

# **The Nova Scotia Leadership Academy Culminating Assessment**

**Spring  
Final Year of the  
Instructional Leadership Program**



# The Culminating Assessment

*Instructional leadership ensures that all students have ongoing access to high quality teaching and learning to achieve curriculum outcomes.*

## Rationale for the Culminating Assessment

The Culminating Assessment is an opportunity for participants in the Nova Scotia Instructional Leadership Academy to show what they know and are able to do related to the *Standards of Instructional Leadership*. The Culminating Assessment will also provide an opportunity for participants to show how they have narrowed the gap between theory and practice.

The Culminating Assessment is designed to be a job-embedded experience. It reflects the principles of fair, valid, and reliable assessment, and, as such, is grounded in authentic performance-based experiences. The Culminating Assessment touches upon the range of learning experiences the participants engaged in during their NSILA course work.

During the Culminating Assessment, candidates will illustrate their acquired skills and competencies in areas such as vision and mission, coaching for instructional improvement, collaborative learning cultures, data use for instructional and school improvement, leading change, creating cultures based on principles of social justice and equity, and leadership for high quality instruction and assessment that improves student learning.

**Only those participants who have successfully completed all six courses of the NSILA Program are eligible for the Culminating Assessment.**

## Standards of Instructional Leadership

The Culminating Assessment is based on the seven *Standards of Instructional Leadership*. These standards define the components of instructional leadership and describe the competencies, skills, dispositions, and behaviours that are present when we observe great instructional leadership.

**Column I** contains the overall description of the **standard**.

**Column II** includes some **indicators**, which further describe examples of the behaviours and actions of the instructional leader as they relate to each standard.

Standard	Indicators of the ILA Participant's Behaviours and Actions
<p><b>Standard I:</b> <b>VISION FOR INSTRUCTION</b></p> <p>The <b>instructional leader</b> facilitates the development, implementation, and stewardship of a shared vision for instruction that supports learning for all.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• collaboratively develops and acts upon a shared vision of effective instruction</li><li>• consistently reinforces the vision for the purpose of increasing student achievement</li><li>• systematically collects and uses data to identify goals, assess organizational effectiveness, and promote organizational learning</li><li>• creates and implements plans to achieve instructional goals</li><li>• monitors and evaluates progress and revises plans</li><li>• abandons practices that are inconsistent with the vision of effective instruction</li></ul>

<p><b>Standard II:</b> <b>LEADING AND MANAGING CHANGE</b></p> <p>The <b>instructional leader</b> identifies and articulates the urgency for instructional improvement and is knowledgeable and strategic about change management and systems thinking.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• uses data and evidence to answer the question “why change”</li> <li>• understands deeply why it is difficult for organizations and individuals to change</li> <li>• recognizes that all change has a personal element and pays attention to the emotional and cognitive aspects of change</li> <li>• knows how to take action effectively to lead and manage change</li> <li>• coaches staff as they move through the change journey</li> <li>• balances pushing for change while protecting aspects of culture, values, and norms worth preserving</li> <li>• adapts change strategies as the need arises</li> </ul>
<p><b>Standard IV: PROFESSIONAL LEARNING</b></p> <p>The <b>instructional leader</b> facilitates high quality and job-embedded learning for teachers based on research, best practices, and teacher development needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• promotes and models life-long learning</li> <li>• fosters a culture of high expectations for engaging in ongoing professional learning</li> <li>• involves staff in planning and facilitating high-quality professional learning</li> <li>• evaluates the effectiveness of school-based professional learning</li> <li>• uses educational research and critical inquiry to inform approaches to professional learning and school improvement</li> <li>• expects staff to apply research and new learning in their practice</li> <li>• regularly reviews his/her own practices, sets personal targets, and takes responsibility for his/her own professional learning</li> <li>• understands that powerful learning comes from reflection on practice</li> <li>• creates time and space for individual and collective reflection</li> </ul>

<p><b>Standard V:</b> <b>HIGH QUALITY INSTRUCTION</b></p> <p>The <b>instructional leader</b> is knowledgeable about and deeply involved in the effective implementation of curriculum, instruction, and assessment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• makes it a priority to assist staff to learn and implement instructional strategies and effective assessment practices</li> <li>• builds a system for effective supervision that is focused on professional growth and guiding instructional improvement</li> <li>• emphasizes content knowledge and research-based instructional and assessment strategies in observations, conversations, and performance appraisals</li> <li>• creates an environment of trust and risk taking for staff to implement innovative strategies</li> <li>• ensures that staff use appropriate pedagogy to respond to the multiple dimensions of student diversity</li> <li>• demonstrates a sound understanding of the curriculum and the curriculum implementation process</li> <li>• maintains high visibility and engages in ongoing staff conversations and coaching to monitor instructional practices and to gather data about student learning</li> <li>• promotes the use of new and emerging technologies that enhance student engagement and learning</li> <li>• ensures that instructional and assessment practices and resources are equitable, inclusive, and culturally responsive</li> <li>• challenges under-performance at all levels and ensures effective corrective action and follow-up</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Standard VI: UNDERSTANDING AND USING DATA TO IMPROVE INSTRUCTION</b></p> <p>The <b>instructional leader</b> uses data to ensure a consistent and continuous school-wide focus on improving instruction and student achievement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• monitors the achievement of school improvement goals</li> <li>• provides professional learning opportunities that enable staff to gain a deep understanding of data collection and data analysis</li> <li>• analyses a robust variety of qualitative and quantitative school data from students, parents, teachers, and external resource people to help improve instruction</li> <li>• uses disaggregated student data to inform staff learning priorities</li> <li>• examines student achievement data as the foundation for staff conversations about teaching and learning</li> <li>• monitors student progress and provides regular feedback to staff about their instruction</li> </ul>
<p><b>Standard VII: POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT</b></p> <p>The <b>instructional leader</b> promotes the success of every student by ensuring that staff acts with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner to create and sustain an inclusive and equitable school learning environment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• promotes a school culture where people respect and value diversity and make curricular connections to student identities</li> <li>• demonstrates a strong commitment to eliminating the achievement gap</li> <li>• ensures that students’ diverse needs inform curriculum, instruction, and assessment</li> <li>• believes and communicates that high quality instruction will close the achievement gap</li> <li>• facilitates professional dialogue that examines instructional practices to remove inequities</li> <li>• develops an inviting school environment that encourages parental and community involvement in instructional activities</li> <li>• evaluates the learning environment through the lens of equity and diversity</li> </ul>

## Components of the Culminating Assessment

- a. Staff surveys of the ILA Participant's ability as an instructional leader
- b. ILA Participant's self-evaluation of his/her ability as an instructional leader
- c. Coaching observations and feedback
- d. Personal interview with the ILA Participant
- e. Culminating Assessment Final Report

## Overview of the Process

### **a. Staff Surveys**

- i. The ILA Participant will select the staff members to be surveyed.
- ii. Two to six staff members, as determined by the size of the school (or other staff group), will complete the staff survey on the *Standards of Instructional Leadership*.
- iii. Two to six staff, as determined by the size of the school (or other staff group), will complete the staff survey on *Coaching for Instructional Improvement*.
- iv. Different staff may be used to complete the two surveys.
- v. The survey will be forwarded to the ILA Participant at least one month prior to the Culminating Assessment school visitation (or other agreeable relevant location) and the ILA Participant will meet with, discuss and distribute the survey(s) to the selected staff members. The completed survey(s) will be returned to the ILA Evaluator one week prior to the school visit.
- vi. The surveys will be completed by staff after (or as near as possible) the ILA Participant has completed Course Six.
- vii. The survey will:
  1. ask staff to reflect upon the ILA Participant's ability in competencies related to the seven *Standards of Instructional Leadership*.
    - a four-point rating scale for each standard will be used
    - a personal comment space will be provided for each standard

NB The indicators for each Standard of Instructional Leadership will be made available to staff.

2. ask staff to reflect on their experience being coached by the ILA Participant.
  - a four-point rating scale for each coaching statement will be used
  - a personal comment space will be provided for each statement

### **b. ILA Participant's Self-Evaluation Surveys**

- i. The self-evaluation surveys will be forwarded to the ILA Participant at least one month prior to the ILA Evaluator's visitation and returned to the ILA Evaluator one week prior to the scheduled visit.
- ii. The visitation may occur at the school or other agreeable relevant location.
- iii. The survey will:
  1. ask the ILA Participant to reflect upon her/his ability as related to the seven standards of instructional leadership
    - a four-point rating scale for each standard will be used
    - indicators will be provided for each standard
  2. ask the ILA Participant to reflect on her/his experiences coaching staff
    - a four-point rating scale for each coaching statement will be used
    - a personal comment space will be provided for each statement
  3. mirror the survey completed by staff

### **c. Coaching**

- i. The coaching observations and feedback will be performed at the ILA Participant's school, or agreeable relevant location, for approximately one hour. Two coaching observations will be conducted.
- ii. The ILA Evaluator will be an observer at the coaching sessions.
- iii. Coaching observation #1 will last for approximately 15 minutes. During the observation, the ILA Participant should use the *Developing the Artisan Teacher: Observation Field Book*, an iPad, or other recording tool.
- iv. Following the first observation, the ILA Participant will either provide immediate feedback to the observed staff member or simulate a follow-up coaching

feedback session with the ILA Evaluator playing the role of the observed staff member for a “30 Second Feedback” session.

- v. Coaching observation #2 will last for approximately 15 minutes. During the observation, the ILA Participant should use the *Developing the Artisan Teacher: Observation Field Book*, an iPad, or other recording tool.
- vi. Following the second classroom visit, the candidate will either provide immediate feedback to the observed staff member or simulate a follow-up coaching feedback session with the ILA Evaluator playing the role of the observed staff member for a “5 Minute Feedback” session.

#### **d. ILA Participant’s Personal Interview**

- i. The interview will be conducted at the candidate’s school or agreed upon relevant location, and last approximately one and a half hours.
- ii. The interview will review the information gathered from the staff and ILA Participant’s surveys and will examine:
  - 1. the reasons the ILA Participant rated herself/himself as she/he did
  - 2. the similarities and differences between the staff and the ILA Participant’s perceptions
- iii. The ILA Participant will be asked to expound on three of the seven standards.
  - 1. Portfolios may be used to support the interview.
  - 2. The interview will focus on where the ILA Participant was, where she/he is now, and where she/he wants or needs to go in the future.
- iv. The ILA Participant may be asked to expound on:
  - 1. the exciting experiences of the program and practicum experiences
  - 2. the challenges of the program and practicum experiences
  - 3. the areas of greatest personal and professional growth
  - 4. future steps and action plans
- v. The ILA Participant will reflect upon and give further details about his/her experiences and practices with the SOCL coaching tools for improving instructional practice.

- vi. The ILA Participant will be provided with the opportunity to provide her/his impressions about the overall strengths and weakness of the Instructional Leadership Program. He/she may be asked to submit a quote(s) that may be used on the NSILA web site.

**e. The Culminating Assessment Final Report**

A final summative report, including a rubric level rating and a closing comment, will be completed within ten days of the personal interview and emailed to the ILA Participant. When required, there will be follow-up with the candidate.

Level	Evidence
<b>Proficient</b>	There is strong evidence of connections between knowing and doing in the application of learning theory and impactful leadership, as defined by the <i>Standards of Instructional Leadership</i> , and successful coaching. ILA Participants who are at the Proficient Level will be recommended to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to graduate from the Nova Scotia Instructional Leadership Academy Program.
<b>Incomplete</b>	Successful completion of the Culminating Assessment is still pending.
<b>Fail</b>	Level of understanding and application of learning theory and standards of instructional leadership do not meet the standard.

## Schedule

The ILA Evaluators will visit each school, or agreed relevant location, for one-half day during April or May of the graduation year. Each ILA Participant will receive further directions for planning and set-up purposes in the winter term.

# Appendices

Appendix 1: Staff Surveys .....	13
1. Standards of Instructional Leadership Staff Survey.....	13
2. Coaching for Instructional Improvement .....	15
Appendix 2: Candidate’s Self-Evaluation Surveys .....	19
1. Standards of Instructional Leadership.....	19
2. Coaching for Instructional Improvement .....	22
Appendix 3: Candidate’s Personal Interview Questions .....	26

## Appendix 1: Staff Surveys

### 1. Standards of Instructional Leadership Staff Survey

Standard	Feedback
<p><b>Standard I:</b> <b>VISION FOR INSTRUCTION</b></p> <p>The <b>instructional leader</b> facilitates the development, implementation, and stewardship of a shared vision for instruction that supports learning for all.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Disagree</li> <li>2. Somewhat disagree</li> <li>3. Somewhat agree</li> <li>4. Agree</li> </ol> <p>Comment on the behaviours that the ILA Participant is using to implement the standard.</p>
<p><b>Standard II:</b> <b>LEADING AND MANAGING CHANGE</b></p> <p>The <b>instructional leader</b> identifies and articulates the urgency for instructional improvement and is knowledgeable and strategic about change management and systems thinking.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Disagree</li> <li>2. Somewhat disagree</li> <li>3. Somewhat agree</li> <li>4. Agree</li> </ol> <p>Comment on the behaviours that the ILA Participant is using to implement the standard.</p>
<p><b>Standard III: COLLABORATIVE LEARNING CULTURE</b></p> <p>The <b>instructional leader</b> builds a school culture that is characterized by caring, trust, and respectful relationships that motivates teachers to engage in collaborative inquiry for instructional improvement.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Disagree</li> <li>2. Somewhat disagree</li> <li>3. Somewhat agree</li> <li>4. Agree</li> </ol> <p>Comment on the behaviours that the ILA Participant is using to implement the standard.</p>

<p><b>Standard IV: PROFESSIONAL LEARNING</b></p> <p>The <b>instructional leader</b> facilitates high quality and job-embedded learning for teachers based on research, best practices, and teacher development needs.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Disagree</li> <li>2. Somewhat disagree</li> <li>3. Somewhat agree</li> <li>4. Agree</li> </ol> <p>Comment on the behaviours that the ILA Participant is using to implement the standard.</p>
<p><b>Standard V: HIGH QUALITY INSTRUCTION</b></p> <p>The <b>instructional leader</b> is knowledgeable about and deeply involved in the effective implementation of curriculum, instruction, and assessment.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Disagree</li> <li>2. Somewhat disagree</li> <li>3. Somewhat agree</li> <li>4. Agree</li> </ol> <p>Comment on the behaviours that the ILA Participant is using to implement the standard.</p>
<p><b>Standard VI: UNDERSTANDING AND USING DATA TO IMPROVE INSTRUCTION</b></p> <p>The <b>instructional leader</b> uses data to ensure a consistent and continuous school-wide focus on improving instruction and student achievement.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Disagree</li> <li>2. Somewhat disagree</li> <li>3. Somewhat agree</li> <li>4. Agree</li> </ol> <p>Comment on the behaviours that the ILA Participant is using to implement the standard.</p>
<p><b>Standard VII: POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT</b></p> <p>The <b>instructional leader</b> promotes the success of every student by ensuring that staff acts with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner to create and sustain an inclusive and equitable school learning environment.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Disagree</li> <li>2. Somewhat disagree</li> <li>3. Somewhat agree</li> <li>4. Agree</li> </ol> <p>Comment on the behaviours that the ILA Participant is using to implement the standard.</p>

## 2. Coaching for Instructional Improvement

<p>1. Overall the coaching experience(s) was (were) valuable.</p>	<p>1. <b>Disagree</b></p> <p>2. <b>Somewhat disagree</b></p> <p>3. <b>Somewhat agree</b></p> <p>4. <b>Agree</b></p> <p><b>Comments:</b></p>
<p>2. Feedback from the coaching session(s) enabled me to reflect upon best practice.</p>	<p>1. <b>Disagree</b></p> <p>2. <b>Somewhat disagree</b></p> <p>3. <b>Somewhat agree</b></p> <p>4. <b>Agree</b></p> <p><b>Comments:</b></p>

3. Feedback from the coaching session(s) enabled me to improve instructional practice.

1. Disagree
2. Somewhat disagree
3. Somewhat agree
4. Agree

Comments:

<p>4. The ILA Participant used communications skills, such as questioning, listening, seeking clarification, and synthesizing during the coaching and feedback sessions.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Disagree</li> <li>2. Somewhat disagree</li> <li>3. Somewhat agree</li> <li>4. Agree</li> </ol> <p>Comments:</p>
<p>5. The ILA Participant coached with confidence, clarity, and sensitivity.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Disagree</li> <li>2. Somewhat disagree</li> <li>3. Somewhat agree</li> <li>4. Agree</li> </ol> <p>Comments:</p>
<p>6. The ILA Participant provided timely and clear coaching feedback after</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Disagree</li> </ol>

<p>the observation.</p>	<p><b>2. Somewhat disagree</b></p> <p><b>3. Somewhat agree</b></p> <p><b>4. Agree</b></p> <p><b>Comments:</b></p>
<p>7. During the coaching feedback session, the ILA Participant made clear connections between the instructional move (cause) and the impact on student learning (effect).</p>	<p><b>1. Disagree</b></p> <p><b>2. Somewhat disagree</b></p> <p><b>3. Somewhat agree</b></p> <p><b>4. Agree</b></p> <p><b>Comments:</b></p>

## Appendix 2: Candidate's Self-Evaluation Surveys

### 1. Standards of Instructional Leadership

Standard	Feedback
<p><b>Standard I:</b> <b>VISION FOR INSTRUCTION</b></p> <p>The <b>instructional leader</b> facilitates the development, implementation, and stewardship of a shared vision for instruction that supports learning for all.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Disagree</li> <li>2. Somewhat disagree</li> <li>3. Somewhat agree</li> <li>4. Agree</li> </ol> <p>Comment on the behaviours that I am using to implement the standard.</p>
<p><b>Standard II:</b> <b>LEADING AND MANAGING CHANGE</b></p> <p>The <b>instructional leader</b> identifies and articulates the urgency for instructional improvement and is knowledgeable and strategic about change management and systems thinking.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Disagree</li> <li>2. Somewhat disagree</li> <li>3. Somewhat agree</li> <li>4. Agree</li> </ol> <p>Comment on the behaviours that I am using to implement the standard.</p>

<p><b>Standard III: COLLABORATIVE LEARNING CULTURE</b></p> <p>The <b>instructional leader</b> builds a school culture that is characterized by caring, trust, and respectful relationships that motivates teachers to engage in collaborative inquiry for instructional improvement.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Disagree</li> <li>2. Somewhat disagree</li> <li>3. Somewhat agree</li> <li>4. Agree</li> </ol> <p>Comment on the behaviours that I am using to implement the standard.</p>
<p><b>Standard IV: PROFESSIONAL LEARNING</b></p> <p>The <b>instructional leader</b> facilitates high quality and job-embedded learning for teachers based on research, best practices, and teacher development needs.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Disagree</li> <li>2. Somewhat disagree</li> <li>3. Somewhat agree</li> <li>4. Agree</li> </ol> <p>Comment on the behaviours that I am using to implement the standard.</p>
<p><b>Standard V: HIGH QUALITY INSTRUCTION</b></p> <p>The <b>instructional leader</b> is knowledgeable about and deeply involved in the effective implementation of curriculum, instruction, and assessment.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Disagree</li> <li>2. Somewhat disagree</li> <li>3. Somewhat agree</li> <li>4. Agree</li> </ol> <p>Comment on the behaviours that I am using to implement the standard.</p>

<p><b>Standard VI: UNDERSTANDING AND USING DATA TO IMPROVE INSTRUCTION</b></p> <p>The <b>instructional leader</b> uses data to ensure a consistent and continuous school-wide focus on improving instruction and student achievement.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Disagree</li> <li>2. Somewhat disagree</li> <li>3. Somewhat agree</li> <li>4. Agree</li> </ol> <p>Comment on the behaviours that I am using to implement the standard.</p>
<p><b>Standard VII: POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT</b></p> <p>The <b>instructional leader</b> promotes the success of every student by ensuring that staff acts with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner to create and sustain an inclusive and equitable school learning environment.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Disagree</li> <li>2. Somewhat disagree</li> <li>3. Somewhat agree</li> <li>4. Agree</li> </ol> <p>Comment on the behaviours that I am using to implement the standard.</p>

## 2. Coaching for Instructional Improvement

<p>1. Overall the coaching experiences were valuable for staff.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Disagree</li><li>2. Somewhat disagree</li><li>3. Somewhat agree</li><li>4. Agree</li></ol> <p>Comments:</p>
<p>2. Feedback from the coaching sessions enabled staff to reflect upon best practice.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Disagree</li><li>2. Somewhat disagree</li><li>3. Somewhat agree</li><li>4. Agree</li></ol> <p>Comments:</p>

<p>3. Feedback from the coaching sessions enabled staff to improve instructional practice.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Disagree</li> <li>2. Somewhat disagree</li> <li>3. Somewhat agree</li> <li>4. Agree</li> </ol> <p>Comments:</p>
<p>4. I used communications skills, such as questioning, listening, seeking clarification, and synthesizing during the coaching and feedback sessions.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Disagree</li> <li>2. Somewhat disagree</li> <li>3. Somewhat agree</li> <li>4. Agree</li> </ol> <p>Comments:</p>

<p>5. I coached with confidence, clarity, and sensitivity.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Disagree</li> <li>2. Somewhat disagree</li> <li>3. Somewhat agree</li> <li>4. Agree</li> </ol> <p>Comments:</p>
<p>6. I provided timely and clear coaching feedback after the observation.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Disagree</li> <li>2. Somewhat disagree</li> <li>3. Somewhat agree</li> <li>4. Agree</li> </ol> <p>Comments:</p>

7. During the coaching feedback session, I made clear connections between the instructional move (cause) and the impact on student learning (effect).

1. Disagree
2. Somewhat disagree
3. Somewhat agree
4. Agree

Comments:

## Appendix 3: Candidate's Personal Interview Questions

### 1. Survey Results:

- A. Discuss the survey results, both yours and the completed surveys from the staff.
- B. Discuss the similarities and differences between your survey and the staff survey results.

### Notes

## 2. Standards of Instructional Leadership:

Discuss your growth around three standards of your choice.

You may use your portfolio/s to support your conversation. Comment on the following:

- a. where were you before starting the ILA program; where are you now; and where do you want or need to go in the future
- b. the areas of greatest personal and professional growth
- c. future steps and action plans

Notes

### **3. Coaching for Instructional Improvement:**

Discuss your experiences and practices with the SOCL coaching tools.

Notes

#### 4. The ILA Program as a Coherent Learning Experience:

Comment on the following:

- a. the exciting experiences provided by the program and practicum experiences
- b. the challenges of the program and practicum experiences
- c. the overall strengths and weaknesses/areas for growth of the Instructional Leadership Program

Provide a quote that may be used on the ILA web site

Notes