

# Mentor's Introduction

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## Recommended Citation

Zimmerman, Enid. "Mentor's Introduction." *Marilyn Zurmuehlin Working Papers in Art Education* 5 (1986): 33-34.

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# *Mentor's Introduction*

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Karen Thomas was a primary school art teacher for about a decade before she decided to return to Indiana University as a doctoral student. Her involvement in teaching art to young students in kindergarten through the third grade had suggested many questions about young people's art development. Before returning to IU as a doctoral student, Thomas conducted a year long pilot study with her young students from which a number of research questions evolved. Some of these questions, reported in her working paper, will form the basis of inquiry for her doctoral dissertation.

Her research methodology has been influenced by a systematic set of beliefs embedded in "the naturalistic paradigm". Questions suggested by Thomas' pilot study, and her insightful observations, suggest a depth of understanding and fundamental questions about how young children respond to art and create art products.

In their book, **Natu**  
about truth and understanding.

The history of human kind is replete with instances - and attempts to understand the world. Our curiosity has been directed at the same fundamental questions throughout time; our progress as inquirers can be charted by noting the various efforts made to deal with those questions.

What is the world? How can we come to know it? How can we control it for our purposes? What is, after all, the **tr**

Karen Thomas is embarking on a journey to begin to answer some fundamental questions in the field of art education about child development and art learning. She is a thorough researcher with an inquiring mind. Preliminary answers to the questions she has posed in this working

paper should sustain her research endeavors over many years. I look forward to her future inquiry and as her mentor am pleased to be associated with her quest.