

# INTRODUCTION

Although most of the activities in this book produce an end product that looks something like “art,” this isn’t really an art book. It is a book designed to shake things up — to produce original, confident thinking.

Granted, the majority of the assignments do center around drawing, cutting, and folding. The art that is made, however, is incidental to the process of getting there. Experiences such as these, which are fun, lively, and non-threatening, help build an “I can” confidence that will spill over into other areas as well.

Here are a few examples of strategies we employ:

**Kinetic** - In “Fist Circles,” students are instructed to hold their pencils in their fists and draw various circles to make a pleasing design. This forces children to draw with arm movements rather than finger movements — an approach that is quite liberating.

**The Surprise Factor** - In “Knuckle Clouds,” children first draw around their knuckles near the top of their papers. Only later do they find out they have started making clouds, and must finish their pictures by drawing everything they can think of that might be in the sky.

**Fluency Drawings** - In “Quick Draw,” students draw eight interesting things in no more than five minutes. Some of the things they must draw include a tree broken by the wind, a sock with a hole in it, and a feather. No matter that some trees, socks, and feathers may be drawn more successfully than others. The important thing is that they make the effort.

Team Art - In "Pass the Houses," every youngster starts with a simple drawing of a house, adds one detail to the drawing, and then passes it to the next person. The papers move around until every student has added one detail to each and every drawing. The outcome: as many completed house drawings as there are people in the class.

All students in grades 1 through 5 will benefit from these activities. But there are certain students for whom the benefits will be the greatest. These are your perfectionists (often your best students), who need to be encouraged to experiment occasionally without the fear of making a mistake.

In fact, the way that you, the teacher, approach these activities is of great importance. Your role as a catalyst in promoting a "loosen up" attitude is instrumental. In the process, we think you and your students are in for a lot of fun!

One housekeeping note: To avoid needless repetition, we have not specified the kind of paper to be used in each activity. Unless stated otherwise, you can assume that all work begins with an ordinary piece of typing paper.

To keep preparation time to a minimum, we have provided you with brief scripts for introducing the activities. We also have included some visual information about the way each finished project will (sort of) look.

Finally, it is our hope that when you say, "Listen up, it's time for 'Loosen Up,'" you'll be looking at a sea of beaming, relaxed faces!