



**Getting to Know You**  
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**Goal:** To understand the social and cultural meaning of a person's name. [Community Cultural Wealth, (Yosso, 2005)]. This understanding should encompass the concepts of legacy, religion, heritage, etymology, social values and semantics.

**Objective:** Pairs of college students explore the origin of their names over a two-week period. Students will (1) research the origin of their individual names (full name) and (2) share that information with the partner, and (3) eventually the class.

**Students Will Be Able To (SWBAT):**

1. Utilize complete sentences to respond to the interview questions about the origin of their names [One of the goals of the *Writing Processes* course]
2. Create a narrative with at least three (3) paragraphs that addresses at least **six (6)** of the ten points suggested for name research. [One of the goals of the *Writing Processes* course]
3. Prepare a 3-5 minute oral presentation on the origins of the partner's name to be delivered *orally* to the class. [One of the "state standards for teacher training"]

**Procedure [Instructions given to students]**

**A. Pre-Activity/Preparation:**

- a. Read two picture books
  - i. Choi. (2003). *The name jar*. New York: Dell Dragon Fly [paperback and audio]
  - ii. Henkes. (1998). *Chrysanthemum*. New York: Weston Woods [audiobook]
- b. Watch
  - . Cisneros. (2009). *My name (from) House on Mango Street*. New York: Vintage Books.
- i. Lahari. (2003). *Namesake*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company

**B. Main Activity**

- . Students Pair up with the inventory of questions about names
- a. Students complete, then, switch roles of interviewer/interviewee to finish tasks
0. Students complete, as fully as possible, the interview protocol
1. At the conclusion of class, students are encouraged to locate sources to better inform them of unanswered questions. Examples:
  1. Who are you named after (legacy)?
  2. What is the geographic origin of your name(s)?
  3. What is the social/historical/familial/cultural etymology of your name?
- b. Based on notes gathered, students have Sustained Silent Writing time (15 minutes) both the first and second encounters with their writing partners.
- c. Students share what they crafted and engage in "Member Checking" to ensure authenticity and accuracy in their representation of their partner's name.
- d. Students, based on feedback,
  0. Revise their texts
  1. Prepare to present to the class

**Results**

- A. All of the students, at a minimum, were able to answer the writing prompts regarding the origin of their names. A holistic, qualitative assessment, based upon:

sentence complexity and literary mechanics (word choice, stylistics, redundancies, [sentence] structural novelty) distributed the student work into three broad categories.

- a. In some cases students offered stories that revealed the legacy or heritage of their names: Maintaining the family tradition of naming girls with “Lynn:” Jerilynn (mother) and Avalynn (daughter);
- b. There were cases in which the etymology narrative revealed salacious or unexpected information
  - i. One student wrote that she was named after her father’s first girlfriend
  - ii. A student revealed that she was named after a “stripper” of whom her father was fond.
  - iii. It was shared that one person’s name was changed to that of a famous actress at the time.
    - B. Three initial categories were reviewed
      - . **Reaction to the assignment:** Overwhelming, the students enjoyed interacting with their classmates in this way around their names: *The sharing was fun and informative...A lesson is always better when everyone one participates.*
      - a. **Understanding of the rationale for the assignment:** In their critiques, several students, in addition to expressions of enjoyment, indicated their understanding of the pedagogic rationale for this kind of activity in classroom settings:
        0. *Working together in class makes it productive...*
        1. *It gives them a chance to show their creative side...*
        2. *Students are give greater creative freedom...*
        3. *This would be a good way to connect students with local cultures...*
      - b. **Extensions and innovations:** Several students suggested how their experience with this activity prompted ideas of additional iterations in their future classroom as teachers:
        0. Integration of other modalities: More than one student suggested the inclusion of opportunities for drawing original pictures to be included in their written texts. *Getting children involved with art and writing at the same time would make it funner activity....*
        1. One student suggested “decoupage” with family members
          1. [I would have my student] *Cut out pictures from magazines...*
          2. *I could use other topics like “food,” too.*
          3. *I would use this craft lesson to teach my students the alphabets...*