



## Conference on "Modeling and Measurement of Competencies in Higher Education"

February 24./25. 2011, Maritim proArte Hotel Berlin

Dear Colleagues,

We would like to welcome you to the website of our international conference on "Modeling and Measurement of Competencies in Higher Education". This conference, which is the first of its kind, focuses on a field of research which has been rather widely neglected by educational research. Although the topic of assessment of competencies is very central in the school area, it has been neglected in the area of higher education, with a few exceptions.

This deficit can surely be traced back to the exceedingly complex structure and genesis of the academically imparted competencies of undergraduates and PhD students, due to the variety of study programs, study structures and teaching performances. Another challenge is posed by the search for an adequate and appropriate criterion (e.g. prospective job requirements) which can be used to measure the acquisition of competencies. Occupational fields of application and the requirements of academics are subject to constant change.

The existing national and international approaches to higher education research, e.g. in the form of the IEA study "Teacher Education and Development: Learning to Teach Mathematics" (TEDS-M) or the OECD feasibility study "Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes" (AHELO), provide information how challenges such as the above-mentioned examples can be dealt with. It is essential to bring together experts from various disciplines and research fields and to adjust our research perspectives across borders and locations.

The conference offers an ideal platform to exchange research experiences and perspectives on the interdisciplinary and international discourse. Thus it should also provide an essential impulse for the new funding initiative in preparation by the German Federal Ministry for Education and Research on "Modeling and Measurement of Competencies in Higher Education". The conference's leading question is:

***"(How) Can generic and domain-specific competencies be measured empirically within the higher education sector?"***

We are extremely pleased that we have been able to attract experts from America, Australia and Europe to participate in a comprehensive and multi-perspective discussion of this question. They will offer interesting insights into current leading research projects and identify the state of research, as well as developments in competence-oriented higher education research in the form of presentations, which will then be followed by short discussion rounds.

A highlight of the conference is the three-hour Town Hall Meeting where the different research positions will be summarized. The audience will have the chance to discuss and share their perspectives. Here the internationally renowned representatives of different methodical approaches to higher education and competence research are brought together with their colleagues, as well as the competent audience.

The conference will be opened by the President of the Humboldt University Berlin Professor Dr. Jan-Hendrik Olbertz who is a renowned expert on issues relating to higher education research. Next to the scientific discourse the program also includes a festive dinner at the Maritim Hotel as well as a supporting program which focuses on Berlin as a historically significant place. Furthermore, it offers opportunities for an informal exchange between the invited speakers and the conference participants. We would particularly like to thank the members of the scientific advisory board who have assisted us in the planning and organization of the conference with their expertise in the domain of modeling and measurement of competencies.

The scientific advisory board has also helped to prepare the funding initiative of the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research and is going to fulfill its important advisory and supporting role in the context of the initiative in the future. We also want to thank the board for this important task.

From both the conference and the subsequent funding initiative of the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, we anticipate significant contributions to the stabilization of empirical higher education research in Germany. We look forward to welcoming you in this context to our capital Berlin.

Yours sincerely,

Prof. Dr. Sigrid Blömeke Prof. Dr. Olga Zlatkin-Troitschanskaia