

9-24-2012

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Recommended Citation

Barrett, Kate, "Linfield College: Study Abroad in France" (2012). *Letters from Returnees: Sharing the Value of Study Abroad*. Letter. Submission 14.

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Linfield College: Study Abroad in France
Kate Barrett

I graduated from Linfield in 2010 with a degree in Intercultural Communication and a minor in French. Following graduation I taught English at a high school in Nantes, France. This year teaching, as well as my semester abroad in Angers, France, not only gave me a great opportunity to solidify and improve my level of French, but I was able to step outside of my comfort zone and learn about myself and the world.

During my semester abroad in Angers, France, I lived with a wonderful host family. They were extremely welcoming and allowed me to experience aspects of French life that were otherwise inaccessible. Some of my fondest memories are of the conversations we had over dinner or a long Sunday lunch.

I am currently beginning a career as a court reporter and I am finding that my background in French is a great advantage being that court reporting involves a language of its own, both verbal and written. While living abroad I was challenged daily and learned to recognize and appreciate small accomplishments. This appreciation of personal growth has instilled a desire to continually develop and improve my skills. At the same time, I have learned the importance of having patience with the process and being able to laugh when you make mistakes.

Studying and living abroad in France put into practice the language that I had studied for many years, but more importantly, I was able to see myself against the contrast of a different culture. The experience gave me the confidence to face challenging situations knowing that if I could live in a foreign country by myself using another language, there was nothing that I could not do.