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Interest-Driven Public Networks and Writing Pedagogy: Reframing and Harnessing Digital Spaces as Activism Playgrounds

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Abstract: Addressing the pedagogical challenges of teaching activism in both technical/professional communication (TPC) and composition (first year composition in particular) studies, this article introduces "interest-driven public networks" (IDPN) as a theoretical framework examining how shared passions intersect with strategic interests in digital spaces to cultivate civic participation. Building on this foundation, it develops an interest-driven public writing pedagogy model that harnesses digital spaces as activism playgrounds in writing classrooms. This work expands traditional conceptions of civic engagement, provides structured approaches for teaching social justice through everyday digital experiences, and bridges TPC and FYC studies in their shared commitment to social justice education.

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As emerging technologies reshape digital landscapes, writing instructors face increasing challenges in teaching activism and civic engagement effectively. This conceptual article theorizes and introduces "interest-driven public networks" (IDPN) as a theoretical framework for understanding and leveraging digital spaces in activism pedagogy. Building on scholarship in both public writing pedagogy (PWP) and technical/professional communication (TPC), I argue that interest-driven digital communities—spaces born from shared passions but give rise to local public lives and capable of transcending their locality to engage broader publics—can serve as accessible, relatively low-risk playgrounds for teaching activism in writing classrooms.

This article makes two key contributions. First, it theorizes the original construct of IDPN through a critical examination of existing frameworks, particularly affinity spaces. By analyzing these spaces through public and civic lenses to reveal their affordances and limitations for activism pedagogy, the article develops a more nuanced characterization of digital spaces that accounts for both their activist potential and inherent power dynamics. Second, the article introduces "interest-driven public writing pedagogy" as a model for harnessing these networks in writing instruction, providing structured opportunities for students to engage in meaningful activist work while developing critical awareness of social justice issues.

The article begins with a literature review examining the parallel yet distinct approaches to social justice in public writing pedagogy and TPC. It then analyzes affinity spaces through a public lens before conceptualizing interest-driven public networks and their pedagogical applications. Through this work, I aim to bridge theoretical insights about digital publics with practical approaches to civic education and activism writing, while fostering greater dialogue between composition studies and TPC in their shared commitment to social justice education, as a response to the call of Gonzales, Shivers-McNair & Bawarshi (2020) and Enríquez-Loya & Léon (2020).

Literature Review

As emerging technologies widen digital divides and artificial intelligence (AI) accelerates global economies, the challenges to social justice and equity grow more intense and complex. Within the composition and rhetoric field, both public writing and technical/professional communication (hence TPC) scholars approach these issues from distinct angles.

Activism Turn in Composition & TPC Studies: A Brief History

The *social turn* in composition studies, which gained prominence in the 1990s, marked a shift from viewing writing as an individual cognitive or expressive act to understanding it as a fundamentally social, rhetorical, and ideological practice shaped by discourse communities, institutional power structures, and public engagement (e.g., Gee's *Discourses*, 1990; Bartholomae's *Inventing the University*, 1985; Bazerman's *Genre as Social Action*, 1988). Building on this shift, John Trimbur (1994) and Ellen Cushman (1996) positioned writing classrooms as spaces for civic participation, urging students to engage with real-world issues and public issues beyond the university. This laid the foundation for public pedagogy in composition studies, often termed *public writing pedagogy* (hence PWP) – a pedagogical approach that connects writing classrooms with real-world contexts, fosters engagement with pressing social

issues, and scaffolds students' participation in public discourse (Mathieu, 2005; Gogan, 2014; Holmes, 2016). While public pedagogy encompasses multiple themes, "civic education" and "social activism" remain central threads of exploration (Sandlin, O'Malley & Burdick, 2011; Sandlin, Schultz & Burdick, 2010), reinforcing its activist and social transformation aims in educational settings. By framing writing as inherently public and political, the *social turn* reinforced composition's role not only in developing students as skilled writers but also in preparing them as civic agents—critical participants in both physical and digital publics.

TPC's social justice turn is more recent (post-2010). While ethics, usability, and accessibility have long been concerns in TPC (Markel, 2001; Redish, 1999), these discussions were traditionally framed within industry and professional contexts rather than activist work. However, since the 2010s, scholars have increasingly challenged the assumption of neutrality in technical communication, advocating for a more explicit engagement with equity, justice, and advocacy (Agboka, 2013; Haas, 2012; Jones, 2016; Schuster, 2015). This social justice turn in TPC has redefined the field's research and pedagogical priorities, shifting attention toward how technical communicators challenge exclusionary design, amplify marginalized voices, and integrate ethical advocacy into workplace and institutional settings (Haas & Eble, 2018; Edenfield, 2022). Unlike composition's social turn, which emphasizes civic participation and public discourse, TPC's social justice turn is primarily concerned with equity within professional and technical communication systems (Walton et al., 2019), setting the stage for new pedagogical approaches that embed activism into upper division, discipline-specific technical writing classrooms.

Similarities and Differences in Composition & TPC's Social Justice Approach

Sharing commitments to social justice and equity, public writing and TPC scholars' pedagogical explorations have led to similar orientations. They both:

- emphasize digital literacies and multimodal composition as essential for contemporary advocacy (Jones, 2016; Mathieu, 2005; Walton et al., 2019);
- grapple with questions of authenticity and meaningful engagement, seeking to move beyond performative activism to ensure student work contributes to real social change (Edenfield, 2022; Haas & Eble, 2018);
- emphasize the importance of local interventions within broader systemic struggles (Welch, 2005; Jones, 2016; Walton, 2016);
- frame students as rhetorical change agents within their respective contexts—PWP encourages students to engage publics as critical intellectuals, while TPC educates them to advocate for justice within professional and technical spheres (Walton et al., 2018; Agboka, 2013).

These shared commitments establish a foundation for activism-oriented pedagogy across both fields. On the other hand, PWP and TPC usually serve distinct student populations and institutional contexts, shaping their divergent approaches to social justice education.

PWP primarily serves lower-division (e.g., first-year composition, or FYC) students who have yet to develop strong professional identities and may be more vulnerable to the risks of public

engagement (see Gruwell, 2017; Sundvall & Fredlund, 2017). These students often need additional motivation to write, especially in general education courses like FYC where they may not immediately perceive the relevance of grand public issues or "wicked problems" commonly addressed in critical pedagogy. Consequently, PWP scholars tend to adopt less explicit framing of activism and social justice, instead encouraging students to experiment with public writing in exploratory, lower-stakes ways (Mathieu, 2005; DeLuca, 2018). This approach manifests in several strategies: appealing to students' existing interests and cultural assets by framing fandoms as sites for public writing pedagogy (DeLuca, 2018); emphasizing privacy, emotional safety (Blackmon & Major, 2023; Jin, 2021, 2023b, 2023c), and peer support through ambient audiences (Hall, 2015); and focusing on individual transformation as a pathway to broader social change.

In contrast, TPC courses typically serve upper-division students who possess stronger professional identities and are already oriented toward specific professional contexts. These students generally have clearer motivations for writing within their disciplinary domains and work with specific target communities, reducing concerns about basic writing motivation or safety. However, TPC students face a different challenge: they may not readily recognize how social justice intersects with their professional work, often viewing technical communication as merely about clarity or neutrality rather than activism (Haas & Jones, 2012). To address this disconnect, TPC scholars employ more overt and direct approaches to social justice pedagogy, explicitly incorporating anti-racist, anti-oppressive, and reflexive methodologies. Their pedagogical strategies frequently involve service-learning, participatory research, and collaborations with marginalized communities (Agboka, 2013; Brizee, Pascual-Ferra, & Caranante, 2020), aiming to achieve systematic and institutional change through professional practice.

These contrasting approaches reflect each field's unique positioning within the broader landscape of writing studies pedagogy: PWP's focus on scaffolding early public engagement while protecting vulnerable students, versus TPC's emphasis on transforming professional practice through explicit social justice frameworks.

Shared Challenges & Conundrum

Despite their distinct approaches, PWP and TPC face shared challenges in integrating activism into writing classrooms. First, both fields grapple with student investment and engagement, albeit for different reasons: PWP students often struggle to connect with large-scale social justice issues that feel abstract or distant and therefore demotivating, while TPC students may view their field as purely instrumental and technically “neutral”, failing to recognize its potential for advocacy and social transformation. Second, both fields face difficulties bridging theory and practice. While PWP connects classrooms with real-world publics and TPC employs service-learning and community-engaged approaches, students in both contexts often struggle to see how their writing projects contribute to meaningful change beyond the classroom. These students may grasp activism conceptually but lack structured opportunities for sustained engagement that makes social justice work tangible and impactful. Third, teaching activism requires more than just rhetorical strategies – while “activism” often accompanies social justice and equity and is generally assumed to be inherently positive, it is ultimately a neutral tool that can be deployed

toward just or unjust ends. Students must develop critical awareness of when, why, and for whom activism should be mobilized, understanding how social justice connects to their lived experiences and why it matters beyond the classroom. Fourth, while both fields have engaged with digital spaces as sites of activism, their pedagogical framing and characterization of these spaces can remain **partial**. For example, while PWP scholars have recognized the importance of mundane and everyday public sites where students pursue personal passion and supply impassioned audience to motivate public writing (DeLuca, 2018), they have yet to fully interrogate the power hierarchy, possible toxicity and risks, institutional forces prevailing in these places. TPC scholars, on the other hand, tend to emphasize community, professional, and workplace advocacy and overtly address oppression and social justice, yet may not recognize and recruit students' non-professional identities and digital life, where they have formed civic identities and participated in activism already.

These shared challenges call for a more nuanced and in-depth understanding and characterization of digital spaces (where many students already live) through public and activism lenses and an innovative pedagogical model that can simultaneously address multiple needs:

1. introducing activism and social justice as relevant and accessible to students' immediate contexts and interest spheres,
2. providing structured opportunities for sustained engagement with visible change-making, and
3. cultivating students' systematic understanding of social justice, oppression, and the ethical deployment of activism as a transformative tool.

Advanced Organizer & Intervention Overview

As an intervention, in the following section I revisit and challenge existing scholarship and their characterizations of digital spaces (e.g., Jenkin's fandoms, Gee's affinity spaces, boyd's networked publics) to critically examine their affordances and limitations through the lens of public engagement and activism; then I conceptualize digital spaces as "interest-driven public networks" to offer a more nuanced, sophisticated, and comprehensive understanding of these digital spaces as potential activism playgrounds, which serve as the foundation for the evolving intersections of passion-driven participation and civic engagement in contemporary digital landscapes.

Following this conceptualization, I propose "interest-driven public writing pedagogy," a pedagogical model designed to harness the potential of these networks for student activism and social justice education. This model provides a structured framework for integrating digital publics into writing classrooms, equipping students with the rhetorical and ethical tools to navigate, critique, and engage in meaningful activism within interest-driven public networks.

I conclude that activism writing and civic engagement can be a place of transdisciplinary for TPC and composition studies and intend to invite further conversations between the two fields, as a response to the call of Gonzales, Shivers-McNair & Bawarshi (2020) and Enríquez-Loya & Léon (2020).

Critical Examination of Affinity Spaces Through Public Lens

Affinity Space (AS) is a situated learning theory and framework rooted in literacy studies to characterize digital spaces as informal learning sites where participants gather because of shared hobbies/passion and common endeavors (Gee, 2005 & 2014; Lammers et al., 2012; Lammers, 2012). If you have hobbies and passion and have accessed either online/offline spaces revolving around these hobbies, where people discuss and realize this passion together, then you have been to your affinity space (broadly speaking, this special issue can be seen as an affinity space for teacher-scholars who are interested in teaching activism).

In the following paragraphs, I examine affinity space from a public and civic lens to analyze its affordances and limitations as characterizations of digital spaces for activism writing.

Affordances of Affinity Spaces

Beyond Confrontation: Gentle Entryways to Activism. AS captures one of the most important reasons why people engage with digital spaces: "Shared passion" (rather than race, class, gender, or disability) characterizes the core affinity as similarities, resonance, and agreements rather than differences, dissonance, and disputes; this does not mean the latter is absent but it foregrounds the importance of the former as a primary cause and binding force to sustain an interest-drive digital space. "Common endeavor" characterizes collective meaning-making and participatory culture, emphasizing friendship, community-building, and a sense of belonging. While it cannot be equated with civic participation and activism, AS encompasses a broad spectrum of literacy practices that can serve as a catalyst for such engagement.

AS, therefore, provides "passionate public audience[s]" (Lammers, Curwood & Magnifico, 2012, p. 49; Curwood et al., 2013) or "impassioned publics" (DeLuca, 2018, p. 78–79): audiences forming identities revolving around passion, interests, and hobbies, transcending possible radical identity differences/gap outside AS, who are not only deeply invested in the topics (revolving around shared passion) but also in each other (common endeavor). Such emotional resonance and collective ethos, in my opinion, is the very foundation of reciprocal, supportive, nurturing interactions in AS.

This is relevant for activism writing and social justice pedagogy because Western-centric views on activism and public life in general tend to foreground controversies and differences as sites of public deliberation (Crick & Gabriel, 2010; Flower, 2016). These approaches often begin with wicked problems – complex social issues like racial inequality, gender discrimination, or LGBTQ+ rights – that are inherently rooted in power dynamics, history, controversy, and conflict. Such starting points can immediately create defensiveness and resistance. When social justice discourse begins from a place of problem identification and accusation, it often leads to polarization before meaningful dialogue can even begin.

AS provides a different perspective, a different soil to grow a kind of audience deviant from the stereotypical activism audience who can be more unpredictable. Unlike traditional approaches

that begin with identifying problems and assigning responsibility, affinity spaces start from shared passions and common endeavors. This foundation of shared interests and collective goals makes social justice work more accessible and achievable. When people first connect through shared enthusiasm and collaborative projects, they build relationships and trust that can later support more challenging conversations about systemic inequities. This alternative pathway to activism - beginning with connection rather than confrontation - may prove more effective for engaging broader audiences in social justice work.

Beyond Formal Instruction: Self-Sustaining Informal Learning Infrastructures. AS also explains why and how informal learning happens in digital spaces where formal, systematic learning structures are often absent:

- shared common space for newbies to learn from and with more experienced members
- curated and pooled general and specialist collective knowledge base (e.g., tutorials, archive, resource hub) for proactive self-learning
- feedback, support, assistance, help and other reciprocal interactions available upon request
- provide situated learning experiences that embed knowledge in experience, action, and interaction

While these informal learning infrastructures do not specifically target social justice and activism learning, they can become fertile soil and a favorable foundation for such learning, if deployed in the classroom the right way.

Case Illustrations of Affordances. These theoretical affordances of affinity spaces – impassioned audiences and informal learning infrastructure – manifest concretely in various digital communities. Two cases illustrate how these affordances foster civic participation and collective action:

Hayes and Lee's (2012) study of The Sims modding forum, which focuses on creating modifications for game content, demonstrates how informal learning infrastructure in affinity spaces mirrors civic infrastructure. In this gaming community, experienced modders create detailed tutorials teaching others how to modify game content through 3D modeling. These tutorials function as fundamental community infrastructure – like power supplies in a city – that all members rely upon. The Q&A interactions surrounding these tutorials showcase how this infrastructure is collectively maintained and evolved; newcomers post questions to recruit help, while experienced members voluntarily contribute their expertise on-demand. This creates a sustainable cycle of civic participation: as newcomers receive help and develop expertise, they often transition into infrastructure maintainers themselves, contributing back to the community that supported their growth. The case reveals how shared passion can motivate systematic community building – participants aren't just sharing knowledge ad hoc but actively constructing and maintaining the digital infrastructure necessary for their community's long-term flourishing. This organic development of sustainable support systems offers valuable insights for how larger-scale civic infrastructures might be built and maintained through collective effort.

Alexander's (2009) examination of World of Warcraft forums reveals how impassioned audiences engage in sophisticated civic deliberation. When faced with challenging in-game bosses requiring 20-50 player cooperation, community members compose detailed analytical essays proposing battle strategies. These seemingly game-focused writings exhibit key characteristics of civic discourse: they address collective concerns affecting the broader community (i.e., how to defeat a difficult boss), involve collaborative deliberation where plans can be challenged and refined, and – most significantly – translate directly into coordinated group actions in the game, a simulated problem space. This case offers a powerful prototype for how collective problem-solving and coordinated action can emerge in digital spaces. The scale is particularly noteworthy – successfully coordinating 20-50 people requires sophisticated rhetorical and organizational skills comparable to managing small organizations. Through their gameplay-focused writing, these community members are essentially practicing key components of civic action: analyzing complex problems, building consensus through deliberation, coordinating large groups, and implementing solutions with real-time feedback. While the immediate context may be a game, the skills and processes involved directly parallel those needed for activism and collective problem-solving. This case demonstrates how affinity spaces can serve as low-stakes training grounds where participants develop and practice capabilities crucial for larger-scale civic action and social change.

Both cases demonstrate how the core affordances of AS – supportive infrastructure for informal learning and passionate, invested audiences – can create fertile ground for civic engagement and collective action, even when such outcomes aren't explicitly sought.

Limitations of Affinity Spaces

AS, as a construct for us to understand digital spaces' potential as an activism playground, also comes with limitations.

Utopian Depiction of Power Dynamics. To begin with, empirical research with AS tends to focus on the more ideal and utopian side of digital communities that positively contribute to learning, featuring exceptional cases – successful overachieving cases that are rare and should not be taken as the norm (Lammers, 2016). Though acknowledging tension and power dynamics, AS scholarship does not overtly view the interactions in AS through public and civic lens, nor sufficiently address the power hierarchy, exclusion, access, oppression, toxicity, and institutional forces prevailing in digital spaces (e.g., see Hayes & Gee, 2010).

For example, Lammers (2012) documents how moderators of a fanfiction forum order other participants around, lock off-topic threads, and correct behavior misaligned with forum rules. Such observation challenges the utopia depiction of AS; yet Lammers uses Basil Bernstein's 1996 model of pedagogical discourses as a theoretical lens to examine the phenomenal, which frames the relationship between moderators and other participants of the forum as "teacher" and "student". It is understandable as AS theories fall mostly into the domain of learning theory, but through public and civic lens, a better metaphor to capture the power dynamics in this case is the state (e.g., moderators) and its citizens (e.g., participant). Another example is Hayes and Lee (2012), when documenting how newbies in a 3D modeling forum recruit help from more experienced participants as they learn, notice that newbies need to sufficiently establish their

need for assistance (e.g., describe their problem in ways that people can understand), or their posts can be ignored. Hayes and Lee seem to view this as a threshold ability to prove worthy of help, and they analyze the various strategies used by successful newbies. Yet they do not mention how such informal learning can widen the learning gap. From a public and civic lens, this exemplifies how marginalized populations can be further marginalized: people who cannot articulate their needs are less likely to be helped, more likely to be ignored, therefore more struggling, and more marginalized.

Structural Oversimplification. Second, AS doesn't accurately characterize the structure of contemporary digital spaces. Though AS scholarship includes vocabulary like "portals" (i.e., hyperlinks prevailing in AS that connect various digital spaces) (Gee, 2005) and "encompassing social networking portals" (Lammers et al., 2012), and acknowledge that participation patterns in AS can be stretched across multiple sites and spaces (Magnifico et al., 2020), AS theories and research do not reflect the complex networks and digital ecologies in the contemporary world. Understanding the structure of digital spaces (how digital communities are organized and networked), and how information is circulated across these spaces (e.g., gatekeeping mechanism of information hubs; algorithm of censorship and surveillance) can be foundational for exercising digital activism.

Unaddressed Formal-Informal Gap. Third, AS scholarship has yet to fully address how to position/arrange formal learning sites with informal learning sites, and how to leverage and recruit students' AS learning experiences in classrooms. It should be noted that AS does distinguish between tacit and explicit knowledge: the former refers to the knowledge that one can use without articulating/explaining it; the latter refers to the knowledge that one can explain and articulate to make sense of what is happening when the knowledge is applied (e.g., writing grammatically correct sentences is using implicit knowledge of grammar; being able to articulate grammar rules like an English teacher is showcasing the explicit knowledge of grammar). This is an important distinction because formal learning sites heavily rely on students showcasing explicit knowledge as proof of learning yet do not sufficiently honor tacit knowledge. Applying this insight in social justice pedagogy, we need to be aware that students may have civic and activism experiences but not recognize them as so and are unable to explicitly articulate the rhetorical skills and social justice understandings they have acquired implicitly.

Conceptualizing "Interest-Driven Public Networks"

This section conceptualizes 'interest-driven public networks' as a theoretical framework for understanding contemporary digital spaces through an activism lens. Beginning with a definition of this original construct, the discussion examines its key theoretical foundations and analyzes how these networks serve as vital seedbeds for public life and activism in the contemporary world.

Defining "Interest-Driven Public Networks"

Interest-driven public networks (IDPN) are digitally mediated spaces that combine affinity-based participation with civic infrastructure. They are characterized by dual motivations (passionate and strategic interests), layered public engagement (internal governance and external public

engagement), and networked ecosystems where technological affordances, structural complexity, and user agency shape information flows and collective action. As a theoretical framework, IDPN provides an activism-driven understanding and characterization of contemporary digital spaces.

Why Engage with Digital Spaces: Dual Meaning of "Interest-Driven"

The term "interest" in this context possesses a crucial dual valence. On one hand, it refers to intrinsic motivation – hobbies, passions, and intellectual curiosities that draw individuals toward sustained participation in activities they find personally meaningful. On the other hand, "interest" also denotes calculative self-benefit, akin to financial interest, where engagement is driven by anticipated returns – whether material, economic, social, or strategic. This dual meaning shapes participation in digital spaces: while some engage primarily out of genuine passion (as emphasized in affinity space theories), others participate strategically to achieve specific goals or gains. More commonly, these motivations intertwine and coexist, as participants navigate between passion-driven engagement and strategic positioning.

The strategic dimension of interest-driven participation, though often overlooked by AS theories' more utopian vision, proves crucial for understanding digital spaces' complex dynamics. Strategic interests aren't inherently negative—they can mobilize collective action for positive change, as seen when professional organizations coordinate advocacy efforts or when activist groups strategically leverage digital platforms for social justice campaigns. However, the pursuit of strategic gains also fundamentally shapes power relations in these spaces, giving rise to hierarchies, gatekeeping practices, and potential exploitation. The notorious Gamergate controversy exemplifies this dynamic: what began as passion-driven gaming communities transformed into battlegrounds where various actors sought to advance strategic interests, leading to systematic harassment and exclusion. Similar patterns emerge across platforms, where the possibility of strategic gain – whether monetary, social, or political – can turn spaces of shared passion into sites of contention and oppression.

This strategic dimension proves particularly relevant for TPC scholars engaged with social justice work. Professional spaces inherently operate through negotiated interests and strategic calculations, even when participants feel passionate about their work. Understanding how strategic interests shape digital participation can help TPC scholars better address systemic inequities in professional spaces and develop more nuanced approaches to social justice advocacy within institutional contexts.

The significance of dual interest-driven lenses becomes clear when we consider these spaces' ubiquity and influence. Contemporary digital platforms host countless interest-driven networks: Facebook groups unite hobbyists, YouTube channels gather fans, Reddit communities connect enthusiasts, and Discord servers coordinate professionals. With billions of users spending hours daily on these platforms, interest-driven networks have become primary sites of students' digital engagement (Gold et al., 2020). Yet their complex nature—simultaneously driven by passion and strategic interests—makes them both incredibly engaging and potentially problematic. This duality explains both their widespread appeal (offering spaces for genuine enthusiasm) and their persistent challenges (creating conditions for power struggles and toxicity).

Understanding both dimensions of "interest-driven" participation proves essential for any meaningful engagement with digital activism and social justice work. These spaces' ability to capture sustained attention through passion while enabling strategic action makes them powerful potential sites for social change – but only if we remain cognizant of how competing interests can transform them into tools of oppression rather than liberation.

"Public" Nature of Digital Spaces: From External Public Engagement to Internal Public Life

The public nature of interest-driven networks operates on two levels. On the macro level, their outward-facing collective action and organized activism are readily apparent, aligning with traditional forms of civic engagement and activism. On the micro level, they foster rich internal processes of self-governance – less obvious/recognizable in their public nature but forming essential foundations for the macro level operations.

Jenkins' (2014) concept of "cultural acupuncture" illustrates how fan communities can bridge popular interests with traditional activism. Through organizations like Fandom Forward (formerly Harry Potter Alliance), fans' passionate engagement with fictional narratives becomes a gateway to social justice work. For instance, Harry Potter fans who deeply connect with Hermione's campaign to liberate house elves can be guided to understand real-world racial discrimination and labor exploitation through these familiar metaphors. This strategic translation of fan passion into civic engagement represents one dimension of how interest-driven networks intersect with traditional public life.

Beyond such organized initiatives, fan communities frequently demonstrate collective civic power through spontaneous mobilization. K-pop fandoms, for instance, regularly organize large-scale charitable activities and emergency response efforts (Jung, 2012). These communities leverage their existing organizational structures and communication networks – originally built for sharing entertainment content – to coordinate substantial social impact. Such cases reveal how interest-driven networks naturally develop infrastructures that can be activated for civic purposes.

However, focusing solely on these outward-facing activist efforts risks overlooking an equally important dimension of public life: the civic processes occurring *within* these digital communities themselves. Lammers' (2012) study of a fanfiction forum reveals how seemingly trivial and local community discussions embody authentic public deliberation and governance. When forum participants debated whether to allow off-topic conversations in a space originally dedicated to fanfiction writing, they engaged in what essentially amounted to local civic discourse. Their discussions centered on fundamental questions of community governance: How should shared digital spaces be used? What kinds of interactions should be encouraged or restricted? How should moderators exercise their authority?

The significance of these internal civic processes becomes clearer when we consider the state of traditional civic engagement. While issues like labor rights, climate change, and electoral politics are undeniably important, they often fail to capture widespread public interest—as evidenced by U.S. presidential election turnout hovering around 60% (Fair Vote). As Eric Liu (2013) notes,

traditional civics are often perceived as "exceedingly virtuous, exceedingly important, and exceedingly boring." In contrast, interest-driven networks offer more accessible and engaging entry points to civic participation.

These digital communities serve as simplified yet authentic versions of larger public spheres—what we might think of as "fish tanks" before the ocean of broader civic engagement. While their internal governance issues might appear trivial to outsiders, they mirror the dynamics of traditional town hall meetings where citizens debate the use of public resources and establish community norms. The accessibility and relative safety of these spaces make them ideal training grounds for civic participation, where members can learn to voice opinions, engage in debate, and participate in collective decision-making without the intimidation factor often present in discussions of larger societal issues.

If we are willing to take a leap of faith and broadly define "activism" as advocating for ideas and promoting changes – no matter how small, local, or seemingly mundane and everyday – interest-driven networks reveal themselves as rich sites of civic life and potential activism. Understanding and validating these everyday forms of civic participation becomes crucial, not only because they are fuzzier and more difficult to observe and track, but because the accumulation of such micro-level changes can lead to profound, long-term transformations in how people engage with public life, and lead to changes that do not necessarily benefit the majority of human race (Stanton, Sundaram, Vose, & Elsherif, 2023).

Structures of Digital Spaces: Making Sense of "Networks"

Digital spaces are complex networks characterized by dense connectivity, multiple interconnected hubs, and fluid information flows that resist centralized synthesis (Jin, 2023a). Understanding these networks requires examining three key perspectives: technological mediation (i.e., how technology mediates participation and access), structural complexity (i.e., how digital spaces are organized/disorganized on micro/macro levels), and infrastructural politics (i.e., how users collectively shape and maintain these digital infrastructures). Together, these perspectives reveal how networks enable, constrain, and transform activist possibilities in digital spaces.

The technological mediation of digital spaces fundamentally shapes participation patterns. boyd's (2014) networked publics framework offers essential insights by demonstrating how these spaces are deeply shaped by technology, power, and socioeconomic conditions. Building on this foundation, contemporary digital landscapes reveal even more complex dynamics: content can be both persistent and ephemeral, shaped by platform governance, state regulations, and user choices (Lammer, Curwood, Magnifico, 2012); content replicability exists alongside sophisticated copyright protections and technological controls; content circulation is mediated by algorithmic systems that complicate traditional notions of scalability (Gallagher, 2017, 2020); and privacy has evolved into nuanced, contextual negotiations that vary across platforms and audiences. These technological mediations create layered power dynamics that affect how different users can engage with and influence digital spaces, reinforcing boyd's core observation about the socially situated nature of networked participation.

Beyond technological aspects, digital spaces exhibit complex structural patterns that transcend traditional public/private distinctions. Hawk's (2011) concept of "sphere publics" illuminates how these spaces operate as decentralized ecosystems with no global hierarchy. Instead, dense connectivity creates local spheres of interaction that maintain relative autonomy while remaining interconnected. Within these spheres, multiple meaning systems coexist without necessarily synthesizing into a unified whole. This structural complexity enables different communities to maintain distinct identities and practices while still allowing for cross-pollination of ideas and tactics.

The human dimension of digital spaces emerges through what Ehrenfeld (2020) terms "infrastructural politics." Digital networks aren't merely systemic structures; they are historically situated spaces actively shaped by collective imagination and strategic action. Users engage in conscious infrastructural work to maintain and transform these spaces, balancing emergent network properties with intentional intervention. This understanding recenters human agency while acknowledging the constraints and affordances of networked systems.

The complex nature of these networked digital ecologies makes them simultaneously accessible and challenging as activism playgrounds. Their decentralized structure and multiple entry points lower barriers to participation, while their interconnected nature enables local actions to potentially scale into broader movements. However, these same characteristics also create risks, as messages can be co-opted, resistance can be surveilled, and algorithmic systems can amplify or suppress activist content. Teaching students to navigate these dynamics becomes crucial for effective digital activism pedagogy.

Harnessing Interest-Driven Public Networks in Classroom: A Pedagogical Model

This section introduces "Interest-Driven Public Writing Pedagogy" (IDPWP), a pedagogical model to navigate and harness the IDPN activism playground. The discussion progresses systematically from theoretical foundations, through pedagogical principles, to a classroom implementation showcase. I begin by synthesizing key theoretical frameworks that inform the model, then articulate the core principles that guide IDPWP's design. Finally, I demonstrate these principles in action through a detailed implementation showcase, illustrating how writing instructors can advance both rhetorical development and activism goals. Through this progression from theory to practice, I provide a comprehensive yet flexible framework for teaching digital activism in writing classrooms.

Theoretical Foundations

My IDPWP model draws from three theoretical frameworks, each contributing essential insights:

- Interest-Driven Public Networks (IDPN, conceptualized in the previous section) provide a critical lens for understanding digital spaces as activism playgrounds to be leveraged by writing classrooms as accessible and gentle entry points for civic participation and activism.

- TPC 4R framework (Walton et al., 2019)—Recognize, Reveal, Reject, and Replace—offers a systematic approach to social justice work. While originally developed for professional contexts, this framework can be adapted and flexibly customized/tailored to lower division writing classrooms by guiding students through progressive stages: recognizing inequities in digital spaces, revealing underlying power structures, rejecting problematic practices, and replacing them with more equitable alternatives. This structured progression helps scaffold students' development from passive observers to active change agents.

- Existing public writing pedagogy models contribute proven strategies for learning sites relocation and bridging classrooms with public spaces (e.g., Holmes, 2016; Lammers & Alstyne, 2019). Particularly, Thorne and Reinhardt's (2008) "bridging activities" framework provides a three-phase cycle – "observation and collection, guided exploration and analysis, and creation and participation" (p. 566); Shepherd's (2020) Reddit-based assignment demonstrates how digital platforms can serve as experimental sites for knowledge transfer.

  Building on these foundations, I now turn to the key principles that guide the implementation of IDPWP in writing classrooms.

Introducing "Interest-Driven Public Writing Pedagogy": Key Principles & Features

IDPWP is guided by five key principles guiding its implementation in writing classrooms:

*1. Interest Before Social Justice, Fish Tank Before Ocean***.** IDPWP does not start with or immediately introduce grand concepts of social justice, civics, and activism. These grand concepts often carry an accusatory tone and can signify something "exceedingly virtuous, exceedingly important, and exceedingly boring" (Liu, 2013, 00:21 - 00:35), potentially deterring student engagement (due to emotional dissonance, disinterestedness). Instead, IDPWP starts with gentle and student-relevant entry points: topics students already care about, digital spaces where students already live in (or willing to live in). IDPWP leverages students' previous experiences, recruits their existing identities, honors their funds of knowledge, and frames all these assets as motivation and a jumping board for social justice learning.

This "interest before social justice" principle can be particularly valuable for lower division compulsory writing courses (e.g., FYC) where students may lack writing interests and motivation. For TPC, this principle can complement service learning: the communities they serve can be a traditional workplace, and/or IDPN that doesn't traditionally fall into the "workplace" sphere. TPC students can bring their professional identities to their leisure digital spaces, and write for community-specific audiences (e.g., Pflugfelder, 2016).

The "fish tank before ocean" approach extends this principle by carefully scaling both issues and contexts. Just as one learns to swim in a controlled environment before venturing into open water, students begin with smaller-scale, local issues within familiar digital spaces before tackling broader social justice concerns. These "fish tank" environments – whether subreddit communities, fan forums, or special interest groups – provide more manageable contexts for

participation. Their relatively contained nature allows for closer guidance, peer support, and collaborative learning while maintaining authentic public engagement. The stakes remain real but less daunting: students can experiment with intervention strategies, receive immediate feedback, and learn from outcomes without risking the overwhelming consequences that might accompany larger-scale activism. This scaffolded approach builds student confidence while developing the fundamental skills needed for more complex social justice work.

2. Learning Sites Infrastructure: Symbiotic Ecology of IDPN and Classrooms. IDPWP orchestrates and establishes a symbiotic relationship between two distinct but complementary learning environments: IDPN and writing classrooms.

IDPNs function as authentic "game playgrounds" for civic engagement and activism, where students can experiment, take risks, and learn through direct experience. Like a game environment, these spaces provide immediate feedback, real consequences, and opportunities for trial and error. Students engage in genuine public discourse, test different intervention strategies, and experience firsthand the complexities of digital activism. The stakes are real but manageable, allowing for meaningful learning through both successes and failures. The classroom, in turn, serves as a meta-space – a "game manual" that helps students understand, analyze, and improve their playground experiences. Through structured reflection, peer discussion, and instructor mentorship, students develop critical awareness of their digital participation. The classroom provides theoretical frameworks for understanding power dynamics, rhetorical strategies for effective intervention, and ethical guidelines for responsible engagement. Hall (2015)'s "ambient audience" (2015) is particularly relevant here, as classroom peers offer crucial support and responses while students navigate their digital activism experiences.

This symbiotic relationship creates a powerful learning infrastructure: the experiential learning in digital networks gains depth through classroom analysis, while classroom discussions remain grounded in authentic public engagement. Each space enhances the other's effectiveness: digital networks provide concrete examples and experiences for classroom analysis, while classroom insights inform more strategic and thoughtful digital participation. This dual infrastructure enables students to develop both practical skills and theoretical understanding of activism and social justice, neither of which would be as effective in isolation.

3. Learning Process: Multiple Identity Development and Empowerment. IDPWP facilitates students' development and navigation of multiple identities throughout their learning process. Through integrated classroom mentorship and IDPN experiences, students first develop as novice ethnographers to recognize and reveal social justice issues, then evolve into local citizens and activists who reject problematic practices and replace them with equitable alternatives – embodying the 4R framework in their learning journey.

This analytical stance requires students to examine community practices, power dynamics, and communication patterns with scholarly rigor. They learn to document observations, apply theoretical frameworks, and engage in critical discourse with peers about their findings. In IDPN, students transition into roles as local citizens and activists, learning to reject problematic practices and replace them with more equitable alternatives. This participant identity demands

practical engagement with real audiences, strategic deployment of rhetorical skills, and careful navigation of community norms.

Students must address at least two distinct audience groups – their classroom peers and their chosen digital community – developing sophisticated rhetorical awareness and adaptability. This dual identity development creates a dynamic learning process where analytical and practical skills mutually reinforce each other. Students' ethnographic insights inform their activist interventions, while their direct experiences enrich classroom analysis. Through this process, students can develop agency not just as writers but as critical participants in digital public life.

4. Assessment & Outcome: Explicit knowledge, Critical Awareness and Reflexivity. IDPWP emphasizes making tacit knowledge explicit through structured assessment and reflection. The model measures learning outcomes through three distinct yet interconnected metrics, each weighted according to instructors' ability to influence and assess them within classroom constraints.

At the highest stakes, individual growth metrics focus on measurable improvements in writing skills and critical awareness. Students demonstrate their ability to articulate rhetorical strategies, document activism techniques, and analyze digital participation patterns with academic rigor. These outcomes align with traditional writing course objectives and can be systematically assessed through analytical writing, research documentation, and critical reflection assignments.

At moderate stakes, social justice understanding metrics occupy a moderate-stakes position, focusing on students' developing ability to identify inequities within their chosen digital networks, propose thoughtful interventions, and articulate the rationale behind their strategic choices. While instructors can support and nurture this development, they must remain sensitive to students' diverse starting points and growth trajectories, acknowledging that students enter the classroom with varying levels of social justice awareness and engagement experience.

Community impact metrics carry the lowest stakes, recognizing that real-world responses to student interventions remain largely beyond classroom control. Rather than mandating specific outcomes, assessment emphasizes documentation of attempt, reflection on process, and analysis of any responses received. This approach encourages bold experimentation while protecting students from grade penalties for factors outside their control. Exceptional community engagement can earn additional recognition, but lack of measurable impact does not detract from course standing.

Through this tiered assessment structure, IDPWP maintains rigorous academic standards while acknowledging the inherent unpredictability of public engagement. The focus remains on developing students' capacity for thoughtful activism rather than requiring specific community outcomes.

5. Safety Nets: Ethics and Risk Mitigation. IDPWP implements comprehensive safety measures to protect students while enabling meaningful digital engagement. Drawing from Sparby's (2017) and Clinnin & Manthey (2019) research on digital aggression and cyberhate, these protocols establish multiple layers of protection without compromising learning objectives.

Identity protection forms the first layer of defense. Students are required to create screen names distinct from their real identities and advised to avoid revealing identifying information in their digital participation. This anonymization strategy allows for authentic engagement while maintaining personal privacy. For TPC students who may need to establish professional presence, additional guidelines help balance visibility with security.

Privacy protection extends to students' existing digital lives. The model offers flexible documentation options that respect students' privacy boundaries: while evidence of digital engagement is required (e.g., screenshots of key interactions), students maintain control over what they share. They may create new accounts to separate classroom activities from personal digital presence and can redact sensitive information from documentation while still demonstrating meaningful participation.

Community respect protocols ensure students' participation and interventions remain ethical. Students must thoroughly research and adhere to community guidelines, understanding their role as legitimate participants rather than outside researchers. The classroom discusses real examples of digital participation consequences, both positive and negative, preparing students to navigate potential challenges.

Peers voluntarily roleplay "ambient audience" (Hall, 2015). When digital communities provide insufficient response – a common challenge in public writing (Lammers & Alstyne, 2019) – classroom peers serve as an intentionally cultivated backup audience. Rather than merely observing, peers actively engage with each other's digital interventions through structured response activities: circulating content within appropriate networks, providing substantive comments, and offering constructive feedback that mirrors authentic public engagement. This peer support system ensures students experience meaningful audience interaction while maintaining genuine public writing contexts.

Clear response protocols prepare students for potential negative interactions. Building on Sparby's framework for understanding digital aggression, students learn to recognize warning signs, document concerns, and follow established procedures for disengaging from hostile situations. Faculty maintain ready access to institutional support resources, ensuring quick response to any safety concerns that arise.

These layered safety measures create a protected space for experimentation while teaching students valuable lessons about digital citizenship and ethical engagement. The protocols acknowledge real risks while empowering students to participate meaningfully in digital public life.

IDPWP in Classrooms: Implementation Showcase

Caveat: My writing project is intended as *a* way, not *the* way of implementing IDPWP.

"Writing Your Passions Into Digital Action" Project Overview & Contexts. This implementation showcase draws from my six years of experience teaching FYC to multilingual students, during which I have systematically explored and optimized pedagogy practices and gradually

introduced activism and social justice as lenses and goals into the classroom (Jin, 2022; Jin, & Almuhanna, 2019). The project usually spans between four and eight weeks, structured around a series of guided explorations and meta-reflective assignments that support students' progressive engagement with IDPN. While this model can be adapted for various digital platforms, I feature Reddit as a particularly accessible entry point for several reasons:

1. Interest inclusivity: As of 2024, Reddit hosts 100,000+ active communities (written as "r/___") covering virtually any topic, making it likely that students can find spaces aligned with their interests. (Note: I have also used Yelp, as a crowd-sources restaurant review platform as IDPN; but the spectrum is mostly confined to food, dining, gourmet and cuisine)
2. Active engagement: With 96 million unique daily active users and existing 16 billion + posts and comments across active communities, students are more likely to receive meaningful responses to their contributions. (Note: I have used Quora, a Q&A platform to share knowledge and get feedback from experts; but Quora only has 27 million unique daily visits, and many students cannot receive sufficient public responses)
3. Content-oriented Circulation: Unlike platforms that prioritize influencer followings, Reddit's relatively democratic upvote system allows even newcomers' quality content to gain visibility (Note: Reddit's threshold of participation can be reached within short period of time, in contrast to the longer time of accumulating required by influencer-oriented platforms like Twitter/X and Instagram)
4. Multimodal flexibility: The platform supports various expression modes (text, images, videos, links), accommodating participants' different communication preferences. (Note: I have used YouTube and Tik Tok, which can be challenging for students walking into classrooms with little experience with multimodal composition despite scaffolding and support; and Pinterest, which features visual and graphic driven modes of participation that shy away students)
5. Manageable learning curve: Basic participation requires minimal technical expertise compared to platforms demanding advanced content creation skills

Learning Objectives

The learning objectives follow a progressive three-phase approach:

Platform & Community Understanding (Newbie Participant Phase)

- Evaluate platform affordances and algorithmic design
- Analyze community-specific genres, discourse conventions, and participation norms
- Apply rhetorical strategies appropriate to digital community contexts

Critical Analysis & Social Justice (Analyst & Ethnographer Phase)

- Identify systemic inequities and power dynamics within digital spaces
- Analyze how platform design and community practices contribute to exclusion and marginalization or inclusion and belonging.

- Articulate connections between local digital practices and broader social justice issues

Strategic Intervention & Reflection (Citizen & Activist Phase)

- Design evidence-based interventions that address identified community issues
- Implement and assess small-scale activist initiatives
- Reflect on experiences through social justice and activism lenses

Phase Explanation: Activities & Assignments

Phase 1: Newbie Participant

Students begin by identifying their personal interests or hobbies, then use these as springboards for exploring relevant communities on Reddit. For instance, a student interested in traveling might start with the broad r/travel community, then navigate to more specialized subreddits like r/solotravel, r/camping, r/travelhacks, or r/JapanTravel. This organic exploration allows students to discover communities that align with their specific interests within broader topic areas.

To support this exploration, I provide on-demand, modulated tutorials covering essential platform literacies through the Learning Management System. These resources explain Reddit's fundamental features, including its navigation system, algorithmic content distribution, karma mechanics, and moderation structure. Rather than frontloading this information through traditional lectures, I encourage students to engage with the platform first, encounter authentic challenges, and then consult these curated resources as needed. This experiential learning approach is further enhanced by peer mentorship within the classroom, where students already familiar with Reddit can share their expertise and demonstrate platform navigation strategies.

The initial participation phase emphasizes observation and peripheral engagement, focusing on two critical literacy components: professional/specialist language acquisition and digital discourse comprehension. Professional language learning is particularly crucial as many specialist terms may appear deceptively familiar but carry context-specific meanings. For example, in tennis communities, the term "let" refers to a specific serving situation where the ball touches the net cord but lands in the correct service box – a meaning radically different from its vernacular usage. Students document their language learning by collecting and explaining ten vocabulary items they encounter during their exploration. For those already well-versed in their chosen community's discourse, the focus shifts to identifying and explaining threshold concepts crucial for newcomers' participation.

Digital discourse comprehension presents unique challenges, particularly for multilingual students who may be proficient in academic English but less familiar with informal language, slang, and digital abbreviations. I recommend resources like Urban Dictionary to help bridge this gap. Throughout this phase, students write explanations targeting their classroom peers who may be unfamiliar with their chosen interest areas, developing their ability to translate specialized knowledge for broader audiences – a key technical writing concept.

This initial phase culminates in students selecting one subreddit community (ideally with more than 100 daily active users) for deeper engagement in subsequent phases. Through critical consumption of community content and peripheral participation activities like voting, students develop the navigation skills and community understanding necessary for more substantive engagement. This foundational phase ensures students can effectively participate in their chosen digital spaces before moving into more complex forms of engagement and intervention.

Phase 2: Analyst & Ethnographer: Recognize & Reveal

This phase comprises three interconnected analytical assignments: genre analysis, power dynamics examination, and issue framing.

The genre analysis assignment begins with students conducting systematic observation of community content to identify recurring patterns and post categories. Students catalog and define these emergent genres, then select and analyze exemplar threads from each category. This analysis requires evidence-based argumentation - students must support their interpretations with concrete evidence from the community discourse. For instance, when a student claims a thread's popularity stems from its humor, they must cite specific comments (such as "LMFAO" or similar responses) and explain how these responses demonstrate audience engagement through humor.

This exercise develops students' ability to articulate the implicit knowledge into explicit. Building on this foundation, students then conduct a critical examination of popular content through a power dynamics lens. This analysis focuses on identifying marginalized or suppressed voices within the community discourse. Students examine which perspectives dominate discussions, which are absent or minimized, and how community infrastructure (such as moderation systems, karma mechanics, or platform affordances) might contribute to these power imbalances. They also identify points of tension, controversy, or conflict within the community as entry points for analyzing competing values and preferences among community members.

The phase culminates in an issue framing assignment where students synthesize their genre and power dynamics analyses to identify and articulate specific issues within their chosen communities. Drawing from their documented observations of community tensions and power dynamics, students construct detailed issue frames that situate community-specific conflicts within broader societal contexts. This framing exercise prepares students for more active forms of engagement and intervention in the final phase of the project.

Throughout this analytical phase, students maintain dual roles as both participants in IDPN and critical analyst in classrooms. They are expected to publish a minimum of three main threads of any topics appropriate in their communities; they are grouped by themes of their topics and closely collaborate with group peers to scaffold and assess their analysis and issue framing. The skills developed in this phase – evidence-based argumentation, critical analysis of power dynamics, and issue framing – provide essential foundations for the civic engagement and activism focus of the final project phase.

Phase 3: Citizen & Activist: Reject & Replace

Students develop and execute concrete intervention plans that address identified community issues through a social justice lens.

We introduce students to civic engagement and digital activism frameworks, particularly emphasizing what we term "fish tank" scale interventions – small-scale, measured actions appropriate for newcomers to digital activism. These modest interventions allow students to experiment with civic participation while maintaining awareness of their positionality as emerging community members. Rather than attempting dramatic community transformations, students focus on achievable, collegial interventions that can create meaningful impact within bounded contexts.

The intervention process follows a structured progression from planning to execution to reflection. Students first develop detailed intervention proposals that outline their goals, target audience, chosen modalities (which may include Reddit threads, social media posts, videos, podcasts, or multimodal compositions), and anticipated challenges. These proposals must demonstrate clear connections between their chosen intervention strategies and their broader civic aims, with particular attention to audience analysis and platform affordances. Proposals are discussed and revised with peers to enhance safety and boost success rate.

During the execution phase, students implement their intervention plans while maintaining careful documentation of both their actions and community responses. This documentation includes preserving screenshots, collecting engagement metrics (such as upvotes, comments, or shares), and tracking both anticipated and unexpected outcomes. The emphasis here is not on achieving viral success or dramatic community transformation, but rather on thoughtful engagement with community response patterns.

The phase concludes with structured reflection that pushes students to analyze their intervention experiences through multiple lenses. Students evaluate the alignment between their intended and actual outcomes, examine how community responses inform their understanding of civic participation, and consider how their perspective on their chosen issue has evolved through direct engagement. This reflection component is crucial for helping students develop a more nuanced understanding of digital activism and community change.

Importantly, we frame potential "failures" - such as low engagement, post removal, or unexpected negative responses - not as setbacks but as valuable learning experiences that deepen understanding of community dynamics and digital civic participation. Through this process, students develop both practical skills in digital intervention and a more sophisticated understanding of the complexities involved in community-based social change.

Conclusion: Reimagining Digital Spaces as Everyday Sites of Civic Engagement

This paper advances our understanding of digital activism pedagogy in two significant ways. First, by theorizing interest-driven public networks (IDPN), I reframe seemingly apolitical digital spaces as vital sites of civic participation. These spaces – where shared passions intersect with strategic interests – offer gentle entryways to digital activism through everyday engagement.

Rather than immediately confronting grand social justice issues, IDPN allow students to develop civic identities through familiar contexts and manageable stakes.

Second, this work bridges technical and professional communication (TPC) with public writing pedagogy (PWP), demonstrating how their complementary approaches can enrich digital activism education. While TPC's explicit social justice frameworks provide systematic tools for analyzing power dynamics, PWP's emphasis on accessible public engagement helps scaffold student participation. The interest-driven public writing pedagogy (IDPWP) model synthesizes these strengths, positioning writing classrooms as meta-spaces where students can critically examine their digital participation while developing practical activism strategies.

Looking ahead, this intersection of TPC and PWP opens promising avenues for future research. Scholars might explore how different student populations navigate IDPN, examine the long-term impact of IDPWP on civic engagement patterns, or investigate how platform algorithms and community dynamics shape activism possibilities. Such work would further illuminate how we can harness everyday digital spaces for meaningful social change while preparing students for increasingly complex forms of civic and digital participation.

By validating mundane digital experiences as legitimate sites of activism, I expand not only the conception of civic engagement but also students' potential to effect change. The future of digital activism may well reside not in dramatic gestures, but in the accumulated impact of thoughtful interventions in spaces where people already live, connect, and care.

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