

Summary

ICLON (Leiden University Graduate School of Teaching) is the interfaculty center of Leiden University for teacher education and teacher professional development in secondary and higher education. During the period evaluated, ICLON consisted of two departments and a research group. The Department of Secondary Education had its core tasks in teacher education for a large number of school subjects, and continuous professional development for teachers in secondary education. The Department of Higher Education had its core tasks in the professional development of teachers in higher education, and the initiation and facilitation of educational innovations in higher education contexts, with a focus on teaching and teacher learning at Leiden University. This unique organizational structure of combining educational research and practice in a single interfaculty center has the benefit of simultaneously developing new knowledge on teaching and teacher learning, and developing practical tools and support for teachers and schools. The interfaculty structure and focus on theory and practice is unprecedented nationally and internationally.

Academic research activities at ICLON are organized within one research program with the overarching aim to improve the quality of teaching through a deep scientific understanding of teaching and teacher learning. Through this aim the research program contributes to both the development of educational theory and the improvement of educational practice. The broader research domain of educational sciences offer complementary perspectives from which to describe, understand, and improve teaching and teacher learning. Teaching-learning situations and processes are highly complex, and cannot be fully understood from one single perspective alone. Therefore, the ICLON research program encompasses research projects that complement each other by taking diverse approaches and perspectives, thus making the outcomes of research richer and meaningful and leading to a broader understanding of the complexity of the mechanisms behind teaching-learning processes and situations. In turn, this feeds and supports sustainable change and improvement of educational practices.

In general, the ICLON research program focuses on teachers as crucial agents in any teaching-learning situation. The most fundamental goal of teachers and teaching is to support and strengthen students' learning and development throughout their educational careers. The research focus is in close agreement with the main tasks of ICLON as a teacher education institute, i.e., to support teachers throughout primary, secondary, and higher education, and during in-service contexts.

The ICLON research program is embedded in a strong international network. Part of this network has been established through ICLON researchers' personal contacts with international colleagues, and part is formalized in sustained relationships with prominent research-intensive universities.

We are committed to equal opportunities, irrespective of national/ethnic origin, gender, age, religion, or home situation, and assesses prospective ICLON research staff members and PhD applicants in accordance with the principle of equal treatment in accordance with Leiden University policy. We provide our research staff with a safe working environment and conditions to meet current needs, maintain staff satisfaction and organizational commitment, and offer fair and equal opportunities for conference visits and development to all research staff members.

Overall, ICLON has a distinctive research profile and a strong network of internationally recognized researchers within the domain of teaching and teacher learning. The dual aim of focusing on the advancement of both educational theory and practice, and the complementary unique organizational structure of combining academic educational research with teacher education and teacher professional development in a single institute, make ICLON a national and global leader in research on teaching and teacher learning. Although limited and competitive budgets for research on education in the Netherlands and the insecurity of funding for education research for Leiden University contexts are severe threats, the increased focus on domain-specific teaching in both secondary and higher education research generate advanced research opportunities.