

Jennifer Dial Santoro

Marley Middle School, Glen Burnie, MD

Middle School Math Education

8th Grade



2005 Honorees



“My first challenge every year is to find out what the new ‘hot-button’ for students will be. Thirteen-year-olds are a moving target; what’s cool one day is past tense the next. I usually find out about my students by observing what they do or talk about when I am not requiring math from them. Any free time I

give them is when I do my learning about them. This year the students are motivated by ‘Manga,’ or fantasy comic books. The students bring graphic novels to class, and every second they have they are reading. This is the first time in my career I have seen all levels of students reading anything by choice, so instead of doing what my teachers would have done (confiscate them), I embrace this part of their eighth-grade culture as much as I can... I developed a few characters on my own, and drawing on my limited ability in art, I have introduced them gradually in class. I have also created templates for the students to take notes in comic book form. The boxes create a framework for sequence, and in mathematics sequence is everything. Instead of taking notes traditionally, students fill in a dialogue between characters... I’m sure that next year will bring another trend, and I will have to search it out and adapt it to my classroom. All the while, though, I have been able to use the tight structure of our new curriculum as a framework for some of the most creative moments in my classroom.” – *Jennifer Dial Santoro*

“Mrs. Dial Santoro is a master at lesson/unit planning and execution. She establishes very clear daily objectives that are aligned with state, local and school mastery objectives, includes an appropriate reinforcement of previous learned skills, and plans appropriate instructional strategies to achieve student outcomes. She carefully adapts plans based on student outcomes.”

“Success is measured in many ways in her program... This is the first year Geometry has been offered and Mrs. Santoro is teaching it. She is able to differentiate and scaffold her strategies to the point where she teaches 7th and 8th grades together. She also has increased the number of students in Algebra so that more sections were added this year... For two years in a row all of Mrs. Santoro’s students have passed the algebra test required for the High school credit in 8th grade except for one that made it the second time. She is constantly monitoring her students’ state scores to push them over the bar into the proficient level. This is the reality of true assessment!”

– *Susan Cassidy, principal, Marley Middle School*

Other Highlights:

Advisor for the school’s Mathalon Team which competes in the statewide Mathalon in November each year

Interdisciplinary Team Leader for eighth-grade team

Currently pursuing Masters Degree in Middle School Math at the University of Maryland

Years Teaching: 4

Average Class Size: 26

Classes Taught Per Day: 3

School’s Percent of ESL Students: <1

School Type: Public, County

Type of Class: Self-contained