

Integrating Padlet as a Writing Strategy during COVID-19 Pandemic: A Study Conducted at the Undergraduate Level

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Abstract – COVID-19 pandemic has an impact on various fields including higher education in Sri Lanka. The temporary closure of higher educational institutes during the COVID-19 pandemic has transformed the education system in favor of virtual learning. However, virtual learning has its pros and cons. Not having enough interaction with lecturers and peers has become one of the major challenges of online education. An online application namely Padlet has been introduced to 100 first-year undergraduates of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities to develop their writing skills and provide feedback during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study aimed at identifying the effect of Padlet on the writing performance of these undergraduates. After utilizing the app for four weeks during online lectures, data for this study were collected utilizing a mixed-method approach which includes a survey questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The quantitative data gathered from the questionnaire were analyzed using SPSS whereas qualitative data from the interviews were analyzed thematically. The results of this study showed that the majority of the students agreed that the usage of Padlet assisted them to improve their writing skills. Among the benefits of utilizing Padlet, its reliability as a mind mapping tool and user-friendly interface was highlighted. Moreover, the participants accepted that it provided them the opportunity for peer learning and self-assessment. However, the respondents find that the limited access to devices and internet connection can prove to be a challenge in implementing Padlet. Overall, Padlet has been accepted as a better writing strategy. The data obtained from this research are of relevance to researchers, instructors, and policymakers since this may inform teaching practices in higher education classrooms within the Sri Lankan context.

Keywords: Padlet, Writing strategy, Virtual learning