Flying over mountains on the back of dragons and commanding a team of gophers in battles against poisonous butterflies, I became fascinated by this dream portal, Pokémon, since I was seven years old. My ubiquitous curiosity has shifted toward technology as I was fascinated by the joyful and innovative experiences this game installed on a hand-sized screen could bring. I desperately wanted to have my own real-life Pokémon. Although this could never happen, I realized that I could create something like Pokémons through technology, a powerful and reliable companion.

In 7th grade, I learned the programming language Python from the internet and decided to create my first “Pokémon”. Frustrated by the inconvenience to obtain my calculated GPA at school, I decided to make a GPA calculator for my grade. After the release of my app, I was shocked by the positive feedback from my classmates and teacher. It felt like I had caught my first Pokémon in real life. I decided that I had to improve my programming skills so that one day I could be strong enough to become the Pokémon Master in computer science, the day when I told people that I am interested in computer science, they would approve and respect my dedications to computer science instead of mocking me that I chose computer science just because I like to play video games.

One day, I have received my most unexpected challenge from the girl I liked. She invited me to join a competition aiming to solve a problem facing our world. I immediately accepted it. Our team chose sex-education as our topic and I proposed to create a sex-education game. After getting my team's support, we began to work on the game. I was responsible for the technical parts of the game such as building the game engine and programming codes.

As I began to develop the game, I realized that this was different from all the other projects I have done previously. Surprisingly, the most difficult part was educating other teenagers about sex-education because people often feel ashamed and doesn’t want to talk about sex-education publicly in Mainland China.

After facing many obstacles, some of my teammates wanted to change the topic. Thinking about the number of gym battles a Pokémon trainer must win in order to become a Pokémon Master, I knew I couldn't give up now. Like John F. Kennedy said, “Not because they are easy, but because they are hard.” I knew I must continue making this game knowing that there are obstacles and risks ahead. These obstacles we were facing showed us how urgent China needs sex-education. I shall defeat these obstacles like the real Pokémon Trainers defeat the gyms.

Four months later, we finally finished the game after overcoming countless obstacles such as finding actors and conflicts with parents. We submitted it to Chinese software distributors, but they rejected our game due to “sensitive content” issue. I realized that this was like the final battle in the Pokemon game before becoming the Pokemon Master. I set a meeting with the game reviewers and after much back and forth communication, I successfully convinced them to change their decision and got their approval to release the game inside Mainland China after making a few changes to the game. In addition, I uploaded the original game on Steam, an online software distributor site.

Our game has been updated four times with over 150,000 downloads. These results make me excited and reminds me of the work my team and I put in was well worth it. It is a reminder that we could change cultural norms of the society we live in by using technology. I am happy that we were able to take an abstract idea and turn it into reality. Being the Pokémon master is not only about having the strongest Pokémon, it is also about having the courage to explore the areas of unknown.

I’m Calen from the city of Shanghai. I’m destined to be the world's number one Pokémon master!

*Comments:*

*I have some questions after reading the essay. The answers were not clear in your essay. Please try to incorporate the answers in your story.*

1. *Who/what are the pokemons in your real life? Challenging, yet glorious and powerful once succeed*
2. *What does becoming a Pokemon master mean in your story? Being a Pokémon master means to have my hardworkings approved and respected.*
3. *Do you think there will be more gym battles/challenges in the future? Yess*
4. *What does it mean to “capture” a pokemon?*

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*There are still a lot of ideas in your essay (pokemon analogy, curiosity, technology, sex-education). Please focus one 1 idea. It will make your essay MUCH stronger and more refined.*