The CHICAGO LANGUAGE SYMPOSIUM invites you to two talks by Professor Erwin Tschirner of the University of Leipzig on the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

Dr. Tschirner is an ACTFL tester and trainer, and a noted textbook author. He is one of the very few individuals engaged in meaningful empirical work on both sets of criteria, while also applying them in his day-to-day work.

There are many similarities between the ACTFL framework and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) because of their common base: the Inter-Agency Language Roundtable (ILR) Scale used by the US government. The differences derive both from the different purposes and historical developments of both frameworks. Whereas the ACTFL framework started as a blueprint for the development of assessment instruments, most notably the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI), the CEFR started as a framework for teaching and learning foreign languages for adults traveling to or moving to other countries within Europe, with a clear focus on the communicative and task-based approaches current at the time.

This presentation will first trace the histories of both frameworks explaining their similarities and differences. It will then summarize the results of studies trying to establish correspondences between both frameworks, and finally, it will look at recent developments that may be of use to US language educators interested in working with both frameworks.

Valid assessments have positive consequences for all stakeholders. They provide feedback for students, instructors, and departments, and help align goals and curricula. For language assessments to be useful, they need to be task-based and theory-based; i.e., they need to be based on a clear understanding of what students need to be able to do at what level of ability. The latter requires an understanding of how language abilities develop over time. The presentation will start with a current model of task-based language assessment called Evidence-Centered Design (Mislevy et al., 2002), and will show how it may help to differentiate between useful and not so useful foreign language assessments. A presentation of a large-scale benchmarking study to gauge speaking, listening, and reading levels of college students will follow to provide a basis for setting achievable proficiency goals. Finally, implications of these findings for curricular renewal will be discussed, outlining how assessments may be used to measure the results of renewal processes and provide ongoing quality control for achieving proficiency goals.

LANGUAGE SYMPOSIUM COMPANION PRESENTATION

ACTFL and the CEFR: Where Shall the Twain Meet?
Friday, April 21, 2017, 3:00-5:00 PM
McCormick Foundation Center 3127

LANGUAGE SYMPOSIUM KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

Positive Consequences: Using Assessments to Align Goals and Curricula
Saturday, April 22, 2017, 9:30-10:30 AM
Harris Hall 107