

ESSAY

Making Math Come Alive

Why should I be part of the Space Academy for Educators program?

As an Algebra teacher, I am passionate about two things: my students, and making Math come alive in the classroom.

I am passionate about my students. They are hardworking and resilient. They come to school despite the socio-economic struggles they face daily. I teach at a Title 1 school, where at least 90% of the students qualify for free and reduced lunch. Many of my students don't see the end game—how education leads to a successful life. They entered high school lacking in basic academic skills. Most of them are recently arrived immigrants whose families cannot afford to send them to college. They think that because they are immigrants, their opportunities are limited. This is heartbreaking for any educator, but to me it is also a challenge. I am inspired to change this mentality by creating opportunities for my students.

One of the ways I strive to do that is by making Math come alive in the classroom. I am passionate about Mathematics, and how it pushes mankind to the frontiers of knowledge. This passion drives my dedication, so that every day, I bring the best possible lesson that enables students to connect their knowledge to the world around them. Every day, I strive to design lessons that make learning meaningful and relevant for my students. I am the kind of teacher who launches makeshift rockets with her students to investigate quadratic relationships. My biggest strength as an educator is my creativity in connecting lessons to real-world contexts.

This is why I seek opportunities like the Space Academy—to make learning relevant for my students. This year, I was selected as one of the Space Foundation's teacher liaisons. The resources and training they provided me have already transformed instruction in my classroom. Opportunities like this program are opportunities for my students to learn meaningfully.

I want to make future engineers or astronauts out of them. Their current language or academic abilities do not deter me from doing so. One of NASA's Astronauts in the Hall of Fame, Dr. Franklin Chang Diaz, was himself an English Language Learner when he first came to the United States. Seven space shuttle missions later, he leads his company in studying plasma rocket propulsion technology to develop faster propellants for rockets. The next Dr. Diaz could be at my school. I want to unlock this potential in every one of my students, and make them realize that success is possible for anyone. I want to instill in them a love for learning Mathematics. I want to do this by bringing outer space into my classroom.

Beyond Mathematics and teaching, I am passionate about astronomy and space exploration. Whenever I can, I bring these interests into the classroom. When students see true passion for something, it is contagious.

I believe that my passion for my students, Mathematics and space exploration, make me a good candidate for the Space Educators Scholarship Program.

JEAMAY PALO

52 W St. NW, Washington DC 20001
443-714-5172, jeamay.palo@gmail.com

CERTIFICATION (Washington DC)

English as a Second Language (K-12)

Math (pending endorsement)

EDUCATION

Ateneo de Manila University (Philippines)

2008-2012

Bachelor of Arts in Communication (Journalism)

Bachelor of Arts Minor in Philosophy

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University – Worldwide (continuing education)

March 2017- Present

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teacher (Theodore Roosevelt High School)

2015 – Present

- Taught (and currently teaching) Algebra 1, Geometry and Algebra 2 to 9th and 10th grade students at the International Academy of Theodore Roosevelt High School. In sheltered-content classes, I integrate language and content instruction to help international students improve Math and English literacy through collaborative learning.

Summer-School Teacher (DC Public Schools)

June- August 2015,2016

- Taught Algebra 1, Geometry and Algebra 2 during a 5-week summer program to help students reach grade-level proficiency, and be on track for graduation at Wilson High School
- Taught English Language Arts to rising 5th graders at Bruce Monroe Elementary School

Tutor (Prince George's County, Maryland)

2012-2015

- Privately tutored K-12 students with Algebra, Geometry, Trigonometry and English
- Tutored K-12 students and helped them reach grade-level proficiency in Algebra 1, Geometry and Algebra 2 at Math Enrichment Tutoring Center in Bowie, Maryland.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Writer

2011-2014

- Wrote for Asian Fortune News--an independent Asian American news magazine for the Asian and Pacific-American Community in DC, Maryland and Virginia
- Wrote for JOIN magazine a multi-cultural publication for *Lokaalmondial* (a media organization in the Netherlands), in a two-week summer internship.

RELEVANT COURSEWORK and PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Math Institute, University of Maryland

October 2016 – April 2017

- Participated in Standards for Mathematics Seminar which focused on integrating strategies to develop mathematical language and discourse in Algebra

Internationals Network for Public Schools Conference

November 2016

- Participated in a two-day conference that included visits to International Academies in New York City, and training sessions about collaborative learning in diverse classes

The New Teacher Project - DC Teaching Fellows

S.Y. 2015-2016

- Admitted to a highly selective cohort of career changers committed to raising student achievement in the DC's highest needs schools

AFFILIATIONS

Space Foundation Teacher Liaison Program

January 2017- Present

- One of 31 teachers worldwide, admitted to a highly prestigious program, which provides teachers training and resources to promote space-related education and curriculum in their respective school districts.

REFERENCES

Aqueelha James, Principal

Theodore Roosevelt High School
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aqueelha.james@dc.gov

Simone Wilkinson, Assistant Principal – International Academy

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Kelly Qureshi, International Academy Instructional Coach

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Sah Brown, Principal

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Vernard Howard, Assistant Principal (11th-12th grade)

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Darlene Morris, STEM Instructional Coach

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Sharlitta Gilbert, ESL Teacher (former ESL Department head)

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Oscar Ramirez, Director of Curriculum and Instruction

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Rosanna DeMammos, Content Specialist

Language Acquisition Division, DC Public Schools
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May 15, 2017

To Whom It May Concern,

This letter is in support of Ms. Jeamay Palo, a mathematics teacher at the International Academy at Roosevelt High School in Washington, D.C. Jeamay is applying for the Kathleen Franzen Memorial Space Academy for Educators Scholarship. As Jeamay's instructional coach, I am pleased to comment on her instructional achievements and attributes.

I began working with Jeamay in August 2016 and have had the pleasure of continuously working with her throughout this school year. I specifically work with Jeamay to support curriculum development and lesson planning for her algebra classes which are comprised of all English-language learners; most of whom are recent arrivals to the United States.

Teaching mathematics to full classes of recent immigrant students is challenging work but Jeamay has been invested in continuously improving her teaching practice to best support her students. Jeamay is open to trying new instructional strategies and exploring various resources in order to integrate language development into her mathematics curriculum. I have repeatedly observed Jeamay directly apply the strategies and ideas we discuss in our meetings to her teaching to best support language development and content understanding.

Entering Jeamay's class you will see that she sets high expectations for behavior and learning. Students expect that they will be held accountable for explaining their work but they also find this process accessible as she provides appropriate scaffolds to support language and content learning. Jeamay also structures collaborative work so students can support one another, problem solve and have more opportunities to practice English.

In her class, you will also see that she values students understanding the concepts of math in real-life contexts. She often presents algebra problems in familiar and applicable contexts such as using various car locations and speeds, restaurant/store situations and even rocket launching. Jeamay's openness to learning and excitement in creating "real-world" math curriculum is why I believe she would greatly benefit from the Space Academy program.

One of the core instructional principles of the International Academy is project-based, interdisciplinary learning and this is a larger instructional goal that Jeamay and her colleagues are working towards. This program would provide Jeamay with valuable experiences that would support her in designing mathematics curriculum that connects to science and engineering as well as uses real-life situations that require authentic math application.

I hope that this letter has been helpful in learning more about Jeamay's strengths as an educator for the Space Academy for Educators Scholarship. From my experience working with Jeamay, I know that she would value and apply such a rich learning experience to her teaching. Please feel free to contact me if you should have any additional questions.

Sincerely,



Kelly F. Qureshi
Instructional Coach
Internationals Network for Public Schools
Kelly.Qureshi@internationalsnetwork.org / 585-749-9245

Simone Wilkinson
Assistant Principal – International Academy

“Global Education for a Global Society”

May 23, 2017

To whom it may concern:

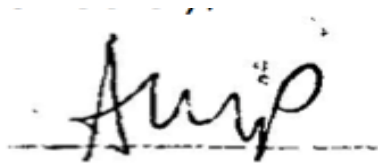
It is my pleasure to recommend Jeamay Palo to be part of your summer Space Academy for Educators program. Ms. Palo is one of our Algebra 1 teachers Theodore Roosevelt High School. She is part of the pioneering International Academy team which serves our 9th-10th grade English Language Learners.

The population Ms. Palo teaches comes with its challenges. Most of our students are recently arrived immigrants, with little to no English literacy. Some also have limited or interrupted education. But Ms. Palo does not limit what they learn to the limits of their language or academic background. Instead, she equips every lesson with various supports which not only help the students access the content, but also help them develop their language. I have seen this on countless occasions in Ms. Palo’s instruction. She is always very creative and strives to make learning exciting and relevant in the classroom. She constantly provides engaging lessons to help students connect their learning to the world around them.

Ms. Palo doesn’t cower from asking rigorous questions to her students, despite the language barrier. Because of this, the students feel empowered, because they are treated like intelligent scholars. In our recent interviews with some of the students on the International Academy team, one student mentioned Ms. Palo as one of the teachers who inspired him despite struggling in her Algebra 1 class, because he felt that she believed in him.

As a colleague, she has very good rapport with her team and fellow teachers outside of her team. She has good initiative to coordinating meetings, organizing events, and getting things done, especially when it involves our students. Her application to this program is just an example of her going above and beyond for them. On behalf of our school community, I strongly recommend her to your program. With her drive and passion, she will be instrumental to your vision of promoting space education to schools.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Simone", written over a horizontal dashed line.

Simone Wilkinson
Assistant Principal – International Academy
Theodore Roosevelt Senior High School
simone.wilkinson@dc.gov
202-603-2295