
Imagination and Speculation as Historical Impulse: Engaging Uncertainties within Art Education History and Historiography

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Through the presentation of three historical accounts, this article explores the roles imagination and speculation may play within the writing and study of history. By looking at these three incidents, each drawn from the history and historiography of art education over the past 150 years, through a perspective that embraces the value of utilizing imagination and grounded speculation, it is believed that a reasoned and supported case is made for each of the three historical interpretations put forth. It is intended that by engaging in this process of historical speculation, others in art education will be enkindled to explore the past and read about the history of this field in new and adventuresome ways, thus demonstrating the beneficial roles imagination and grounded speculation may play in generating much-needed historical inquiry and discussion in art education.

The words "imagination" and "speculation" do not come to mind frequently when considerations are made regarding historical investigation. Yet the writing of history, more often than not, consists of the historian's ability to choreograph a dance of compatibility between the fragments of a known past, and a world constructed through reasoned imagination and grounded speculation of the historian. John Lewis Gaddis has explored this notion in his book, *The Landscape of History* (2002), in which he offered that both "logic and imagination" are essential to the historian (p. 41). Historian J. H. Plumb (1971) concurred, indicating that the writing of history "requires imagination, creativity and empathy as well as observation as accurate as a scholar can make it" (p. 12). Thus, in the production of engaging history, the writer is called upon to do so through some degree of imagination and speculation, which in turn, evokes the visionary character of the reader.

Taking hold of these ideas, it could be argued that suppositional wonderings, speculations, playful musings, and the employment of questions that begin with, "What if," "How might," or "Why did," are actually a serious and necessary part of meaningful investigation into the past. If so, then inquiry and imagination become significant ingredients in the engagement of fruitful historical exploration. Trevor-Roper (in Lloyd-Jones, Pearl, & Worden, 1981) has emphasized this notion:

If we are to study history as a living subject, not merely as a coloured pageant, or an antiquarian chronicle, or a dogmatic scheme, we must not indeed lose ourselves in barren speculations, but we must leave some room for the imagination. (p. 364)

The historian needs to guard against "barren speculations," as argued by Trevor-Roper, yet it is valuable to consider that thoughtful and grounded speculations and wonderings of the imagination are profitable motivators that assist the historian in initiating and carrying out lively and meaningful investigations into the past. History writing is often a tentative and somewhat ambiguous enterprise, and historical "interpretation can be filled with speculation" (Walch & Harding, 2007, p. 8). Thus, the employment of thoughtfully-based questions, inquisitive imaginations, and supported speculations may lead the historian into investigative terrain that provides new and unique perspectives on the past and, perhaps also, on the present.

A fine example in art education of this published historical confluence between engaging questions, grounded speculations, and inquisitive imaginations is found in Diana Korzenik's *Drawn to Art* (1985), in which the writer explored the mid-19th century as a time when Americans were "possessed by the passion for learning to draw" (p. 2). Elucidating this belief, Korzenik undertook an exploration of the Cross family, living in 19th-century Merrimack, New Hampshire. In her work, Korzenik utilized many of the Cross family's childhood drawings, watercolors, prints, writings, paper documents, family mementos, and art books, from which the writer "pieced together" (p. 6) a story of the Cross family's emersion into learning about art. Employing a strategy of anchoring her historical discussion within the considerable information known about the Crosses and the world of their day, Korzenik recognized that the "remaining gaps are tantalizing" and "the lack of evidence tempts me to invent this scenario" wherein "the following scene is pure invention" (p. 37). Korzenik then skillfully re-created and wove together a rich tapestry of the Cross family and their participation in art, utilizing what is known about these individuals from the information available, yet doing so through the use of grounded speculation.¹

Any attempt to understand a time and place beyond our own requires the ability to wonder about and empathize with questions and speculations we can never fully know, yet the recognition of such limitations should not be regarded as reason to forgo engagement in historical study. It is incumbent upon the historian not to overextend her or his speculative or imaginative conjecture beyond what the material will support, yet it could be well argued that imagination and speculation are qualities that can assist the historian in delving into investigations in ways that are both unique and meaningful.

Giving form to these ideas about the role of imagination and speculation in historical investigation, what follows in this article are three speculative and somewhat imaginative historical accounts that emerge out of incidents in the history and historiography of art education within the last 150 years. Although the interpretive historical incidents discussed here require a certain degree of conjecture, each has been built on information that reaches beyond unsupported supposition. It is intended that by engaging in this process of historical speculation, others will be encouraged to recognize

¹ Korzenik was so successful at this task that she received the 1986 *Boston Globe* L. L. Winship Literary Award for her book, *Drawn to Art* (1985).

the wonderment of history and historical investigation and see the value of exploring the past with an inquisitive and imaginative mind, as well as recognize the beneficial roles imagination, contextual understanding, and grounded speculation may play in searching out and participating in provocative historical inquiry and discussion.

Speculative Historical Account One

Events involved in the first account of speculative historical engagement presented here took place in the year 1859, but had their beginning in 1855. In the mid-1850s, Massachusetts lawmakers found themselves in a self-generated legislative quagmire. Throughout the 1800s, the Massachusetts legislature enacted hundreds of laws annually, influencing a vast array of topics within the state. Legislation affecting schools, immigration, railroads, banks, taxation, and a host of industries was ratified. Legislative enactments of that era look, in many ways, like those passed into law by legislators today. However, an important technological difference has set the two time periods apart: Document printing and publishing capabilities of the mid-19th century do not match those currently employed. At that time, legislation was ratified by lawmakers year after year, yet by the mid-century there had not been any overall consolidating and cataloging of the laws passed annually in Massachusetts for 20 years, since 1835 (Messerli, 1972). Document retrieval and printing capabilities were not available to quickly cross-reference and bring up to date the changes that were made in Massachusetts law each year. For this reason, two decades of ratified bills had become a confusing legislative entanglement, to the point that considerable time and energy was expended by lawmakers in researching what laws had or had not been enacted, which ratified measures had been altered, replaced, or repealed through subsequent legislative action, and in what years such changes took place. The legal system in Massachusetts was becoming increasingly encumbered with each passing year, and lawmakers decided it was time to rectify the problematic situation.

In 1855, three individuals, skilled in legislative understanding, were given the charge of untangling two decades of lawmaking that had occurred in Massachusetts. Those assigned the task of sorting and organizing the enacted laws in Massachusetts were Joel Parker, of Cambridge; William A. Richardson, of Lowell; and Andrew A. Richmond, of Adams (Secretary of the Commonwealth, 1860, p. iii). Their directive was to produce a single large volume that brought all the laws of Massachusetts up to date, and which reconciled any inconsistencies found in the state statutes.² This codification of laws initiated by Parker, Richardson, and Richmond was to be completed before the opening of the 1860 legislative session.

During the years 1855 through 1859, the committee members worked to organize and document 20 years of legislative action. This arduous editorial task was drawn to completion in late-summer and fall of 1859, and in a special session of the Massachusetts legislature, the updated extensive volume of consolidated laws was finally approved by legislators

² In the words of the time, the three men were charged to undertake the following: "Omit redundant enactments and those which may have ceased to have any effect or influence on existing rights; to reject superfluous words, and condense into as concise and comprehensive a form, as is consistent with a full and clear expression of the will of the legislature, all circuitous, tautological, and ambiguous phraseology; to suggest any mistakes, omissions, inconsistencies, and imperfections which may appear in the laws to be consolidated and arranged, and the manner in which they may be corrected, supplied, and amended" (Secretary of the Commonwealth, 1860, p. iii).

on December 28, 1859, to go into effect January 1, 1860 (Secretary of the Commonwealth, 1860, p. iv). An examination of the school laws housed in this document showed eight subjects were specifically listed as required to be taught in Massachusetts public schools: orthography, reading, writing, English grammar, geography, arithmetic, the history of the United States, and good behavior (Secretary of the Commonwealth, 1860, p. 215).

Along with the eight required subjects, five areas of study were listed as optional in the school laws of Massachusetts. These five subjects were algebra, vocal music, drawing, physiology, and hygiene, and "shall be taught by lectures or otherwise, in all the public schools in which the [local] school committee deem it expedient" (Secretary of the Commonwealth, 1860, p. 215). This reference to drawing, as a discretionary school subject, marked the first time this area of study was referenced specifically within the laws of any state (Green, 1948). It would be 10 more years, in 1870, until the subject of drawing was listed among those *required* to be taught in the public schools of Massachusetts (Stankiewicz, Amburgy, & Bolin, 2004).

The listing of these five optional school subjects has raised an important question about their inclusion into Massachusetts law when the statutes were codified late in 1859. In what year was each of these five discretionary subjects ratified by lawmakers? This question has been answered for the studies of algebra, physiology, and hygiene, as an investigation into the Massachusetts statutes shows that these three school subjects were passed into law as optional studies by the Massachusetts legislature in 1858 (Secretary of the Commonwealth, 1858, p. 6). However, such is not the case for the subjects of vocal music and drawing. After searching in the pre-1860 Massachusetts legal statutes year by year, over and over again, it is clear that no legislative action was ever undertaken that led to the inclusion of either drawing or vocal music into the school laws of Massachusetts. In other words, when the laws of Massachusetts were updated and consolidated into a single volume by Parker, Richardson, and Richmond—work which was completed late in 1859—drawing and vocal music were inserted into the existing list of three optional school subjects (algebra, physiology, and hygiene), yet these two specific areas of study were never passed into law as such, as were the other three subjects on the list. This action begs the question: Why were the subjects of drawing and vocal music introduced into Massachusetts law when the revisions were completed late in 1859, without ever being ratified by lawmakers of that state? A definitive answer to this question is not clear as there are no records to reveal the reason for the insertion of these two subjects into Massachusetts law, but I propose a speculative possibility for this perplexing occurrence within the history of art education.

A very important event in Massachusetts took place in the summer of 1859, at the precise time the final work of consolidating and arranging the Massachusetts laws was being accomplished by the legislative committee. On August 2, 1859 the life of one of the greatest, if not the most prominent, educators of the 19th century came to an end, after a brief illness.

3 One other piece of support for this historical speculation is worth noting. When the task of untangling the laws of Massachusetts was begun by Parker, Richardson, and Richmond in 1855, it had been 20 years since a similar process had been undertaken in the state. In 1831 a legislative committee was appointed to codify years of Massachusetts lawmaking, much like the committee was charged to do in 1855. In the early 1830s the process to unravel the increasingly confused jumble of legislation in Massachusetts was undertaken through a committee spearheaded by a young and articulate lawyer/politician who, according to Messerli (1972), "played a leading role as the work progressed" (p. 204), and who eventually, along with Representative Theron Metcalf, oversaw "the publication of the new laws" (p. 205). This vibrant and emerging politician who headed the legislative committee was Horace Mann. Perhaps as a tribute to the work Mann had accomplished for lawmakers and general citizens of Massachusetts, and as

(continued)

This noted educator was from Massachusetts, and his name was Horace Mann. Giving up a promising career in law and politics (Messerli, 1972), Mann became the first Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education—arguably the most powerful educational post in the United States at that time—a position initiated by the state in 1837 and which Mann held for 12 years, until 1848.

Horace Mann was a prolific writer and orator. During the dozen years Mann was Secretary of the Board of Education, he wrote 12 extensive annual educational reports, which were among the most influential documents on teachers, schools, and schooling published in the 19th century in this country. Downs (1974) asserted, "Mann's influence in stimulating an educational renaissance was by no means limited to Massachusetts. His fame was country-wide. Virtually every state in the Union felt the impact of his ideas" (p. 117). In reading Mann's educational reports and other of his writings, it is clear that as a powerful supporter of public schools, Mann was an advocate for and champion of two subjects that until then had received relatively little professional attention by educators: drawing and vocal music. In two of his educational reports, he included specific and lengthy discussions of the benefits for students of instruction in drawing (in 1843) (Mann, 1844), and vocal music (in 1844) (Mann, 1845). These discussions by Mann were very influential in directing the way educators considered, and at times implemented, these subjects within the public school curriculum, even though these subjects were not specifically listed in the laws of Massachusetts (or any other state) at the time of his writing. Horace Mann was tremendously instrumental in advocating for and advancing the teaching of drawing and vocal music in the public schools of the United States, beyond only those schools situated in Massachusetts.

The emphasis Horace Mann placed on the subjects of drawing and vocal music may have been the reason these two subjects were included in the laws of Massachusetts in late 1859. Perhaps the insertion of drawing and vocal music in the laws of Massachusetts was done by the legislative committee as an honorable response to the death of Horace Mann, this highly prominent and influential educator and politician in Massachusetts who died and was being eulogized in Boston and throughout the United States just as work on untangling and consolidating these Massachusetts laws was being completed.³ Such legislative action cannot be verified by documentation in historical accounts of the time, but this speculative interpretation is initiated here through an imaginative examination of the past, grounded in the context of the day and supported by events from that era.

Speculative Historical Account Two

The second account of speculative historical engagement in art education presented here is more accurately described as a discussion of historiography rather than history. It centers on the subject of manual training, and particularly some of the educational historians who have written about this topic. The term "manual training" has been used to describe a form of education

prominent in various European locations during the 19th and early 20th centuries, and particularly in the United States in the last quarter of the 19th century until about the conclusion of World War I (Stankiewicz, 2001).⁴ Manual training was a form of education initiated in schools “not to teach trades.... The products [made by the students] were to have no market value” (Bennett, 1937, p. 337). In its inception, manual training was undertaken in order to promote the learning of skills that could be gained through understanding the physical principles employed in utilizing tools, engineering, and construction, and not, primarily, how to use the tools themselves as a means of vocational employment.

Manual training was associated with art education in the late-19th and early-20th centuries because of its hands-on quality (Efland, 1990). The noted educational historian Ellwood Cubberley (1934) expressed the conjoining of manual training and art education in the early-20th century:

With the new light on child development gained from child-study and the newer psychology, manual training came to be conceived of in its proper light as a means of individual expression, and to be extended to new forms, materials, colors, and new practical and artistic ends. (p. 466)⁵

Because of its close relationship with art education, the subject of manual training has been one of the few topics discussed extensively within historical writings in both general education and art education.

Educational historians have repeatedly referred to manual training (e.g., Cremin, 1961; Cubberley, 1934; Karier, 1986; Lazerson, 1971; Nasaw, 1979; Peterson, 1985; Spring, 2001). A number of these writers (e.g., Cremin, 1961; Cubberley, 1934; Peterson, 1985) not only describe the value and influence manual training had in the schools of the United States, but have recorded what is regarded to be the specific origin of this hands-on form of education in this country. Regarding this beginning, Cubberley (1934) expressed,

The first general introduction of the United States to this new form of instruction [manual training] came as a result of the exhibit made by the Russian Government, at the Centennial Exhibition in 1876, of the work ... done by the pupils at the Imperial Technical School at Moscow. (p. 462)

Cremin (1961) added that in encountering this Russian manual training exhibition, “American education was never the same thereafter” (p. 25). Within 10 years, manual training found its way into the curriculum of high schools and elementary schools throughout the United States (Bennett, 1937; Cubberley, 1934; Stankiewicz, 2001).

Historians of schooling in the United States have recorded that two highly influential educators in this country visited the exhibition of the Russian system of manual training at the Centennial extravaganza in Philadelphia, and they were profoundly influenced by the particularly successful form of hand-based education they encountered there. These two educators were

a commendation for his lifetime of service in the development of schooling within the state, two school subjects very important to him—drawing and vocal music—were inserted into Massachusetts law late in the year 1859, soon after his death.

⁴ Manual training was a precursor to industrial arts education in North American schools, and over the years it took on a variety of configurations. It was begun in the United States, however, not as a form of instruction whose intent was to prepare students in the skillful use of tools and mechanical implements solely for employment purposes. Manual training was initiated in this country “without any direct or immediate trade or industrial motive” (Bennett, 1937, p. 318), but rather to teach students mathematical and engineering principles *through* the use of industrial tools.

⁵ An abundance of art education literature of that time makes reference to the analogous association between manual training and the teaching of art in public schools (e.g., Clark, Hicks, & Perry, 1897; Froehlich & Snow, 1905, 1906).

Calvin Woodward, a professor at Washington University, in St. Louis, and John Runkle, President of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), in Boston. In response to the exhibition of the Russian Imperial Technical School, Runkle wrote in 1878 that the Russian method of manual training "is not only educational, but it constitutes the only true and philosophical key to all industrial education" (in Bennett, 1937, p. 321). Communicating in a similar tone, also in 1878, Woodward offered:

To Russia belongs the honor of having solved the problem of tool instruction.... Russia first conceived and tested the idea of analyzing tool practice into its elements and teaching the elements abstractly to a class. In their hands, manual tool instruction has become a science. (in Bennett, 1937, p. 322)

Both these men, highly regarded educators in the United States at this time, extolled the advantages of a Russian-based system of manual training education in writings and public speeches delivered throughout the United States in the years directly following the Centennial exhibition in Philadelphia.

When examination is made of the primary general histories of art education published before 2000, which include information on the 19th century, discussion of manual training is clearly present throughout this body of literature. Reference to manual training is found in Efland (1990), Wygant (1983), Logan (1955), Green (1948), Belshe (1946), and Bennett (1937). Of these six writers, only one omitted any record of the Russian system of manual training as marking the influential initiation of this form of hands-on education in the United States. The single history of art education from this list to include a discussion of manual training but neglect mention of the Russian exhibition at the Centennial celebration was Logan's *Growth of Art in American Schools* (1955).

In his book, Frederick Logan (1955) presented substantial discussion of manual training in the United States, but this was done in relation to the Swedish or Sloyd system of manual training. Logan made no mention of the well-documented Russian-influenced beginning of manual training education in the United States, as found in the other five historical writings in art education identified here. Why was this so? Why was there no mention of Moscow's Imperial Technical School in the discussion of manual training given by Logan? This question is particularly provocative, given that so many other histories of art education and general education reference this prominent event as the clear and focused beginning of manual training education in the United States. Again, in response to this narrative about a past incident in art education, a speculative reply to this question is given.

Before doing so, however, it must be recognized that a critical feature of any historical analysis is the historian's act of selectivity. It is always the professional prerogative of the historian to choose what information from the past to include and what to exclude from her or his interpretive work.

Not all information about any situation from the past has been inserted into the historical account. What has the historian selected to record as part of history and what has she or he chosen to omit? This being said, it is the obligation of the reader to recognize the selective nature of all historical writing, and to ask why the historian has constructed her or his interpretation of history in a particular way. On what basis has the historian decided to embrace certain people, events, activities, and theories from the past and insert them in the pages of history, while at the same time ignore the recognition of others? Walch and Harding (2007) offered that the historian's work is influenced by his or her own perceptions, thus "matters such as politics of the time period or religious beliefs" (p. 8) help shape the history that is written. It is crucial for readers of history to recognize that contextual conditions influence the work of the historian, an understanding that is pivotal in considering Logan's omission of reference to the Russian system of manual training in his history of art education. Addressing this notion, Carr (1961) stated: "When you take up a historical work, it is not enough to look for the author's name in the title-page: look also for the date of publication or writing—it is sometimes even more revealing" (p. 51).

Following Carr's urging, it is beneficial to recognize that Logan's book was published in 1955, a time of critical import for the United States. This was an era of tension and growing mistrust within many social, political, and educational spheres of the country as the Cold War between the United States and Soviet Union was increasing in intensity. Given this tumultuous climate, it could be argued that the mid-1950s was not a propitious time to document and praise the positive aspects of anything Russian—particularly in education—nor refer to Russia as having perfected a specific form of education (manual training) to be a "science," as did Washington University professor Calvin Woodward in his statement referred to previously. It may not have been in Professor Logan's best interest to include a discussion of Russia's positive contribution to the American educational system in his writing at this time.⁶

It is not known with certainty that Logan omitted mention of the Russian Imperial Technical School in his writing about manual training because of the possible repercussions he may have faced were he to include such discussion in his book during this era of anti-communist sentiment.⁷ Fredrick Logan died a few years ago, so we will likely never know with any degree of certainty the accuracy of this speculation about why mention of the Russian system of manual training was omitted from his historical writing. I do think, however, this notion is a worthy consideration that helps "demonstrate how imagination can interact with scholarship to broaden our view of the past" and to show "how the historical imagination can be applied not only to forming new conceptualizations of the subject matter of history, but also to asking new questions of documents and doing different things with them" (Sharpe, 1991, p. 36). Approaching the analysis of history and historiography through a speculative process may well lead

⁶ To consider the impact of the Cold War on higher education in the United States, it is eye-opening to read the works by Schrecker (1986), Holmes (1989), Lewis (1988), and McCormick (1989). These and other writers have reminded us in dramatic fashion that the early- and mid-1950s were a time of strong anti-communist sentiment and intrusive investigative activity in American higher education.

⁷ The individual most known for anti-communist investigations throughout the United States at this time was Joseph R. McCarthy, a legislative senator from Wisconsin between 1947 and 1957. Fredrick Logan was a faculty member at the University of Wisconsin, located in McCarthy's home state.

to new and engaging insights regarding the past, and I believe doing so here provides a valuable example for recognizing and questioning the selectivity of information that all historians bring to their work.

Speculative Historical Account Three

The third account of speculative historical engagement, like the second, is centered on historiography rather than history. It involves the consideration of events in a time closer to our own. On three occasions in the last 40 years the two primary journals published within the field of art education, *Studies in Art Education* and *Art Education*, focused an entire issue of the journal on the subject of history. These historically-directed journal issues occurred in the years 1966, 1976, and 1985.

Specifically, in January 1966, the whole of *Art Education* was devoted to topics of historical significance within the field. The same was true 10 years later for the January 1976 issue of *Art Education*, when a range of historical subjects in art education received attention. The Winter 1985 volume of *Studies in Art Education* contained a full collection of articles directed toward past people, purposes, and practices within art education. If the efforts of the historian, like those of the practicing artist, reflect to some extent the world in which she or he works, then could it also be the case that professional groups and perhaps even organizational bodies are affected by contextual matters that occur around them? Is it only happenstance that at these three particular junctures in time, spanning a period of 20 years, the field of art education (or at least the journal editors' perceptions of the field) engaged in documenting and writing about historical matters? Or, did conditions exist or events happen in the surrounding society, general education, or art education that influenced writers and journal editors to direct the field's attention to issues of history? In short, why might it have been that the editors of these journals in art education focused their attention on history at these three particular points in time?

Addressing these questions, the reason history was highlighted in the January 1976 issue of *Art Education* is the most direct and straightforward to interpret, when considering the three instances when history was made the focus of these art education periodicals. Beginning the preface to the January 1976 volume, Guest Editor, Fred Logan, expressed: "This is the 'Heritage' number of *Art Education*, planned as an introduction to the Bicentennial Year. The authors are dealing with that aspect of life most significant in an anniversary year: the subject of history" (p. 4). The United States bicentennial initiated and shaped an untold number of events that occurred in 1976 in this country, and it is clear through Logan's words that the bicentennial celebration's imprint on this historically-focused issue of *Art Education* was unmistakable.

Why the editors of the journals *Art Education* and *Studies in Art Education* may have directed attention to historical matters in 1966 and 1985,⁸ respectively, is much less obvious and requires somewhat more imaginative and speculative, yet engaging, consideration. The years 1966 and 1985 were

⁸ The Guest Editors of the January 1966 volume of *Art Education* were John S. Keel and Robert J. Saunders. The Senior Editor of the Winter 1985 volume of *Studies in Art Education* was Jean C. Rush.

highly significant within the last five decades of art education. Both dates signaled times when the field contemplated and initiated major theoretical reconsiderations and shifts. The mid-1960s were a time of critical professional growth within art education, immediately following the 1965 Penn State Seminar, which Hoffa (1997) reminded us was "a watershed in the history of art education" (p. 509). This conference, planned at a time when "a new vision of art education had begun to take form" (Efland, 1984, p. 205), provided the opportunity to conduct a forum for intense discussion about the professional nature of art education, particularly within the areas of curriculum development and research.

In similar fashion, 1985 beheld the launch of the vastly pervasive Discipline Based Art Education (DBAE) movement, which materialized with the specific DBAE title after Greer's highly influential article the previous year. Greer's (1984) writing was undertaken for the purpose of "setting out discipline-based principles ... [to provide] an image of what art education could be" (p. 212). Though some of the basic features of a comprehensive and discipline-centered art education had been discussed since the 1960s, it was in the mid-1980s that they received the DBAE designation and were thrust into prominence. It is significant to note that at both junctures in time (1966 and 1985), 20 years apart, when the field of art education was seeking to expand its professional standing and redefine its theoretical position, the two leading journals in the field directed readers' attention to the subject of history. Was the emphasis toward history evidenced by the writings in these journals happenstance, intriguing coincidence, or planned occurrence? Likely, none of these three possibilities can be argued with full certainty, yet I believe it is a valuable exercise to wonder about, imagine, and even speculate why this historical focus in art education occurred at these specific times.

In carrying out this imaginative and speculative endeavor in historiography, it is provocative to suppose that forward thinking shifts that occur in any academic field—in this case art education—may be most thoughtfully undertaken when there is an active body of ongoing research about historical dimensions of the particular field in question. Fertile ground for future disciplinary development may be stimulated and cultivated through conducting inquiry into the past. Knowledgeable and critically examined perspectives about previous purposes, practices, individuals, and institutions in art education may indeed provide vital foundation for the future expansion and maturation of art education. In this vein, Carr (1961) offered: "The belief that we have come from somewhere is closely linked with the belief that we are going somewhere" (p. 176). In both 1966 and 1985, as art education was poised to step somewhere new and unsettled, the field was simultaneously interested in establishing and promoting a more engaging conversation about where art education had been.

What, if anything, might this idea mean for art education today? I believe we are again at a pivotal juncture for art education. Since the commotion of DBAE has died down, the field is faced with a range of diverse purposes

⁹ Also, a significant number of essays in Liora Bresler's (2007) edited volume *International Handbook of Research in Education* are directed toward matters of history.

for art education, such as eco-responsibility, visual culture, material culture, creativity studies, arts-based research, and policy development in art education (among others), all of which are seemingly competing for the field's focused attention and energy. Amidst the current turbulent activity to identify future direction for art education is heard a sprinkling of voices by those engaged in historical investigation (e.g., Bolin, 2006; Chalmers, 2004; Romans, 2005; Stankiewicz, 2007; Stankiewicz, Amburgy, & Bolin, 2004; White, 2004).⁹ The efforts of these and other historical writers must not be overlooked and the significance of their work for art education unrecognized. The questioning, analysis, and interpretation of art education that occurs through the lens of history is critical for our field today. Moreover, could it be we are somewhat stymied in our attempts to move the field forward at the present time because we have not sought to carry out the investigation of our past utilizing the same broad-based fervor and earnestness of purpose we have undertaken to seek out and explore the possible future directions for art education?

If Edward Carr is correct, then these two directions—pursuing an engaging course for the future of art education, while simultaneously looking toward the past with a sense of keen vigor and intensity—do go hand in hand. My purpose in raising this idea is not to advocate a single trajectory for art education of attending forward or in looking back, but rather, to encourage us as we focus our energies toward exploring future directions of art education, to realize that in so doing it is to our advantage if we utilize an equal amount of enthusiasm and insight toward research into people, practices, incidents, and issues from our field's past. I believe it is then, when we explore and pursue with passion and intensity the imaginable and speculative futures *and* pasts of art education, that we can begin to comprehend a more complete range of possibilities for shaping and promoting a well grounded and dynamic professional field of art education.

Conclusion

Imagination and speculation are profitable tools to be utilized by writers and readers of history. When employing their craft, historians and historiographers must guard against the assertion of ungrounded speculation into their historical analyses, yet it is worthwhile to observe that well-supported speculations and imaginations can be useful devices to assist one in initiating intriguing and significant explorations and readings of the past. Even in situations where a writer of history has acquired plentiful information about a specific subject there is still, quite often, much related information the historian does not know. Because information available to the historian has come through a filtering process that is affected by time, place, and individual, it is important for readers of history to recognize that some degree of imagination, speculation, and interpretation are always critical aspects of the historical process. Thus, imagination and speculation do have an essential role to play in the writing and reading of history.

Through the presentation of these three speculative historical accounts, it has been shown that history writing is frequently filled with suppositions, and is often a much more uncertain endeavor than we readily believe. By looking at these three incidents—each drawn from the history and historiography of art education—through a perspective that embraces the value of utilizing grounded imagination and speculation, it is believed that a reasoned and supported case is made for each of the historical interpretations put forth. It is intended that by engaging in this process of historical speculation, others in art education will be enkindled to explore the past and read about historical matters of our field in new and adventuresome ways, thus demonstrating the beneficial roles imagination and grounded speculation may play in generating much needed historical inquiry and discussion in art education.

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