

# Mentor's Introduction

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# *Mentor's Introduction*

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Susanne Atkins brings a broad background of teaching experience to her doctoral studies. Her undergraduate and masters degrees are in social studies education. She taught her first two years at Nova High School, an experimental high school in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, where she became interested in using and studying innovative teaching techniques such as the use of small group dynamics and individualized instruction through designing learning activity packages. Her interest in curriculum design continued after her move to Atlanta, Georgia, and after her move from social studies education into art education. She has taught art in the high school classroom for twelve years.

Her interest in teaching art appreciation began early when she used art to help make history come alive for her students. Her current interest in teaching art appreciation by combining studio activities with art appreciation stems from her desire to enrich her teaching experience. The studio-based art humanities curriculum which she designed and has taught for three years has become the subject of her dissertation studies.

Susanne has studied art for three summers in Italy. Her experience of doing studio work while studying the rich artistic heritage of Italy reinforced her belief in the importance of art appreciation as a motivational tool and source of ideas useful in the studio.