

Not, “Just an Admin!”: Exploring the Renewed Administrative Considerations, Expectations, and Responsibilities of Teaching English During a Global Pandemic

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Abstract - When the Sri Lankan Universities moved their courses to online space in April 2020 in response to the COVID-19 Global Pandemic, it was left to the academics to strike a balance between those who blindly jumped on the online bandwagon citing the ‘efficiency rhetoric’ and the market logic of ‘targets’ and ‘deliverables’ and those who refused to teach online at all highlighting the ethical deliberations required of such a move in an inequitable space like Sri Lanka. As such, this paper is an attempt to explore the renewed administrative considerations, expectations, and responsibilities of the coordinators of English Language Teaching (ELT) courses, who bridge the gap between the needs of the actual classroom and the demands of the faculty vis-a-vis the State University System, as ELT courses were converted from face-to-face to online spaces overnight. This is a qualitative study where primary data was obtained via structured interviews and informal conversations with the coordinators and the teachers of the ELT courses of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Peradeniya. The findings illustrate that the renewed considerations expectations and responsibilities include but are not limited to (1) maintaining a quality curriculum, (2) meeting course goals and objectives, (3) introducing new pedagogic practices and assessment methods capable of preserving academic integrity within the online space, and (4) addressing non-traditional teacher/student needs, all the while finding ways to (5) minimise injustices, (6) maximise equity and accessibility, and (7) preserve the spirit and the values of free education in the online teaching space.

Keywords: Online Education, English Language Teaching, Course Administration