practice. The proscriptive approach to design starts with the functional needs of others. Proscriptive solutions are problem-solving solutions. Inscriptive design methods are problem seeking, and pose questions and probabilities as both process and product. Galen Cranz writes in her book, *The Chair, "*As our ideas change, so do our chairs." Designers should necessarily refer to old ideas, history, and advocacy when they rethink the concept of comfort in ways that will allow them to overturn the artistic approach and allow them to reconceptualize the how, why, and where. The first proscriptive error is to accept an object's form and function as already established. Ms. Cranz calls for a new theoretical model acknowledging the reality that different parts of the body and the mind work together in complex ways. In keeping with an inscriptive approach, she suggests that body-conscious design should integrate critical principles of ergonomics, psycho-social entities of people, and the psychological experience of movement in space.[9] Working similarly within the inscriptive method, Katherine and Michael McCoy, past Directors of Design at Cranbrook and currently at the Illinois Institute of Technology's Institute of Design, teach and practice an *interpretive approach* to design as cultural production; in *interpretive design*, design professionals accept that meaning is partially a negotiation between the viewer/user and objects. They are aware that meaning is embedded in objects symbolically and linguistically, but also phenomenologically, ergonomically, and experientially. In *New Thinking in Design,* Michael McCoy describes how he takes *interpretive design* into practice in product design, furniture, and interiors. McCoy points out that he uses a lot of the same attitudes and methodologies in interiors projects as he uses on electronic projects. "In the case of an interior, one addresses how public space symbolizes or talks about the cultural condition that supported its making–or just how public space indicates its possibilities for use–the way of seeing and the methodology are the same."[10]

DESIGN AS KNOWLEDGE

Design educators

Design educators have struggled with the relationship between instruction and reflection, production and invention, vocation and critical practice. Design education, inherently linked to practice and industry, is about learning "trust" in a process of discovery, the endpoint of which is not initially known or even predictable. From Vitruvius' *The Ten Books on Architecture,*[11]

the oldest extant writing on architecture, we learn that architects need to be equipped with knowledge of many branches of study and varied kinds of learning, and that this knowledge is the child of practice and theory. For the designer of space, both practice and theory are necessary and interrelated components of a complete education.

In interior design education, "practice" is twofold. At the level of instruction, it involves developing technique and skills in a liberal arts setting that fosters thinking and understanding. The designer learns to understand all of the practical aspects of people's intimate connections to the habitable, through material things and behavioral research. Traditionally, interior decoration has dealt with the application of color, texture, and materials, and the knowledgeable and selective collection of furnishings and objects signifying ownership and occupation of space. We collect things. We surround ourselves with objects of necessity, of delight, of use and of memory. Peter Gomes, professor at Harvard University, writes, "I cannot remember a time when I was not interested in things and their arrangement."[12] We embed our homes and work places with things that contribute to the ease and pleasure of our existence and define who we are and sometimes even how we are. When designers question the limits of the inside and accept our natural impulse to fill our spaces with collections, they need to reconceptualize the very idea of habitation. For designers, the study of space is the study over time of human use and experience. With occupation of space comes habitation. With habitation comes complex interaction, associations, activities, and experience. We develop relationships with each other, with the world outside, all through the "designed" world of the artificial.

Theory, if not received at the door of an empirical discipline, comes in like a ghost and upsets the furniture.

Erwin Panofsky

In an important way, however, in the design studio, practice becomes theoretical. To practice effectively, the design professional must question the parameters of habitation and of design practice, not only through factual research and expertise, but through challenging the philosophy of how we might work to reveal how we might live. The relationship between practice and theory in design is similar to the relationship between science and philosophy, experiment and understanding. In *The Story of Philosophy,* Will and Ariel Durant write of the difference between science and philosophy: "Science is analytical description, philosophy is synthetic interpretation. Science wishes to resolve the whole into parts, the organism into organs, the obscure into the known. It does not inquire into the values and ideal possibilities of things, nor their total and final significance. The philosopher is