Using Literary Texts in Undergraduate ESL Classroom in a Blended Learning Environment

Nimna Edirisinghe

Sri Lanka Institute of Advanced Technological Education

<njedirisinghe@sliate.ac.lk>

Abstract – In view of the symbiotic relationship between language and literature, this study aims to appraise the implications of setting up a virtual literary circle to improve the language skills of the ESL learners at tertiary level. As a pilot project, a case comparison was conducted with a sample group of 10 undergraduates who participated in an online discussion forum with a guided reading list on a variety of literary texts. A commercially available learning management system was used to facilitate student interaction and record progress. A questionnaire was administered to determine the participants' responses. It was revealed that the majority of the participants positively perceived the use of literary texts in a virtual environment due to ease and convenience of access and ability to interact with their colleagues. The participants stated that the particular tasks had helped them to expand their vocabulary and use certain words and expressions with confidence. The post reading activities revealed an overall improvement in creative writing and critical reading skills. Thus, it was concluded as a highly progressive step to initiate a literary discussion forum in a blended classroom to enhance language skills of the undergraduate students.

Keywords: Literary texts, English as a Second Language, Blended learning

Department of English Language Teaching
Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities
Rajarata University 0f Sri Lanka

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