Using Rural Education Research to Rethink Literacies Pedagogies

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This chapter considers how rural education research might inform literacies pedagogies. It begins by describing how researchers have mapped pedagogical approaches for teaching literacies and how there are consequences for using particular pedagogies in narrow ways. It also considers how, in the current competitive context of standardised testing, some education systems have required schools to declare publicly their pedagogical framework. Such moves seem to have resulted in a proliferation of narrow pedagogical approaches that are unlikely to be effective for all students. The chapter argues that rural education research—with its detailed and nuanced understandings about rural place and space—offers evidence to help open up particular pedagogical approaches to scrutiny and to demonstrate the importance of knowledge about place in selecting pedagogies.

Introduction
The field of rural education is embedded in the view that place matters. Although we might argue that this is a truism, the field has offered considerable explanation and discussion about how 'the rural' is different from the urban, a conceptualisation that has often prompted a binary logic. As Donehower, Hogg and Schell (2012b) discussed, such logic has ensured "dualistic narratives, depicting rural places and people as lacking educational, economic, and cultural resources" (p. xi; see also Moriarty, Danaher, & Danaher, 2003). In addition, these narratives have often masked or erased insights about the productive characteristics of those who live in rural places.

It has been recognised for a long time that there is crucial work to be done in trying to "reject the deficit model underpinning constructions of nonmetropolitan Australians as less normal and more problematic than their metropolitan counterparts" (Moriarty, Danaher, & Danaher, 2003, p. 135). Indeed, in light of the prevalence of deficit thinking, many researchers (e.g., Bartholomaeus, 2018; Green & Corbett, 2013a; Reid et al., 2010; Roberts & Green, 2013) have worked to turn around such thinking and to "reclaim the rural in productive ways" (Donehower et al., 2012b, p. xv).

In my own research, it was the prevalence of stereotypical and deficit stories about itinerant farm workers' children and their families (Henderson, 2008, 2009) that prompted me to shape my later research around positive stories. This shift in focus— to go looking for evidence of responsive and flexible literacies teaching that effects transformative action in schools (Janks, 2010)—drew me towards literacies pedagogies as an important area to research. My thinking was shaped by a view that, if we want teachers in classrooms to make a difference to students' learning, it is important to find out what is working, why and how. However, in building my understandings about literacies pedagogies, I concluded that researchers and school practitioners could learn from rural education research. One of the reasons for that is that rural education research has a lot to say about rural contexts and how understandings of place can make a difference.

This chapter explains my thinking about how an understanding of 'the rural' can inform understandings about literacies pedagogies. I begin by sharing three incidents

that prompted my initial thinking about rural education research in relation to literacies pedagogies. I then discuss how literacies pedagogies have been conceptualised and how the uptake of particular pedagogies warrants some rethinking. I discuss how rural education research might provide details about place, along with details about the lives of those who reside in particular places, thereby providing details that can impact on thinking about pedagogies, before returning to the three incidents and explaining briefly why interconnections between rural education research and literacies pedagogies are important.

Reflecting on Three Incidents
As already explained, three incidents prompted me to think about the nexus between rural education research and literacies pedagogies.

Incident 1
The first incident was a research interview with the principal of a school in a rural area of south-west Queensland, Australia. The school was impacted by the current policy and practice context which demands the quantification of learning and ongoing comparisons with other schools (Gorur, 2016). Also evident in that context were what Cormack and Comber (2013) called "discourses of data" (p. 78) and a governmental push for "a stronger position on normative standards" (Comber, 2006, p. 59).

Indeed, the principal lamented that the high stakes assessments and associated talk about data put enormous pressure on her staff (and herself) in relation to meeting the education system's expectations for continuous school improvement. However, she felt that the pedagogy advocated by advisers from the education system—all of whom were based in an urban area and a full day's drive from her school—was not working for the school and its student cohort. In relation to literacies learning and the school's attempts to enhance student learning, she explained:

> We were seeing gains ... particularly from our non-Indigenous kids. We still just couldn't get that bang for our buck ... for sort of the rest of them. We were on that treadmill and never getting anywhere … We were putting in a lot of time, a lot of work, a lot of effort into these kids and we just weren't seeing the results.

As explained elsewhere (Henderson, 2020), the principal was frustrated by issues that impacted on her school as a result of its rural location. She was concerned about the cost of professional learning for teachers—because attendance usually meant being away from the school for several days due to the necessary travel—and the limited availability of relief teachers. She also felt that the pedagogical advice that she was receiving was neither meeting the needs of her school nor making a difference to the students' literacies learning.

Incident 2
The second incident was when I read two booklets produced by a state education department (Queensland Department of Education and Training, n.d.; Queensland Government, 2016). These are examples of curriculum-related documents currently in circulation. The *Age appropriate pedagogies program: Progress report 2016* (Queensland Government, 2016) identified a plan for "championing high quality teaching and learning" (p. 4). However, despite attention to the complexity of

teaching and considerations of child, teacher/educator, curriculum, assessment (evidence of learning) and pedagogy, along with acknowledgement of the importance of context and "school and community location" (p. 6), there was no mention of rurality or rural context. This seemed odd, especially since 72 per cent of the schools in the program were situated in non-metropolitan locations that included rural, regional and remote contexts, all of which fall under a rural umbrella (Bartholomaeus, 2018).

Incident 3
The third incident was a finding in my research on literacies pedagogies—that teachers are not always able to articulate their pedagogical approaches (Henderson, 2015). Other researchers have noted similar findings. For example, Comber and Nixon (2009) reported that when "teachers talk about their work … they speak little about pedagogy, student learning and academic achievement" (p. 334). However, this does not mean that teachers are unaware of their pedagogical approaches. As Cochran-Smith (2012) pointed out, learning to teach occurs over time and should be understood as a process, rather than as an event, that is influenced by background characteristics, experiences of initial teacher education, experiences of policy and practice in schools, personal beliefs and values, as well as "multiple identities, positions, roles, and ways of knowing" (p. 121). This complexity is not always easy to explain or to share with others.

In addition, Comber and Nixon (2009) suggested that the absence of teacher talk about pedagogies is due partly to the demands of bureaucracy, the constraints of managerial discourses that have become so prevalent, and the impact of a growing range of social issues that affect students, such as poverty, mental illness and feelings of alienation. In recent years, the push for data-informed practice in schools has made it difficult for teachers to be other than "the technicians and implementers of someone else's curriculum and pedagogy" (Comber & Nixon, 2009, p. 344).

Considering Rural Education Research and Literacies Pedagogies
The previous section of this chapter outlined three incidents and their influence on my thinking:

- a principal frustrated by the way that systemic attempts to raise literacy levels seemed far removed from what was needed in her remote rural school;
- the lack of 'the rural' in a curriculum-related initiative that was meant for rural schools as well as metropolitan schools;
- the apparent absence of pedagogical considerations in teachers' talk about students' learning of literacies.

These incidents suggested that a consideration of rural education research with literacies pedagogies would be helpful. That highlighted the importance of further investigations about literacies pedagogies, so this is the focus of the next sections.

Mapping Literacies Pedagogies
In considering the field of literacies pedagogies, it is obvious that there is a wide range. I reviewed some of the mapping of literacies pedagogies (e.g., Freebody & Gilbert, 1999; Freebody, Ludwig, & Gunn, 1995; Luke & Freebody, 1997b; Phillips & Walker, 1987). Over time, the interweaving of a diverse range of understandings

about the learning of literacies—from the fields of psychology, linguistics, sociology, anthropology, history, politics, English literature, educational assessment and human development—has resulted in what Stahl and Miller (1989) called a "continuous evolution" of literacies perspectives, beliefs and pedagogical practices (p. 89).

Different researchers have conceptualised this variability in different ways, resulting in a range of frameworks that have tried to map different pedagogies for teaching literacies. I have chosen here to talk about one of these, from the work of Luke and Freebody (1997b). What I like about their mapping is that it attempted to account for a historical perspective, as well as some of the shifts across domains, such as the move from psychological to sociological models of literacy. Luke and Freebody (1997b) identified three clusters of approaches to literacies pedagogies. I have used Fig. 1 to visually represent the three clusters—traditional skill-based, progressivist child-centred and cultural-critical approaches—with a rough indication of when they originated and how they continue to co-exist in the present.
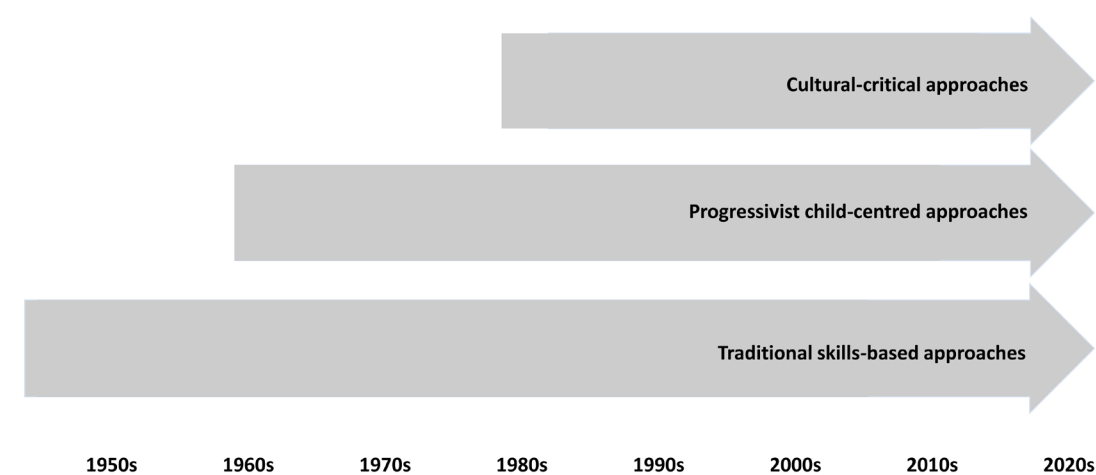

Cultural-critical approaches

Progressivist child-centred approaches

Traditional skills-based approaches

| 1950s | 1960s | 1970s | 1980s | 1990s | 2000s | 2010s | 2020s |

Fig. 1. The three clusters of literacy pedagogical approaches identified by Luke and Freebody (1997b)

The first cluster of approaches, traditional skills-based approaches, includes the basics-plus-classics model of literacy education, where some students were educated in the basics—"word recognition, hand writing, spelling, and reading aloud"—while others received the basics along with "exposure to a canon of valued literature" (Luke & Freebody, 1997b, p. 186). Later developments saw a growing interest in behavioural psychology and a move towards a view of the reader as a "psychological entity" (p. 188), thus reading instruction involved the mastery of sequences and hierarchies of skills, with basal readers for beginners providing controlled vocabulary and increasing levels of textual difficulty. In pedagogical terms, skills-based approaches to literacy tend to utilise direct and prescriptive teaching, thus representing a view that literacy requires sets of particular foundational knowledges and skills (Comber & Cormack, 1995; Ivanič, 2004).

The second cluster of approaches, those described as progressivist and child-centred, appeared around the 1960s, particularly because of new understandings from

cognitive and developmental psychology. This moved the focus away from the skills-based approaches and their preoccupation with "the breaking down of the language into its various parts" (Christie, 1990, p. 15), towards conceptualisations of reading as "the construction of meaning in the internal cognitive space of the reader" (Luke & Freebody, 1997b, p. 189). This cluster incorporates experiential, whole language, process writing, growth, language-experience and cultural heritage approaches (see Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1983; Goodman, 1986; Graves, 1981; Smith, 1983). In general, the focus was on active constructions of meaning in authentic meaningful contexts for reading and writing. Such approaches emphasise that children should be immersed in language and print resources.

The third cluster of approaches identified by Luke and Freebody (1997b) includes those based on sociological, cultural and critical understandings, with literacies recognised as social practices (Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Gee, 1996; Luke, 1991). These emphasise the sociocultural contexts of literacies, highlight their political aspects, and thus recognise that literacy practices always take place in social situations and cultural contexts and involve cultural knowledge, ideologies and social power (Freebody et al., 1995; Ivanič, 2004). From this perspective, literacy is a multiple concept—hence the plural term, *literacies*—while learning is about access to, and participation in, particular social and cultural practices. School literacy success, then, is influenced by the extent to which students display culturally-preferred ways of talking, listening, reading and writing (Comber & Cormack, 1995; Luke & Freebody, 1997b).

This move away from unidimensional definitions of literacy (as per the other two clusters of approaches) accompanies a recognition that literacies education draws on selective traditions of what is accepted as literacy. Literacies education, therefore, is understood as a "normative social and cultural project" that constructs particular versions of the literate student (Luke & Freebody, 1997a, p. 6).

I want to make it clear, however, that Luke and Freebody's (1997b) mapping does not suggest that literacy approaches can be organised into a tidy, sequential order that explains literacy learning, or that more recent approaches have replaced older ones. In fact, Luke and Freebody discussed the accumulation of understandings over time and the way that multiple literacy beliefs and pedagogical practices co-exist. This is indicated in the visual representation of Fig. 1. Indeed, teaching practices are often based on aspects of all three clusters, so that "remnants from all of these … are sustained in most contemporary classrooms and lessons" (Luke & Freebody, 1997b, p. 191; see also Freebody & Gilbert, 1999), with teachers seeming to take an eclectic approach or drawing on "hybrid instantiations" of various approaches (Ivanič, 2004, p. 240). That is, new approaches have tended to join, rather than replace, existing perspectives.

Understanding the Effects of Different Pedagogical Approaches
As has already been stated, the evolution of the three clusters of approaches to literacies teaching did not result in new approaches replacing previous ones. As a result, a wide range of different and hybrid understandings about what literacy is and how it should best be taught is evident in the literature as well as in classroom practice. Indeed, the education system documents discussed in Incident 2 at the beginning of this chapter indicate some of this diversity.

In the last couple of decades, there have been many calls for balanced approaches to the teaching of literacies. This has come from recognition that particular pedagogical approaches can play out in particular ways or, as Hamilton (1999) suggested, "entail different outcomes" (p. 148). Luke (2003) highlighted this when he talked about schools taking up particular programs and how this can skew literacies outcomes. He gave the specific example of a school that "declared itself with full parental support a 'basics' school, committed to phonics, word study and quota spelling" (p. 69). The outcome was that "the kids could spell really well" (p. 69), but they were not doing well in other areas of literacy, such as reading comprehension and writing. As Luke explained, this was an "unbalanced program" (p. 70).

Considerable research calls for the balanced teaching of literacies, particularly to ensure that literacy instruction incorporates the full range of literacy practices: code-breaking, semantic, pragmatic and critical practices (e.g., Frey, Lee, Tollefson, Pass, & Massengill, 2005; Heydon, Hibbert, & Iannacci, 2004; Kalantzis, Cope, Chan, & Dalley-Trim, 2016; Luke & Freebody, 1999). Rasinski and Padak (2004) highlighted that programs that "combine aspects from more than one theoretical or conceptual framework have been found to result in positive learning outcomes" (p. 92), while Kalantzis et al. (2016) stressed that "excellent pedagogy has always involved a balanced and appropriate mix of activity types" (p. 74).

With these arguments in mind, let us return to the clusters of pedagogical approaches described by Luke and Freebody (1997b). Although the traditional skills-based and progressivist child-centred approaches conceptualise literacy teaching in different ways, they both focus on the cognitive, psychological and social differences that exist amongst students. As a result, failure to learn literacies can be readily located in individual children or in their family or home backgrounds. This conceptualisation of literacy underachievement has allowed deficit discourses to become a commonsense way of explaining why literacy learning is not happening. When the focus is on deficiencies, stories of blame often become taken-for-granted explanations, with blame ascribed to children and/or their families for individual learning problems, knowledge gaps, or impoverished home or social backgrounds.

Such a view—"a deficit gaze"—has consequences (Dudley-Marling, 2007, p. 7; Henderson & Woods, 2018; Woods, 2018), particularly in relation to teachers' decisions about suitable pedagogical practice. When there is a perceived deficit, compensatory measures seem to provide an appropriate way to top up students' knowledges and skills, thus (supposedly) fixing their literacy problems. However, such thinking can lead to further unintended consequences, including narrow approaches to curriculum and "an over-reliance on teaching basic low-level skills" (Woods, 2018, p. 212).

This is not a new point of view. More than 25 years ago, Cambourne (1992) highlighted the consequences of deficit views: "one simply takes steps to ensure that the learners who are deficient are given a large dose of whatever it is that they're deficient in" (p. 61). In addition, because compensatory approaches are focused on individual students, there is no interrogation of the structures and characteristics of school, schooling and the wider community and how these might influence students' learning. However, in contrast to compensatory thinking, the third cluster of

pedagogical approaches—the cultural-critical—offers a perspective that recognises literacies as social and cultural practices and therefore considers context. This perspective focuses on "the particular texts, discourses, and practices" which students can access. It emphasises "standpoints, cultural expectations, norms of social actions and consequences" (Luke & Freebody, 1997b, pp. 208–209).

The cultural-critical cluster, then, widens the lens that teachers use and helps to show that "those resources and practices that children bring to classrooms are cultural resources, and not idiosyncratic individual differences, learning styles, skill deficits, or innate abilities" (Luke & Freebody, 1997b, p. 195). Widening the view and looking at the overall picture relating to student learning is a useful strategy to prevent a focus "on one small section to the neglect of others" (Henderson & Woods, 2018, p. 242). Indeed, such a wide lens is helpful for moving beyond the deficit understandings and stereotypical assumptions that so often accompany the commonsense logic of compensatory approaches.

Putting Pedagogies on the Public Record
Since the late 1990s when Luke and Freebody (1997b) provided their account of how literacies pedagogies have changed over time, there have been many attempts to draw together different pedagogical approaches to inform the teaching of literacies. These include The New London Group's (1996) seminal paper on a pedagogy of multiliteracies and the related work of Cope, Kalantzis and others (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015; Kalantzis, Cope, & the Learning by Design Project Group, 2005; Kalantzis et al., 2016). Without going into detail about these approaches, it is suffice to say that they have taken into account that different pedagogies have different outcomes and limitations, and they have attempted to include a range of pedagogical approaches, as a way of capitalising on the strengths of each. As The New London Group explained, the four components of pedagogy in their model do not represent a hierarchy and are not stages to be followed in a pre-determined order. Instead, teachers should interweave the components to be responsive to students' learning needs. In this way, the components "may occur simultaneously, while at different times one or the other will predominate, and all of them are repeatedly revisited" as required (The New London Group, 1996, p. 85).

While these more recent models have drawn together features of all three of the pedagogical approaches identified by Luke and Freebody (1997b), we need to ask:

- What literacies pedagogies seem to be evident in schools currently?
- Have education systems, schools, policymakers and teachers used recent understandings about pedagogies and their consequences to inform their selection of pedagogies?

In Queensland over recent years, there has been a push for schools to identify, and make publicly available, their pedagogical framework, as a way of demonstrating what schools are doing to ensure quality teaching. This has been particularly the case with government schools, which are required to "implement and monitor the use of an agreed, research-validated, school-wide pedagogical framework" (Queensland Government, 2019, p. 2). To gain a picture of the frameworks prepared by schools in Queensland, I conducted a Google search. I decided to examine the first 20 frameworks for Queensland schools produced by that search. My reason for

investigating only one state was to be consistent with the context that had informed the three incidents at the beginning of this chapter.

My review of the 20 pedagogical frameworks revealed that 17 of the 20 schools identified explicit teaching as the school's pedagogy, with the majority of those schools citing the work of Archer and Hughes (2011) as informing their practice. Some of the schools framed their approach with statements like "our students learn through drill and skill," a statement that resonates with the traditional skills-based approaches described by Luke and Freebody (1997b). Of the three remaining schools, one referred only to learning, not to teaching; one named Productive Pedagogies (Education Queensland, 2000) and the other identified Marzano's (2007) art and science of teaching, while also highlighting explicit teaching as one of its differentiation strategies. In these three schools, it seemed that a multifaceted approach to pedagogy was preferred, rather than a narrow approach.

Although explicit instruction is a necessary component of an effective pedagogical approach (Kalantzis et al., 2005; Luke, 2014; The New London Group, 1996), a focus only on explicit teaching—as was evident in 17 of the 20 frameworks—is of concern. This is because explicit instruction is based on "clear behavioural and cognitive goals and outcomes" (Luke, 2014, p. 1) and it usually does not consider the way that becoming literate is a process "embedded in social, cultural and material contexts" (The New London Group, 1996, p. 82).

In the current educational context in Australia, where schools are pressured to improve their students' results on the national literacy and numeracy tests, known as NAPLAN (see Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2019), and to be competitive with other schools (Woods, 2018), such narrow pedagogical responses are probably not unexpected. In general, there is a sense that the stated pedagogies of most schools are characterised by what Hamilton (1999) called "short-termism," where the more strategic question about what students will become as a result of their education has been replaced by a simpler (and narrower) question, "What should they know?" (p. 136).

Nevertheless, I recognise that my review of school pedagogical frameworks was limited. I looked only at the first 20 identified by a Google search and my discussion is around the 'stated' pedagogies, not those that might be in actual use in the classrooms of those schools. At the same time, I am mindful that the regulation of schooling and an associated shift to narrow approaches are not exclusive to Queensland, or to Australia for that matter. Rather, they are part of a global trend in schooling and even child care (e.g., Löfdahl & Folke-Fichtelius, 2015). The promotion of NAPLAN as a measure of supposed school and teaching quality has been recognised by many researchers as a major influence on classroom practice. Indeed, researchers have reported a dominance of teacher-centred pedagogies, reduced emphasis on higher order thinking and authentic assessment (Thompson, 2016) and, according to Gorur (2016), the promotion of what seems an "impoverished … version of the very complex phenomenon of schooling" (p. 41).

While such shifts towards narrow views of literacy and narrow approaches to teaching literacy in schools seem often to have resulted in one-size-fits-all approaches, research has demonstrated that successful literacies teaching must involve a "complex

integration" of pedagogical components (The New London Group, 1996, p. 83; see also Kalantzis et al., 2016). Indeed, the shaping of pedagogies across the multifaceted components of literacies teaching has been found to make a difference in classrooms (e.g., Comber & Kamler, 2004; Flynn, 2007; Kalantzis et al., 2005). As Comber and Kamler (2004) emphasised, teachers have a critical role in examining the effects of their pedagogical approaches on the students in their classes and on their learning. In view of my review of schools' pedagogical frameworks, albeit a rather limited review, the current dominance of explicit teaching as the only 'recognised' pedagogy of many schools is of utmost concern.

How Might Rural Education Research Contribute to Literacies Pedagogies?
The recent moves by at least one education system to promote the role of pedagogies in literacies teaching—as described above—seem sensible. However, in light of accountability agendas that have pressured schools to 'name' their pedagogical practices and the unintended negative consequences of narrow approaches to pedagogy, the field of literacies pedagogies seems to be facing some serious challenges. It would certainly seem easier to name narrow approaches rather than complex ones. How, then, might we tease out such issues and offer schools and teachers ways of moving forward, to meet systemic requirements but to simultaneously ensure that their approaches to pedagogies are going to be effective. This is where rural education research could play an important role. In teasing out the importance of place in education and providing detail about particular contexts, rural education research has much to offer literacies pedagogies.

Broadly, rural education research, with its focus on place, place-consciousness and place-based education, advocates using the community and environment in which a school is located as a starting point for student learning (Bartholomaeus, 2018). As Sobel (2005) noted, place-based education's emphasis on "hands-on, real-world learning experiences" is useful for increasing academic achievement across the curriculum and helping students become active citizens (p. 7). Similarly, Greenwood (2009) argued that place-consciousness provides "a frame of reference" (p. 1). In the case of literacies pedagogies, such a frame can facilitate and contribute to considerations about how pedagogies, and schooling more generally, might work to achieve much broader educational goals than, for example, being successful at moving through schooling (Queensland Government, 2019) or producing high results on NAPLAN tests.

Many rural education researchers have advocated for understandings about place to inform learning, especially to benefit rural students and those in marginalised communities. This has included the use of place-based learning activities to engage and motivate students (Bartholomaeus, 2018) and the inclusion of place-based education in initial teacher education as a way of preparing pre-service teachers for rural placements (White & Reid, 2008). Other researchers, however, have taken a wider view. They have considered the potential of understanding place in terms of overarching educational goals. Gruenewald and Smith (2010), for example, highlighted the potential to build students dispositions, understandings and skills to foster "responsible community engagement" (p. xvi), to act ethically (p. xxii), to make "contributions to their communities that are valued by others and that promise to improve people's lives" (p. xviii) and to "regenerate and sustain communities" (pp. xvi).

While such goals might seem a long way from pedagogies, one of the main points I want to make here is that rural education research provides detail that can raise questions about the disconnect between what research is saying about pedagogies (that is, that an integration of pedagogies is important) and the narrow pedagogies being cited as school practice. In addition, rural education research can help us interrogate our choices of pedagogies. For example: How does a particular pedagogy take notions of place into consideration? What are the enablers and constraints of using a particular pedagogy when we know details about 'this place' and its community?

Understandings about particular places and their communities open the way for scrutiny of the deficit discourses that are often in circulation. Through insights into the social practices of particular communities, including literacy practices, what community members do and the practices children bring to school can be understood as assets, rather than as deficits. A small teacher-research project conducted by Comber and Kamler (2005) demonstrated the power of knowing about students' literacies in their homes and how that knowledge impacted on teachers' actions. Such knowledge can make a real difference to teachers' decisions about pedagogies, not only for selecting pedagogies but also for understanding the effects of different pedagogical approaches.

In particular, such understandings are important for countries like Australia, where so many schools are located in rural, regional and remote areas. However, they are also useful for thinking about whether the literacies pedagogies that are in use in schools in marginalised communities, including those located in cities, are doing the type of pedagogical work that needs to be done. In teasing out the characteristics of place, rural education research contributes to knowledge about the complexity and heterogeneity of communities. These details can bring "an awareness of complicated histories" and allow deeper understandings of "continually changing, nuanced, context-dependent realities" (Donehower, Hogg, & Schell, 2012a, p. 5). Thus, rural education research can contribute detailed accounts of the types of experiences and traditions that students bring to school and link them to an understanding of what it means to be literate in rural as well as metropolitan locations.

As highlighted by Roberts (2017), rural education research "puts the perspectives, knowledges, and understandings of rural peoples at the forefront of the research" and shows the need, indeed the necessity, to shift from an embedded, and often invisible, metro-centric position in order to counter rural marginalisation (p. 57). Although rural education research has often dealt with policy and curriculum issues (e.g., Reid, 2017; Roberts, 2017), such studies also have the potential to open pedagogies to scrutiny and to show how places have "geographies *and* histories, and these matter" (Reid, 2017, p. 94). They matter not only to enable a more socially just education, but also to interrogate the effects and consequences of particular pedagogical approaches.

Indeed, some rural education research has offered specific examples of, and insights into, rural communities (e.g., Baca, 2012; Guenther, Halsey, & Osborne, 2015; Corbett et al., 2017). This research might be used to shift views of literacies pedagogies away from narrow stereotypical perspectives, thus demonstrating why one-size-fits-all pedagogical approaches are not appropriate. By exploring "the

conditions of the rural" (Roberts, 2014, p. 135), rural education research highlights "the particularity of the rural life-world" (Roberts & Green, 2013, p. 770) and the "thisness" of rural communities (Thomson, 2000, p. 151). This foregrounding of rural place, space and location (Green & Reid, 2014) offers a way into questioning tacit assumptions about metro-centric norms.

Conclusion
In this chapter, I have discussed how researchers of literacies have mapped different pedagogical approaches and elaborated the consequences of some approaches. Research has emphasised that effective pedagogy requires a complex shaping (Comber & Kamler, 2004; Flynn, 2007; Kalantzis et al., 2005, 2016) and should incorporate a wide perspective that moves beyond narrow commonsense views based on deficit understandings of students (Henderson & Woods, 2018).

Nevertheless, there is evidence that the adoption and promotion of particular pedagogical approaches in schools—in many cases endorsing learning via pedagogy that almost exclusively encourages explicit teaching or narrow skills-based approaches—may in fact be counterproductive (Cormack & Comber, 2013; Woods, 2018). In trying to find a way of dealing with such challenges, I am suggesting that rural education research offers detailed and nuanced understandings that highlight the diversity of rural place and the different ways that rurality is manifested and constructed (Green & Corbett, 2013b). I am suggesting, therefore, that input from rural education research may help to open up pedagogical approaches and their consequences to a rethinking. In particular, the following points provide a starting point for dialogue between those interested in rural education research and those for whom literacies pedagogies are part of daily work:

- the importance of place in education, including literacies education;
- how the study of place can provide detailed information about the experiences and traditions that students bring to school;
- how pedagogical choices are often based on particular assumptions, sometimes stereotypical assumptions, about students;
- how understandings of place can question the deficit discourses in circulation;
- why narrow pedagogies might have negative consequences.

Understandings from rural education research assist in the foregrounding of complexity, diversity and heterogeneity, by shifting the focus away from metro-centric perspectives (Green & Corbett, 2013b; Moriarty, Danaher, & Danaher, 2003; Roberts, 2017) and offering a wider view that is likely to facilitate more effective and equitable outcomes. What is suggested here is a bringing together of knowledge about the rural and understandings about literacies pedagogies, to enable a rethinking of pedagogies for the teaching of literacies.

To conclude, I would like to return to the three incidents that prompted my exploration of this topic. For the principal in Incident 1, an exploration of place-based pedagogy and place-consciousness has the potential to offer ways of tailoring pedagogy for her school. Possible solutions to the challenges she identified lie not in either-or solutions, but in melding ideas from rural education research with the pedagogical recommendations offered by the system, to find an approach that will work for all of the students, not just a select few.

In Incident 2, the cited documents would benefit from a consideration of the relationship between place and pedagogy. The documents contain no mention of the rural, despite almost three-quarters of the schools being located in rural areas. The key question might be: How does knowledge about place inform decisions about pedagogies?

Finally, Incident 3, which referred to my research finding about teachers' inability to talk about pedagogy, hinted at the importance of giving teachers time and space to consider, reflect, talk and review their pedagogical approaches and the use of those pedagogies in their particular context. I am reminded here of Comber and Kamler's (2004) words that "There is, however, no simple 'happily ever after'" (p. 308). Solving the challenges of literacies pedagogies will never have a single definitive solution when we are talking about schooling in multiple and varied contexts, but taking rural education research into consideration seems to be a step in the right direction for understanding the diversity, heterogeneity and complexity of different contexts, and for recognising that these factors should be considered in relation to pedagogies.

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