Studio: Combating Imposter Syndrome (TA Notes)

Summary

This studio is an opportunity to learn more about **imposter syndrome** and discuss ways that imposter syndrome can impact us. Imposter syndrome impacts many people across many disciplines, and people from non-traditional backgrounds are particularly impacted.

Coding is hard to learn, and the tech industry has many high and confusing barriers to entry. Trying to navigate this new subject matter and contemplating entering a new industry is intimidating. Beyond class 8, we start talking about JavaScript in the context of a much larger system and how it is used to build whole applications. Now is a good time to discuss how imposter syndrome is real AND completely normal. Experiencing these emotions is NOT a testament to your actual skill level.

Objectives

- Have an open and honest conversation about imposter syndrome and the ways that different people are impacted by it.
- Help students understand that they are not alone in their struggles with imposter syndrome.

Activity Notes

1) First, go over the following list of tasks. For each one, ask students to make a silent note of whether or not they feel capable of achieving that task. Remind them that even if they are unsure of how something works, at this point in the class they already know more about coding then the majority of the world's population. (5-10 min)
   a) Use code to print "Hello, World" to the screen.
   b) Define, initialize, change, and use variables.
   c) Convert the string '1234' into a number.
   d) Construct a for loop to repeat a task 100 times.
   e) Construct if/else statements to decide which of three tasks to perform.
   f) Build, modify, and access an array.
   g) Design and call a function.
   h) Call one function from within another function.
   i) Find and fix bugs in a segment of non-working code.
2) Discuss the following questions (about 5 minutes for each question). These questions are prompts. If the conversation naturally covers one, then that is great!

     a) Have you ever felt the effects of Imposter Syndrome? When?

     b) Have you ever responded to a compliment by diminishing the work that earned you the praise? If so, why did you answer in that way?

     c) How do you feel in a test/quiz/studio when someone finishes much earlier than you?

     d) What are you most proud of from your time working with LaunchCode?

     e) What are your strengths?

     f) What gives you confidence?

     g) How can you use your effort and strengths to boost your confidence?

3) Go over the [helpful tips](#) for the students. Make sure that everyone has had a chance to share (5-10 min.)

     a) Have the students bookmark the studio page or store a copy on their computers - whatever works best. That page has helpful tips and inspirational quotes!

     b) Go over the tips and an example of how those tips can help. Did something from these tips help you when you dealt with imposter syndrome? Once again, don't be afraid to share personal experiences!

     c) Make sure the students read the inspirational quotes and then discuss how the comments can provide encouragement! They learned in the goal-setting studio how much quotes can inspire us!