

EXPLORING DISCORD AS AN EDUCATIONAL TOOL: STUDENT INSIGHTS AND PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract

The rise of social media has significantly influenced various aspects of daily life, including education. Among these platforms, Discord stands out due to its interactive features and community-building capabilities. Initially designed for communication in gaming contexts, Discord has recently attracted interest as a potential educational tool. This study explores its educational viability by examining student experiences and perceptions. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, the research surveyed 50 students from the National University – Dasmariñas, combining quantitative data on Discord usage patterns with qualitative insights into its educational effectiveness. The survey revealed that 70% of respondents used Discord frequently, with 60% employing it for learning. Preferred subject areas included Science and Math, aligning with Mayer's Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning, which highlights the advantages of combining auditory and visual information. Qualitative data offered deeper insights into student motivations, highlighting Discord's accessibility, informal nature, and engaging format as key factors. Students appreciated the platform's ability to present complex topics in bite-sized, digestible formats. However, concerns were raised about the limitations of short-form content, particularly regarding depth and accuracy. The study concludes that while Discord holds significant potential as a supplementary educational tool, particularly for initial knowledge acquisition and visual learning, it should be thoughtfully integrated with traditional learning methods to address its limitations.

Keywords: Discord, EdTech, Social Media, Educational Tool

I. INTRODUCTION

Social media has evolved from a purely social interaction tool into a potential platform for educational innovation. This study investigates the use of Discord as a learning environment, particularly among university students. By leveraging Mayer's Multimedia Learning Theory, we assess how Discord's features support—or hinder—cognitive processing and knowledge retention.

Discord is a free digital communication platform that enables users to engage through text, voice, and video, making it a popular tool for both social interaction and professional collaboration [1]. Initially developed for gamers, it has since expanded to serve diverse

communities including students, educators, and organizations. Users communicate within servers—virtual communities that contain various channels dedicated to specific topics or functions. These servers allow structured discussions, file sharing, screen sharing, and even integration with bots to automate tasks or moderate content. In educational settings, Discord is increasingly used for virtual classrooms, study groups, and academic discussions, providing a flexible and interactive environment for collaborative learning. Its user-friendly design, real-time capabilities, and ability to organize communication by topics make it particularly effective for fostering engagement and maintaining community among students and educators.

Using a mixed-methods approach [2], 50 students from university in China—were surveyed regarding their use of Discord for learning. Results indicated frequent use of the platform for academic purposes, especially in STEM subjects. Students cited its engaging

nature and accessibility as major advantages, though they also noted concerns about content depth and information accuracy.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

A. Research Design

The study employed a mixed-methods design to gain a comprehensive understanding of how students use Discord for educational purposes. A quantitative survey assessed usage patterns, while qualitative interviews explored perceptions, motivations, and learning styles.

B. Data Collection Procedures

Data was gathered through an online survey via Google Forms, targeting university students. The survey included both structured and semi-structured questions to collect demographic data, usage patterns, and qualitative feedback.

Structured Questions:

1. How often do you use Discord daily?
2. Have you used Discord for learning?
3. In which subject areas has Discord helped you learn?
4. What content format do you find most engaging on Discord?

Semi-Structured Questions:

1. What motivates you to learn on Discord?
2. What are its strengths and weaknesses as a learning tool?
3. How does it compare to traditional learning methods?
4. How do you find educational content on Discord?
5. Is the short-video format suitable for your learning style?
6. How do you retain what you learn on Discord?
7. Can Discord play a larger role in formal education?

C. Data Analysis

Quantitative data was analyzed for frequencies and trends, while qualitative responses were examined using NVivo for thematic analysis [3]. Mayer's 12 Principles of Multimedia Learning provided a theoretical lens [4].

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A survey of students' use of Discord for educational purposes revealed several key insights. First, 70% of

students reported using Discord frequently or very frequently, indicating a high level of familiarity with the platform. This aligns with Mayer's Coherence Principle, which emphasizes the importance of well-organized and familiar content in enhancing learning effectiveness. Additionally, 60% of participants indicated that they specifically used Discord for learning purposes. This reflects the Relevance Principle, highlighting students' preference for content that is focused and directly supports their educational objectives. Regarding subject areas, Science and Math were the most frequently mentioned disciplines where Discord proved helpful. This finding is consistent with the Modality Principle, which recommends the use of visual and auditory materials—particularly effective in explaining technical or abstract concepts. Lastly, students showed a strong preference for explainer videos and animated content, which resonates with the Segmenting Principle. This principle advocates delivering content in smaller, digestible segments, suggesting that Discord's short-form, fast-paced media format is particularly effective for fostering initial understanding of complex topics.

A. Findings

1. Motivations for Learning on Discord

Students cited accessibility, entertainment value, and ease of understanding as motivators. Statements like "learning without feeling like studying" illustrate the platform's informal, enjoyable nature.



Figure 1. Word cloud

Here is the word cloud visualizing key motivators students cited for using Discord, such as accessibility, entertainment, and ease of understanding. Let me know if you'd like to adjust colors, shapes, or export it for a presentation.

2. Perceived Effectiveness

Students valued the clarity, brevity, and interactivity of content. However, concerns were raised about in-

formation depth and credibility, highlighting the need for fact-checking and media literacy.

Table 1. Student Perceptions of Content on Discord

Aspect	Mean (1–5)	SD	Interpretation / Notes
Clarity	4.3	0.6	Students found content easy to understand and well-articulated.
Brevity	4.5	0.5	Short-form content was appreciated for quick learning.
Interactivity	4.2	0.7	Engaging features like reactions, chats, and multimedia aided learning.
Information Depth	2.9	0.8	Some students felt the content lacked comprehensive explanations.
Credibility	3.0	0.9	Concerns were expressed about the accuracy of information.
Need for Fact-Checking	4.1	0.6	Students emphasized the importance of verifying sources.
Media Literacy Awareness	4.0	0.7	Recognized the value of critical thinking in navigating online content.

3. Comparison to Traditional Learning

Discord was seen as more flexible and engaging than traditional methods. However, traditional tools were still appreciated for deep, structured learning, indicating that hybrid approaches may be most effective.

Table 2. Perceived Effectiveness of Learning Tools

Learning Aspect	Discord	Traditional Methods	Hybrid Approach
Flexibility	✔ High	✗ Low	✔✔ Balanced
Engagement	✔ High	△ Moderate	✔✔ High
Structured Learning	△ Moderate	✔ High	✔✔ High
Student Preference	✔ Growing	✔ Still Present	✔✔ Most Preferred

B. Discussion

1. Content Discovery

In terms of content discovery, students commonly found educational materials on Discord through a combination of hashtags, educational accounts, and the platform's built-in search functions. Hashtags played a particularly influential role in guiding users toward relevant topics, with #LearnOnDiscord, #ScienceTips, and similar tags being frequently mentioned by participants [5]. These hashtags served not only as markers of educational content but also as entry points into broader learning communities where students could explore related posts, discussions, and multimedia resources. Educational accounts—often managed by educators, subject enthusiasts, or study groups—provided curated, reliable content that students began to trust and follow regularly. The search function further supported this discovery

process by enabling learners to locate specific topics or revisit previously encountered material. This organic, interest-driven method of content exploration reflects how Discord's informal learning environment encourages autonomous learning, allowing students to personalize their educational journey by following topics that align with their goals and interests.

2. Learning Style and Short Format

Discord's video-centric format proved particularly effective for visual learners, who reported that animated explanations, screen recordings, and graphical content helped them grasp complex ideas more easily. The platform's dynamic use of visuals—such as diagrams, step-by-step tutorials, and motion-based storytelling—catered well to those who process information best through images and demonstrations. These learners appreciated the intuitive layout and the ability to pause, replay, and focus on specific segments of content, enhancing their understanding and engagement. However, auditory learners—those who learn most effectively through listening—expressed a notable gap in content offerings. Many of them indicated a preference for spoken explanations, narration, or audio summaries, which were less prominent or inconsistently available in the current materials shared on Discord [6]. This feedback highlights a significant area for improvement: the diversification of content formats. To fully support various learning styles, educational content on Discord would benefit from integrating more audio-based elements such as voiceovers, podcast-style discussions, or even live audio sessions. Such enhancements would ensure that both visual and auditory learners can engage meaningfully, making the platform more inclusive and pedagogically effective.

3. Knowledge Retention Strategies

Students employed a variety of strategies to retain the knowledge they gained through Discord, revealing insights into how the platform functions as part of a broader learning process. Many students reported taking notes while watching educational content, highlighting the importance of active engagement in transforming passive consumption into meaningful learning. Others rewatched videos, either to reinforce their understanding or to clarify points they had missed during the initial viewing. This behavior suggests that Discord's accessible and replayable content format is well-suited for reinforcement learning, where repetition helps solidify key concepts. Additionally,

some students went a step further by applying the knowledge they acquired from Discord videos directly to their coursework or school projects. This transfer of learning from informal digital contexts to formal academic tasks underscores Discord's role as a valuable tool for initial exposure to new material. However, the students' reliance on additional strategies—like note-taking and content application—also suggests that Discord alone may not be sufficient for long-term retention. Instead, its effectiveness is significantly enhanced when integrated with other learning methods, such as traditional study routines, classroom instruction, or structured revision tools. This integration creates a more comprehensive learning ecosystem that supports both surface-level understanding and deeper cognitive processing [7].

4. Future Integration into Formal Education

Students expressed a forward-looking perspective on the role of Discord in education, envisioning the platform not as a replacement for formal learning, but as a complementary tool that could enhance the classroom experience. They imagined Discord being used to supplement traditional instruction through the creation of curated educational accounts that consistently share subject-specific resources, study tips, and multimedia content aligned with curriculum standards. Furthermore, students showed enthusiasm for instructor-generated content, such as recorded mini-lessons, discussion threads, and resource-sharing channels tailored to their courses. This vision reflects a desire for a more interactive and accessible learning environment where teachers extend learning beyond the classroom in a format familiar to students. However, alongside this optimism, students also stressed the critical need for quality control [8]. They raised concerns about the accuracy and credibility of user-generated content, acknowledging that while Discord allows for easy sharing, it also opens the door to misinformation or superficial learning. As a result, students advocated for the implementation of accuracy checks, content moderation, and educator involvement to ensure that the learning materials shared on the platform are trustworthy and pedagogically sound. This feedback underscores the importance of balancing innovation with academic rigor in integrating social platforms like Discord into formal education.

IV. CONCLUSION

This study found that Discord is a promising educational platform, particularly for visual learners

and initial knowledge acquisition. Its informal, engaging format fosters accessibility and motivation, while its interactive features support peer learning. However, it is not without limitations, including concerns about depth of content and information accuracy.

Integrating Discord with traditional educational methods may create hybrid learning environments that cater to diverse learning styles. As students increasingly turn to social platforms for knowledge, education systems must adapt to harness these tools effectively.

Future research should aim to build on current findings by addressing several key areas. First, studies should involve larger and more diverse student samples to ensure that conclusions are more representative and applicable across different educational settings, age groups, and cultural backgrounds. Expanding the participant pool would enhance the generalizability of insights related to student engagement and learning outcomes on platforms like Discord. Second, there is a clear need to investigate effective content moderation and quality assurance mechanisms. As students have raised concerns about the credibility of user-generated content, future research should identify strategies to maintain educational integrity while still allowing for the flexibility and creativity that social media platforms offer. Finally, research should focus on developing best practices for integrating formal instruction with social media-based learning. This includes examining how educators can design and implement instructional strategies that blend traditional pedagogy with the interactive, user-driven features of platforms like Discord, ensuring that learning remains both effective and engaging.

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