



# **Researching literacies learning in relation to student mobility**

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# My context



Toowoomba,  
Queensland





# Overview

- Initial research and some subsequent research projects – beginning with the doctoral journey
- How I came to think about pedagogy
- Researching the links between student mobility and the learning of literacies
- Still puzzling about some issues





# Researching student mobility

- Initial interest in farm workers' children
- Pedagogy
- Research locations: several in Australia, plus overseas (Ireland, Scotland and Illinois)
- Later: the broader issue of mobility and its relationship to literacies learning and schooling more generally
- 'new' students

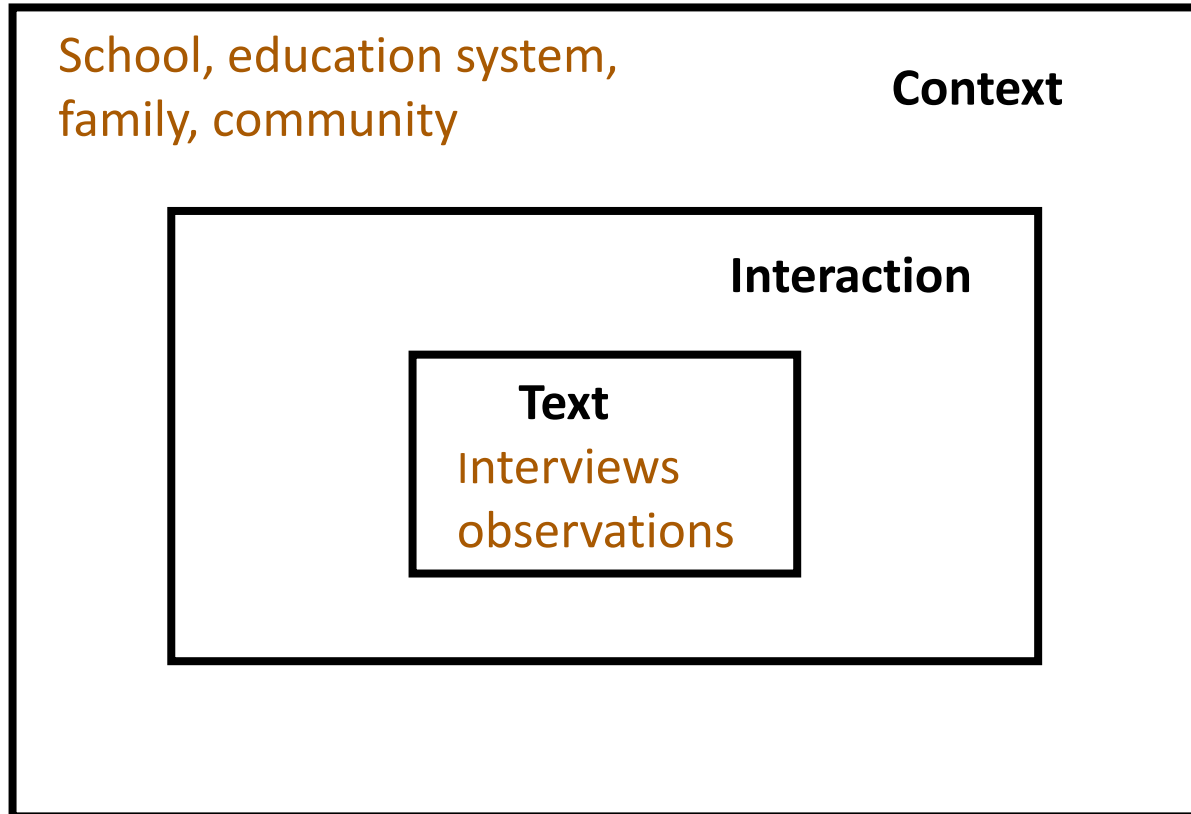




# Initial research

- the social and discursive construction of itinerant farm workers' children as literacy learners
- Unskilled – many from Pacific Islands, Turkey, Vietnam
- north-south migration
- impact on children's schooling
- often invisible to educators, policy makers etc
- deficit discourses
- challenges for schooling





(Fairclough, 2001)

Explanation  
Interpretation  
Description

Linguistic +  
social analysis

- The community
- The families
- The school
- Kalisi
- Personal, family and lifestyle deficits
- Mustafa ... a really good boy

# Thinking about pedagogy

- The effect of deficit stories on teachers' pedagogical considerations
- Stories of blame
- Other stories/discourses ... hope ...
- Other research projects:
- Scotland, Ireland and Illinois
- Compensatory programs

# Investigating pedagogy



A study I conducted in Australia:

- ‘pedagogy’ not discussed by teachers
- teachers modest about their work, but evidence of considerations in their teaching practices:
  - making students feel comfortable (social)
  - fast decisions to get students started (academic)

New research issues:

- Changes in types of student mobility:
  - technological developments in farming
  - cost of travel
- Changes in thinking about education – parental choice
- Effects of socio-economic factors
- How to investigate pedagogy
- Perhaps use video-stimulated recall



# Thinking about pedagogy: A methodological problem?



## Questions:

- Was I mistaken?
- Was pedagogy for 'new' students a figment of my imagination?
- Was I not being observant enough when collecting classroom data?

## Questions about teaching:

- Did teachers focus on the social rather than the academic?
- Had teachers normalised their academic strategies as part of their 'teaching as usual' routines?
- Could teachers simply not articulate their pedagogical decision-making?
- Was teachers' academic work invisible to them, as well as to me?

# Another research project



- a school with high student mobility
- recognised as a school that caters for students
- four teachers (from different year levels) willing to be involved – not so keen about the use of video
- six months of observations, 3-4 hours per week

The Year 1 teacher (Mrs Anderson):

Mrs A: I always feel nervous when you're in my classroom.

Me: Would you prefer that I didn't observe today? Would you like me to leave and come back another day?

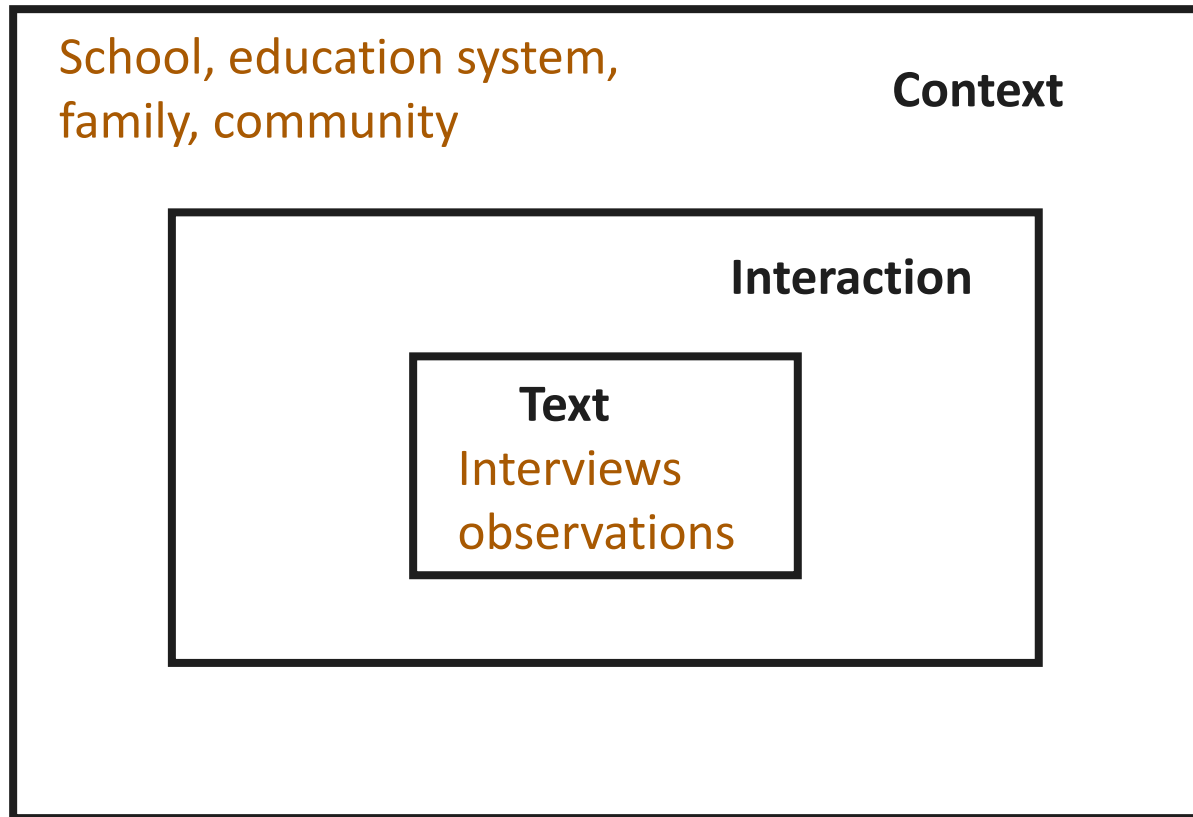
Mrs A: No. I'm getting used to you being here, but I'm certainly not ready to be videoed.

## Mrs Anderson's strategy

# Theorising pedagogy from a multiliteracies perspective



(The New London Group, 1996)



(Fairclough, 2001)