The Journal of the

World Universities Forum

"I Should Have Watched the Live-stream"
Found Graffiti within Lecture Theatres

PETER WALKER

COMMON
GROUND

The Journal of the World Universities Forum is a peer-reviewed scholarly journal.

"I Should Have Watched the Live-stream": Found Graffiti within Lecture Theatres

Peter Walker, Flinders University, South Australia

Abstract: This article thematically analyzes graffiti found in the lecture theatres of the Education, Humanities and Law Faculty at Flinders University, South Australia. Through close examination, it is concluded that lecture theatre graffiti presents a previously unrecognized but valuable discourse concerning students' perceptions of their educational experiences. This paper interpreted these left messages and considered how they might inform the practice of lecturers.

Keywords: Graffiti, Education, Lecture

G raffiti dates back to biblical times as "the writing on the wall," although it is more commonly identified as an ingredient of hip hop culture. Its creation is considered deviant and criminal behaviour by community bodies (Moreau and Alderman 2011) and criminologists and politicians (Halsey and Young 2002). Graffiti is equated with vandalism and has even been suggested as a gateway activity to further crime, such as heroin use (Halsey and Young 2006, 290). In order to be legitimized and accepted by society, graffiti must cease to be what it intrinsically is, an illegal act (Halsey and Pederick 2010). Despite the largely negative reception to graffiti as a text, some previous research recognized the value of analyzing it and even protecting it as a form of cultural heritage (Frederick 2009).

This research project originally set out to analyze graffiti found within the Faculty of Education, Humanities and Law at Flinders University, South Australia. The purpose was to locate dominant themes beyond those expected to be found, based on prior graffiti research. Expected themes included: a response to hegemonic conditions (Rodriguez and Clair 1999), gender dominance (Cole 1991), sexuality (Stocker, Dutcher, Hargrove and Cook 1972), race (Nayak 2010), humour (Schreer and Strichartz 1997) and social issues (Nwoye 1993). The project was soon re-focused, however, in response to unexpected graffiti found within lecture theatres.

A variety of disciplines, including psychology, psychiatry, sociology and criminology, have analyzed graffiti. Analyses established common threads as well as hypothesized the communicative intent of writers. Graffiti research in university settings previously focused on understanding contexts and emerging social issues (Nwoye 1993; Schreer and Strichartz 1997). Research on graffiti within elementary or high schools was not prevalent, likely due to the criminality of the act. Graffiti in such schools are also often quickly removed as a control measure, reducing opportunities for analysis.

Despite lecture theatres being a traditional educational space, no research was found describing an analysis of the graffiti within them. This paper seeks to establish such research opportunities as both a valid and an informative practice. Considering the importance of location on graffiti content, it is theorized that graffiti in lecture theatres, the traditional teaching and learning space of higher education, should thematically differ from that found within other spaces and relate strongly to students' experiences as learners.

Graffiti, Space and Time

The placement of graffiti is essential. It can result in added meaning, such as anti-police graffiti being placed where police violence has recently occurred (Iddings, McGafferty and da Silva 2011) or added content, such as the correction of spelling found in graffiti near a university's

COMMON GROUND

English department (Cole 1991). As stated by Lynn and Lea, graffiti is "more than just a visual experience; it is a spatial one and a temporal one" (2005, 43). Lynn and Lea suggest that graffiti be considered as heteroglossia, a distinct voice within its broader language. Graffiti are indeed imbued with a sense of time and place which has primacy in its interpretation. That is, the meaning of graffiti when and as it is written for its audience, is different and more meaningful than at any other time. This consideration presents a challenge for graffiti research.

The six lecture theatres surveyed in this study are also utilized by the broader university. Due to space constraints and high demand, theatres are therefore sometimes inhabited by students outside of the Faculty of Education, Humanities and Law. Lecture types also differ greatly in regard to length, content, and students in attendance. Both undergraduate and postgraduate topics are taught, so ages and life experiences of students differ considerably.

A plentiful supply of graffiti was found (N=96) with only one lecture theatre (North Theatre 2) containing no graffiti whatsoever. Some of the theatres attempted to prevent graffiti by utilizing dark colors on both seats and tablets. Many seats were made of a darkly patterned material, which could only be used as a graffiti canvas by marking onto the very top of the backrest. The majority of graffiti was located either along walls or on/under tablets. Most graffiti existed in the rear of theatres, where the act could be more easily hidden.

Unlike latrinalia (Dundes 1966), there was no method to identify the gender of the writers. There was also no way to date the graffiti, which meant some theatres could display over 20 years' worth of resistant text whilst the newest theatre, in the education building, could have no more than three and a half years' worth. Most graffiti were noticeably hurried in their composition, with only one piece ("Moose") in a stylized font. Some graffiti may have already been eradicated due to its unsightly nature (Halsey and Young 2002). The lecture theatres within the facility are cleaned Monday to Friday during semesters, but graffiti itself is only removed upon request.

The design of university theatres has changed little in over 100 years, with perhaps the replacement of blackboards with new technologies the most obvious difference. Like classrooms, lecture theatres are not considered neutral ground. Positions of both power and evasion of power are evident. The fact that most graffiti was created at the rear and sides of theatres, away from the surveying eyes of the lecturer, highlights this. Goffman described these as "back regions" that are perfect for subversive activities and resistance (Symes and Preston 1997, 204). They are the places where "illicit and tabooed activities are conducted," and therefore ideal locations for the creation of graffiti.

All theatre seats point toward the lectern, illustrating what is valued and where power resides within the teacher-student exchange. It also signals a reluctance to promote collaboration or conversation amongst students, who are often physically trapped by their peers to the left and to the right, deprived of their most basic mobility rights. Meanwhile, the lecturer is free to saunter across the stage or up and down the stairs. This clear demarcation of territory makes lecture theatres a vibrant location for graffiti which is "traditionally about the marking of space" (Halsey and Young 2002). Graffiti artist King Adz elaborates: "The thing about graffiti is that it's territorial. It's like a dog pissing on a lamp post. You know, it is" ("Graffiti Wars" 2011).

Data Collection

Graffiti was collected in situ over the course of one day from each of the six lecture theatres within the faculty. The date of collection was the first day of semester break, allowing for the opportunity, time and space to collect the data. Unlike previous research (Schreer and Strichartz, 1997), partial graffiti was recorded even if fairly illegible. Sometimes the partial erasure of text can be suggestive of a counter-voice or disagreement, lending it an additional analytical quality.

Collected graffiti were coded with the lecture theatre number, location of the text, the message (transferred verbatim), and a description of any additional drawings or markings. A

column labeled 'additional information' was also included, enabling the addition of further detail if necessary. In cases where graffiti appeared in a chain of dialogue, each new contribution was considered as one unit of graffito. In these chains, each graffito was individually thematically labeled despite being part of a continuing dialogue.

Example:

1.
   (a) *"Fuck U"*
   (b) *"OK (:"*
   (c) *"Can I join in"*

Although (a) was clarified as an insult, both (b) and (c) were categorized as humor due to their lighter tone. Therefore, one conversation became three units of graffito; each coded differently.

Consistent with the research approach of Schreer and Strichartz (1997), graffiti collected were written onto cards and sorted into categories. The categories were broad and not specific to graffiti found in lecture theatres due to a lack of previous research in this specific setting. The graffiti data was thematically categorized by an additional person to further validate the process, with an inter-rater reliability of 91%. When disagreement occurred, a consensus on category and sub-category was reached through discussion.

Table 1 shows the classification of graffiti into broad themes. As already stated, of particular interest to this researcher were graffiti addressing lecture quality. This subcategory is located within 'Social Issues' and can be found on Table 2.

Table 1: Distribution of Graffiti by General Topics

Topics	#	%
* Social Issues	47	49%
Miscellaneous	29	30%
Insults	13	14%
Humour	6	6%
Sexual	1	1%
TOTAL:	96	100

Table 2: Distribution of Graffiti within 'Social Issues'

Topics	#
*Lecture	20
Romantic	12
Movies/TV	5
Music	3
Religion	2
Philosophy	2
Politics	1
Drugs	1
Sport	1
TOTAL:	47

In purely numerical terms, there were far fewer sexual graffiti compared to that often found in toilets. The high frequency of lecture commentary (N=20) was unexpected and led to the re-focusing of this project. The graffiti in this subcategory represented 21% of overall graffiti found.

There were no samples of racist graffiti collected and few examples inclusive of sexual content. This was in stark contrast to graffiti generally collected within public spaces where the

author could be discrete. Either these issues were not as pertinent to the students within this faculty or the risk of being caught creating such messages was too great and the repercussions too heavy. An open lecture theatre certainly does not afford the same level of privacy as a toilet cubicle.

13 pieces of graffiti were found in the new education building lecture theatre. The tablets in this room were a much lighter colour and, as such, were easier to mark. This may result in a higher frequency of graffiti production in the years ahead, particularly, according to the "broken window theory," if the theatre was not well maintained.

"Boring!": Content and Quality

The quality and clarity of lectures are clearly criticized in the following exchanges:

    2.
- (a) *"THIS LECTURE IS TERRIBLE"*
- (b) *"Yes, it is!"*

        And:

    3.
- (a) *"Why is he talking about this?"*
- (b) *"I don't know."*

To confuse or disengage the students through poor delivery is obviously not the goal of a good lecture. Engaging the students by asking questions during lectures is a valuable lecturing method as it creates a desirable "break" during content delivery (Olmsted 1999). This helps students to maintain focus. In the case of 3 (a) and (b) this strategy might also have enabled students to clarify their thoughts, reducing the chance or degree of disengagement.

Graffiti content often reflected student boredom:

    4.
- (a) *"KILL ME NOW"*
- (b) *"And me"*
- (c) *"Wimps!"*

Another example (5) was adorned with the picture of a stick figure imprisoned at the top of a medieval tower. The initial plea (a) appeared in a speech bubble emanating from the figure, whilst the response (b), was in another author's hand, scrawled beneath.

    5.
- (a) *"Save me!"*
- (b) *"No."*

Further graffiti (6 and 7) reflected student detachment:

    6. *"Boring!"*

    7. *"zzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz"*

This thread of confusion and negativity was also evident in North Theatre 4. The exchange below appeared to be three separate authors:

    8.
- (a) *"If you are not bored you are very smart"*
- (b) *"not smart" (arrow pointing to original contribution)*
- (c) *"defs not smart"*

Graffito 8(a) indicated that the high difficulty level of the lecture content is perhaps the reason for the students' disengagement and boredom. When considering Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (Vygotsky 1978), the lecturer may have overestimated the students' knowledge and understanding prior to content delivery. The gap between their true knowledge and the new knowledge is too great, thereby leading to struggle and eventual boredom. It is

interesting to note that one of Vygotsky's strategies for bridging the knowledge gap is learning through peer collaboration, something not common with traditional lectures. The responses (b) and (c) to the initial graffito disputed "being smart" as the criterion for not being bored, implying perhaps that the students' frustration was more than content based.

On a wall in the same theatre we return again to the theme of boredom with three more authors:

9.

     (a) *"Law is boring" ["boring" is written over a previous but partially erased and illegible word]*

     (b) *"GAY"*

     (c) *"I know"*

In North Theatre 1, despite the dark and graffiti-unfriendly interior, one writer creatively used liquid paper pen to leave commentary on a window sill:

     10. *"this is boring"*

"I Should Have Watched the Live-stream"

The subcategories within the social issues theme (Table 2) provide some insight into student lifeworlds. When not engaged in lectures or using graffiti creation to comment on them, students attended to topics varying from popular culture references ("Harry Potter!") to declarations of affection ("I like Sophie") or religion ("Does god really care for us?"). Given the diversity of ages and experiences of both lecturers and students, we should expect their lifeworlds to differ.

     11.

     (a) *"I should have watched the live-stream"*

     (b) *"Agreed" (arrow pointing to original contribution)*

This exchange illustrates the dilemma some students face – choosing to attend lectures in person when they could be more easily and efficiently accessed at home. Transport expenses, lost time, and frustration over limited car parking can create an additional reluctance to engage in person. Students frequently negotiate the competing time demands of family, social lives, and paid work in order to also study. It cannot be presumed that university life is the greater of these demands.

In considering claims of power and space, attention should be given to the students who are staking these claims. The earlier work of Prensky (2001a; 2001b) identified a generation of emerging university students who had grown up with new technologies (Digital Natives) compared to their teachers who adapted to its arrival (Digital Immigrants) with differing success. Also identified by different generational titles (Generation Z, Net Generation, or Millenials) and deconstructed and defined in different manners, these Digital Natives proved a stark contrast to previous generations through their use of technologies and expectations around *how* they wanted to learn. Such methods included receiving information in a non-linear pattern and a desire for interactivity throughout the learning process (Prensky 2001b). This runs contrary to common understanding on what constitutes a 'good lecture,' which is to reproduce information step by step, offering limited opportunity for students to collaborate and discuss content. Tapscott and Williams (2010) identified the lecturer as a 'broadcaster':

> "Broadcast learning may have been appropriate for a previous economy and generation, but increasingly it is failing to meet the needs for a new generation of students who are about to enter the global economy." (Tapscott and Williams 2010, 20)

Yet some researchers caution against overly simplifying what remains a complex, diverse, and heterogeneous student body (Kennedy, Judd, Churchward, Gray and Krause 2008; Jones,

Ramanau, Cross and Healing 2010). On closer inspection, it appears that students have quite different "patterns of access to, use of and preference for a range of other technologies" (Kennedy et al. 2008, 117). The digital divide, which Prensky considered the biggest single problem facing educators (Prensky 2001a), may not be as insurmountable a division as once thought.

"Flinders 4 Life"

No writing praised either lecturers or lecture quality. This is consistent with the use of graffiti as a text of resistance. Two contrasting views of the university, however, were found in the following exchange:

> 12.
>> (a) *"Flinders 4 Life"*
>> (b) *"Fuck Flinders you cunt"* (arrow pointing to the original contribution)

The initial graffito "Flinders 4 Life" can be considered a slogan, as many examples of graffiti are. The emancipating sentiment is even reflected in the official slogans or catchphrases recently utilized by the university, such as "Flinders is Freedom."

The responding graffito, 8(b), took aim at the original contributor in no uncertain terms. Although "Flinders 4 Life" can be considered as a positive statement about university life (as it had obviously been interpreted by the responding contributor) it can also, quite clearly, be considered as a prison sentence. The sentence is life in university, instead of life in prison.

A clear tension exists between corporations and graffiti creators, shown in the ongoing fight over public space. Whilst capitalism endorses "legal graffiti" through advertising forms such as slogan filled billboards (Halsey and Young 2002), graffiti creators who sell nothing but their message, are unlawful. The aesthetic of public space cannot be borrowed, but clearly can be rented (Bird 2009).

By interpreting the lecture-themed graffiti as created by a student body "bound in solidarity against an 'oppressive group' (university administration, lecturers)" (Nwoye 1993, 438), it is evident that graffiti creation is an opportunity to break down the barrier created by the lectern. Graffiti has been recognized as a way to place participants on a more equal footing with others in society (Rodriguez and Clair 1999). With traditional lectures often existing as unidirectional conversations, motivation for a responding voice can be readily observed. Considering the bulk of this graffiti was found in the education theatre, this researcher suggests that pre-education teachers, themselves the arbitrators of educational rules, see value in certain acts of transgression.

Graffiti marks ideological boundaries (Holmes 2010), so graffiti found in lecture theatres could be considered as a way university students establish a sense of ownership or authorship of ideas. The removal of graffiti, likewise, could be interpreted as a way to re-territorialise this space. Frederick states this succinctly, "Graffiti is regularly interpreted not only as a record of human presence and the social construction of space but as a function of efforts to make claims *over* space" (2009, 212). It could therefore be considered that students, through graffiti, are claiming ownership of not simply the physical space, but the pedagogical one as well.

Conclusion

As of 2013, all lectures in major theatres will be recorded at Flinders University and delivered through online topic sites. This will enable students to use the recorded material for revision and when unwell or absent due to other commitments. Attendance at lectures remains a requirement of students enrolled in internal topics despite challenges universities now face: "For many of the smartest students, it's fashionable to try and get an A without going to any lectures – meaning that the cream of the crop is beginning to boycott the basic model of pedagogy" (Tapscott and Williams 2010, 18).

When considering teacher-led instruction in competition with collaborative learning, there are some unhelpful and limiting dichotomies produced. One of these is "'Lectures are bad' vs. 'group work is good'" (James 2007, 37). As James explained, it is not an either/or proposition. Good teaching can occur through the traditional telling of information just as it can through group discussion. Likewise, bad teaching exists in either format. Further discussions on the complexities of what constitutes "good teaching" need to be considered before sounding the death knell on lecture presentations. Universities should also take caution in oversimplifying and generalizing their student cohorts (Kennedy et al. 2008).

It would be wrong to assume that all lecturers are ignorant of this building discourse regarding lecture delivery. Some have already sought to bring innovation to their practice. Whether from the use of personal audience response systems (de Jong, Lane, Sharp, and Kershaw 2009), inquiry-based instruction (Ebert-May, Brewer and Allred 1997), problem-based learning (Fyrenius, Bergdahl and Silén 2005), active learning techniques (DeNeve and Heppner 1997) or the replacement of live lectures with virtual delivery (Smeaton and Keogh 1998), examples exist of creativity within the practice.

Bird (2009) indicated that graffiti changes our experience of the environment it is found in. Considering this, I suggest that graffiti found in lecture theatres can affect learning experiences, producing a counter-voice to the lecturer as "broadcaster." There is also opportunity for lecturers to read what is written and allow their teaching practices to be affected. After all, it is presumptuous to assume that students leave these messages for the audience of fellow students alone.

Students share their perceptions through graffiti creation, and the graffiti found in lecture theatres represents a separate conversation to graffiti found elsewhere. This distinct discourse provides an insight into students as educational consumers. One conclusion from the analyzed graffiti is that students wanted their lectures to be entertaining, engaging, clearly understood, and relating to their lifeworlds. It also highlights the need for teachers to provide an interactive learning experience which ideally cannot be duplicated or replaced by "live-stream." Although a sense of the otherness of lecturers may very well exist, as espoused through the Digital Natives vs. Digital Immigrants discourse, students and teachers have much to learn from each other. Graffiti, by nature, is a radical act designed to resist oppression. When considering Freire, it is worth quoting "Radicalization criticizes and thereby liberates" (1970, 19). The liberation he wrote of there was not simply that of the students. Freire further stated, "This, then, is the great humanistic and historical task of the oppressed: to liberate themselves and their oppressors as well" (Freire 1970, 26).

If our students are seeking to liberate us of out-dated and disengaging practices, then perhaps graffiti creation is the voice they are using to convey the message. The writing may very well be on the wall.

REFERENCES

Bird, Susan. 2009. "Aesthetics, Authority and the Outlaw of the Street." *Public Space: The Journal of Law and Social Justice* 3, no. 3:1-24.

Cole, Caroline. 1991. "'Oh Wise Women of the Stalls…'" *Discourse Society* 2, no. 4:401-411.

De Jong, Terry, Lane, Jenny, Sharp, Sue and Kershaw, Pat. 2009. "Optimising Personal Audience Response Systems Technology To Enhance Student Learning In Teacher Education Lectures." In H. Wozniak and S. Bartoluzzi (Eds.) Proceedings of the 32nd HERDSA Annual Conference: The Student Experience, Darwin 6th -9th July: 111-120.

DeNeve, Kristina and Heppner, Mary. 1997. "Role Play Simulations: The Assessment of an Active Learning Technique and Comparisons with Traditional Lectures." *Innovative Higher Education* 21, no. 3:231-246.

Dundes, Alan. 1966. "Here I Sit – A Study of American Latrinalia." *Papers of the Kroeber Anthropological Society* 34:91-105.

Ebert-May, Diane, Brewer, Carol and Allred, Sylvester. 1997. "Innovation in Large Lectures – Teaching for Active Learning." *Bioscience* 47, no. 9:601-607.

Frederick, Ursula. 2009. "Revolution is the New Black: Graffiti/Art and Mark-making Practices." *Archaeologies: Journal of the World Archaeological Congress* 5, no. 2:210-237.

Freire, Paulo. 1970. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* UK: Penguin.

Fyrenius, Anna, Bergdahl, Björn and Silén, Charlotte. 2005. "Lectures in Problem-based Learning – Why, When and How? An Example of Interactive Lecturing that Stimulates Meaningful Learning." *Medical Teacher* 27, 1: 61-65.

Halsey, Mark and Pederick, Ben. 2010. "The Game of Fame: Mural, Graffiti, Erasure." *City: Analysis of Urban Trends, Culture, Theory, Policy, Action* 14, nos. 1-2:82-98.

Halsey, Mark and Young, Alison. 2002. "The Meanings of Graffiti and Municipal Administration." *The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology* 35, no. 2:165-186.

Halsey, Mark and Young, Alison. 2006. "'Our Desires Are Ungovernable' Writing Graffiti in Urban Space." *Theoretical Criminology* 10, no. 3:275-306.

Holmes, Rachel. 2010. "Risky Pleasures: Using the Work of Graffiti Writers to Theorize the Act of Ethnography." *Qualitative Enquiry* 16, no. 10:871-882.

Iddings, Ana, McGafferty, Steven and Teixeira da Silva, Maria. 2011. "Conscientização through Graffiti Literacies in the Streets of a São Paulo Neighborhood: An Ecosocial Semiotic Perspective." *Reading Research Quarterly* 46, 1: 5-21.

James, Richard. 2007. "Places & Spaces for Learning Seminars – Draft Report, (3.4) The Theories of Teaching and Learning Underpinning Space and Design Decisions." *The Carrick Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education* 32-34.

Jones, Chris, Ramanau, Ruslan, Cross, Simon and Healing, Graham. 2010. "Net Generation or Digital Natives: Is There a Distinct New Generation Entering University?" *Computers & Education*, 54, 3.

Kennedy, Gregor, Judd, Terry, Churchward, Anna., Gray, Kathleen and Krause, Kerri-Lee. 2008. "First Year Students' Experiences with Technology: Are They Really Digital Natives?" *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology* 24, 1.

Lynn, Nick and Lea, Susan. 2005. "'Racist' Graffiti: Text, Context and Social Comment." *Visual Communication* 4, no. 39:39-63.

Moreau, Terri and Alderman, Derek. 2011. "Graffiti Hurts and the Eradication of Alternative Landscape Expression." *The Geographical Review* 101, no. 1:106-124.

Nayak, Anoop. 2010. "Race, Affect, and Emotion: Young People, Racism, and Graffiti in the Postcolonial English Suburbs." *Environment and Planning* 42:2370-2392.

Nwoye, Onuigbo. 1993. "Social Issues on Walls: Graffiti in University Lavatories." *Discourse & Society* 4, no. 4: 419-442.

Olmsted, John. 1999. "The Mid-Lecture Break: When Less is More." *Journal of Chemical Education* 76, no. 4: 525-527.

Prensky, Mark. 2001a. "Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants." *On The Horizon*, 9, no. 5.

Prensky, Mark. 2001b. "Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants Pt. 2: Do They Really *Think* Differently." *On The Horizon* 9, no. 6.

Preston, Jane (Producer). 2011. "*Graffiti Wars.*" TwoFour Broadcast, UK: London.

Rodriguez, Amardo and Clair, Robin. 1999. "Graffiti as Communication: Exploring the Discursive Tensions of Anonymous Texts." *Southern Communication Journal* 65, no. 1:1-15.

Schreer, George and Strichartz, Jeremy. 1997. "Private Restroom Graffiti: An Analysis of Controversial Social Issues on Two College Campuses." *Psychological Reports* 81, no. 3:1067-1074.

Smeaton, Alan and Keogh, Gary. 1998. "An Analysis of the Use of Virtual Delivery of Undergraduate Lectures." *Computers & Education* 32:83-94.

Stocker, Terrance, Dutcher, Linda, Hargrove, Stephen and Cook, Edwin. 1972. "Social Analysis of Graffiti." *The Journal of American Folklore* 85, no. 338:356-366.

Symes, Colin and Preston, Noel. 1997. *Schools and Classrooms – A Cultural Studies Analysis of Education*. Melbourne: Longman.

Tapscott, Don and Williams, Anthony. 2010. "Innovating the 21st-Century University: It's Time!" *EDUCAUSE Review* 45, no. 1.

Vygotsky, Lev. 1978. *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Appendix

Graffiti Samples
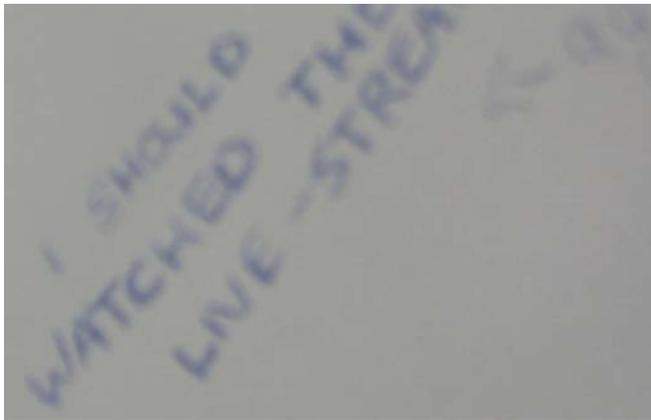
5 (a) "I should have watched the live-stream"
(b) "Agreed" (arrow pointing to original contribution)
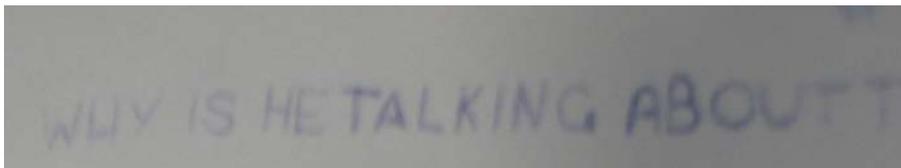
7 (a) "Why is he talking about this?"

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Peter Walker: Prior to becoming a Special Education lecturer at Flinders University, I spent over twenty years in the field, as a classroom teacher, an assistant principal, and then as a principal of a Special School in North Sydney. I have worked extensively in both New South Wales and South Australia. My interests include inclusion, challenging behaviours and the use of Augmentative and Alternate Technologies to facilitate communication. My interest is also occasionally piqued by the analysis of unconventional educational texts. I am currently studying an Educational Doctorate at Flinders University.

The Journal of the World Universities Forum seeks
to explore the meaning and purpose of the academy
in a time of striking social transformation. The journal
brings together university administrators, teachers
and researchers to discuss the prospects of the
academy and to exemplify or imagine ways in which
the university can take a leading and constructive role
in the transformations of our times.

Today, universities face significant challenges to their
traditional position in society. Contemporary knowledge
systems are becoming more distributed and learning
ubiquitous. Where does this leave the university—as a
historically specialized and privileged place for certain
kinds of knowledge and learning, as an institutionally
bounded space? What do these changes mean for
the mission and structures of the renewed university?
What are emerging as principal areas of the academic
interest? These are some of the key questions
addressed by the journal.

The Journal of the World Universities Forum is a peer-
reviewed scholarly journal.