**Our families and communities often define us and our individual worlds. Community might refer to your cultural group, extended family, religious group, neighborhood or school, sports team or club, co-workers, etc. Describe the world you come from and how you, as a product of it, might add to the diversity of the University of Washington.\* ( max 300)**

Growing up, I’ve always loved solving math riddles and equations. I appreciated the fact that arithmetics had non-abstract, defined solutions. So when my friend invited me to a competitive programming club called Kokocoder, I was instantly interested. I believe it would allow me to pursue my passion for problem-solving from a computer science perspective. As I spent hours in the club learning, laughing, and enduring difficulties, the alien environment slowly turned into a place of comfort..

One of the biggest lessons I learned at Kokocoder came from a senior member of the club. Whenever I felt puzzled by one of the coding problems, he’d always tell me, “Start with the most ridiculous solution and see if it works, you can always simplify it later.” He’d write programs intentionally exceeding the memory limit and then optimize them to shorter, more complex algorithms while guiding me through each step. This allowed me to understand the logic behind the solution first and then translate it to more effective methods achieving the same result.

The community at Kokocoder represented a special place, where I first learned that there was no wrong way of pursuing knowledge, even if it meant using unconventional methods. At UW, I’m eager to use my programming experience to contribute to Udub’s CompProg and win competitive programming titles. Moreover, I want to host community events, hackathons, and mentor programs for others including underprivileged children to help them experience the fun of programming, just as Kokocoder did for me.

Hi Joe,

Succinct and interesting lesson learned here. I’ve deleted parts that will not affect the essay if they were removed. My suggestion will be to to add another meaning to the lesson/community instead of just programming and winning competition. This will make your essay more meaningful.

C.G.