Western Wise won the InnovateHER Challenge hosted by Iowa Startup Accelerator because it has a measurable impact on the lives of children, women, and families; it has enormous potential for commercialization; and it has traction that shows that it is already filling a need in the marketplace.

First, Western Wise's business model has a lifelong impact on the children and families they serve by providing children in China an opportunity for higher education abroad and enhancing their qualifications for employment in skilled positions in China and elsewhere. By delivering the service via the Internet, the team's ability to take the technology and methodology of teaching ESL (English as a Second Language) in this manner creates a scalable solution with an incredible impact on the youth of China as well as many other non-English speaking countries and providing job opportunities in the U.S.

Next, Western Wise is still developing but has proven that their model works. This company already has paying customers with millions of more students who desire their product. Due to this demand, Western Wise recently hired more tutors to help fill the need in the marketplace. The Western Wise team itself is led by a business-minded CEO and a linguist.

Finally, Western Wise understands their niche, and the niche is narrow enough that they can learn and grow without losing focus. They differentiate themselves by focusing on creating lifelong English language learners rather than entering an overcrowded test prep market. This increases the lifetime value of their customer and fills the need in the market for continuous learning and practice rather than a one-time prep session.