



**TASA** The Australian  
Sociological Association

**TITLE: Talking about racism: The production of truth/s in the social practice of teacher education**

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**Abstract:**

Commonsense discourse asserts the myth that 'everything depends on the teacher' in schooling and achievement. The argument that is then made is: in order to improve student outcomes we must prepare better teachers in teacher-education programs. Policy dictates in Australia ensure that there is busy practice in meeting the requirements of a highly standardised and regulated environment characteristic of the neoliberal university. In such a context of increased pressure to perform in ways adhering to these policy discourses, what space is there for addressing broader socio-cultural issues that might drive institutional contexts of schooling? This paper reports on issues surrounding racism in Australian society as they are addressed in a sociology of education course for secondary preservice teachers within a graduate diploma of education program. Connections are made to the debates around the 'integration' of general capabilities

(<http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/generalcapabilities/overview/general-capabilities-inthe-australian-curriculum>) and cross-curriculum priorities

(<http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/crosscurriculumpriorities>) and the fabrication of normalised understandings about what it means to be a 'quality' practitioner. I ask questions about how notions of 'truth' in teacher education might be embedded and produced in the daily practice of institutions. I also interrogate my own positioning in this activity, critiquing the power relations served within the expectations of the course.