Reading the World: Tours as Texts

That demands of the 21st Century require complex and multiple literacies is hard to refute. While the term Multiliteracies was coined by the New London Group in 1996, the concept arguably holds even more relevance today, as educators in both school and museum settings rise to the call for equity, inclusion and relevance for Australia's children and young people.

This presentation will demonstrate the extraordinary opportunities when teachers engage with museum learning settings. It provides a case study of the work of a primary education team and their collaboration with experienced story tellers from cultural institutions. A professional learning experience, *Tours as Texts,* allowed space for educators, researchers and literacy advocates to come together to share insights and ignite passions. It demonstrated that when educators frame literacy as multimodal meaning-making, they are better equipped to engage learners and foster their growth as critical, creative, active and informed citizens.

As their school prepares for its centenary in 2027, teachers experienced tours to strengthen their knowledge of people, places and events of significance to early Canberra. Partnerships with critical friends and advisors from cultural institutions allowed them to experience complex, multimodal texts, comprising images, environments, oral storytelling, spatial design and objects. Through the lens of the *Four Resources*, staff analysed their participation as code breakers, meaning makers, and users and analysts of texts. Grounded in inquiry theory, the experience served as a reminder that learning is social, contextual and constructed. Reflection in this professional learning community made space for an examination of how meaning can be made, as intentional curation and design choices shape engagement, interpretation and emotional response.