

Schmohl, Tobias; Jansen-Schulz, Bettina  
**Joining institutional policy with the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.  
Higher educational context and implementation strategies at the Universities  
of Lübeck and Hamburg**

*Jansen-Schulz, Bettina [Hrsg.]; Tantau, Till [Hrsg.]: Excellent teaching. Principles, structures and requirements. Bielefeld : wbv Media 2018, S. 91-98. - (Blickpunkt Hochschuldidaktik; 133)*



Quellenangabe/ Reference:

Schmohl, Tobias; Jansen-Schulz, Bettina: Joining institutional policy with the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. Higher educational context and implementation strategies at the Universities of Lübeck and Hamburg - In: Jansen-Schulz, Bettina [Hrsg.]; Tantau, Till [Hrsg.]: Excellent teaching. Principles, structures and requirements. Bielefeld : wbv Media 2018, S. 91-98 - URN: urn:nbn:de:0111-pedocs-279545 - DOI: 10.25656/01:27954

<https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0111-pedocs-279545>

<https://doi.org/10.25656/01:27954>

**Nutzungsbedingungen**

Dieses Dokument steht unter folgender Creative Commons-Lizenz: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/deed.de> - Sie dürfen das Werk bzw. den Inhalt vervielfältigen, verbreiten und öffentlich zugänglich machen sowie Abwandlungen und Bearbeitungen des Werkes bzw. Inhaltes anfertigen, solange Sie den Namen des Autors/Rechteinhabers in der von ihm festgelegten Weise nennen und das Werk bzw. den Inhalt nicht für kommerzielle Zwecke verwenden. Mit der Verwendung dieses Dokuments erkennen Sie die Nutzungsbedingungen an.

**Terms of use**

This document is published under following Creative Commons-Licence: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/deed.en> - You may copy, distribute and render this document accessible, make adaptations of this work or its contents accessible to the public as long as you attribute the work in the manner specified by the author or licensor. You are not allowed to make commercial use of the work, provided that the work or its contents are not used for commercial purposes.

By using this particular document, you accept the above-stated conditions of use.

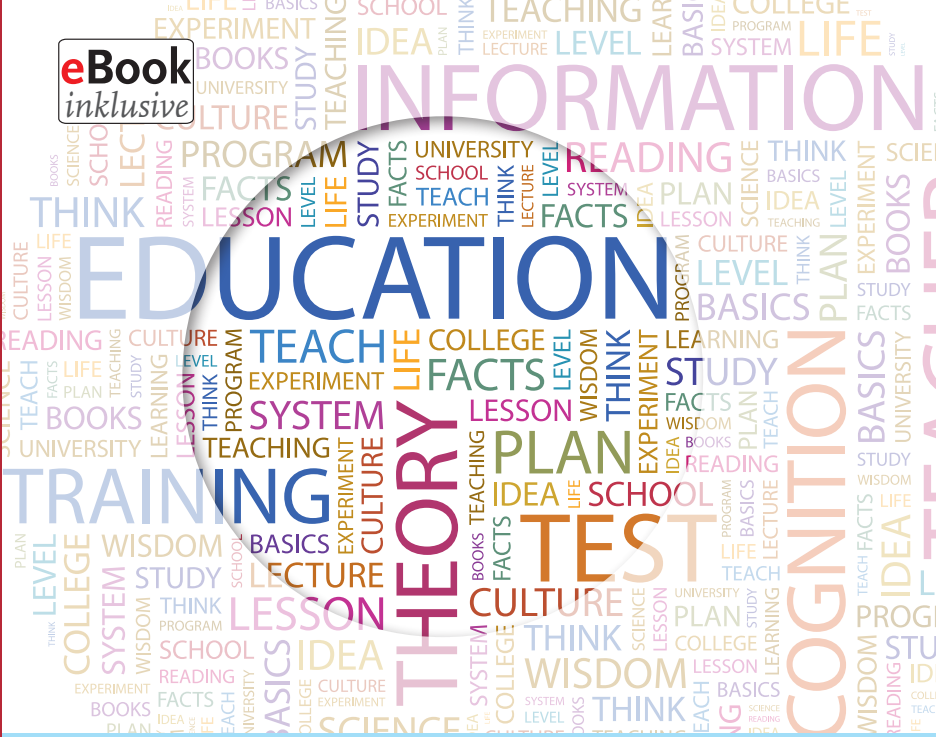


**Kontakt / Contact:**

peDOCS  
DIPF | Leibniz-Institut für Bildungsforschung und Bildungsinformation  
Informationszentrum (IZ) Bildung  
E-Mail: [pedocs@dipf.de](mailto:pedocs@dipf.de)  
Internet: [www.pedocs.de](http://www.pedocs.de)

Mitglied der

  
Leibniz-Gemeinschaft



# Excellent Teaching

## Principles, Structures and Requirements



# Joining Institutional Policy with the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

## *Higher Educational Context and Implementation Strategies at the Universities of Lübeck and Hamburg*

TOBIAS SCHMOHL & BETTINA JANSEN-SCHULZ

### **Abstract**

This article pursues two goals: Firstly, we outline the current discourse around the term *Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* (SoTL) in Germany; secondly, we try to explain its conceptual development by exemplifying its institutional implementation. After reviewing the use of the concept in some of the latest research contributions on SoTL, we take a closer look at two examples: The University of Lübeck and the University of Hamburg have established SoTL programmes that enrich core parts of their respective strategies on professional development in higher education. Of course, other institutions have recently begun implementing SoTL strategies and could also serve as examples.<sup>1</sup> The two cases we present here both show ways of implementing SoTL at a university's strategic level which may encourage other institutions to consider the concept as a key term of their graduate education activities and show decision makers in the higher educational sector how they could engage in linking their institutional activities and pedagogical research at the university level. The model we introduce, and best practice examples provide models that could be adapted at other higher education institutions.

---

<sup>1</sup> For instance, at Paderborn University, there have been recent efforts to bring SoTL forward at an institutional level (see Kordts-Freudinger, Braukmann & Schulte, 2018). In 2017 and 2018, colleagues from this university founded a network of twelve universities that started with SoTL.

## Contents

1	Current Situation and Recent State of Debate: the SoTL Concept in Germany . . . . .	92
2	SoTL at the University of Lübeck . . . . .	93
3	SoTL at the University of Hamburg . . . . .	94
4	Conclusion . . . . .	96

## 1 Current Situation and Recent State of Debate: the SoTL Concept in Germany

In the broad field of tertiary education, the term *Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* (SoTL) has been discussed over the last three decades in an international context (for a conceptual overview see Schmohl, 2017b). In Germany, the number of publications dealing with SoTL has risen since Ludwig Huber first introduced the concept into discourses on higher education in Germany (Huber, 2011a, 2011b). From that point on, the concept has had quite an impact on university education in Germany. Among others, the German Society for Academic Development (*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Hochschuldidaktik*, abbreviated as dghd in the following) (e. g., Huber et. al., 2014), Reinmann (e. g., 2017), Brahm (e. g., 2016) or Kreber (e. g., 2014) contributed to the further development of the concept and to bridging recent research in tertiary education with SoTL.

The idea behind the SoTL concept is to regard *teaching* as a scholarly activity like research and research-related activities such as applying for funding or publication activity (Boyer, 1990, p. 15). Instead of looking at teaching as something like an add-on to academic work, followers of the SoTL movement view it as part of how they conceptualise their professional identities.

Being a *research methodology*, SoTL can be conducted in two ways:

- as a special form of interdisciplinary inquiry,
- as inquiry in a more generic and discipline-specific manner.

Either way, SoTL entails one specific problem that teachers and facilitators need to address: The conflicting notions of what the term *inquiry* means. Only some of them are compatible with the common rationale of social and/or educational science research.

At the institutional level, there are more and more academic centres, departments and chairs following the movement by including its dictum in their mission statements and key strategies. However, across the different contexts in which the SoTL concept is used, there is little convergence when it comes to spelling out what *scholarship* actually means and how it is linked to the activity of teaching and learning. This situation is described in more detail and further specified by Schmohl (this volume).

Following Huber (2014, p. 35) what is needed most today in Germany's discussion on SoTL is a new set of research-related questions and research-based engagement within the community. With this publication, we follow this discussion and try to address questions of SoTL systematically.

We would like to outline here exemplary ways in which the concept has been implemented at the top level of two German universities. In both cases, the concept has been supported by the universities' presidential boards and plays a key role in institution's strategies for higher education.

## 2 SoTL at the University of Lübeck

The *University of Lübeck* started to implement SoTL institutionally in 2014 as part of its postgraduate education portfolio. Here, the term SoTL refers to an individual research and development project, while SoTL in a broader sense (referring to the attitude of scholars towards their own teaching) is part of the university's certification programme. This programme encompasses more than 50 courses each year and defines three stages of certification: Participants can get a certified diploma after accomplishing courses following a combinatory system. The most substantial certificate one can acquire has a work load of 224 time units (of 45 minutes) and has been accredited by the dghd. Scholars interested in obtaining this certificate have the choice between either registering for courses in six areas of competencies – or following the university's model of SoTL inquiry. For the latter, they have to systematically conduct the following five steps, each of which includes a critical examination by a supervisor:

1. Course planning focused on one's field of teaching as an object of inquiry.
2. Coaching for course planning.
3. Teaching the planned course (including critical observation and a consultation session).
4. Research project on higher education (including publication).
5. Supplementary courses from the certificate portfolio.

On an annual basis, the university offers an introductory course on SoTL, as well as an open colloquium on a quarterly basis where teachers share their ideas and experiences and get input on research methods, ethical standards, etc. Following the University of Lübeck's mission statement and the principle of educational openness, there is no determined period within which the SoTL qualification must be completed. In 2017, the group consisted of 12 participants from different disciplinary backgrounds, all of which are part of the medical and technical faculties of the university. Two of them contributed to all this volume by publishing their research design (Maria Noftz) or first results of their inquiry (Amir Madany). Additionally, the article by Tim Kunold and Till Tantau (this volume), which is based on a doctoral dissertation, is also related to SoTL.

Coaching, classroom observations by peers, the SoTL introductory course and the educational instruction of the SoTL group are the responsibilities of the university's Lecturers' Service Centre. This centre strives to foster learning and personal development throughout the whole SoTL process of each participant. It imparts the craft of educational research and offers consultation during the development of SoTL-related publications and on the structural integration of training research methodology (e. g., Huber, 2014, p. 22).

Due to the participants' backgrounds in natural sciences, the definition of a research question as well as the selection of a suitable (qualitative) research methodology have often proven to pose a challenge that needs to be met with critical reflection – derived from one's disciplinary background. We offer the participants lessons on (qualitative) research methodology. Due to the research tradition in a medical university we decided that the SoTL participants should also write a short ethics research proposal that is submitted to the university's ethics commission.

Both, the professional development certificate and the SoTL studies, have become relevant for internal career paths at the University of Lübeck since 2016 (Universität zu Lübeck, 2017, pp. 8 f.). This coupling of SoTL inquiry with an academic career path is a unique feature that distinguishes the University of Lübeck from other German universities (Jansen-Schulz, 2016).

### **3 SoTL at the University of Hamburg**

The Hamburg Centre for University Teaching and Learning (HUL) is a higher educational research, teaching and consulting institution at the University of Hamburg that draws on a long-standing history of research on university teaching and learning and its mediation. The goal is to interlink theory, empirical re-

search and practice in this area. At the HUL, SoTL is at the heart of the university teaching agenda and takes the role of a guiding principle intertwined with most of the higher educational research, teaching and counselling activities at the university level. It is complemented by the University of Hamburg's general vision of teaching and learning (Universität Hamburg, 2017) and by a mission statement of developing the university as a place for lifelong learning and towards a sustainable future (Bassen et al., 2016).

The HUL's initiatives include a post-graduate master's degree programme *Higher Education*, as well as a workshop and certification programme *Good Teaching Practice*. The centre's overall goal is to facilitate *Bildung durch Wissenschaft* (self-education through research) in reference to a Neo-Humanistic phrase by Wilhelm von Humboldt, which is set into context with current issues of educational technology and digitalization, media studies, curriculum design, social psychology, pedagogy, educational philosophy, etc. The hands-on development and continuous improvement of teaching and learning at the university level combines with the centre's research activities.

Focusing on the master's programme, SoTL is explicitly set as the educational objective pursued by its students who usually have at least a first master's degree and gained experience in teaching in tertiary education. A pilot cohort started in October 2016, the first regular cohort just began their studies in October 2017, a second one followed in April 2018. Admissions for the programme from now on continue to take place on a half-year basis (each semester). Applications from the first three rounds have shown a high number of aspirants (between 20 and 25 applications each term). The disciplinary backgrounds are very diverse: Some of the participants work as professors in their fields of expertise, some are researchers at the postdoctoral level or Ph.D. candidates and a handful of them work inside a discipline's third space (for example as study programme coordinators with teaching obligations).

Being disciplinary experts already, these students therefore strive to gain another master's degree or a Ph.D. in the field of Higher Education. They do so by following a research-based curriculum that explicitly goes along the lines of a SoTL agenda (see Reinmann & Schmohl, 2018; Schmohl, 2017a, 2017b, this volume). In particular, they conduct an individual research project (valued with 20 of a total of 60 ECTS credit points) focusing on teaching and learning issues in their own teachings for at least three semesters. Courses on educational research methodology, as well as an introduction to recent research on university teaching and learning complement this module. Students familiarise themselves with the concept of scholarship, they engage in the recent discourse on

SoTL – and also on what is called the *Scholarship of Academic Development* (SoAD, see Schmohl, 2017b). Apart from this, participants acquire basic knowledge in the fields of learning studies (focus on *psychology of learning*), second order research (focus on *philosophy of science*), university studies (focus on *social sciences*) and media studies (focus on *educational technology*).

By taking these disciplinary perspectives and by taking up the ‘SoTL attitude’ towards university teaching and learning, students learn how to deal with educational issues in their own disciplinary teachings from a research-based perspective. During their whole SoTL development, an educational research mentor guides them through their specific research processes.

## 4 Conclusion

Both cases we presented here can be seen as testimonies that it is possible to put SoTL into practice within the German higher education sector – even at a university’s institutional level. Experience made in both cases show that, in Germany, researchers across the disciplines have a high level of readiness and even commitment to reflect upon their own teaching by means of disciplinary research methodologies. Yet the strategies of implementation, as well as the outreach of the measures differ: At the University of Lübeck, SoTL is part of a post-graduate certificate programme that builds upon individual research and development projects. At the University of Hamburg, SoTL is a key factor in the development of a community of disciplinarians interested in reflective approaches towards their own teachings who work on a master’s degree or Ph.D. in *Higher Education*. Both SoTL activities have rooted at a higher educational centre that is directly linked with the university’s presidential board and associated with their universities’ teaching and learning strategies.

Based on our experiences, we are convinced that systematic guidance for the disciplinarians who start posing educational questions concerning issues of their own teachings is imperative. In both cases, for the scholars who engage in a SoTL development process, their way towards SoTL can be tricky – and consequently, the personal dedication of the educators or SoTL trainers involved is a *conditio sine qua non* for the success of the whole endeavour.

Besides its technical components, SoTL is first and foremost a notion where a community of scholars start to reflect upon their own teaching. This community does not emerge without hard work to build it. It takes efforts addressing the individual level (such as training of the participants’ attitudes to-



wards their disciplinary teachings) and it takes efforts at a cultural level (based upon opportunities for exchange of ideas, the striving for interdisciplinary translation, educational counselling, etc.). It requires an infrastructure and the institution's willingness to embrace non-instructional mindsets and ideas when focusing on teaching and learning issues. In sum, those are anything but trivial prerequisites. But if you manage to get a SoTL project up and running at a university level, it will not only advance the teaching in the disciplines involved, but the institution as a whole.

## References

- Bassen, A., Brüggemann, M., Frost, J., Held, H., Horstmann, A., Schmitt, C., & Schramme, T. (2016). *Nachhaltigkeit: Leitidee der Universität Hamburg. Positionspapier*. Retrieved from [https://www.nachhaltige.uni-hamburg.de/downloads/1\\_7-positions-papiere/knu-shortpaper-2016-1.pdf](https://www.nachhaltige.uni-hamburg.de/downloads/1_7-positions-papiere/knu-shortpaper-2016-1.pdf)
- Brahm, T. (2016). Lehrbezogenes Faculty Development an der Universität St. Gallen – Konzeption und Reflexion. In T. Brahm, T. Jenert, & D. Euler (Eds.), *Pädagogische Hochschulentwicklung: Von der Programmatik zur Implementierung* (pp. 69–82). Wiesbaden: Springer.
- Huber, L. (2011a). Forschen über (eigenes) Lehren und studentisches Lernen – Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL): Ein Thema auch hierzulande? *Das Hochschulwesen*, 59(4), 118–124.
- Huber, L. (2011b). Scholarship of Teaching and Learning – Forschung zum (eigenen) Lehren. In B. Berendt, B. Szczyrba, H.-P. Voss, & J. Wildt (Eds.), *Neues Handbuch Hochschullehre. Lehren und Lernen effizient gestalten* (J 1.11, pp. 1–20). Stuttgart: Raabe.
- Huber, L. (2014). Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. Konzept, Geschichte, Formen, Entwicklungsaufgaben. In L. Huber, A. Pilniok, R. Sethe, B. Szczyrba, & M. P. Vogel (Eds.), *Forschendes Lehren im eigenen Fach. Scholarship of teaching and learning in Beispielen* (Blickpunkt Hochschuldidaktik 125, pp. 19–36). Bielefeld: wbv.
- Jansen-Schulz, B. (2016). Karriere durch Lehre (möglich). Hochschuldidaktik als karriereorientierte Personalentwicklung. *die hochschullehre*, 2, 1–18. Retrieved from [http://www.hochschullehre.org/wp-content/files/diehochschullehre\\_2016\\_jansen-schulz.pdf](http://www.hochschullehre.org/wp-content/files/diehochschullehre_2016_jansen-schulz.pdf)
- Kordts-Freudinger, R., Braukmann, J., & Schulte, R. (2018). Scholarship of Teaching and Learning – individuell-evidenzbasiertes Lehren. In N. Schaper & B.

- Szczyrba (Eds.), *Forschungsformate zur evidenzbasierten Fundierung hochschuldidaktischen Handelns*. Köln: Cologne Open Science.
- Kreber, C. (2003). The scholarship of teaching: A comparison of conceptions held by experts and regular academic staff. *Higher Education*, 46(1), 93–121.
- Kreber, C. (2014). Reviving the ancient virtues in the scholarship of teaching, with a slight critical twist. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 34(3), 568–580.
- Reinmann, G. (2017). Überlegungen zu einem spezifischen Erkenntnisrahmen für die Hochschuldidaktik. *Impact Free*, 7, 1–6.
- Reinmann, G. & Schmohl, T. (2018). Der Master of Higher Education. Studiengangsentwicklung als zyklisch-iterativer Prozess. In M. Weil (Ed.), *Zukunftslabor Lehrentwicklung. Perspektiven auf Hochschuldidaktik und darüber hinaus* (pp. 161–181). Münster: Waxmann.
- Schmohl, T. (2017a). Science Studies: An integral part of a research-based master's degree curriculum. *New Perspectives in Science Education*, 6, 52–56.
- Schmohl, T. (2017b). The research—education nexus: Basic premises and practical application of the “Scholarship” movement. *The Future of Education*, 7, 317–321.
- Universität Hamburg. (2017). *Leitbild universitärer Lehre der Universität Hamburg: Beschlossen durch den Akademischen Senat auf seiner 719. Sitzung am 10.07.2014*. Retrieved from <https://www.uni-hamburg.de/uhh/profil/leitbild/lehre.html>
- Universität zu Lübeck. (2017). *Karrierewege Lübeck: Verhaltenskodex für gute Beschäftigungsbedingungen an der Universität zu Lübeck*. Retrieved from [https://www.uniluebeck.de/fileadmin/uzl\\_presse/Nachrichtenbilder/Verhaltenskodex\\_fuer\\_gute\\_Beschaeftigungsbedingungen.pdf](https://www.uniluebeck.de/fileadmin/uzl_presse/Nachrichtenbilder/Verhaltenskodex_fuer_gute_Beschaeftigungsbedingungen.pdf)

## Authors

Tobias Schmohl, Prof. Dr. phil., Hochschule Ostwestfalen-Lippe – University of Applied Sciences OWL and University of Hamburg,  
[tobias.schmohl@hs-owl.de](mailto:tobias.schmohl@hs-owl.de), [tobias.schmohl@uni-hamburg.de](mailto:tobias.schmohl@uni-hamburg.de)

Bettina Jansen-Schulz, Dr. phil., University of Lübeck/TransferConsult, Lübeck,  
[jansen-schulz@transferconsult.de](mailto:jansen-schulz@transferconsult.de)

# JoSch – Journal der Schreibberatung

Fachzeitschrift für Schreibdidaktik  
an Schule und Hochschule

JoSch – Journal der Schreibberatung setzt sich mit den verschiedensten Themen der Schreibdidaktik an Schule und Hochschule, aber auch an anderen Einrichtungen, in denen geschrieben wird, auseinander.

JoSch – Journal der Schreibberatung ermöglicht Schreibberater:innen und Schreibdidaktiker:innen

- Artikel zu veröffentlichen,
- neue wissenschaftliche Erkenntnisse und eigene Forschungen zu präsentieren,
- Erfahrungen weiterzugeben und
- Schreibthemen neu zu betrachten.

Dabei fördert JoSch den Austausch zwischen studentischen Schreibberater:innen und den wissenschaftlichen Mitarbeiter:innen der Schreibzentren.

2  
Ausgaben  
im Jahr



Lernen Sie **JoSch** kennen!

Informationen und Bezugsmöglichkeiten auf [wbv.de/josch](http://wbv.de/josch).

wbv Media GmbH & Co. KG • Bielefeld  
Geschäftsbereich wbv Publikation  
Telefon 0521 91101-0 • E-Mail [service@wbv.de](mailto:service@wbv.de) • Website [wbv.de](http://wbv.de)



Excellent teaching. Clearly a worthy goal for lecturers and their institutions to strive for. But when, where and how does it emerge? What will facilitate it, what will impede it? In other words, what are the principles, structures, and requirements of excellent teaching? In different articles, written by academic actors ranging from deans and chancellors to young lecturers, this book addresses these questions from four different perspectives: governance (with a focus on supportive university structures), higher-education research (with a focus on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning movement), hands-on (with concrete teaching examples from different German universities and one Chinese university) and visibility (with a focus on teaching award winning lectures). The book's intended audience includes both lecturers wishing to reflect and improve on their own teaching, as well as decision makers wishing to reflect and improve on the structures that support excellent teaching at their institutions.



ISBN 978-3-7639-5991-4