



THE VISION

Enhancing the app-based language learning experience.

By creating a Mandarin learning app directly connected to its Learning Management System (LMS), Inchin Closer revolutionized the language learning experience by connecting students and teachers through a convenient and easy to use mobile tool. I led the redesign of the app by enhancing the user experience through a more intuitive and user friendly app for students and teachers of all levels of experience.

THE CHALLENGE

The founder of Inchin Closer approached me for an audit of the beta app due to the overwhelming negative feedback received. In conducting an audit I concluded that the app with all its great features was lacking in one key area: Usability. My goal in improving this was to create a better balance between functionality and usability. I focused on making the system quick and easy to master and added personalization to accommodate every level of student.

THE OUTCOME

By adding details like pop-up navigation guides, filters and progress timers, users had greater success in navigating the app and taking full advantage of its important features. The experience was more frictionless and the feedback on the updated app more positive, proving users were eagerly using the new and improved app to advance their Mandarin learning.

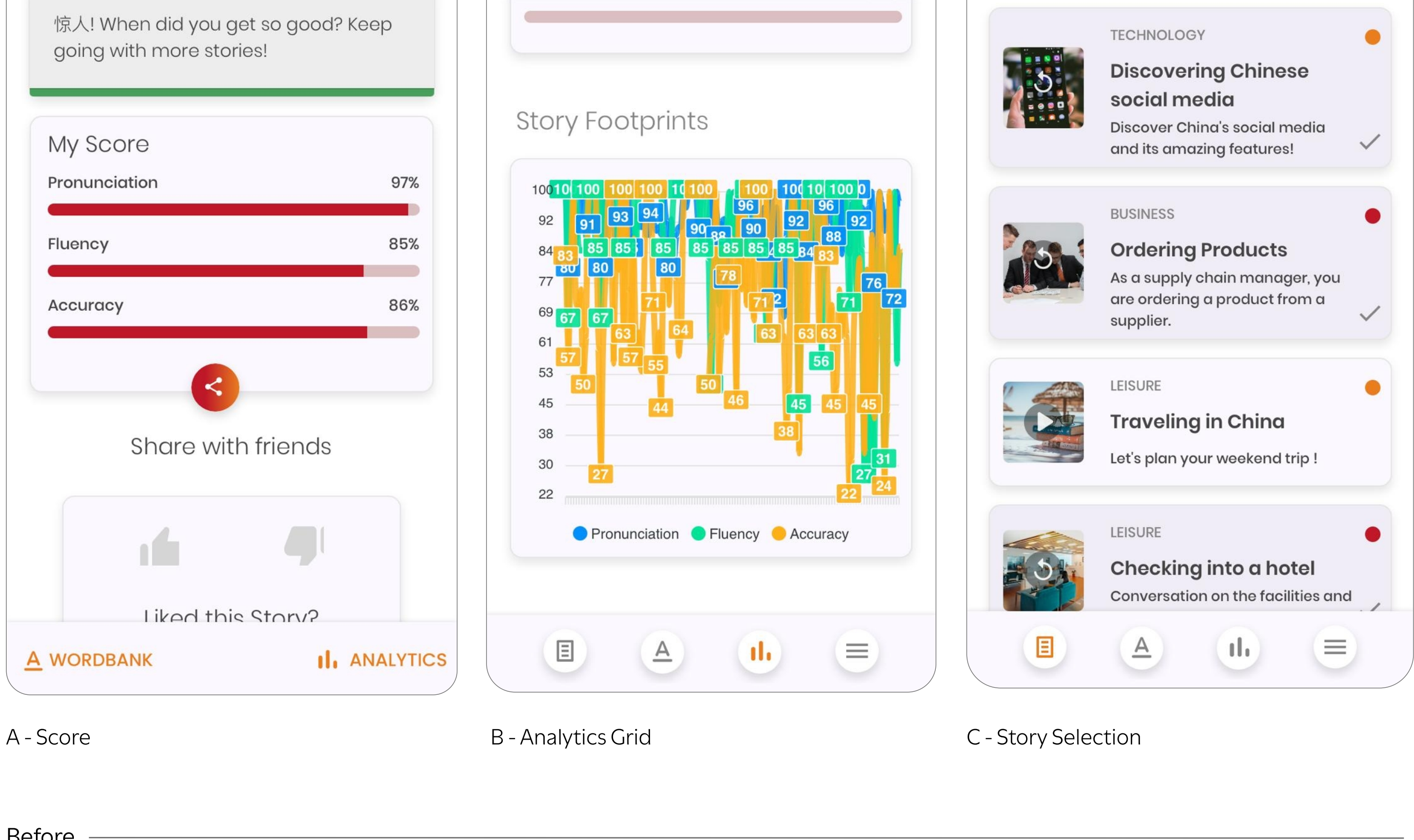
THE APPROACH

To increase usability, I focused on improving three main areas all of which were identified through an audit and user feedback of the beta app.

1. Creating more hierarchy and clarity in the content

Simplicity was an overarching priority considering the amount of content being shared on many of the pages. Some pages presented a lot of copy and others a lot of data. It was important to keep the user engaged while they were reviewing and absorbing the content.

As the content did not have a clear structure, I set out to incorporate a few elements to create better flow on every page. Taking the "Stories" page as an example, the existing format did not make use of a filter. Incorporating a "Category" and "Level" filter allowed students to choose stories based on their skill level versus scrolling through the list of stories to find ones suited to them.



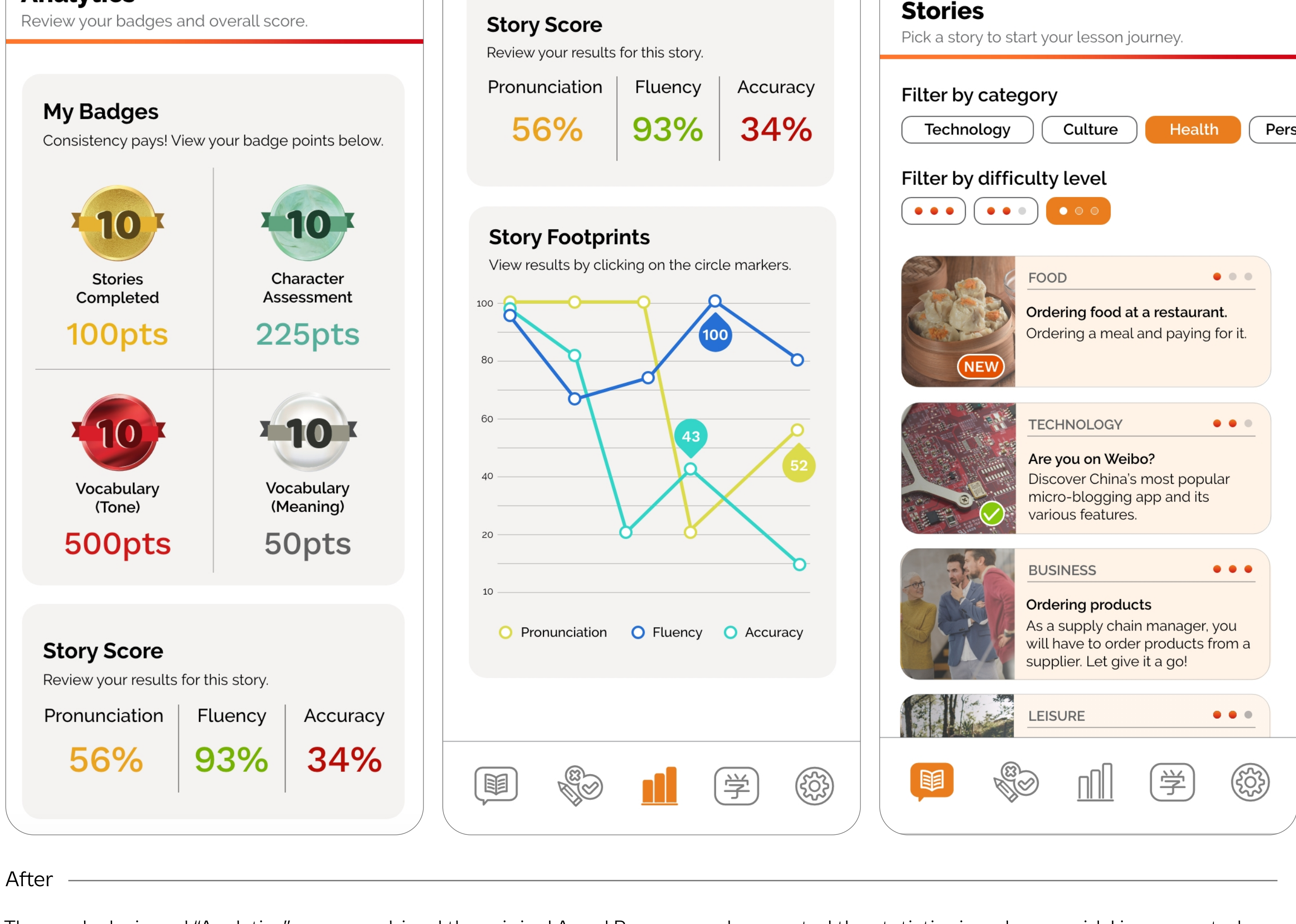
A - Score

B - Analytics Grid

C - Story Selection

Before

In the original layout, the branding was inconsistent and the information was not presented in an easy to comprehend manner. Considering the amount on content on each page, there was a lack of clarity and guidance. Overall the interface was visually unappealing and confusing.



After

The newly designed "Analytics" page combined the original A and B pages, and presented the statistics in a clearer grid. I incorporated two filters on the "Stories" page, to give students of different levels quick access to exercises that matched their needs.

2. Incorporating in-app guides for better user onboarding

As a new user, being confronted with a bunch of unfamiliar features in a brand new app can be daunting. Where does one begin? I initially considered a "product tour" to help users navigate the various features presented. However this felt like it was a "front load" of information which wouldn't drive the users on the path of product adoption.

Being sensitive to cognitive load and not wanting to overwhelm the user, I decided the better way forward was to offer help and guidance in real-time - exactly when the user needs it. Contextual onboarding would encourage product adoption by providing the user help in smaller, more digestible doses.

By creating pop up guides that explained a feature in simple to comprehend verbiage, the user was able to navigate the app with much less friction than before.

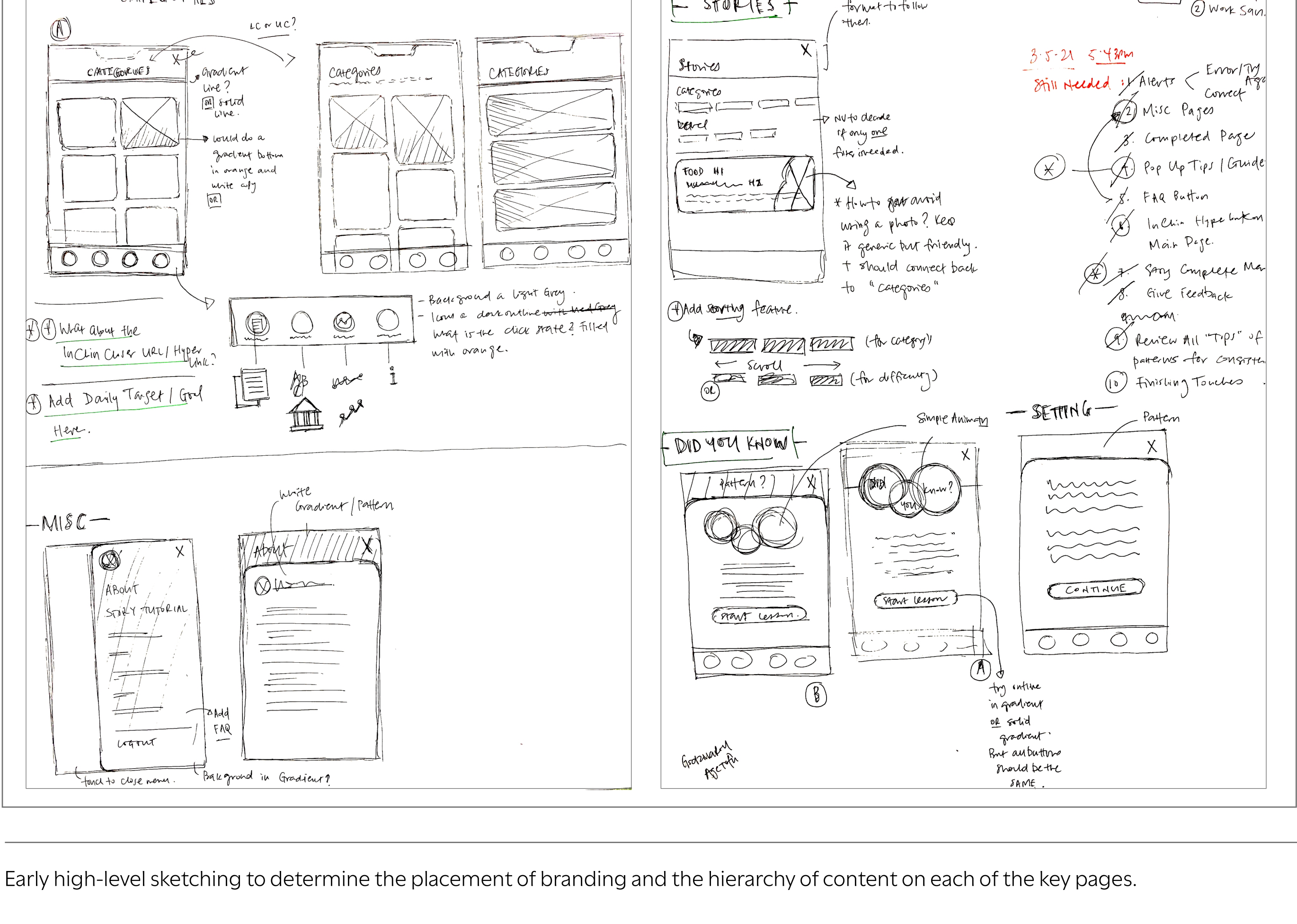


Pop up tips and guides to help the user quickly understand how to navigate and use the interface.

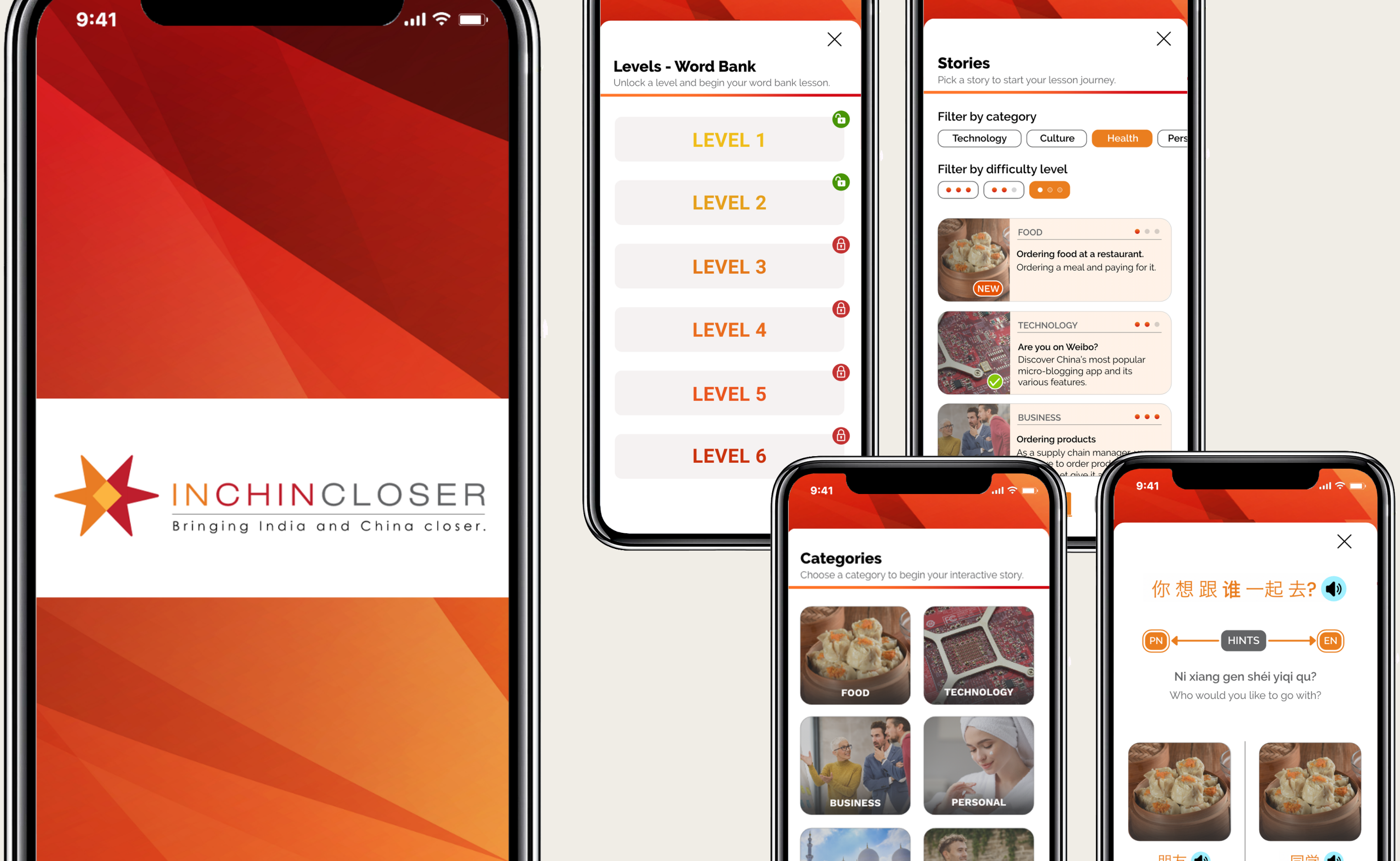
3. Enticing users by elevating the overall look and feel of the interface

The existing app had many inconsistencies, from the branding (logos and colors) to content layout. Focusing first on the branding, I reviewed each page to assess where branding was required and to what extent. Simply introducing existing brand colors onto pages was an easy way to tie them together. In addition to this, I streamlined the number of typefaces used across the app to ensure visual simplicity. And through the use of color, highlighted headers and key words for extra visibility.

Pushing it one step further, I incorporated a pattern which appears on the opening page and at the top of multiple subsequent pages, lending a cohesiveness to the overall look and feel.



Early high-level sketching to determine the placement of branding and the hierarchy of content on each of the key pages.



THE IMPACT

Improved usability by way of simplified navigation, clear and concise content and guided onboarding led to increased user engagement

I was happy to see how positively the client and users responded to the improvements implemented.

It is of utmost importance to provide users with a seamless experience including features they can comprehend quickly and without much friction. The feedback so far proves that the improvements are working and as we continue to receive feedback, I will be making additional changes.