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English Composition I
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Summary of “I Show a
Child What Is Possible”
Revision

In his process analysis essay, Jacques D’Amboise informs the reader on how good guidance and support can help young children to find their true talent and change their lives forever, regardless of where they come from.

His own story is a very good example. When he was seven years old, his mother insisted that he had to attend his sister’s ballet classes, taught by Madame Seda. In this way, he would be kept off the “the street and away from [his] pals, who ran with gangs like the ones in *West Side Story*” (191). Initially, he wasn’t very happy and “diabolically” (191) tried to disrupt the class. However, the wise Madame Seda would know how to make the little boy love dancing. She would ask him to participate in the class and she would teach him how to dance. She interested him in ballet and the “bored little kid” (192) was “hooked” (192). He would continue to attend the classes for the next six months, discovering his talent for dance, learning how to take control of his body as well as over his life.

Madame Seda was also the one that talked to his mother, advising her to send the children to a better school. They went to study at the School of American Ballet.

The little kid from a dangerous neighborhood became a principal dancer with a “joyful career that lasted for four decades” (192).

After retiring, he would decide for a teaching career in dance, so he would be able to help young children experience the “magic of art—dance in particular” (192). As a result, he founded the National Dance Institute.

Teaching is very rewarding for an instructor, especially when they can “help a child discover that he can control the way he moves” (193). For Jack D’Amboise, “dance, as an art, has to be taught” (193).

The environment is very important for the relationship between the teacher and the student. He uses Madame Seda’s technique—asking kids to participate in the class. He demands precision, tries to be clear and “absolutely truthful”—he thinks that it is very important to love or believe in what you’re doing.

Rewarding kids is also very important because it will help them to begin to know themselves, to know that they can manage themselves if they want to. It’s the “beginning of dance” (193).

The art of dance has no boundaries, and the teaching technique is “the same everywhere, although there are cultural differences” (194). The children will adapt to the teaching technique. For example, in China, the children realized that it is better to stand back and watch, rather than get too close, since there were so many of them. No matter where the kids come from or how

talented they are, if they don't receive any guidance or encouragement, the "talents never get the chance to flower" (194).

Jack D'Amboise explains why parenting is a very responsible task. Parents have to teach their children the "civilizing things we have taken millions of years to develop" (194). A dance class can not take place without good manners and respect, though "dance could teach those things" (194).

Jack D'Amboise compares kids with a "trunk" (194) that you can load with good or bad things. Whatever you are going to put in the trunk, "that's what is going to be left after you, that's what your children are going to have, and that will determine the world of the future" (194).

In the closing paragraph, Jack D'Amboise states that the reason he is teaching dance is to help clean up his own environment and to "pass it on to the next generation" (194). Teaching dance represents his contribution to society.

Works Cited

D'Amboise, Jack. "I Show a Child What is Possible." *Connections: A Multicultural Reader for Writers*. Editor Judith A. Stanford. California: Mayfield, 1997. 191-194.