

Conference on Teaching Economics in the 21. Century in Berlin

Where will be an important conference from 26.-28. November in Berlin on the need to reform economics education and on ways to do this. The meeting will be held partly in English, partly in German at the Berlin School of Economics and Law (HWR)

[Joint Conference „Teaching Economics in the 21st century“](#)

November 26-28, Berlin School of Economics and Law

The joint conference discusses the state of research and teaching in economics and the way forward. The focus of the conference is on pluralism of theories, methods, disciplines and teaching methods.

Robert Skidelsky of Jesus College, **Sheila Dow** of the University of Stirling and **Silja Graupe** (Cusanus Hochschule) will deliver keynote speeches. The conference will include a panel discussion with **Peter Bofinger** (University of Würzburg) Ulrich Klüh (Sparkassen Finanzgruppe Hessen-Thüringen) and Hans-Jörg Herr (Berlin School of Economics and Law) on the status quo of teaching and textbooks at German-language universities.

Critics contend that economic research and teaching and economic policy advice are dominated by a neoclassical paradigm to the exclusion of competing approaches, despite the sobering experience of the financial crisis. Those who defend the neoclassical mainstream tend to cite more complex and advanced models in order to prove that the mainstream-models are not as biased and unrealistic as critics contend. However, the relevance of these models is questionable, as long as they do not find their way into undergraduate textbooks and curricula for students of economics. After all, most students who are exposed to economics teaching leave university with undergraduate textbook knowledge and the restricted toolbox and hidden ideological bias contained in these textbooks. Where economics is taught at high school level, it is often a similarly biased and restricted body of knowledge, which is presented as “economics”. Therefore, the abovementioned associations are organizing a joint conference to analyse and to help modernize the prevailing textbook content. We want to stimulate a productive dialog between authors and publishers of textbooks and teaching materials, researchers, teachers and students.

The focus will be on the following topics

Pluralism of Theories

How many theories should a textbook present, and which theories should be chosen? How much focus should there be on the genesis of these theories? How much weight should be given to history of economic thought, economic history and the philosophy of science? How should a pluralistic textbook be organized?

Pluralism of Methods

Should model-based reasoning be presented as the gold standard of economics? Which qualitative methods could help improve our understanding of the (globalized) economy? How can qualitative methods be combined with quantitative ones in a fruitful way to analyze economic issues? Which models could be taught outside the equilibrium paradigm?

Pluralism of Disciplines

How interdisciplinary can or should a textbook be? How can the academic isolation of economics be overcome that has developed over many decades? Which roles should knowledge from other fields like sociology, law, political science, social and cultural anthropology, physics, biology, and philosophy play in teaching economics?

Pluralism of Teaching Methods

Why do textbooks play such a dominant role? Should they? What are their goals and what are their limitations? Does the dominant role of some particular textbooks pose a problem? If it does, what should be done? How should alternative textbooks be structured and written? Which teaching materials are being used at school and in other non-academic contexts? How do these need to change?

Arbeitskreis Politische Ökonomie (AK PolÖk), World Economics Association (WEA), Netzwerk Plurale Ökonomik, European Association for Evolutionary Political Economy (EAEPE), Institute for International Political Economy (IPE), Forschungsstelle für wissenschaftsbasierte gesellschaftliche Weiterentwicklung (FWGW), Forschungsnetzwerk Makroökonomie und Makropolitik (FMM), Vereinigung für Ökologische Ökonomie (VÖÖ).