories for the six sections of the Handbook, our most significant contribution was to select persons to serve as section editors. Our approach was to choose experienced and respected scholars with records of research and publication within the arena of the respective section topics. Each editor accepted significant responsibility for crafting his or her section. They selected authors, suggested topics, and determined the scope of their respective sections. They were responsible for editing the works of the authors they selected, seeing that deadlines were met, and maintaining communication between the general editors and the section authors. The two general editors maintained a lighthanded relationship that allowed each section editor to proceed with few restrictions.

We mention with some pride that all who worked so hard on this endeavor contributed their efforts as academic volunteers. None received remuneration for the countless hours and painstaking research required for creating and editing each chapter. Their reward is the satisfaction gained by generous professionals in the advancement of the field of knowledge and practice to which they are dedicated.

When we invited the section editors to assume responsibility for the selection of chapter authors, we did not have, nor did we want to have, a specific format or array of criteria to be used in preparing chapters. Consistent with the arts, we value diversity, and the reader will find among the chapters a wide range of writing styles and approaches to scholarship. Some display the traditional accoutrements of scholarly social science research, whereas others display interpretive and other forms of qualitative scholarship. We find this diversity quite acceptable and consistent with the general field’s interest in the cultivation of productive differences.
We indicated that the six section editors were responsible for selecting authors for their sections. We reviewed those proposed appointments and had a hand in shaping the appointments. In addition, the section editors were responsible for reviewing the chapters, at least at an initial level. We reviewed the chapters as well but left final decisions regarding the form and content of the chapters to the section editors.

It should be clear from our work that the Handbook as a whole is a collective effort of scholars committed to the importance of the work and willing to take on what is a detailed and at times arduous and complex process. We are extremely grateful to the section editors for the important contribution that they made to the Handbook.

Relationship of Research and Practice

Earlier we discussed the connections between research and practice in the field of art education, described the growing theoretical and conceptual sophistication of members in the field, and reviewed the ways in which the field has changed with respect to these issues since its birth around the middle of the 19th century. But there is another issue that should be addressed pertaining to the uses of research. It has to do with the relationship of practice, research, policy. Practice, being a practical endeavor, deals inevitably with particular situations. Theory, particularly theory in the sciences, always addresses abstractions and in large measure, idealizations of a phenomenon. As a result, theory and other conceptual apparatus needs to be appraised not by its formulaic contributions to problem solving in the practical world, but by the insight and guidance it affords practitioners in addressing what are always uniquely particular circumstances. No student, for example, is identical to any other even though they may share many similarities. The teacher needs to fine-tune teaching practices to suit specific groups or individuals. Thus, theory is a guide in human affairs, not a formula for action. For those who seek prescriptions, the Handbook will be a disappointment; it has none to provide. What it will provide are ideas that can serve as guides for serious and often difficult reflection upon local circumstances. We believe there is much in the Handbook to provide that kind of guidance and insight. Looked at metaphorically, theoretical material provides an aperture through which to peer. The contours of that aperture differ from discipline to discipline, from theoretical perspective to theoretical perspective. No single aperture tells the whole story, and all put together at the same time create an occlusion; nothing can be seen because there is no longer an opening. Thus, apertures are useful as individuals acquire the skill to see through them and the flexibility to shift apertures at will. Hence, graduate education in some sense is concerned with providing students with a variety of such apertures and developing the appetite and flexibility to look through many of them. Because these apertures are made by humans, knowledge about a state of affairs is, in the end, a construction that is influenced by the tools with which one works and the forms of representation one uses to describe, reveal, and display what one has learned.

Policy in Art Education

The first section of the Handbook is designed to illuminate core value questions regarding the purposes of art education. How a field defines its purposes, that is, the objectives it seeks to attain, is critical for virtually all that follows because the kind of research, for example, that one undertakes, the kind of preparation provided for prospective teachers, the ways in which the field interprets itself to the larger community are all shaped by policies pertaining to the fundamental functions of the field. The section on policy looks at these functions from a range of perspectives and examines research that purports to justify art education by its contributions to extra-artistic outcomes such as academic achievement. Thus, policy helps shape the direction
INTRODUCTION

of one’s research questions and the consequences of research—what has been learned through it—help shape policy. There is an ineluctable dialectic between the two.

Learning in Art

The second section of the Handbook focuses on development and learning in art. Art education has a long history of efforts to describe what is often referred to as “stages” of children’s art. These stages have been regarded, in the main, as genetically unfolding processes that manifest themselves in graphic form. To understand development, one needed to assume a biologically driven framework—a framework that is being problematized today. There is now a growing emphasis on the impact of culture on children’s and adolescents’ image-making. This emphasis on culture tends to diminish the importance of biological imperatives and emphasize matters of value, opportunity to learn, and the like. Indeed, art itself is seen as a cultural artifact. What one values aesthetically, it is claimed, is dependent on how one has been socialized. Thus, the artistic development of children is, for some, to be regarded as the product of learning rather than as the consequences of an unfolding of genetically conferred capacities. The section on development and learning in art presents an array of perspectives, some of which conflict with one another.

Assessment

Assessment in the visual arts constitutes the third section addressed in the Handbook. Given the implementation of educational policies that mandate the testing of students in virtually all subject areas, assessment becomes particularly critical in the field of art education. It is critical because the field embraces outcomes that are not simply routine or definable in their entirety in advance; it values outcomes that are imaginative, diverse, and interesting in any number of ways. Thus, there may not be a single criterion or even a set of criteria or rubrics as they are called that can adequately represent what students have learned. And yet there is considerable pressure on art educators to formulate standards and use them to evaluate what students have accomplished. This leaves the field in a bind. If conventional standards and assessment practices are not employed, the field might lose even the marginal position it now enjoys. If, however, conventional approaches to assessment are employed, all in the name of validity and reliability, doing so might undermine the distinctive values the field seeks to achieve. These, and other issues are particularly important in the assessment arena, and the section itself represents perspectives on assessment that extend from the interpersonal critique in the visual arts to large-scale assessment of student outcomes as represented by the National Assessment of Educational Progress. The reader should come away from this section with a broad appreciation of the varieties of assessments and the programs in which these assessments function.

Historical Currents in Art Education

Another mark of the emergence of art education within the academic discourse is increased attention paid in recent years to histories of the field. As a subject too often regarded as peripheral to the central core of general education, art education has a history of shifting rationales. The field has transformed itself through a series of justifications that promised a variety of educational benefits for students. At various periods in the history of art education, these justifications have promised to prepare students for the industrial workplace, to foster creativity, to provide for a healthy integration of personality, to develop the aesthetic lens for understanding, and to assist students to more adequately negotiate the contemporary world of
commercial applications in art and visual culture. These and other rationales have waxed and waned in practice and in academic discourse, and most have persisted to some extent in the art curricula and publications of art education.

This section of the Handbook presents two ambitious chapters: one that addresses and discusses art education in the 19th century, and one that offers a perspective on art education in the 20th century. Both chapters relate the histories of this field within the larger contexts of general education and social, political, and cultural events that influence education.

Teaching and Teacher Education

Teaching is obviously central to the field of art education, yet art teaching is relatively unstudied by researchers and scholars. If the body of research on teaching art is weak, one might ask, what guides the preparation of new teachers? Questions relevant to contemporary educational policy abound, suggesting a pressing need for competent, informative, and insightful research. In today’s economic environment, what motivates college students to choose teaching as a goal? What are the potential enticements for prospective art teachers to join the profession? In the face of a general teacher shortage, how might the profession recruit prospective teachers, support new teachers, and retain experienced professionals? What are the characteristics of art teachers’ professional lives in their classrooms? In what ways do values promoted within their university preparation interact with practical pressures new teachers experience from the institutions in which they serve? What are the available avenues for certification to teach? How might an art teacher’s experience vary according to the state, the community, the school district, and according to the school situation they choose? What are the implications of current emphasis on assessment, newer instructional technologies, and educational standards on the working lives of art teachers? These and many other interesting and vital questions associated with teaching and teacher preparation are addressed, analyzed, and discussed in this section, and a thorough analysis of research methods and methodologies employed in their study is offered in a separate chapter. The seven authors of this section serve the field in establishing a research base about art education teaching and teacher education. The chapters range widely across topics of teaching and teacher education, from the status of current research to suggestions for future directions, all with the unique focus of art education.

Emerging Visions of Art Education

As we mentioned earlier, art education has undergone significant change over the past 2 centuries. Change in art education, perhaps more than in other areas of the curriculum, has been complete and radical far beyond the mere updating of subject content. Philosophies, theories, and rationales for art in general education have been transformed from one paradigm to another. But before significant change can occur, a vision is required that articulates, motivates, and provides direction for the desired change.

An educational paradigm is a relatively complete and stable pattern of ideas, propositions, and theories that provide guidance for practice. It is a more consistent set of ideas in comparison with an educational vision, which can be viewed as a candidate for paradigmatic status. Visions, no matter how grand, need on to be acted on to become real. Ideas, clearly, are important. Without them change has no rudder. But change also needs wind and a sail to catch it. Without them there is no movement. A vision might be more tentative and speculative than a paradigm as it offers new ideas and directions, competes for status through advocacy of change, and inspires disciples to pursue the vision.

In this section, authors are free to present their proposals for the futures of art education. They are free to speculate on possibilities for improvement, create convincing portraits of
new visions, and advocate directions that compete with the discipline-based paradigm that is salient in the field today. The chapters in this provocative section are offered with an invitation for readers to speculate, critique, and contribute their own views and visions of the field of art education. In the spirit of creative scholarly discourse, this invitation serves as a fitting end-piece for the *Handbook of Research and Policy in Art Education*. 