



SPISE: how to prepare your future

A month away from home, a month of hard work, a month without sleep, AND a month that would have been a month of vacation, under normal circumstances! That's what I say when I'm asked what the Student Program for Innovation in Science and Engineering, or SPISE, is. But that description lacks the adjective that best describes the experience: a wonderful month. I am Loïc MICHEL and I attended SPISE from July 16 to August 13, 2016. I will share with you here my experiences and the importance that this program has had on my schooling and my career choices.

I am currently in my 3rd year at the Institut National des Sciences Appliquées (INSA) in Lyon. I was accepted into the first cycle of this school just after I obtained my scientific baccalaureate in 2017. The INSA's integrated preparatory course was a challenge. While the courses did not seem particularly difficult at the beginning, the first test revealed the true nature of the whole cycle. The pace was intense, the teachers were demanding and my grades often seemed unfair to me given the amount of work I was doing. Yet all this was not totally unfamiliar to me. Those two years of preparation reminded me a lot of the SPISE. Intense pace, large amount of work and limited time, I think that SPISE can be described as a strong preparation for what is after high school.

After the first cycle, I chose to go to the Electrical Engineering Department of the INSA. I am currently undergoing general training in the field of electricity with courses on sensors, electronics, computer science... In two years I will be able to work as an engineer. These career and study choices were motivated by the SPISE. The electronics courses I was able to take during the program led me to choose electricity as my field of study. I knew in advance what to expect when I joined the Electrical Engineering Department, and I am not disappointed.

Although SPISE has provided me with theoretical and technical knowledge as well as rigorous working methods, it has also been an interesting and memorable social experience. I have excellent memories of all the people I met during that month and I am still in touch with a Jamaican friend on social networks. The cultural and linguistic exchange that I had during the program has greatly contributed to my open-mindedness and helped me develop my curiosity.

SPISE was probably the most informative experience of my high school years. If I continue to describe it today as a wonderful experience, it is because I learned a life lesson. I learned to confront my failures. To say that I succeeded at everything during the SPISE would be a big lie, just as to say that I am succeeding at everything in my studies. However, thanks to the caring environment of the program, I was able to overcome the frustration of failure and use the unsuccessful attempts to get closer to my goals. This is a mindset that I find in the engineering world now. Design error, miscalculation... Engineers are not afraid of all these things because they are a part of the job. In engineering as elsewhere, failure is neither inevitable nor a sign of weakness. It is simply the mark of those who have the will to do things.

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