



Identity Work in the Classroom: Successful Learning in Urban Schools

Cheryl Jones-Walker

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This book provides classroom examples to demonstrate how identity-making is integral to the teaching and learning process. Responding to school reform efforts that focus on top-down reform measures, this book proposes "identity work" as an alternative approach. The author argues that efforts to improve urban schools should recognize the importance of relational change that focuses on deepening personal interactions between students and teachers, teachers and other teachers, and schools and parents. Based on an in-depth study of two classrooms in urban K-8 schools, the book illuminates the importance of allowing teachers the freedom to make pedagogical adjustments based on their knowledge of students' needs, backgrounds, and interests. This volume reframes our understanding of urban schools and raises questions about the goals of local and federal reform and what is at stake for educational systems.

Book Features:

- * Provides examples of identity work and its potential for creating individual, institutional, and large scale systemic improvement.
- * Identifies how skilled educators make pedagogical decisions that increase student engagement and learning outcomes.
- * Examines the challenges of working within a context of increasing mandates and rigid accountability structures.
- * Advocates for design improvement strategies that rely on the capacities of students, teachers, and community members.
- * Shows how qualitative work that elucidates the experience of students and teachers can inform education policy.

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