Integrating CALL and Computer Assessment with Teacher Instruction in College ESL Writing: Its Efficiency and Effectiveness

Dr. Sandra Siok Lee (CSU, Fresno)

Date/time of talk: January 24, 11:30am-1:00p.m.
Location: RCB 6152

Abstract:
Current literature on writing instruction supports computer assisted language learning (CALL) and computer assessment as more beneficial for students than traditional instruction. On the other hand, bias in research methodology has been increasingly recognized, emphasizing the need to investigate the learning process involved in using CALL and computer assessment of writing.

This study examined the effects of traditional writing instruction integrated with CALL and computer assessment. Fourteen university students in a preparatory academic writing class received direct instruction in composition and submitted two drafts of each of the five compositions to the Criterion assessment program. The students were required to improve on the second draft, using the computer feedback on the first draft. The instructor also provided feedback on the second draft after which students wrote the third draft. Three analyses were performed on the fourth composition of the semester in order to determine the following:

i. a student’s learning process, based on a case study of her uptake on Criterion and instructor feedback;
ii. the accuracy of Criterion feedback on grammar, style, mechanics, and idea development, based on a sampling of the whole class data; and
iii. student perception of the integrated course, based on a class survey.

Several factors are proposed for the minimal learning effects revealed in the case study. Online assessment was found to be inaccurate and ambiguous in grammar and mechanics feedback and lacked information on content suitability and idea development. Participants showed preference for instructor feedback, despite generally positive perceptions of the integrated course. Appropriate timing of instructor intervention between drafts and improvement of software are recommended.