**Describe how you plan to pursue your academic interests at USC. Please feel free to address your first- and second-choice major selections. (250 word limit)**

Every week during family gathering, my 7-year-old cousin would get angry for no reason. He seemed to be incapable of controlling his anger; and it prompted me to read various books about child psychology. Despite having a growing interest in the field, it wasn’t until I built a project called SafeSpace – a platform where teenagers get to anonymously share their personal problems that they don’t feel comfortable sharing even to their closest ones. One story specifically caught my eye: a female teen who tended to her younger sister’s varying episodes of what seems to be bipolar disorder. Perhaps an economical reasoning underlaid the situation here, yet what tingled my amygdala was the efficacy with which sisterhood could boost out of a treatment.

At USC, I intend to study courses which are building blocks to understanding the basis of human behavior. I am excited to take courses such as Children’s Learning and Cognitive Development and Abnormal Psychology to leverage on my analytical approach towards my cousin’s bad temper disposition. Furthermore, I am intrigued by the vast research opportunities, specifically at the Minds and Development Lab. By working alongside Professor Henrike Moll, I’d love to delve deep into children’s cognitive development. Equally important is to hone my practical finesse outside of classroom, which is why I plan to volunteer with Teach for Los Angeles. After graduating as a Trojan, I look forward to not only help my cousin with his transition, but also other kids out there who are fighting their battles.

*Hi Kelly!*

*250 words is indeed a challenging limit to serve a comprehensive content like you just put out there which gives that natural transition from the 1st to 2nd paragraph.*

*However, given that you spent about half-half on the background behind why you want to study psychology vs your actual plan outline on how you intend to pursue it, perhaps you can expand a tad bit more on the latter (which is the main focus of the prompt) and cut the background a little. For instance, you can perhaps explain more on your intended research on ‘children’s cognitive development’ (e.g. empirical, literature review + collab with corporations/NGOs in the field, etc.)*

*All in all, keep up the heavy lifting and trust me, you’ll enjoy the results!*

*- Matthew*