Personal Statement
Objective: PhD in Psychology
Applicant: Cao Zhen

As Charles W. Eliot, the former president of Harvard claimed that the fruit of liberal education is not learning, but the capacity and desire to learn, not knowledge, but power. Before I commenced to think about why education is so important, I recalled my school years, the grounding years of anyone’s education. I went down memory lane to recall my teachers, schoolmates, subjects, the years pursuing psychology home and abroad, all of which project vivid pictures in my mind and give me direct impetus to pursue professional Psychologist as my lifelong career and as the focus of my PhD program. In order to be engaged in the career of Psychologist as life goal, I would like to relinquish the tangibly materialistic awards of life. My choice of pursuing in the research of educational psychology is not only motivated by my innermost love for the cause of educational psychology, but also my dream to be an accomplished educator whose thoughts can influence the mind of other people.

The first thing that enables me to think about education is to gain knowledge. Education endows us with the knowledge of the world around us. It gives us our own perspectives of looking at life. It helps us build opinions and have points of view on everything in life. Scholars and educators never stop debating over the subject of whether education is the only thing that gives knowledge. Some of them claim that education is the process of gaining information about the surrounding world while knowledge is something very different. They are partly right. But the conversion of information to knowledge is possible because of using psychology involving education. Undoubtedly, education makes us capable of interpreting rightly the things perceived. Education is not about lessons, poems, theorem or laws in textbooks. It is about the lessons and essence of life.

Two years of oversea study in Visva-Bharati University, one of the most preeminent university in India, I came to realize that education and the issues of education reform seem more important to China and India, these two ancient countries with large populations and with thousands years of civilization and history than to any other countries in the world. Even though scholars and educators in these two countries have never stopped seeking for creative and unique educational psychological ideas for younger generations, the situation still remains not encouraging at present. As a graduate of Educational Psychology, I possess the strengths of English proficiency that enables me to have more access to the developing trend of modern psychological method from the West. Although I became a qualified college student by receiving first class degree for my postgraduate study, I refuse to consider myself as a successful product of the existing relatively laggard education system. Unquestionably, those who received education from the West and the East as well might have a brighter future.

During my college life in Visva-Bharati, I was an active participant in discussion about communication skill and advertisement psychology and often navigated between seminars.
and workshops that gave my teachers and peers a deep impression. Except for my excellence in academic, my practical experiences related to psychological assessment have considerably deepened my understanding of psychology as a discipline. Such as advertisement psychology, I edited magazine to use psychological elements to analyze how people reactive after reading and how to made it more attractive via statistics. Since 2009, I have been working for Immersion Subject English School, sponsored by Houghton Miffilin Harcourt Group. I am not only English teacher but also is the psychological consultant at school. I have engaged in psychological consultation department to do service activities closely related to my academic studies. I also did my work with the psychometric analyses of psychological assessment measures and children mental disorder via video recorder. Its innovative teaching methodology and education management modes give me a broader vision on education and stimulate me to absorb more advanced educational psychological theories and cutting-edge ideas in USA, the foreland of psychology research.

In the meanwhile, reading books and journals have also made a huge impact on my present life and future goals. I have always been interested in studying biographies of famous people as to analyze their way of thinking and ideas strike in their mind in the real-life. I have been admiring such figures as Francis Bacon, Rabindranath Tagore and John Dewey and their masterpieces deeply influenced my perception of the charm of education and life philosophy as a whole. With the enlightenment of those mentors’ success, I learned some unremitting driving force of pursuing the study on educational psychology which will be beneficial to my future career development and academic research in the field of psychology. I firmly believe in faith that education paves the path leading to disillusionment. It wipes out all the wrong beliefs in our minds. It helps create a clear picture of everything around us and we no more remain in confusion about the things we learn. Education brings up questions and also devises ways to find satisfactory answers to them. Educational psychology is about knowing that everything has a science to it, it is about learning to reason everything till every question meets its answer. Good education method can lead us to enlightenment through proficient psychological management. It is education that builds in every individual, a confidence to take decisions, to face life and to accept successes and failures. It instills a sense of pride about the knowledge we have and prepares us for life!

To be honest, taking an oversea course will be a challenge for many students. Having a good command of English and oversea study experience will be conducive to my future research on educational psychology in your esteemed university. My undergraduate Educational Psychology and MA study in Mass Communication have taught me not only the language and knowledge of educational psychology, but also the ability to have an insightful view on other cultures, which could be my another advantage over other Chinese candidates as well.

I am looking forward to being eligible to commence my research on educational psychology with you and am excited at the prospect of moving away from home. I feel that I am academically and socially equipped for all that university life has to offer and hope that you award me with the privilege of an offer from your university for my chosen area. I believe the University of Tulane is
an ideal place for accumulating more interests, for meeting people, for working hard, for finding a niche in life. I feel I have the commitment and confidence of giving my best during my academic research and afterwards