"Fostering Belonging and Inclusivity through Multilingual and Multimodal Writing Practices: An Exploration within an International Context"

Luiza Louback, COL 2026
Amy Stornaiuolo
University of Pennsylvania
Graduate School of Education
luizal@sas.upenn.edu

Introduction: Theoretical Approach

Building upon the research framework presented by Light et al. (2018), we have adopted a critical 'walkthrough' method to navigate the newly launched Write4Change Discord server. In its beta phase, it boasts approximately 80 members, constituting a diverse community. mainly of high school students.

Write4Change is a collaborative authoring community of youth writers (13+) supported by a team of adult and youth moderators and researchers connected to the University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Education.

Moreover, using Jackson and McKinney as inspiration to consider how Discord allows us to "view the writing center from a different angle," (2011). Our focus now shifts to the exploration of how young writers from diverse cultural backgrounds and countries conceptualize and engage in collaborative efforts for **"writing for change."**

This entails an investigation into the ways in which cultural contexts shape their perceptions and approaches to transformative writing endeavors. We are keen to understand how these writers collaboratively work to effect meaningful change through their written expressions.
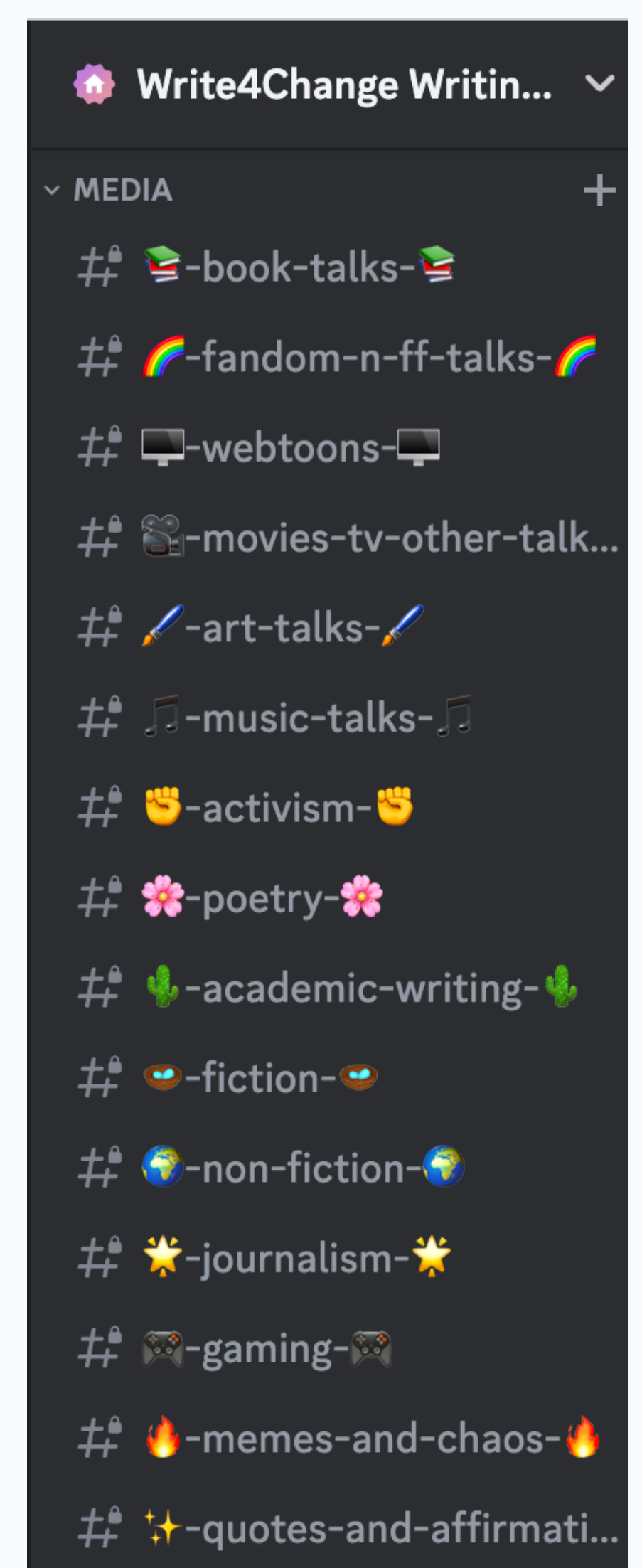
Methodological Approach

Problem Questions:
- How do youth writers express and explore their identities in the Write4Change community on Discord?
- How do the diverse writing expertise and cultural backgrounds of youth from various countries contribute to their interactions within an international writing community, and how does this influence the collective creative process?"

Experiences in Making Community in Discord

Our data collection strategies include extracting artifacts through comprehensive keyword searches within the Discord platform, coupled with the systematic recording of pivotal interactions through screenshots and detailed field notes.

To bolster our research, we are amassing resources pertaining to data collection and analysis. This extends to understanding the nuances of formulating practical interview questions and investigating potential avenues for data scraping from the Discord platform. With regard to data analysis, our approach encompasses a diverse array of techniques: observational (field notes from observing), and artifactual (screenshots of examples of dialogues and transcriptions of live events.)

Conclusion

The data extracted from Discord isn't just data; it's a collection of narratives that unveil the previously concealed and underappreciated interactions responsible for shaping the writing center – interactions characterized by continuous emotional and relational efforts.

Despite its lack of physical presence, Discord serves as a shared platform that anchors us as a community to a conceptual space. The dynamic realm of the writing center, extends beyond individual sessions, becoming a continuous arena for navigating relationships and emotions. International youth engage in creative writing through bonding and sharing experiences, not only for validation but also for a sense of belonging.