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B.A. in Japanese Studies, B.S. in Psychology, 2011

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I choose to major in Japanese for a variety of reasons, mostly because 1) I was applying to the JET program and considering living there long term at the time, and if not 2) I was thinking of continuing my education in Japanese after undergraduate, and 3) I was minoring in it anyway, and getting a major was only a few more classes so I might as well.

I truly enjoyed the language classes, for their small size and because I really got to know my teachers and cohort very well. In fact, one of my letters of recommendation for Oxford was from the lovely and amazing Mochizuki-sensei! I also enjoyed the seminar and the upper division classes for the same reason, and the topics we discussed were very interesting.

Majoring in Japanese Studies has directly and indirectly impacted my life in many ways. The obvious ones ways are preparing me for a life in Japan and the JET Program (and probably helping my chances of getting accepted in the first place) as well as preparing my continuing education for my masters in Japanese Studies as well. In more indirect ways, it's led to close friendships I still maintain to this day (from the classes and from studying abroad), and it's changed who I am as a person. It's made me more open to others cultures and differences in lifestyles, and it's made me a more accepting and adaptable human being.

My message to current Japanese Studies students is that it's okay to not be sure of what you're doing and where you're going in life. I've stumbled into many opportunities that, by keeping an open mind, led me to learn things about myself I never knew (like that I like working with children!) and has also led to me to realizations of things I *don't* like and don't want to pursue (like a career in pure academia). It's okay to figure out you life path by a process of elimination instead of having it all figured out ahead of time.