

The Use of Sri Lankan Poetry in English as a Pedagogical Tool in Enhancing Student Engagement in the Online Teaching of English as a Second Language in the Sri Lankan Tertiary Education Context

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Abstract - It is an undisputed fact that the global COVID-19 pandemic has ruptured the traditional modes of teaching and learning providing an opportunity for educators globally to embrace online platforms. The challenges of TESL have exemplified with this transition online, for, it was necessitated with limited time, with preparation demanded for by both the facilitator and the student almost instantaneously. In this context, ‘student engagement’ in the ‘Online Platform’ may pose a problem. This preliminary study analyses the manner in which ‘Sri Lankan Poetry in English’ may be employed as a pedagogical tool to enhance student engagement in ESL Online platforms specifically at a tertiary level in Sri Lanka. The study employed a methodological framework of a questionnaire (online) administered to select TESL practitioners at a Tertiary level specifically in relation to TESL in the Online setting and the employing of Sri Lankan Poetry in English in the pedagogical framework(s). The study therein attempts at identifying if a/the relatability to Sri Lankan Poetry in English by virtue of a familiar local context the said poetry in the course(s) espouse, may enhance student engagement in the Online ESL platform from the practitioners’ perspective. The study further simultaneously analyses the usage of Sri Lankan Poetry in English in select ESL (tertiary) curricula administered Online, with a focus on pedagogical choice, therein, ascertaining if the manner in which select material employed in the Online teaching of ESL in the Sri Lankan (tertiary) context enhances student engagement Online therein.

Keywords: Sri Lankan Poetry in English, English as a Second Language, Online Tertiary ESL Education