

Interviewer (all Q): Hello, thank you so much for joining me in this interview. For my IB computer science course, we have an internal assessment which is a really big project which we work on for a long period of time. We essentially are creating a program from a client. I thought you would be a perfect client because I know your work may have some problems that I can help solve. In this interview, we will learn a bit about you, a bit about your jobs, and hopefully discover some problems I can help you with. May I ask the first question?

Interviewee (all A): Absolutely. I'm glad and honored you chose me as your client

Q1: Great. What is your job title?

A1: I am a Bollywood dance, teacher, choreographer, and performer

Q2: Who do you work for?

A2: I work for myself. I'm independent. I do everything from beginning to end, by myself

Q3: What does your workplace look like?

A3: I work in two different dance studios. One is a big studio in the neighborhood where I live, and the other studio is a smaller one at my home from where I exclusively teach zoom classes.

Q4: How often do you have classes?

A4: In the big studio, I have classes 3 times a week. In the home studio where I do zoom classes, I have one class a week.

Q5: How long have you been teaching Bollywood?

A5: 12 years now. Our family has lived in several different countries in Asia. I learned Bollywood in India and started teaching it in different countries.

Q6: Who attends your classes?

A6: I teach ladies of different ages. I have younger ladies and all the way up to grandmas. Over the years I've had hundreds of students, mostly expats. As expats, it is quite natural that they come and go. Right now, I have about 30 ladies who live in my community neighborhood, and they come to my in-person classes. That was the situation for more or less the 12 years I have been teaching. But, due to the rise of the Covid pandemic a few months ago, suddenly the world opened up. Ladies who studied with me before in other countries and now lived anywhere else in the world started reconnecting with me, and I started teaching them by streaming classes zoom. So before Covid, I was exclusively teaching in-person, traditional classes, whereas now I am teaching classes that have real people present and at the same time streaming those classes on Zoom to people all around the world.

Q7: How do you structure your classes?

A7: My classes are in a series format. Usually, I do a 5-6 week session, in which each week we build on what we learned the week before. So in 5-6 weeks, we would learn a full song due to the choreographies being quite intricate, and them not being something I can teach in 10 minutes, or not even in an hour. It's built over this period so I can give these ladies tools to most which can most effectively help them learn, practice, and memorize the dances. Then, on top of that, I sometimes offer a one-hour drop-in class. So if you just wanted to take an hour class for some exercise and fun, and then not have to practice after, this would be the perfect opportunity!

Q8: Sounds very cool! So take me through how you prepare for a 5-6 week session you discussed, and what this looks like from start to finish?

A8: Firstly, I look at my calendar and decide a period of 5-6 consecutive weeks which is suitable for me to teach. Next, I advertise. I can advertise on my community Facebook, via email to existing clients, and flyers around my neighborhood to get new students. Then, once I get the number of students that signed up, I start to think about what song I want to do, which choreography and difficulty level, is it something I have done before or not. Then, even if I have done it before, I have to practice the choreography and video myself to help myself remember, and that's basically it. I finalize the sign up a couple of days before the lessons and then show up to the class!

Q9: Is there anything else your job entails which you have not discussed?

A9: One of the things I do is that I send my students a weekly email with updates on the schedule, any Bollywood information/trivia that might be interesting, information about the song we are doing, information about anything cultural in India that is happening. Another thing is that usually after 6 weeks we have performance opportunities since we live in a community with lots of different community events and gatherings. This means I would have to prepare everything else that comes with the performance like preparing costumes, dance formations/positions, practicing, etc...

Q10: What sort of information are you responsible for handling and working with?

A10: A lot of information. First and foremost, the names of all my current and previous students, meaning hundreds of them. Moreover, their emails, their location, including places like the US, South America, Europe, Africa, Asia, Australia. Everywhere. This is very important now due to Covid and my differing class structures compared to previous years which now includes Zoom classes. Also, I have to keep track of who paid and who hasn't, their dancing level, etc... Lots of information to keep track of, and only one person to do the job!

Q11: How do you keep track of all this information and try to stay organized? Do you use any computer programs for this?

A11: I have to say, I am not very hi-tech. I use a notebook to keep track of the main information like emails and names. I also have all my choreographies and songs in folders on my ancient Windows 7 computer.

Q12: It sounds like you are very passionate about your work, but what are some struggles that make your job hard?

A12: Well since I am doing everything myself, literally everything, there is a lot, a lot to do. That is what makes my job really hard but also awesome at the same time.

Q13: Are there any tedious issues with organizing or remembering information that you discussed earlier? If so, what are they?

A13: Well yes. Maybe because of the way I work, I have a lot of information and it is all stored in different places; so I have some stuff on my phone, and some on my computer, and some on my laptop, some on my notebook, and some on random papers which I just randomly jot down ideas on. So lots of information dispersed everywhere. More specifically, with all my students, I have a personal relationship with each of them. That is the magic of me being a teacher, is that when they call me they know my name personally and I know there's personally. However, this is super time consuming because to write to one lady and to have her write back with an answer, and then to write to another lady, and she writes back and I have to answer, and.... I don't remember, "did she answer?"... So this personal relationship is great, but also very very tedious.

Q14: And also, having all this personal information in a lot of different places makes your life harder as well?

A14: Correct, exactly.

Q15: What are some other certain tasks in your job that are difficult?

A15: As I said, one of the things I have to do every session/drop-in class is decide on a song. Sometimes I need to choose a new song that I have never done before, and thus I need to choreograph it from scratch. Sometimes I choose a song I have done already. But, let's say I did it 8 years ago, I don't remember who has done it already and who hasn't: who have I taught it to and who haven't I taught it to. Also, is it a beginner level, intermediate or advanced level song. Does it fit the group of girls who have signed up? So, it takes me a lot of time to choose a song based on these premises.

Another task that takes a lot of time and makes my job very difficult is trying to figure out dance formations that I can use for a certain performance venue with a certain number of student performers. So for example, the dance positions of 18 performers on stage will be different than 20 performers on stage. I will sit for hours and hours just on this one task which is necessary for the performance, drawing "X's" on papers and scratching it out, and drawing more, and scratching out until I finally decide on formations which I like.

Q16: So do you think any of these issues could be assisted by a digital solution or program?

A16: I am absolutely sure they could be. For example, for dance formations, how great would it be if I could say: OK there are 18 girls in this performance, give me a couple of possibilities and options for dance formations. Maybe even moving from one dance formation to another within the same song, but the important part is that it NEEDS to fit 18 girls.

Q17: Makes sense... Lastly, a more computer science-related question, but try your best to answer. Is there any of all this information that needs to be sorted or searched that would make your job easier?

A17: Of course. Searching by geographical location would be fantastic.

Q18: Let me clarify... You mean the location of each and every student, right?

A18: Right. Sorting by levels of each student. Searching for who has done what song before? For example, I have "Song A", who has done that song, and who hasn't? Give me a list. Or maybe even vice versa... I have a list of students signed up, can I do a certain song for this group of students?

Interviewer: Totally! Well, thank you so much for sitting with me in this interview. I am excited to develop this program and continue working with you in the near future.