



Improvement Scholars Network

REPORT ON IMPROVEMENT RESEARCH
AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT IN
INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

APRIL 2025

As part of our ongoing efforts to build the field of improvement research in education, the Improvement Scholars Network (ISN) conducted a survey to identify opportunities in institutions of higher education (IHE) for students to learn about improvement research and/or continuous improvement in education.

The goal of this survey was to generate information about the breadth of opportunities and to subsequently track changes in opportunities over time.

The following report draws on data collected from **84** members of the ISN community, **72** of which were from ISN colleagues in IHEs. Respondents included deans, department chairs, lecturers, program directors, professional and tenure track faculty members, researchers, and students. From the 72 respondents, we learned about opportunities for student learning in improvement research and/or continuous improvement in **51** unique IHEs.

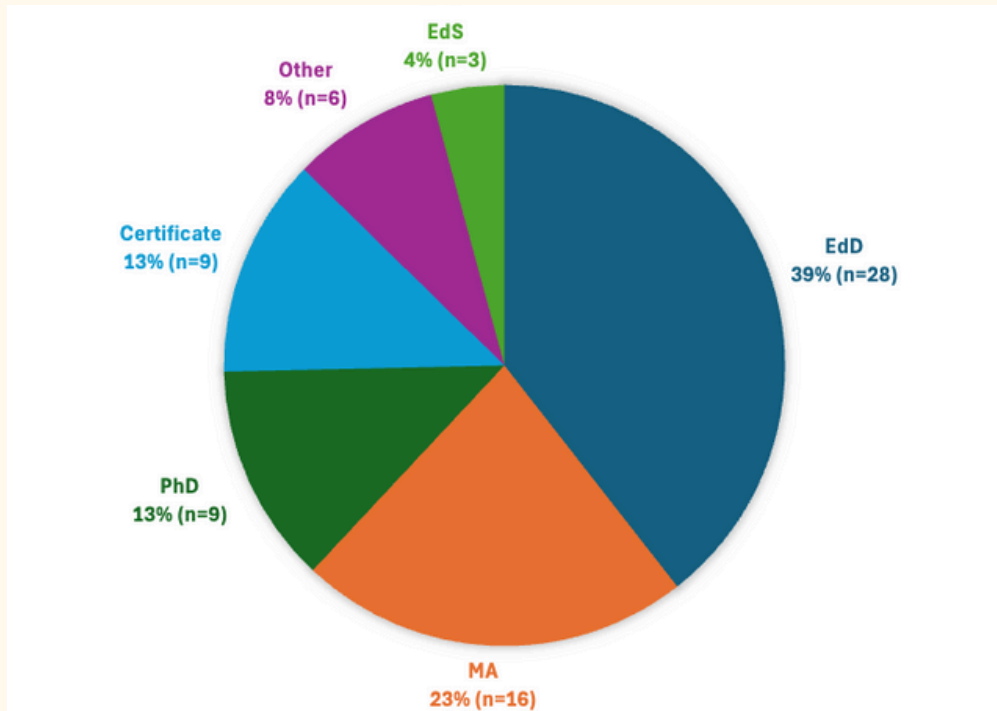
We share key findings regarding improvement-focused programs, courses, and other learning opportunities in the following report.

Institutions Surveyed

- Boston University
- California State University, Fullerton
- Clemson University
- Columbia University
- Escola de Administração de Empresas de São Paulo
- Florida State University
- Fordham University
- George Mason University
- George Washington University
- Grand Valley State University
- Harvard University
- High Tech High Graduate School of Education
- Indiana University Bloomington
- Lahore University of Management Sciences
- Montana State University
- New York University
- Northwestern University
- Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso
- Radford University
- Rowan University
- Rutgers
- Shenandoah University
- Stanford University
- The University of Texas, Rio Grande Valley
- University at Albany
- University of California, Irvine
- University of California, Los Angeles
- University of California, Riverside
- University of California, San Diego
- University of California, Santa Barbara
- University of Colorado, Boulder
- University of Delaware
- University of Denver
- University of Hawai'i at Mānoa
- University of Illinois Chicago
- University of Maryland
- University of Michigan
- University of Mississippi
- University of Nebraska-Lincoln
- University of Oklahoma
- University of Pittsburgh
- University of Potsdam
- University of South Carolina
- University of Southern California
- University of Stirling
- University of Toronto
- University of Virginia
- University of Washington
- Vietnam National University, Hanoi
- Washington University in St. Louis
- Zurich University of Teacher Education

Programs

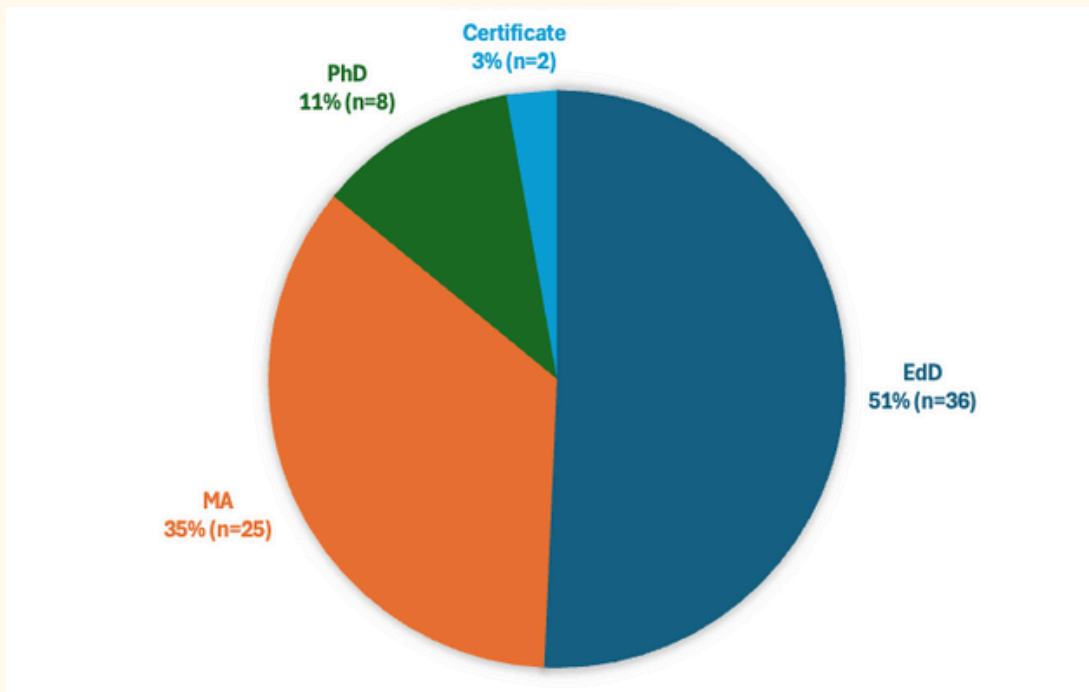
Respondents identified **71** unique programs that provide opportunities for students to learn about improvement research and/or continuous improvement in education. These programs are offered at various levels, with the most programs offered at the EdD level.



	Sample Programs
EdD	P12 Educational Leadership; Teacher Education
MA	Research for Educational Improvement; Global Leadership
PhD	Educational Leadership and Policy Studies; Learning Sciences and Policy Analysis
Certificate	District Building Leadership; Principal Certification Program
Other	School Improvement Leadership Academy; Teacher Residency
EdS	Educational Leadership

Courses

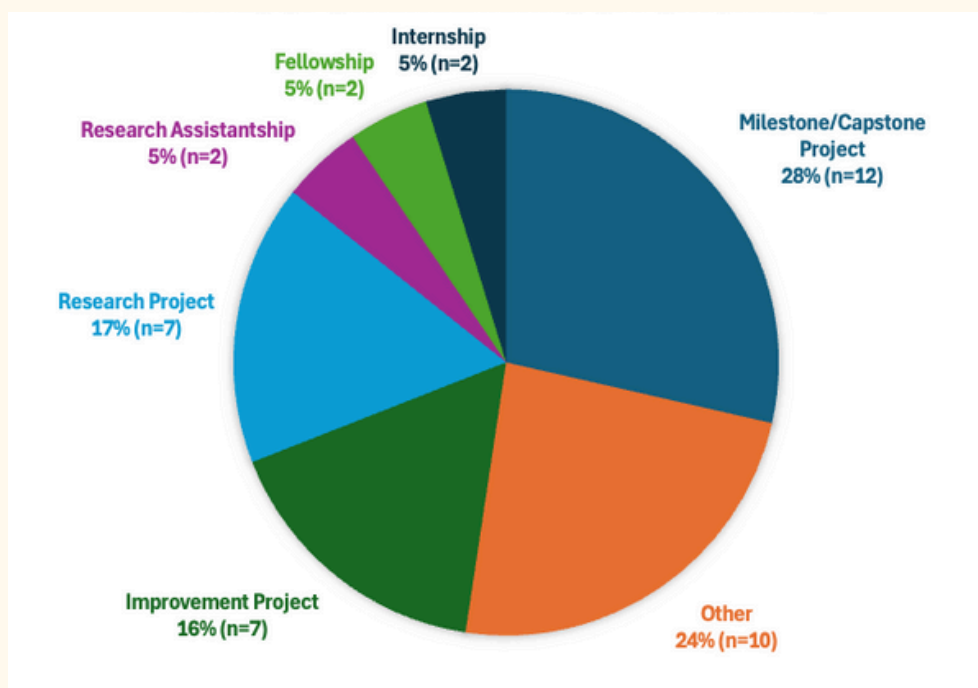
Respondents identified **71** unique improvement-focused courses that they teach that provide opportunities for students to learn about improvement research and/or continuous improvement in education. These courses are offered at various levels, with the most courses offered at the EdD level.



	Sample Courses
EdD	Applied Research for Leaders; Instructional Leadership
MA	Education Policy; Leadership of Continuous Improvement
PhD	Contexts for Teaching and Change; Education Policy Implementation
Certificate	Building Learning Communities in Educational Organizations; Using Research to Lead School Improvement

Other Opportunities

Respondents identified **42** other improvement-focused learning opportunities offered at their IHEs. Other improvement-focused learning opportunities include experiences such as **fellowships, apprenticeships, improvement projects, capstone projects, and assistantships.**



Other Types of Learning Opportunities

Dissertation in Practice
Embedded Internships
Evaluation Research Apprenticeship
Field Research
Improvement Networks
Improvement Project Capstone
Local School District Partnerships
Public Service Fellowship
Research-Practice Partnership Seminar

Next Steps

In our continued efforts to identify and understand the breadth of opportunities in IHEs for students to learn about improvement research and/or continuous improvement in education, the ISN will carry out two additional phases of inquiry in the coming months.

1

The ISN Hub will circulate the survey to other organizations in order to learn about improvement-focused research in a larger population of IHEs.

2

The ISN Hub will develop and administer a 'Phase Two' survey that digs deeper into the improvement-focused learning opportunities in IHEs and the experiences of those leading these efforts.