

# Chapter 1

## Identity Work

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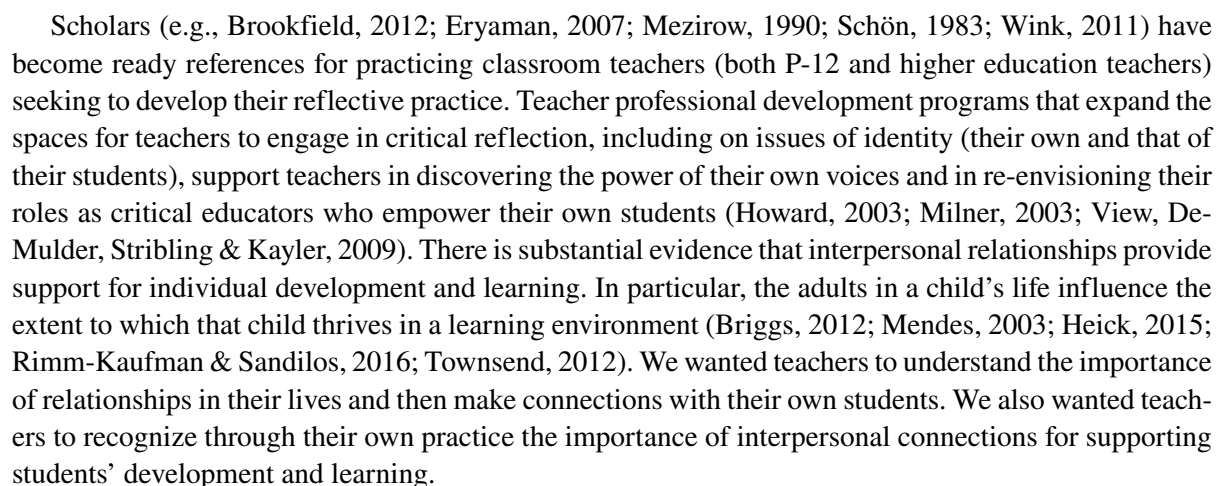
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### ABSTRACT

*The authors describe the first crucial step in antiracist teacher professional development – developing a deep understanding of one’s identity. After providing the theoretical framework behind this approach and sharing their own stories of their identity development as antiracist educators, the authors describe the curricular approaches they used to engage teachers in exploring the self. They also share the outcomes of these efforts and the tensions and dilemmas that arise when supporting teachers to examine their identities in the process of becoming antiracist educators.*

As Kendi (2019) reminds us, “...racist and antiracist are not fixed identities. We can be racist one minute and an antiracist the next” (p. 10). In other words, the work is on-going and requires constant reflection on the self. We need to be aware of the identities we claim related to race, gender, ethnicity, language, etc. and how these complex interconnected identities drive our worldviews, dispositions, behaviors, attitudes, and actions (see example identity web in Figure 1). Furthermore, it is imperative that we deepen our understanding of the role our experiences play in shaping these identities and ultimately how these identities we bring to our classroom then impact students’ learning. Through deep reflection, we can become more aware of the ways in which our actions in the classroom are (or are not) “supporting an antiracist policy...or expressing an antiracist idea” (Kendi, 2019, p. 13).

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