

FED-CLLE Seminar: “Writing Assessment in the Age of AI: Challenges and Opportunities for Research, Practice, and Dissemination”

Date: 30 October 2025 (Thursday)

Time: 14:00-13:30

Venue: E33-2036, Faculty of Education

Language: English

Registration: <https://go.um.edu.mo/d1ry6igy> or



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Speaker:

Prof. Xun YAN is a professor of Linguistics, Second Language Acquisition and Teacher Education, and Educational Psychology at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He is a faculty member in the Beckman Institute for Advanced Science and Technology. He received his PhD degree in second language studies from Purdue University and is a language tester by training. At UIUC, Prof. Yan is the director of the undergraduate program in Linguistics + TESOL and the supervisor of the English Placement Test and the Oral English Assessment Interview. His research interests include speaking and writing assessment, psycholinguistic and computational approaches to language testing, and language assessment literacy. His work has been published in journals including *Applied Linguistics*, *Assessing Writing*, *Foreign Language Annals*, *International Journal of Bilingualism*, *Journal of Second Language Writing*, *Language Assessment Quarterly*, *Language Learning*, *Language Testing*, *System*, *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, and *TESOL Quarterly*. He is a co-editor for *Language Testing*. Prof. Yan was the recipient of the ETS TOEFL Essentials New Scholar award in 2022 and the ILTA/Sage Best Book Award in 2024. At UIUC, he also received the LAS Alumni Distinguished Professorial Scholar Award in 2024, the Conrad Humanities Mid-Career Scholar Award in 2022, and the Lincoln Early-Career (LEAP) Scholar Award in 2018.

Abstract:

In writing assessment, large-scale testing organizations are increasingly investing in proprietary AI systems to reshape high-stakes tests, while teachers and programs in local contexts are leveraging off-the-shelf generative AI tools for grading and feedback to support learning. However, the impact of AI on writing assessment across different contexts remains underexplored. This talk examines both the challenges and opportunities that AI introduces to writing assessment at different scales. Key challenges include fairness, validity, test security, feasibility, and the ethical management of AI use. At the same time, local assessments may be especially well positioned to innovate—by aligning evaluation with curricular goals, experimenting with authentic and multimodal tasks, adopting flexible AI-assisted scoring approaches, and foregrounding local values of transparency and accessibility. Rather than prescribing uniform solutions, the talk invites reflection on how local contexts can chart distinct futures for writing assessment—and how context-sensitive, research-informed AI applications can foster responsible and sustainable assessment ecosystems. The discussion will also consider implications for scholarly dissemination: how evolving publication practices can document, critique, and shape AI-driven change in writing assessment research and practice.