**Tech eChallenge Reflection**

**Context**

Coming into the Tech eChallenge course, I was quite nervous, as I did not have any experience in the entrepreneurship field. As a computer science student, I was unfamiliar with many of the topics presented during the workshops. However, back home in Singapore, I had done a course “Project Work”, or PW, which had some similar aspects, such as identifying a problem to be solved, proposing some solutions, and presenting to a panel of judges. While this course did not use any framework, such as the Jobs To Be Done framework, it greatly helped me prepare for the presentation in this course. Since my teammate, Germin, was also from Singapore, and had similar experience with PW, we were able to use the experience we had to construct a powerful presentation, practicing multiple times daily.

However, when it comes to preparation, we cannot claim full credit. In the days leading up to our semifinal pitch, we were granted the opportunity to consult with Tom, a pitch consultant from Talent Academy. Tom was very helpful when it came to our presentation, and was instrumental in helping us synthesise our points together coherently. After our allotted 20-minute time slot, Tom welcomed us back for another 40 minutes during his free timeslots, and further helped us refine our pitch. According to him, he was not satisfied with the guidance he was able to provide in the 20-minute period, but his dedication to helping us students was apparent, and we are deeply grateful.

When it came time to present for the semifinals, I had my usual nerves before the pitch, but I was able to calm myself, as I was confident in our preparation and ability. From the first sentence, we were able to distinguish ourselves from our competition, as we were able to maintain a high energy level throughout the presentation. Through eye-contact with the judges and audience, I able to notice that we had their full attention, and this further assuaged my anxiety. After the presentation, the judges were nothing but supportive of the idea, and gave us further suggestions on how to develop the idea, such as consulting with a game psychologist, to understand the minute details of what makes games so addictive, and how to channel their powers positively. We also did not get a single question, which we took to mean that we were able to present our idea clearly in a way which was clear and understandable.

For the finals, we had a decent understanding of the strength of other groups, but we still practiced as much as we could to improve our fluency and polish our pitch. During the questions segment of the final presentation, one of the judges mentioned that he had been so interested in our pitch, that he had forgotten to take notes for questioning, while another judge asked why we had chosen to include a consultation with a game psychologist. We were able to give a satisfactory answer, mentioning that there were many small details that one might not usually consider when designing an app, especially one meant for children, such as the innate satisfaction of swiping or tapping on a screen.

**What Worked**

With the power of hindsight, knowing that what we prepared led us to victory, we have a decent understanding of what worked, mainly the amount of practice we did, and the structure of our pitch, as well as our overall presentability.

With the ability to easily practice, since my teammate and I are also roommates, we were able to practice multiple times daily. This greatly contributed to our pacing and fluency, since we knew the subject matter like the back of our hands when it came time to present. Since we were one of the few teams which had prepared a script, and were able to memorise it, it helped distinguish us from other teams. Furthermore, since we had dedicated so much of our time to this idea, we were able to give well thought-out answers to the questions asked of us during the finals, as we had considered most of the questions previously.

The second major contributing factor to our success is our presentation itself. After many iterations, we were able to refine our pitch to contain only the most important and relevant details. Using the concepts taught to us in class, we were able to clearly and concisely define the problem within our pitch, as well as use examples to provide evidence of the problem, and finally synthesise it with our solution, which are targeted towards the jobs to be done. With further help from Tom, our pitch consultant, we were able to create strong punchlines that stuck with the audience. After both the semifinals and finals, we were told by the judges that they were impressed by the line “fighting fire with fire” when it came to gamifying savings, as it contextualised our use of game principles to make saving enjoyable, especially for children. Furthermore, the judges agreed with our cost estimates, as well as our estimated timeline, which were quite accurate, as my teammate used to intern at a recruitment firm. From our experience, my teammate and I were also able to streamline the presentation, using our powerpoint slides as an aid to illustrate our points more clearly, instead of simply putting all the information on the slides and reading directly from them.

The final point which I believe greatly contributed to our success was our presentability. From the Venture Showcase in week 9, we prepared suits and a banner to garner attention to our project, and show our commitment. While we were severely overdressed and overprepared in the moment, we believe that this preparation ultimately contributed much to our success, and our investment in these props paid off. During the finals, one of the judges made a passing comment on how we were the best dressed so far, which, while not in the rubric, gave us confidence that we made a good impression on the judges.

**Improvement**

While there is always room for improvement, I believe that my teammate and I have both contributed as much as we reasonably could into the project. From the time and financial investment from the both of us, we have created a project that we are proud of, and will continue to pursue. The two main improvements we can consider are to practice more to an audience, as well as to actually develop and launch our product.

Since most of our practice was done in a casual environment, without an audience, or paraphernalia such as clickers, there was still some difference between our practice environment and the final presentation. Since we presented with the screen to our right during the semifinals, we practised with that layout in the week leading up to the finals, but noticed on the day itself that there was not enough space on the right to present, thus we had to mirror most of our hand gestures. Furthermore, since the clicker used during the semifinals was a different design to that used in the finals, we had a minor hiccup during our finals presentation, where I was figuring out the clicker. While I doubt it affected the judging, it definitely presented a minor hit to our confidence, as the pitch was not as smooth as we had practised. Additionally, while we had practised by presenting to our friends, the environment was much less professional than the judging.

The second improvement that can be made would be to actually create and launch our product. Since we only had a few months from ideation to the pitch, we did not have much time to produce the actual app, especially due to our commitments to our other courses, and our lack of experience on our platform of choice, Unity. If we had dedicated ourselves to learning Unity more, we might have been able to use a live version of our app during our demonstration, which would greatly improve the viability of our idea.

As a team member, both my teammate and I applied ourselves to this project, but my teammate was definitely more attached to the idea, as he came up with the idea. While I grew to like the idea more the more I worked on it, if I had been more excited about the idea earlier, I believe we could have fast-tracked a lot of our project. Overall, I enjoyed the course very much, and I am grateful to all of the tutors for their help and support.