Reporting Student Learning – *Writing Comments that Work*

Christine Battagli

Consultant, Research, Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting

The Niagara Catholic District School Board, through the charisms of faith, social justice, support and leadership, nurtures an enriching Catholic learning community for all to reach their full potential and become living witnesses of Christ.

What is important in writing Report Card Comments?

Report Card Comments should…

NIAGARA CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Criteria for Writing Report Card Comments	Details/Specifics of Writing Report Card Comments
HOW comments are written	✓ Written in parent-friendly language ✓ NOT repeating the language in the curriculum document or achievement chart ✓ Personalized ✓ Free of spelling and grammatical errors ✓ Positive in nature ✓ Include the student's name to begin the comment ✓ Use qualifiers and descriptors to appropriately communicate student learning
WHAT comments tell parents about student learning and achievement	✓ What students know and can do based on clusters of curricular expectations used to create Learning Goals ✓ Reflect student achievement (or lack of achievement) of Success Criteria ✓ Provide meaningful feedback based on Descriptive Feedback shared with students during learning ✓ Celebrate student strengths by including specific examples of student work ✓ Tell students how to improve ✓ Tell parents how they can help at home

NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Learning Goal and Success Criteria for Writing Report Card Comments

In writing report card comments, teachers will…

Focus on what students have learned

Write key learning with qualifiers and descriptors developed from a cluster of expectations which focuses on what students have learned.

Based on:
- ✓ A cluster of expectations articulated in the Learning Goal

Describe significant strengths

Share specific examples that demonstrate learning by describing significant strengths of the student's work.

Based on:
- ✓ attainment of specific Success Criteria
- ✓ observations, conversations and student products that best demonstrate student strengths

Identify next steps for improvement

Communicate next steps to parents and students that will identify strategies for improvement.

Based on:
- ✓ Success Criteria that could be improved or not yet met
- ✓ Descriptive Feedback shared with students

Sample: Gr. 4 Science – Level 3

Marie clearly understands the function and structure of pulleys and gears. In her multimedia presentation comparing and contrasting pulley systems, she correctly identified different examples of pulleys and gears (e.g., flagpole, clothesline, crane) and explained their impact in everyday life. **Marie understands and is able to describe most properties of light and sound.** She accurately designed, built and tested a kaleidoscope listing the properties of light involved. **Marie needs to keep in mind the purpose of her presentations and use appropriate scientific language.**

NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Planning for Learning with Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting – A Quick Reference for Teachers

C. Battagli, Consultant, RAED– October 2014

Comment Framework

Describe in overall terms what students have learned (key learning)

1

Growing Success: "focus on what students have learned."

The teacher reports on the student's achievement of the *key learnings*, which are rooted in clusters of specific expectations that support the achievement of the overall expectations.

Qualifiers may be used to reflect the student's level of achievement of expectations. **Descriptors** may be used as an alternative to, or to clarify "effectiveness".

Example: Using the elements and principles of design, Julia creates artwork that expresses her personal feelings and ideas about a local event.

NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Comment Framework

Share examples that demonstrate the learning (strengths).

2

Growing Success: "describe significant strengths."

Based on *a body of summative evidence* (information from observations, conversations, and student products), the teacher shares examples of the student demonstrating his/her strengths.

The information is personalized and connected to the *success criteria* for identified *learning goal(s)*.

Example: She designed a promotional poster, effectively using warm colours to emphasize her positive emotions in contrast with bold lettering to show enthusiasm for the upcoming Terry Fox Community Walk/Run.

Comment Framework

Communicate next steps to students and parents.

3

Growing Success: "identify next steps for improvement."

The teacher communicates *success criteria* the student still needs to meet; or the teacher communicates ways for the student to extend his/her learning.

The next steps are connected to the identified *learning goal(s)*, and are meaningful, clear and attainable.

Example: Julia needs to focus on making use of foreground, middle ground, background to show depth in her art.

http://www.misalondon.ca/videos/a&evideos/grade_2_math.html

"On the provincial report cards, it is essential that a comment and the assigned letter grade/percentage mark for a subject/course work together to convey a clear message about the student's achievement of the curriculum expectations."

"The grade/mark should reflect the student's most consistent level of achievement, with special consideration given to more recent evidence of achievement."

"The comment should provide clear, meaningful, and personalized reflections on the student as a learner in the particular subject/course."

Reporting Student Learning, 2010

Report Card Writing Tips

The report card is the teacher's professional statement about achievement to parents/guardians and students.

Ontario **PROVINCIAL REPORT CARD** Date:

Student:		Days Absent:	Total Days Absent:
Grade:	Teacher:	Times Late:	Total Times Late:
Board:	School:		
Address:	Address:		
	Principal:	Telephone:	

Promotion Status: ○ Progressing well towards promotion ○ Progressing with some difficulty towards promotion ○ Promotion at risk — Grade in September:

Letter Grades	Achievement of the Provincial Curriculum Expectations
A- to A+	The student has demonstrated the required knowledge and skills. Achievement exceeds the provincial standard. (Level 4)
B- to B+	The student has demonstrated most of the required knowledge and skills. Achievement meets the provincial standard. (Level 3)
C- to C+	The student has demonstrated some of the required knowledge and skills. Achievement approaches the provincial standard. (Level 2)
D- to D+	The student has demonstrated some of the required knowledge and skills in limited ways. Achievement falls much below the provincial standard. (Level 1)
R	The student has not demonstrated the required knowledge and skills. Extensive remediation is required.

IEP - Individual Education Plan that addresses special learning needs ESL- English as a Second Language ESD - English Skills Development

Subjects	Report 1	Report 2	Report 3	Strengths/Weaknesses/Next Steps
English ☐ ESL ☐ ESD ☐ Not applicable ☐ IEP				

NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Traits of Effective Progress or Achievement Report Cards

- **Asset-Driven**
  - The wording highlights the student's strengths and next steps in positive, constructive terms.
- **Preplanned**
  - The teacher has reviewed the data collected over a period of time and makes observations about the data relative to the learning outcomes for a specific subject or grade.
- **Concise**
  - The report card gets to the "heart of the matter."
  - There is an absence of lengthy wording.

NIAGARA CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Traits of Effective Progress or Achievement Report Cards

- **Introspective**
  - The report is personalized and reflects the strengths and needs of each student.
- **Readable**
  - The report is well organized. One area discussed at a time.
  - The report is easy to read.
  - There are no spelling, grammatical or syntactical errors (spell check in MS Word and Maplewood).
- **Meaningful**
  - Parents/guardians should be able to understand exactly how their child is progressing/achieving.
  - Academic areas which need particular attention are clearly identified.

NIAGARA CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Things To Avoid

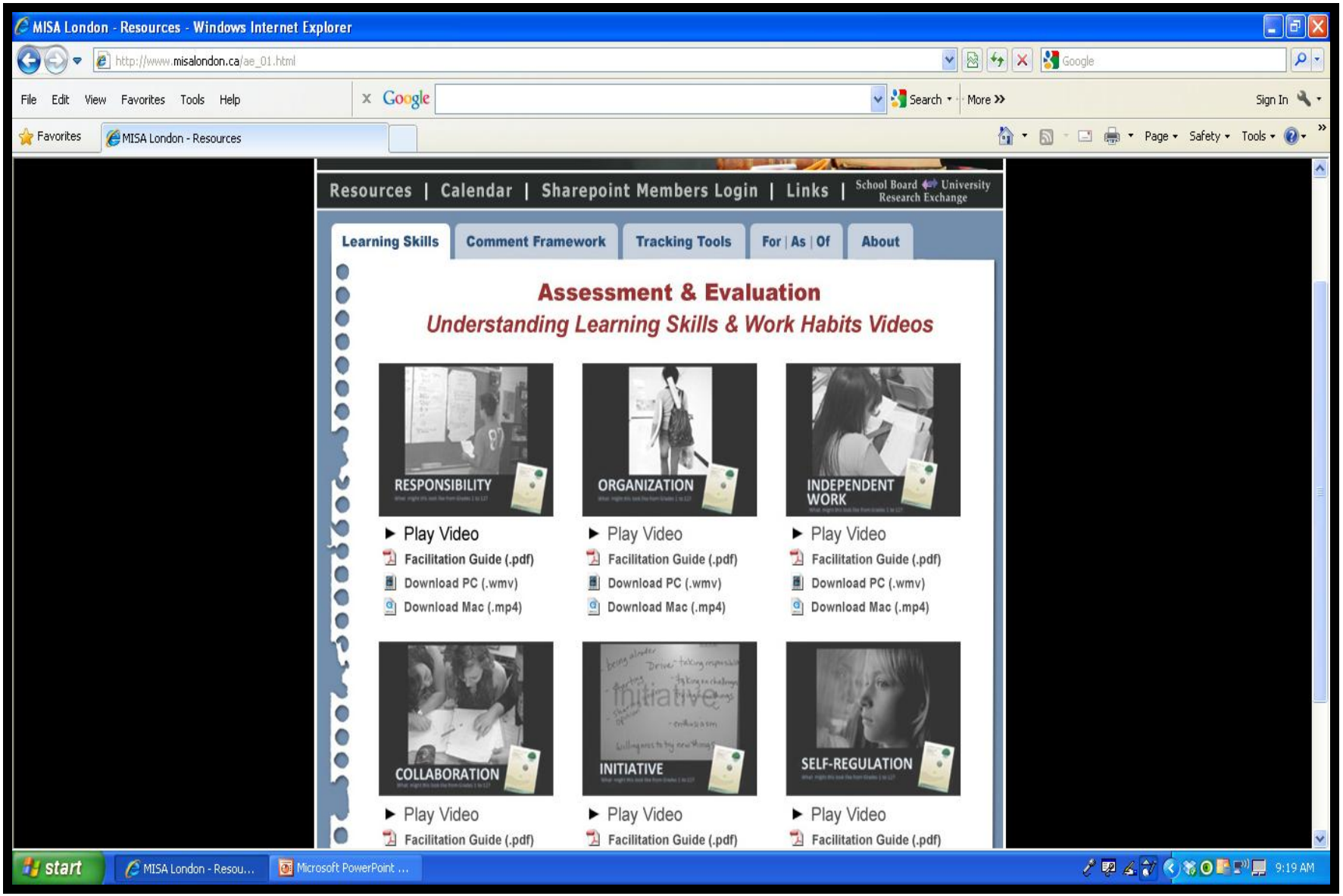
- **Educational Terminology**
  - Use parent/guardian and student friendly language.
- **Slang**
- **Redundancy**
  - In Term 2, re-read Term 1 Report Card to avoid repetition.
- **Making Predictions**
  - “I’m sure Christine will have a successful year in Grade 6.”

NIAGARA CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

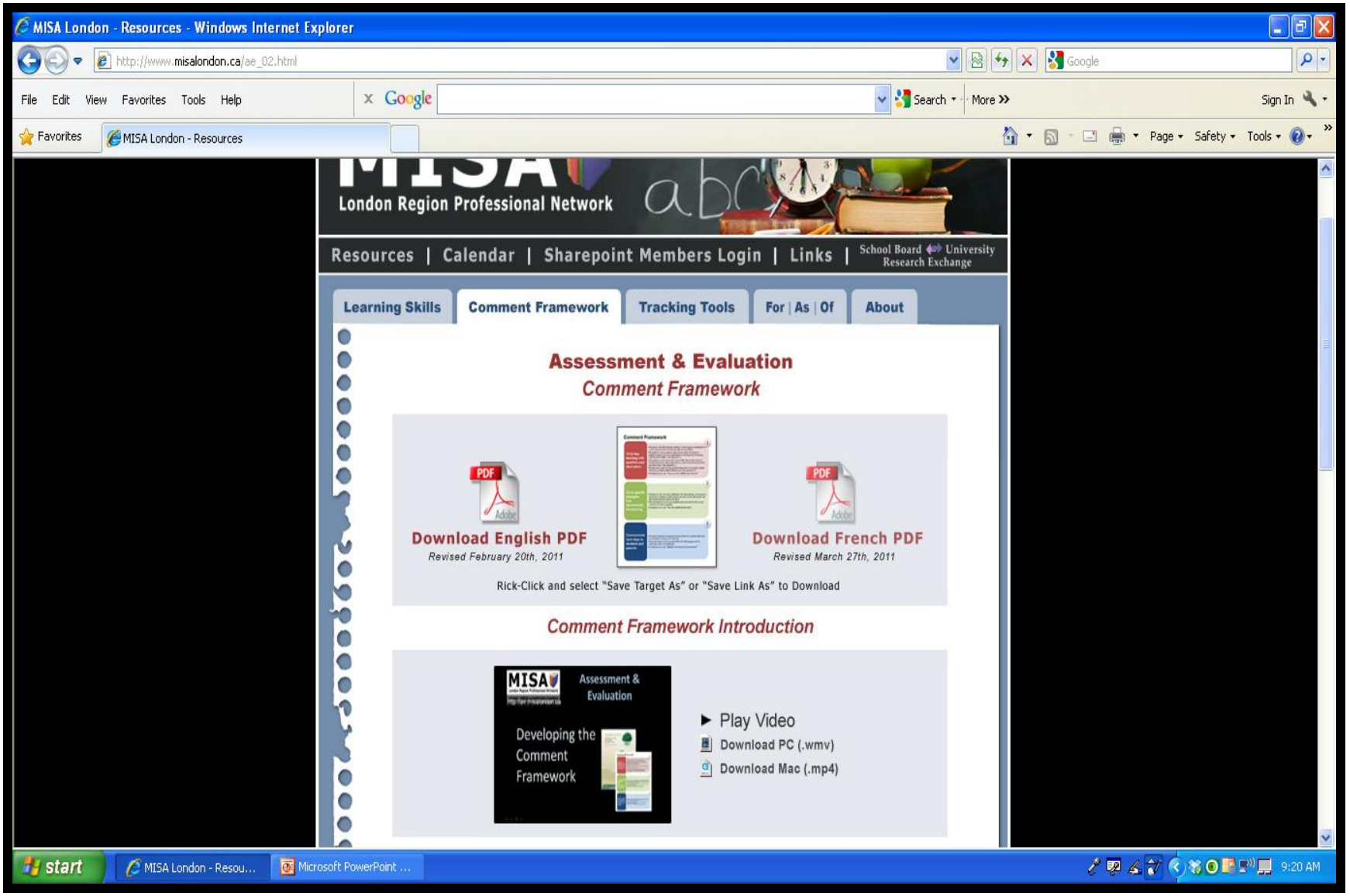
Points to Remember

- Keep ongoing records of each student's assessment data.
- Pre-plan the report card. Using the language of learning goals and success criteria allows for comments to be personalized.
- Ensure comments reflect the learning goals for the current term.
- The comment reflects the student's strengths and next steps; the grade gives the overall level of achievement.

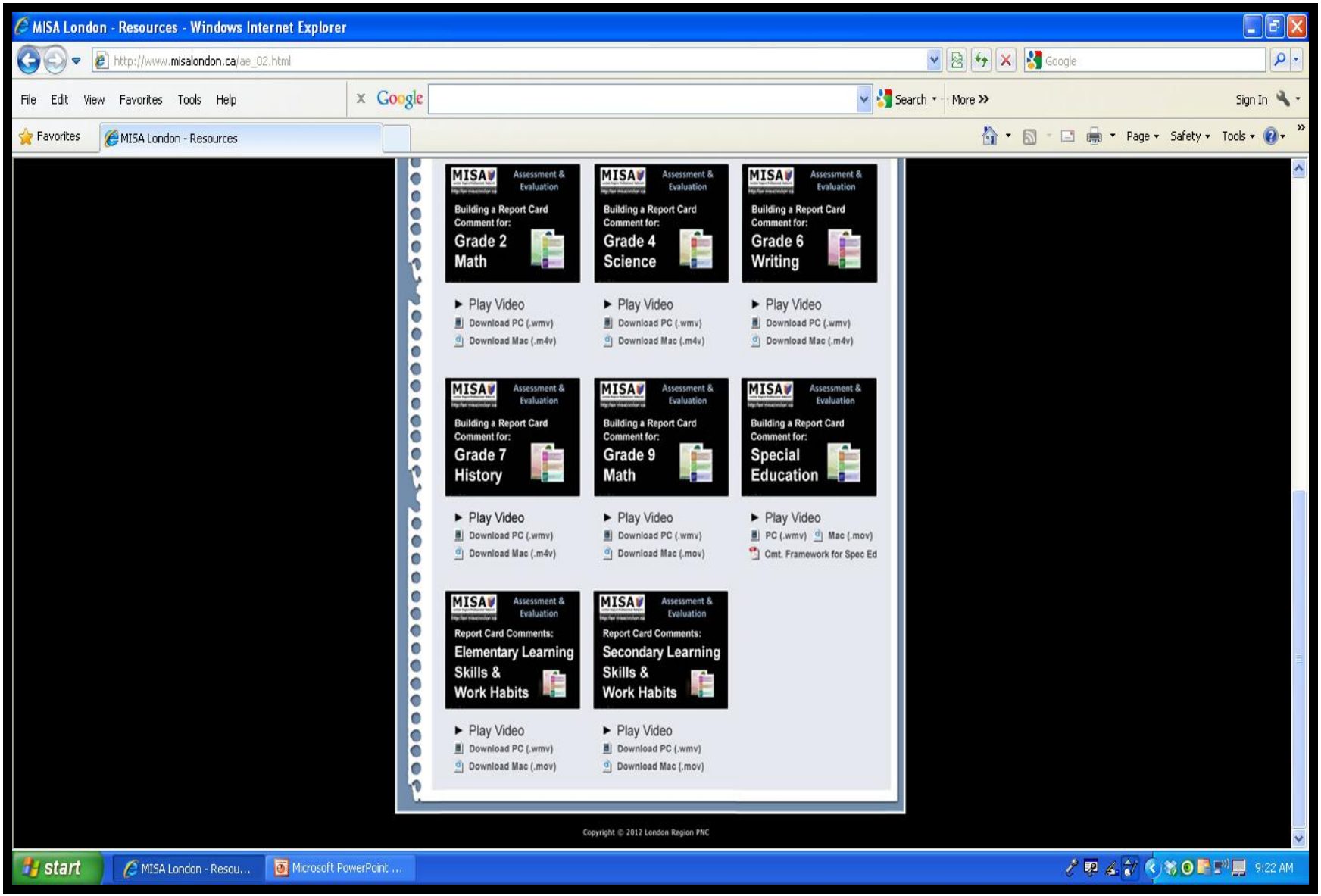
NIAGARA CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD



NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

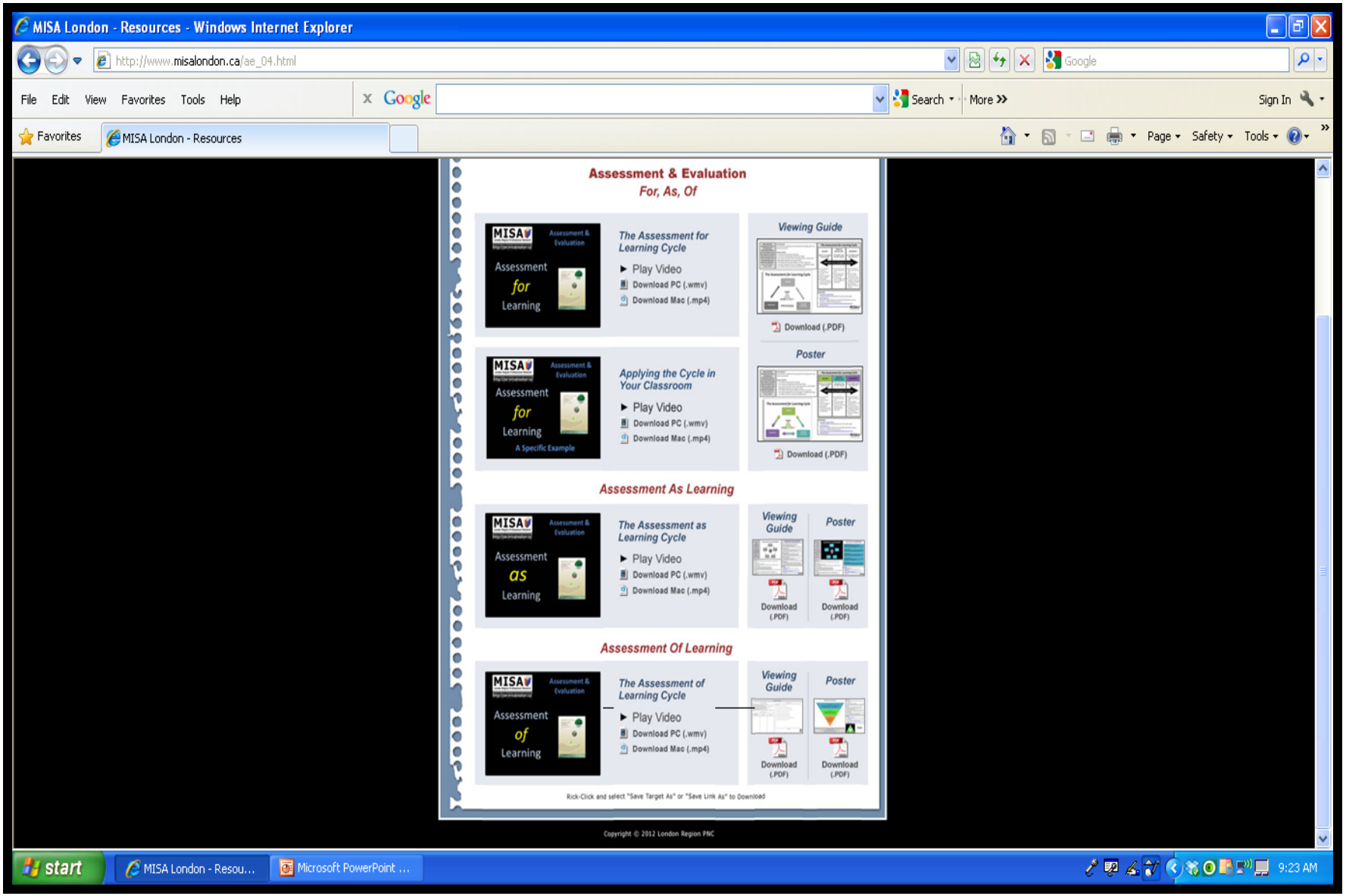


NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

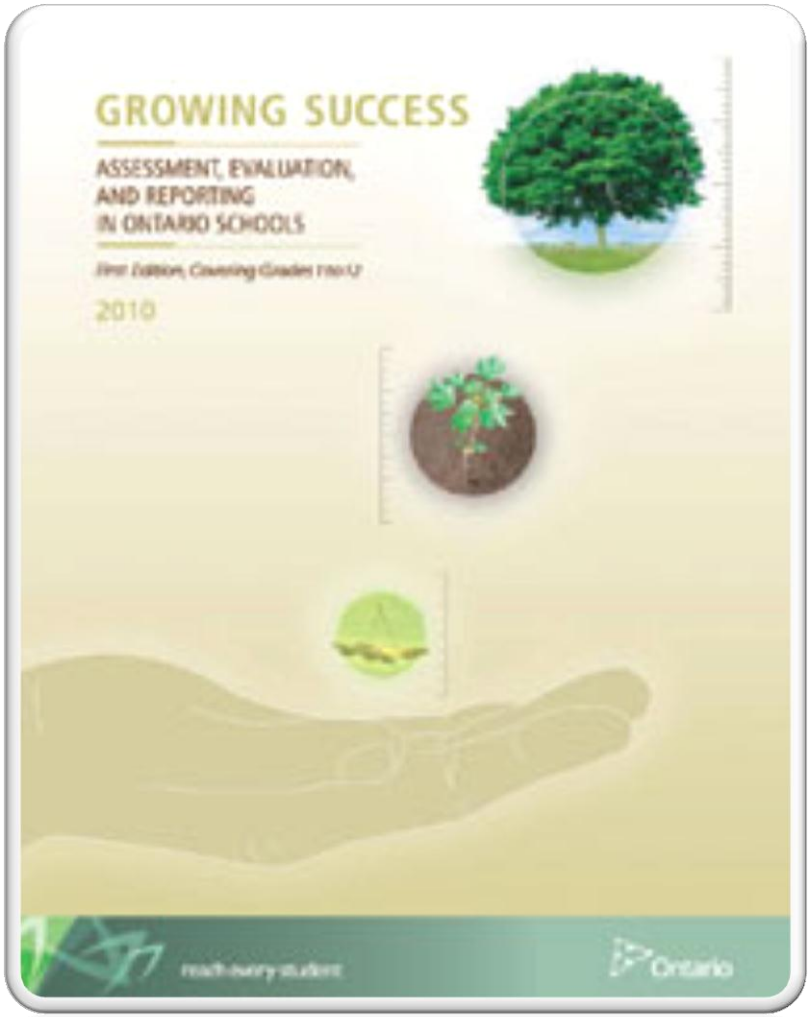


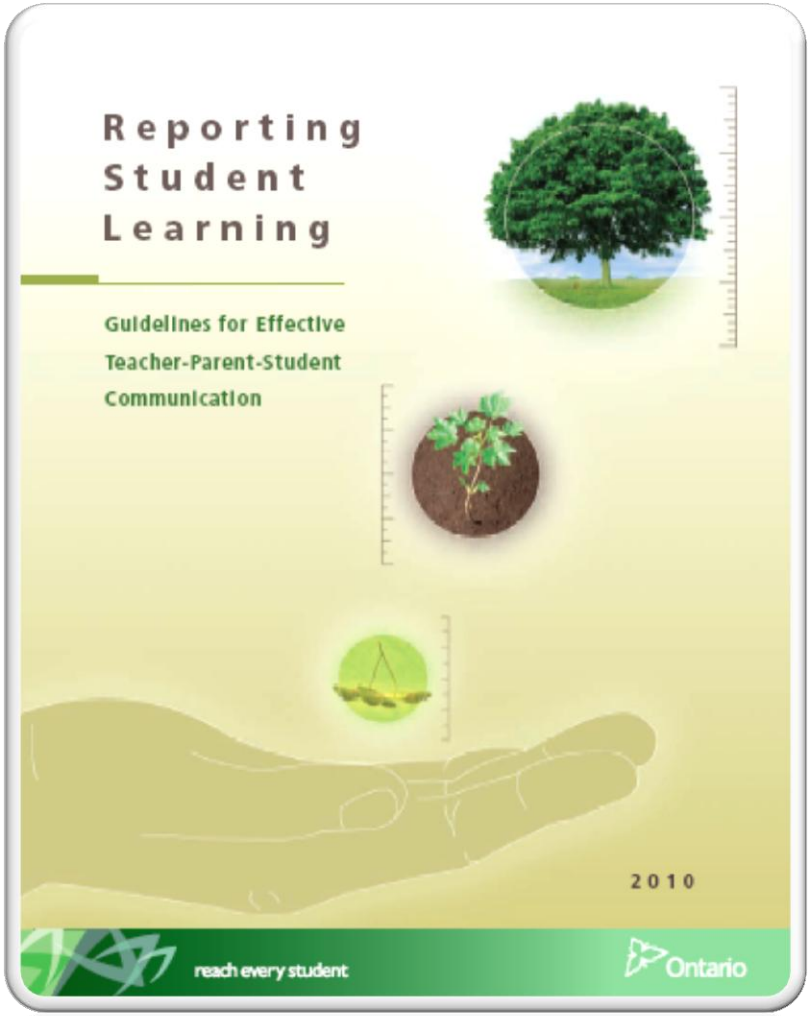
NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD



NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD





NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

www.edugains.ca
Ministry Developed Resources
Assessment Reporting

NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD