

Racialised discourse and adult learning principles: some thoughts about 'difference' and VET

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In this paper I focus on the tensions within some strands of VET literature to understand and investigate conditions of inequality and how they are experienced within VET settings. Yet a substantial amount of this literature gives little recognition to the ways in which contemporary theory normalises and renders invisible discourses of 'Whiteness'. I investigate the claim that dominant discourses of VET have a limited capacity to deal with issues of whiteness as it is constituted through the messy environs of learning settings. At the same time dealing with these issues through the lens of 'difference' is itself problematic.

In this paper I begin from a point of analysis that attempts to destabilise the problematic notion of 'target groups' so commonly used in the literature. In doing so I explore the tangible effects of Whiteness on theory making about learning in VET settings.