

# The use of Discord for a language course

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# What is Discord?

- Released in 2015, originally to help gamers communicate with each other.
- Community platform with voice calls, video calls, and text messaging capabilities
- Users can create communities (called “Servers”) and invite other users.
- Growing popularity among college students in recent years.
- Over 200 colleges and universities are on the platform (according to Discord).





# Why did I start using Discord

- Needed a place for students to communicate with each other and share resources without having to log into Canvas.
- Lower the threshold for students to contact me.
- A friend who teaches Computational Linguistics at University of Utah had successfully used Discord for their course.
- Issues with Slack (discussed later).

# Interface

FYJPN1\_Sec7

▼

CNCC

F

F2-IJB

+

▼ INFORMATION

# welcome-and-rules

▼ TEXT CHANNELS

# general

# language-related-quest...

# japanese-culture

# language-learning-reso...

▼ VOICE CHANNELS

Lounge

Study Room 1

Study Room 2

Takahashi

#9827

# japanese-culture

Discuss and/or share resources on Ja...

#

Search

October 20, 2022

10/20/2022

<https://www.tiktok.com/t/ZTRH9HmX/>

November 1, 2022

Takahashi 11/01/2022

<https://www.nhk.or.jp/archives/kaisou/vr/>

回想法ライブラリー | NHKアーカイブス

むかしの家360 VR

なつかしい物や映像を見て思い出を語り合う回想法は、認知症の進行予防やうつ状態の改善につながる可能性があるといわれています。

+ Message #japanese-culture

GIF

ONLINE — 4

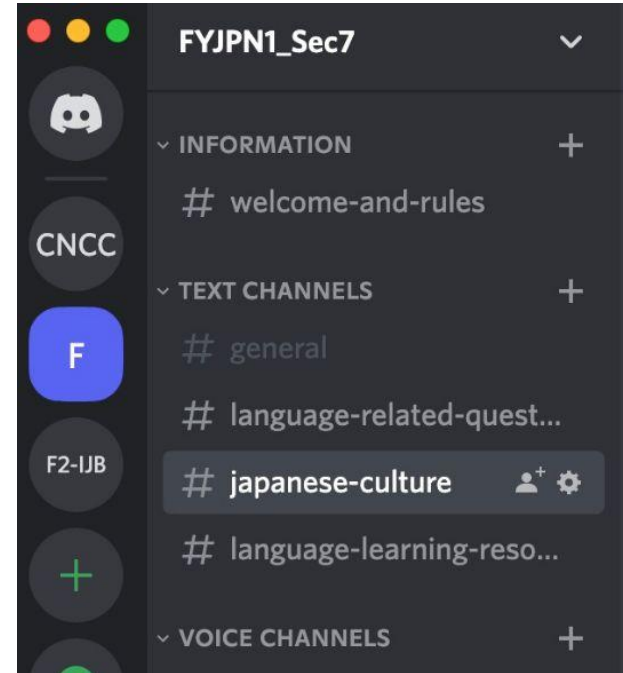
Takahashi

OFFLINE — 15



# Channels

- Customized channels encourage students to ask questions of peers/instructors on specific topics.
- Inclusive:
  - Everyone can see the questions.
  - Provides several modes of communication, lowering the threshold to reach out the instructor.
- Two modes of acknowledgements (replying or using emojis) - useful when you need to know who saw the message.



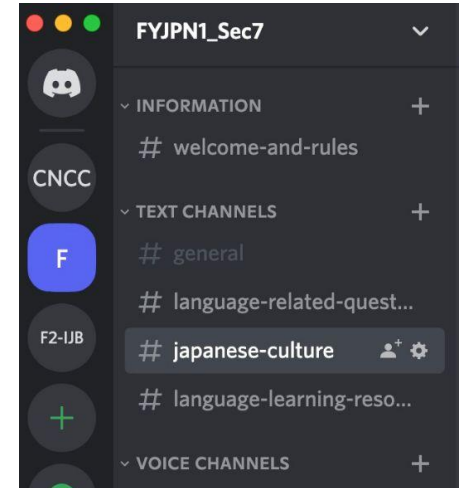
# Channels

**#general** : Announcements (also sent via Canvas).

**#japanese-culture** : Anything related to Japanese culture

**#language-related-questions** : Questions about Japanese language. Students are encouraged to respond other students' questions.

**#language-learning-resources**: videos, song, online resources students (or the instructor) want to share



# Channels: restricting access

- It is possible to create channels for separate sections of the same course.
- It is possible to invite outside collaborators to certain channels.
  - Final Project - working with students in Japan
  - Collaborators (students in Japan) have access to #japanese-culture, #anything-else, #life-in-the-us (Columbia students' idea) channels.
  - #japanese-culture → create authentic language use content for our student consumption





# Direct messaging

## Pros

- Extremely easy to find past interactions with students, since all interactions with a particular student are saved in a thread.
- Can indicate acknowledgement using emojis (e.g., thumbs up).

## Cons

- Some students did not want to display their real names, opting to show usernames instead.
- Real names can be shown as 'aka'
- I got used to students' use of usernames faster than I thought I would.



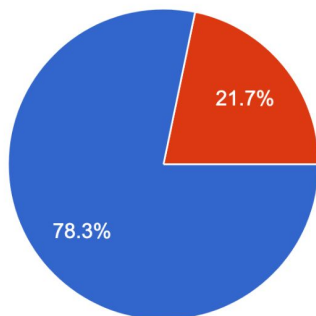


# Student Feedback: Questionnaires filled out 2-3 weeks after Discord use commenced

- Administered to obtain info on students' current Discord use.
- 23 out of 42 (54%) students completed the questionnaire.

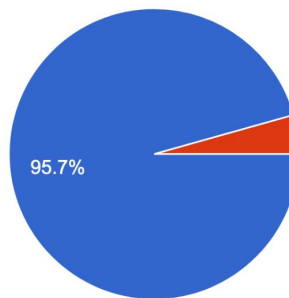
Was it your first time using Discord for a class?

23 responses



Do you have the Discord app on your phone, tablet or desktop?

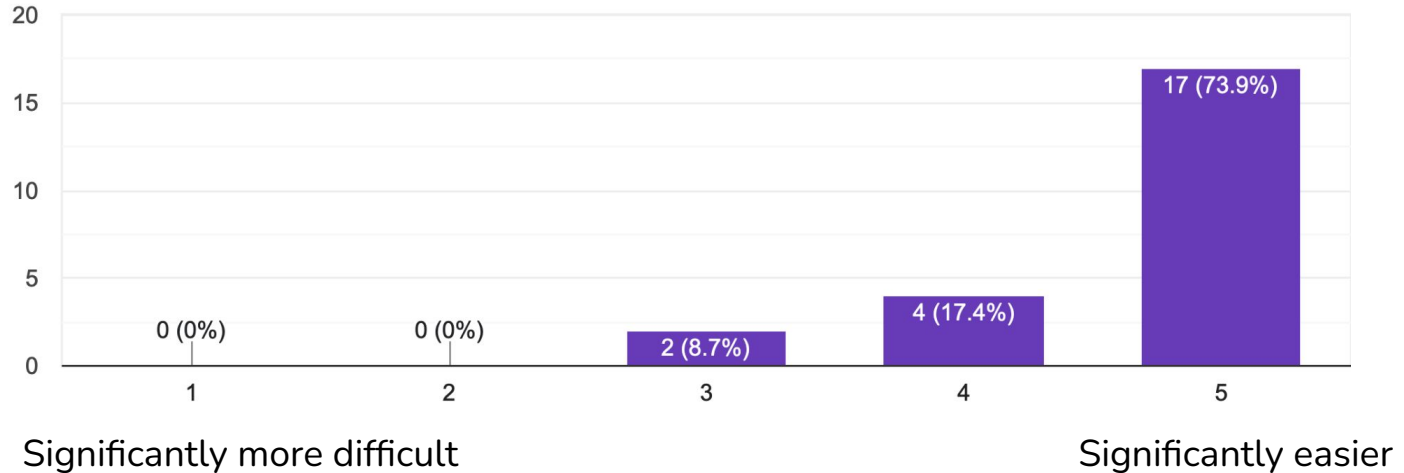
23 responses



# Students' Feedback: Questionnaire filled out 2-3 weeks after started using Discord

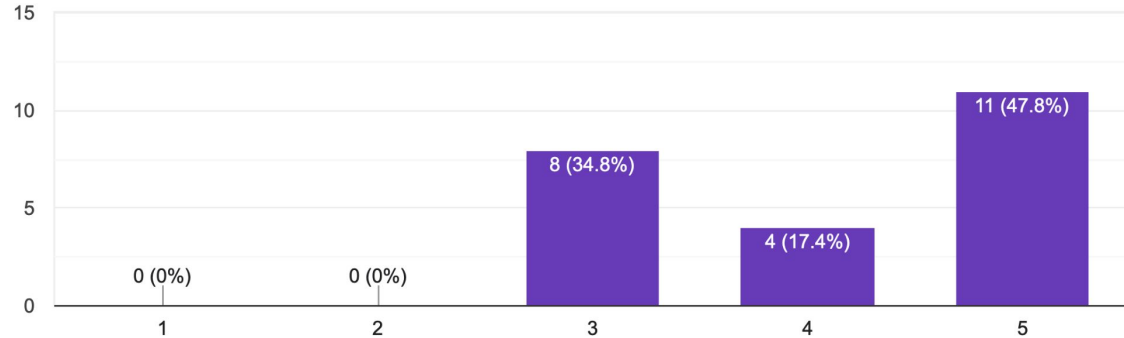
How has the use of Discord made communicating with your instructor?

23 responses



# Students Feedback: Questionnaire filled out 2-3 weeks after Discord use commenced

How has the use of Discord made communicating with your peers?  
23 responses

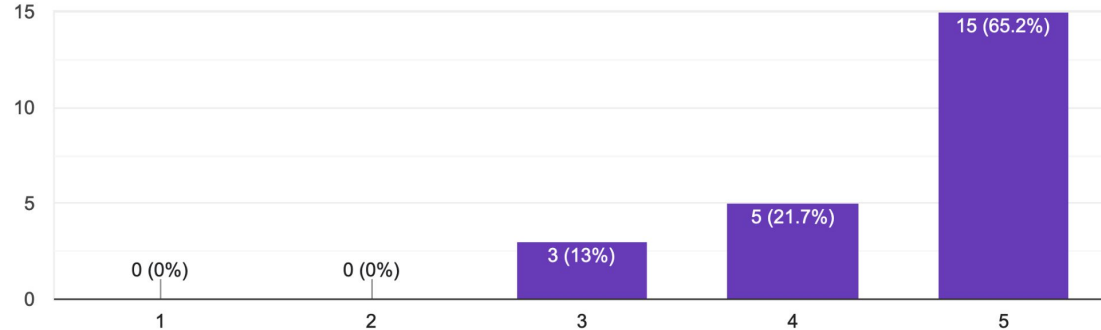


Significantly more difficult

Significantly easier

# Students Feedback: Questionnaire filled out 2-3 weeks after Discord use commenced

How has the use of Discord made sharing resources?  
23 responses



Significantly more difficult

Significantly easier



## **Student responses: “What do you like about using Discord for a language course?”**

- it really allows students in the class to communicate with one another and support each other's learning.
- Really feel much more closer to everyone.
- I also think the format of the platform makes it less intimidating for me to ask questions. It also takes less time than emailing.
- It is much easier to reach out to the professor with smaller inquiries which may be tedious to do over email.
- The ease of access in communication with the Professor and the way it makes learning Japanese less stressful and formal.
- I have discord on almost always, so it is very nice being able to get updated on announcements the moment they are posted.
- discord is my main form of online communication, and it can be organized into specific channels thus it is so much easier to navigate different types of materials.



## **Student responses: “What do you NOT like about using Discord for a language course?”**

- Sometimes, there are too many information to go over, maybe need a more detailed classification?
- Because I use Discord with my friends, I have a really personal profile, but I don't want my classmates or professor seeing that, so I had to make a new account with my Columbia email for class. On computer, you can easily and quickly switch between Discord accounts. However, on my phone, I have to manually log in and log out each time I want to change, so it is less convenient. Still, it is a lot better than Slack.
- It is just another App to add to my numerous other Apps.

# Supplementary Application: Dropmark

Powered by Dropmark

## Japanese Language Learning Resources

by [chikonuts](#) · 16 items



ter Dictionary



Minnato Nihongo Vocab L4



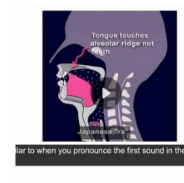
Greetings in Anime



Greetings in Anime 2



Jisho - Dictionary



Pronunciation - ra ri ru re ro



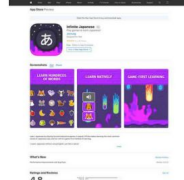
Tofugu - Yoroshiku Onegaishim...



hiragana



Tofugu - Japanese Language L...



Infinite Japanese - App



Reading



Reading 2



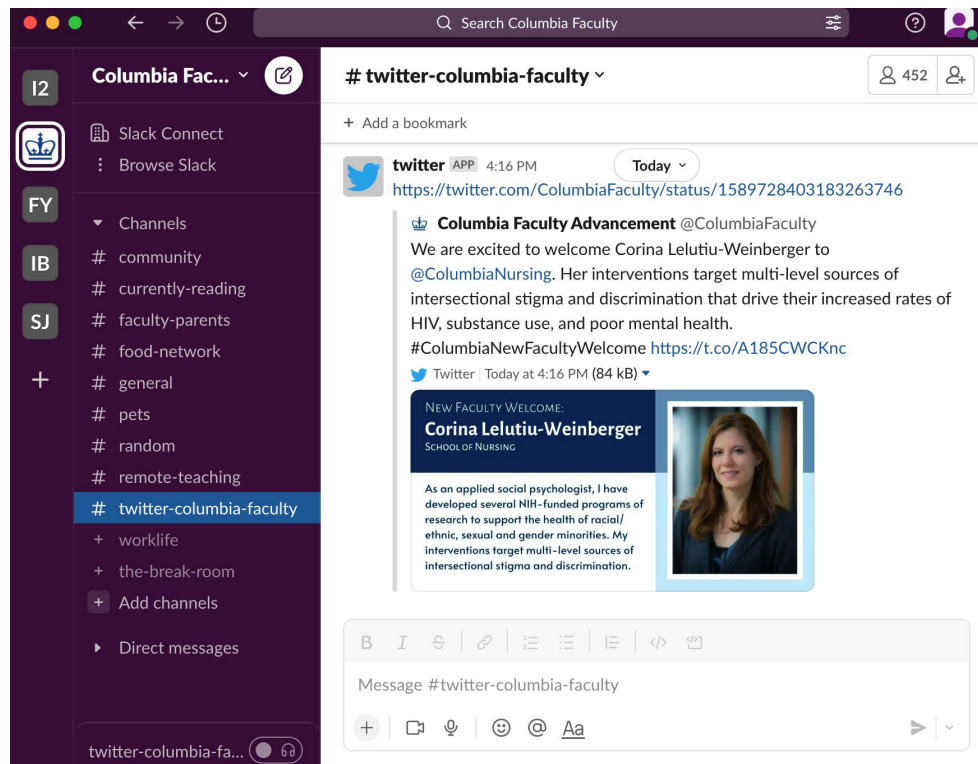
Reading 3



Reading 4

# Similar applications: slack

Very similar interface to Discord but only 90 days worth of data is visible on a free account.







# Summary

## Pros

- It has saved me significant time when communicating with students via DM.
- It seems to have
  - made it easier for students to communicate with peers and the instructor.
  - lowered the threshold for the students to reach out to the instructor.
  - encouraged students to be more active in sharing learning resources.

## Cons

- Some students did not want to display their real names, opting to show usernames instead. → But real names can be shown as 'aka' and I got used to student use of usernames faster than I thought I would.

## Other possibilities with Discord

- Using a programmable ChatBot for assignments and assessments.
- Using video communication features for office hours.