



## 2015-2016 AESN Case Study

**School:** Hazelton Secondary School

**District:** #82Coast Mountains

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(please note there are many teachers moving fluently in and out of this inquiry but are not listed as contacts)

**Your focus for this year:** Developing a common goal of focusing on formative assessment within this family of schools. Although this valley is isolated they share many commonalities between buildings and should look towards working together to build capacity. We hope all of our learning community will develop a common language of learning (used in formative assessment) no matter which building they attend.

**Scanning:** We used the four key questions as part of the scanning process. OECD principles are embedded in this inquiry – we are working across our community, focusing on enhancing the social nature of learning through embedding formative assessment strategies and developing positive beliefs about self, both for educators and students.

Each of these schools demonstrates exemplary practices around developing Aboriginal culture and traditions and are exploring ways to create practices based on the First Peoples Principles of Learning while developing strong formative assessment strategies that will enable learners to own their own learning.

Educators have formed a coalition of teacher leaders and principals/vice principals to create a cohesive understanding of the revised curriculum, including Assessment for Learning Strategies. It is difficult for educators to sustain learner engagement amongst the students. This group is looking at creating common pedagogical and relational understandings for all learners, no matter what building they attend.

Educators desperately want to enhance both academic and life long successes for their students.

**Focus:** Formal leaders from each of the buildings have held discussions and met as a team. The Vancouver Island University (VIU) Rural Literacy initiative has offered some support but area educators know that change depends on them and have identified a need to make a change – and focused on the common goal of understanding and using AFL strategies across the zone, as a collaborative effort to enhance both educator and student learning. We are hoping that a focus on collaborating with using the revised curriculum and formative assessment will increase growth mindsets in all members of the learning community.

**Hunch:** A number of ongoing events related to poverty and low socio-economic issues have impacted all staff's ability to focus on meaningful change. Developing an ongoing focus will

create both individual, staff and cross-school goals and will help keep educators focused on outcomes.

**New professional learning:** We will use the resource, “Embedding Formative Assessment” as well as “Mindsets.”

**Taking action:** The staffs were brought together in December for a shared staff meeting. In May each school attended a meeting of school principals and vice principals as well as teachers representing teaching staff members. During this meeting teachers were able to come to agreement to develop a collaborative model. A steering committee was established with both teachers from across the zone and formal leaders. It was decided that collaborative meeting opportunities would be offered three times in the coming year. Teachers reached a different understanding of collaboration – and see collaboration as both an opportunity to celebrate success and develop confidence to discuss successful formative assessment strategies. Educators understand that this is not a standalone experience and it will take 3-5 years of a unified approach to realize change.

**Checking:** Understanding the history of the Hazeltons is important – the schools have struggled to develop trusting relationships between the large number of bands that exist in this environmentally rich valley as well as developing trusting relationships between schools and learning communities. They have taken the first steps to developing a united learning community rather than five separate sites. Right now, the four questions are being directed to the educators as learners, and mindsets about who they are as educators are beginning to change. This is evidenced by their willingness to be part of a leadership team that will influence the directions of education and their view of the learning community as every student - no matter which building they attend needs everyone’s attention.

**Reflections/Advice:** We are just starting our journey, but are optimistic and sense change! Ideally, we will see strong connections develop between the buildings and through those strong connections we will see the strengths and gifts of students and educators shared throughout the valley. We hope to see a common language of learning flourish and all members of the learning community being able to discuss what the learning looks like for each student.