Latinxs and Hispanics in Mathematical Sciences

Camila Reyes
Analyst Programmer, Duke University School of Medicine

Camila Reyes attended Modesto Junior College (MJC) after high school to pursue a degree in history. She struggled with mathematics throughout middle school and high school and never thought of a career in mathematics. However, after a year at MJC, Camila took a basic algebra course and fell in love with the material. She began to take more mathematics courses, and when she transferred over to California State University (CSU) Stanislaus, she switched her major to mathematics. She received her Bachelor of Science in Mathematics from CSU Stanislaus in 2013 and decided to pursue graduate school. Although Camila enjoyed teaching and helping others understand mathematics, her passion was to use mathematics to help people. She moved across the country to Tennessee to pursue a graduate degree in mathematics from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. After four years at UTK, Camila earned her Master of Science in Mathematics and specialized in Applied Mathematics in Health and Herd Immunity. After graduation, she moved to North Carolina and developed her programming language skills. She intended to further apply mathematics in a clinical research position that would help her grow in her career and advance her current skills in mathematics and programming. Camila became employed at Duke University in the School of Medicine in 2019 as an Analyst Programmer helping study teams with data collection, data management, and data analysis. Camila also enjoys publishing her work and contributions in clinical research. Since then, Camila has become certified as a SAS Base Programmer and is planning to pursue a second master's in statistics to further diversify her applied analytics skills portfolio.

Having a solid understanding of algebra and logic is necessary in an Analyst Programmer position. Probability and statistics are also very useful. For example, Camila is working on a government project that requires linking data from multiple sources. An understanding of data linkage methods (deterministic or probabilistic) is necessary to link these data sets. Given Camila's background and degrees in Mathematics, she has been able to learn about these methods and provide an opinion to her study team on the best methods to use.

Camila has been an adjunct teacher on and off the past few years at Durham Technical Community College. Although it is not her full-time job, she still enjoys teaching mathematics and helping students understand the importance of having solid math skills.

Camila advises students to learn at least one programming language, especially one of the more popular languages like Python or R. If students get a chance, they should take some probability and statistics courses, as well. Both skill sets will boost your CV/Resume and prepare you for a job in business, industry, or government.

"Hispanic Heritage Month is an opportunity for everyone to learn about the contributions and accomplishments of our people. Personally, I am a fan of the food! During this month, you can find me at festivals learning about different Hispanic cultures and enjoying all the delicious foods from mi familia extendida. I am proud to be Salvadoran American. My parents left their home country with dreams to find a better life for their children, and I hope that I have lived up to their dreams. I hope I have made them proud of who I am today!"