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Above & Beyond CS (ABCS)

Coding Interview Workshop Series

Workshop 9
Tackling Imposter Syndrome



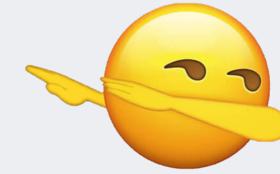
What have we seen so far?



Before coding

...the first 5'

1. Work the clock ✓
2. Communicate proactively ✓
3. Design your algorithm ✓



During coding

...the next 10'

4. Writing code at the whiteboard ✓
5. Talk through your code / solution ✓
6. Handling mistakes ✓



“After” coding

...the last 2-3'

7. Test your code ✓
8. Increase your speed ✓
9. Tackle imposter syndrome

After you're coding...

7. Test Your Code
8. Increase Your Coding Speed
9. Tackle Imposter Syndrome



9. Tackle Imposter Syndrome

Tackling Imposter Syndrome

Imposter syndrome is like Kryptonite to coding interviews.



- Technical interviews trigger imposter syndrome even in the best of us.
- Your imposter syndrome can make you:
 - Make you give up when you hit a snag
 - Make you go silent for fear of asking questions that are “too basic”
- Your imposter syndrome will probably never go away, but there are ways to manage it.

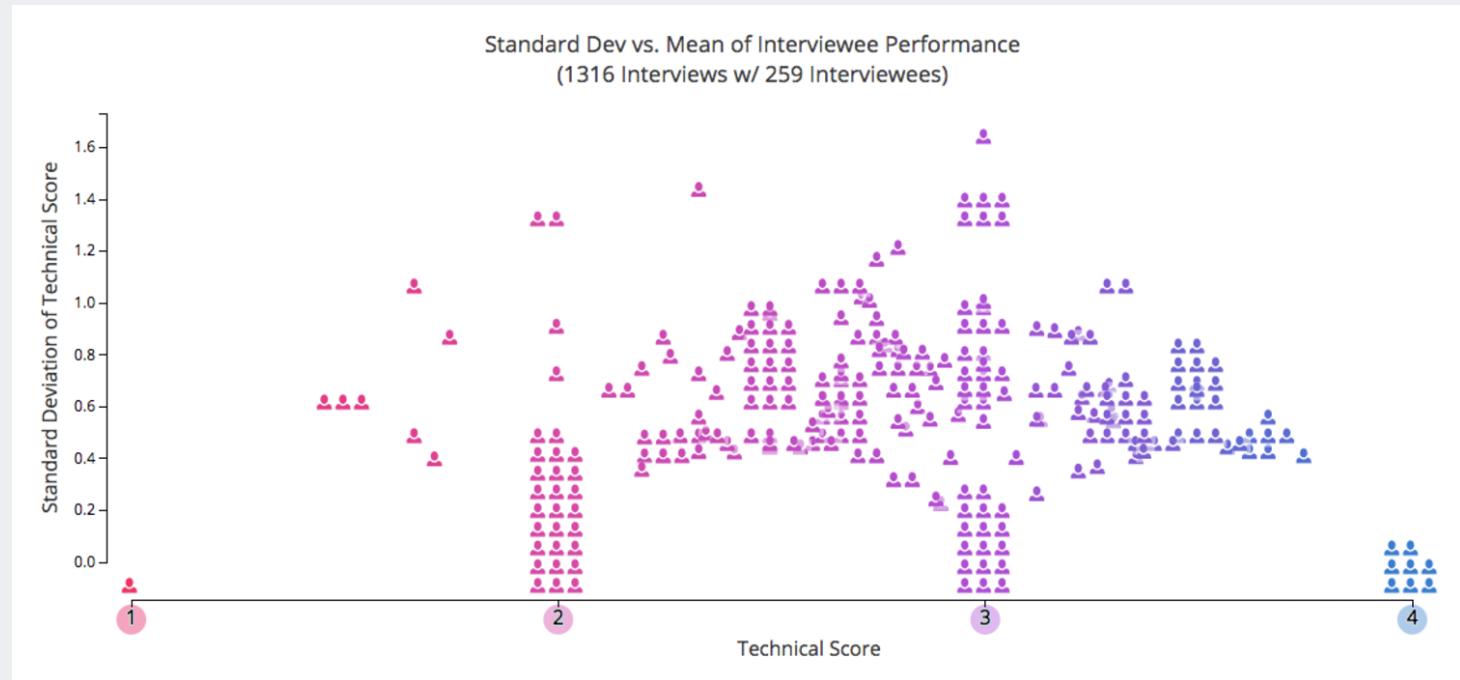
What is Imposter Syndrome?

Here's the good news. You're NOT an imposter!

- Imposter syndrome is the psychological experience of seeing yourself as an intellectual fraud and the fear of being exposed.
- You might feel:
 - Being brilliant is a prerequisite for developers.
 - You've tricked other people, and you might be exposed.
 - Like you don't really know that much (only a tiny sliver of all the stuff there is to know), and if something is easy for us, it must be easy for everyone else.
- >70% of people experience imposter syndrome in their careers.

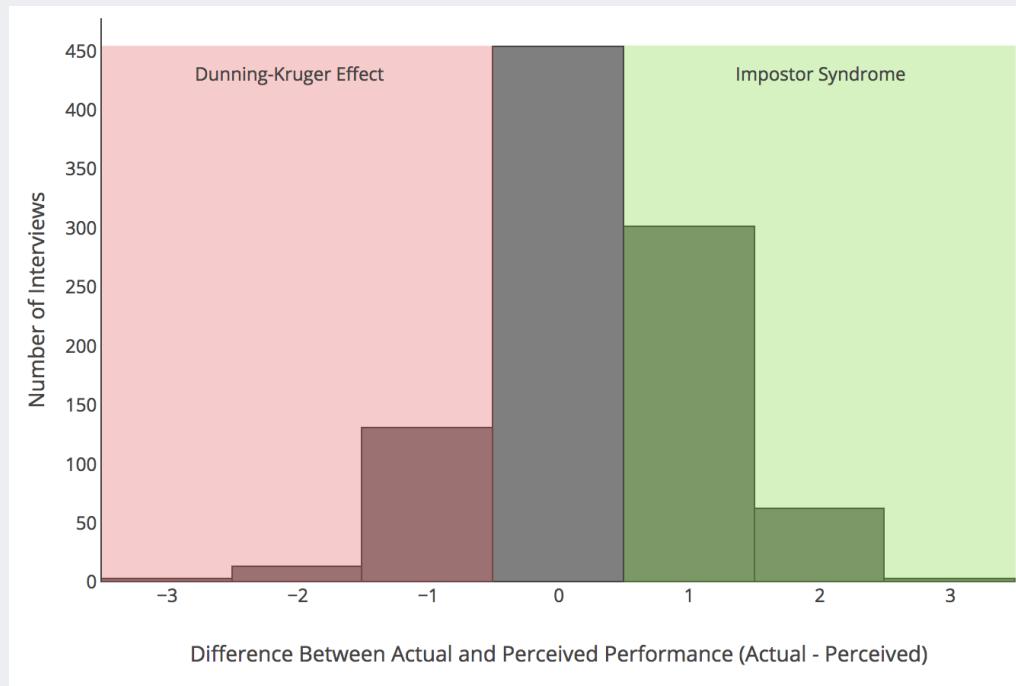
Interviews Aren't Always Accurate

In fact, interview outcomes are kind of arbitrary.



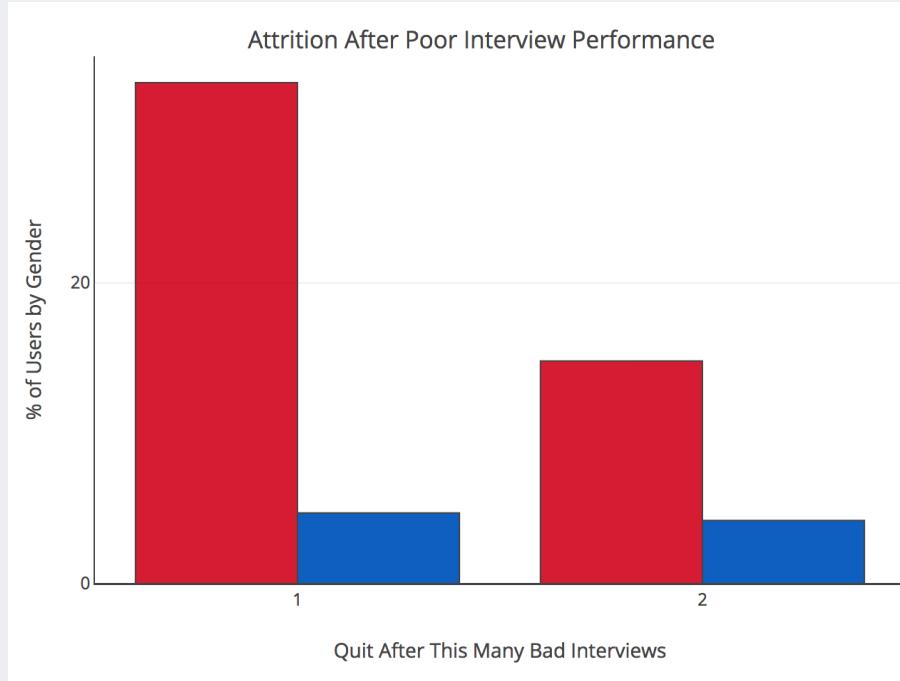
Most People Can't Tell How They're Doing

It's never as bad as you think it is. Or as good, for that matter.



The Impact of a Poor Interview isn't Equal

You will have a poor interview eventually. But, don't quit.



A Few Tips to Tackle Imposter Syndrome

Here's the good news. You're NOT an imposter!

- Familiarity will calm your nerves.
 - Be sure to simulate the experience with more mock interviews from peers
 - Use Glassdoor to review interview questions at the company you're interviewing for
- You're internal dialogue isn't reality.
 - You may think you're tanking, but your interviewer expects you to be nervous! Stay calm.
- Hard work > perfection.
 - NOBODY knows everything. Set realistic expectations, goals, and celebrate progress!

Wait! Before you go...

First, Know the Content

These tips help, but it starts with mastering the content.

- Know your data structures and algorithms
 - Understand, not memorize, the foundations
 - Discuss complexity (time and space)
 - Could be reimplementing library functions
- Use your most comfortable language
- Specific questions about concepts are rare

If You Remember Nothing Else,

Then be sure to remember at least:

1. Don't start coding right away; ask questions!
2. Communicate your design tradeoffs
3. Focus on getting a working solution first
4. Keep calm and think out loud
5. Practice, often, at the whiteboard

Finally,

I promise, this really is the last thing.

- Failure is okay, everybody screws up
 - It might not be fun, but it's okay; there are lots of positions in and you still belong in the industry'
 - Every interview is a learning opportunity
- **And not matter what, most importantly, if all else fails...**



KEEP CALM
AND
THINK
OUT LOUD

Other Great Resources to Help You Prep

- [Cracking the Coding Interview](#)
- [Cracking the Facebook Coding Interview - The Approach](#)
(password: FB_IPS)
- [Cracking the Facebook Coding Interview - The Walkthrough](#)
(password: FB_IPS)



Questions?

