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My Experience in Paris and at EIDD

Growing up, my dad used to always tell me what it was like living in France and how he immediately fell in love with the language and the culture the moment he stepped foot in Rouen. He has a thick binder full of all his photos from his time in France that he still shows off (digital photography was obviously nonexistent at the time)--it was also his first time living in the occidental world. When it came time to choose languages in my public school, I really, really wanted to study French, much to my mother's dismay who urged me to study a more ubiquitous and perhaps more useful language like Spanish that all my friends were choosing (which is also a beautiful language that I am currently self-studying). I worked my way through AP French in high school, and then as an Electrical Engineer at Princeton without a language requirement, I began taking French classes for fun which reignited my passion for the language. I pursued a study abroad program at the University of Paris EIDD in Paris, France my Junior Fall (last semester) where I studied engineering in French, and coming back I knew that I wanted to study French in addition to engineering in college. It is so interesting and mind-opening to see how different countries' pedagogies vary. I am in fact tentatively thinking about writing a thesis on comparing the French and American education system's approach to specialization.

I am forever grateful for making that decision to choose French in 6th grade. Without sounding corny, I am confident that my life would have been much different had I made another decision, and French is something that I am genuinely passionate about. After living in Paris for 6 months and falling in love with the city, I really miss my French community friends, and I believe that reintegrating myself in French language and culture by being in a group of motivated

French speakers will make me feel less “homesick”. The language has allowed me to make close friends from all over the world—from Paris to Pondicherry. It has also opened up educational opportunities for me—for example, in high school, I was able to earn a biological research position because a lab worker was from a francophone country and several of the articles were in French. I always keep my ears open for French; for example, just this past weekend I met Parisians visiting NYC and we compared the NYC MTA Subway to the Parisian RATP métro (“Attention à la marche, en descendant du train”). Though people in Paris may be stereotypically rude, there is always a large smile when connecting with a French person outside of the francophone world. I cannot speak more highly of my wonderful experience in Paris.

