### NCSS Notable Trade Book Lesson Plan
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Early Childhood and Elementary Community

| Title of NCSS Notable Trade Book: | *Alma: and How She Got Her Name* by Juana Martinez-Neal  
ISBN-10: 0763693553  
Candlewick Publishing  
A 2019 Caldecott Honor Book |
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<td>Book Summary:</td>
<td>If you ask Alma Sofia Esperanza Jose Pura Candela, she has way too many names: six! Alma turns to her Daddy for an answer and learns about Sofia, the mother who loved books and flowers; Esperanza, the great-grandmother who longed to travel; Jose, the grandfather who was an artist; and the other namesakes, too. As she hears the story of her name, Alma starts to think it might be perfect after all and realizes she will one day have her own story to tell.</td>
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<td>NCSS Standard:</td>
<td>IV. Individual Development and Identity</td>
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| Materials: | Homework sheets  
Art supplies for creating identity posters |
| Compelling Question: | How is everyone unique?  
Supporting Question: How is my story unique? |
| Procedures: | **Activating Strategy:** The teacher will build excitement for the lesson by having a picture of him or herself as a young child. They will explain that before they were Mr./Ms./Dr. they were just called________________. They can then share the origin of their name, before introducing the book about a girl named Alma with a very special, and very long, name.  

**Introduce and Model New Knowledge:**  
Read the story aloud, or listen to it read in English and Spanish.  
[https://youtu.be/ejaplDyL-Xw](https://youtu.be/ejaplDyL-Xw) |
Share some naming traditions from around the world. For instance: in Hispanic cultures a person usually has four names. A first name, second first name, father's last name, and mother's last name.

In China, what Americans call a last name (or family name) comes before one or two given names. The family name is usually one syllable, and the given names may contain one or two syllables each.

Explain to the class that just as Alma asked her dad where her name came from, the students are going to be responsible for asking their families/guardians where their names came from. Explain the homework letter (provided below).

The next day the students can share their findings. One suggestion is to have them do a “carousel of sharing.” Students sit in two circles, on inside the other. The outside circle rotates around so that the students can share multiple times with different partners.

Review with the students Alma’s character traits that we learned from the book (likes to read, artist, cares for others).

**Provide Guided Practice:** The students will begin planning what will go on an identity poster. Working with a partner, have the students decide what are some of their own character traits. The most interesting and important things about themselves (including their name) will be written down and shared.

**Provide Independent Practice:** Students will craft their identity posters.

**Wrap-Up:** Students will share their posters in a gallery walk.

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<th>Assessment:</th>
<th>The final identity posters will serve as the summative assessment.</th>
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**References & Web Links**

Interview with author/illustrator Juana Martinez-Neal. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xvuuoGzrR0s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xvuuoGzrR0s)

Teaching Tolerance Identity Poster lesson: [https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/tolerance-lessons/identity-posters](https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/tolerance-lessons/identity-posters)
Listen to the story read aloud in both English and Spanish. [https://youtu.be/ejaplDvL-Xw](https://youtu.be/ejaplDvL-Xw)

### Ideas for very young learners
- Use this book as an activity to introduce name-writing practice. Fun name writing and recognition activities can be found at: [https://handsonaswegrow.com/practice-name-writing-preschoolers/](https://handsonaswegrow.com/practice-name-writing-preschoolers/)

### Ideas for grades 4-6
- Older students can do some research on additional naming traditions.
- Older students can research their own surname or first name. They can explore online to see if their name has origins that can be traced back to a particular culture or place of origin. Students can locate those places on a globe, and share this information with their classmates.
Students,
Today in school we read Alma and How She Got Her Name by Juana Martinez-Neal. Your special homework tonight is to ask your family where your name came from. Here are some questions to ask (but feel free to ask more):

- Who picked out my name?
- Am I named after someone? If so, who? Can you tell me about them?
- Is the way I was given my name special because of our culture?

Come to school tomorrow ready to share what you learned with your classmates. You can write the answers on the back of this paper if that will help you remember. You can also bring in pictures to show your classmates if you have some.

I am eager to learn more about you.

Sincerely,