



Teaching and Learning in Art Education 2nd Ed

Cultivating Students' Potential from Pre-K through High School

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Artists' Lessons to Thrive! 1.3 Sher Christopher's *The Pied Piper: Honesty Is the Best Policy*

Big Idea: Honesty

Children are excited by narrative texts, including fairytales and biographies, that feature characters and storylines with which children can relate. Many children have read *The Pied Piper*, which describes a medieval town infested with rats that had eaten all of the people's food and damaged their homes. In desperation, they implore the mayor to find a solution to rid the town of its rats. When all hope seems to fail, a stranger called the Pied Piper approaches the mayor and promises to remove the rats from the town for a fair payment. The mayor agrees to pay the Pied Piper for his services, and the Pied Piper plays his melodic pipe to lure the rats away. When the Pied Piper comes to collect his payment, the mayor pays him much less than originally promised because he feels that the Pied Piper's job was too easy. Enraged and disillusioned, the Pied Piper believes that the town's children should not grow up in a place where they would become dishonest adults. He plays his pipe and lures the children away to a distant land where they can sing, play, and live meaningful lives (Jackson & Disney, 1933). The Pied Piper accomplished his mission by freeing the children from an immoral life, but he left the town's people disheartened because they missed their children.



FIGURE 1.3.1 Sher Christopher, *The Pied Piper* ©.

Source: Courtesy of the artist; www.sherchristopher.com.

Like children, adults respond to the *Pied Piper* tale. Building on childhood memories, British paper sculptor Sher Christopher constructed her *Pied Piper* figure in a squatting position, playing his magical tune to an audience of rats, by manipulating colored paper into lifelike forms (Figure 1.3.1). She twisted black paper into tight curls to create his hair and strategically placed folds into his cape so that they would drape over his body. To express the *Pied Piper*'s unyielding confidence in his rat-ridding abilities, Christopher depicted him concentrating steadily with the rats gleefully listening to his musical notes.

Essential/Guiding Questions

1. How do Christopher's *Pied Piper* sculpture and book illustrations help people understand the story better? What, if any, new words did you hear in the *Pied Piper* story?
2. What does the *Pied Piper* communicate about honesty? What would you have done if you were the mayor or the *Pied Piper*? How might have your actions changed the story?

Preparation

Students learn how to tell their own stories by hearing other people's stories. The class will read the story of the *Pied Piper*, discuss Sher Christopher's artwork, and define honesty. They will develop and share original short stories about honesty with their classmates.

Daily Learning Targets

I can develop a two- or three-dimensional illustrated story that teaches honesty is the best policy.

- I can integrate at least one reference from the *Pied Piper* and Sher Christopher's art in my design.
- I can show emphasis, unity, and craftsmanship in my completed illustrated story.
- I can exhibit my illustrated story in a public setting and read my story during the opening reception.

National Core Arts Anchor Standards 1, 6, 8, and 11

www.nationalartsstandards.org