***UC essay prompt 3***

*What would you say is your greatest talent or skill? How have you developed and demonstrated that talent over time? (350 words)*

Unlike other kids, I was never really exposed to many toys and manga. Instead of toys, I played with used home appliances, such as mixers, water pumps, and computers, trying to fix them. Instead of manga, I would read home appliance manual books and study each of their components. As I improved my “fix success rate,” I built a sense of accomplishment when my mom and her friends asked me to fix their appliances.

As I grew confident, I began challenging myself to “create” instead of just “fixing”: I built my own pedal-powered bicycle generator. It all started from my frustration due to recurring blackouts in my area during the pandemic, restricting my activities. I couldn’t charge my devices and power my wifi. So, I took my dad’s unused mountain bike, added a roller underneath the wheel, and connected them to a used car alternator with a fan belt. This enabled me to generate electricity by pedaling and used a 12V portable battery to store the electricity. Besides generating electricity, the modified bike helped me stay fit during the isolation; it was a productive, win-win pandemic pastime. Reminded of my neighbors who faced similar electrical issues, I was eager to help them spread my bike modification, thus, leading me to help build several affordable pedal-powered bicycle generators.

I enjoy the thrill of solving problems. I further my skill by taking on car-tuning. I started by helping my cousin develop his race car. The brakes, gearbox, suspension, and chassis are bespoke which requires a high level of engineering knowledge. Therefore, I started reading Carroll Smith’s “Engineering to Win,” which allowed me to help realize the first steps of designing race cars of the future.

What started out as missing out on toys and manga, fixing appliances to impress mom’s friends, and repurposing my dad’s mountain bike during the pandemic, I have now gained the skills to work with bigger machines. This has led me to confirm my passion for machine design, which I plan to continue to further develop this skill within the UCs and as an engineer.

Hi Mellvin,

Your essay shows a great deal of expertise when it comes to engineering, which is what I assume is your intended stream of study to pursue at the University of California. Though I sense a great flow in chronology, this essay seems to be very to the point, which isn’t necessarily a bad thing, but would be better if the readers can look directly into your personality to support your motivation to be an engineer. Since you talked about how you are not exposed to toys and manga as a child, instead of just saying that you play around with home appliances, maybe include a personal perspective of why you chose to play around with these appliances. This will help the readers understand the motive, or the “catalyst” that snowballed your talent in engineering, which paints a clearer picture that connects YOU to the talent you have and to the major you want to take in university.

Overall, I think this essay just needs a little bit of refinement. Just like developing a talent, developing a great essay is merely looking back at your essay and refining it to create something better from the previous version.

I look forward to the development of your application.

* Calysta Tesiman, ALL-In Eduspace Essay Editor.