

FROM *THE BOX* TO YOUR COMPUTER

This document provides background information about the new Supplemental Lessons and a narrative overview of the premises that guided the revision of The Box activities.

Background

What is “The Box”? In the early 90’s, Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MO-DESE) visionaries saw the need for a resource to facilitate the implementation of the Guidance Curriculum component of the Missouri Comprehensive Guidance Program (MCGP). A group of Missouri’s dedicated Professional School Counselors (PSCs) were called together to design and develop a leading edge resource for classroom guidance activities. The result was a series of K-12 classroom guidance lessons based on the 1988 MCGP competencies and organized in 3 boxes—elementary school; middle-school/junior high and high school. The activities became known by PSCs at all levels as “the box”. The activities were received with applause; “the boxes” became “must have” resources for Missouri’s PSCs as well as PSCs from other states.

By 1998, revision of the activities became necessary. Once again, a group of Missouri’s finest PSCs (including many who were involved in the development of the original activities) gathered together to review, revise and add to the activities. During the 1998 revision process it was decided to officially title the revised/new activities “The Box”. For many PSCs the 1998 *Box* is still a resource for classroom guidance activities.

What Happened to *The Box*? Reductions in funding made publication (and purchase by districts) of *The Box(es)* cost prohibitive. In addition, the MCGP Curriculum Framework was revised in 2005 to align with the frameworks of other curriculum areas; publication of *The Box(es)* ceased. The MO-DESE visionaries knew the activities were too valuable to lose; thus, it was decided to revise and align the activities in *The Box(es)* with the 2005 MCGP Curriculum Framework and to make them available on-line via the Guidance eLearning Center (<http://www.missouricareereducation.org/for/content/guidance/>).

The “new” on-line activities are considered supplemental lessons.

- The lessons may be used to supplement the existing MCGP/Guidance eLearning Center sample classroom guidance units
- The lessons may be used as the basis for PSC-developed classroom guidance activities.
- The lessons may be used to enhance/expand other classroom guidance lesson in use by individual PSCs.
- The student materials and PSC resources included in the lessons are appropriate for use as stand-alone-activities or as a part of classroom guidance lessons currently being implemented by individual PSCs.
- To facilitate PSCs’ access to the resources, in addition to inclusion of the resources with the individual lessons, the resource materials have been copied into a separate document. In this way the resources may be reviewed, accessed and used separately from the supplemental lessons--without having to sort through the lessons.
- With slight modification, the student/PSC resource materials will be useful for a variety of purposes. See *Student Thinking Papers and Student/PSC Resources* for each Strand and Level (K-3 and 4-6).

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE BOX(ES)? THEY MOVED TO A COMPUTER NEAR YOU

WHAT IS NEW?

The Supplemental Lessons (the revised *Box* lessons) are available on the Guidance e-Learning site (see link below). The following is a list of the Elementary Level supporting materials for students and Professional School Counselors that may be found (along with Supplemental Lessons) at: <http://www.missouricareereducation.org/for/content/guidance/>.

- From *The Box* to Your Computer ([this document] Notebook Section 1)
- **Crosswalk matrix (Notebook Section 2):** The matrix provides an at-a-glance overview of the revised activities. Included are:
 - Grade level(s) for which each supplemental lesson is most appropriate (the majority of the lessons may be adapted for any grade level);
 - The MCGP Curriculum Framework Strand, Big Idea and Concept on which lessons are based;
 - The purpose of each lesson or (in some cases, series of lessons);
 - Links to related sample MCGP guidance curriculum units/lessons;
 - The number of *The Box* activity replaced by the new lessons (for those who are still using or have used *The Box*; please note that a number of activities were NOT revised);
- **The supplemental lessons/activities (Notebook Sections 3, 4 and 5):** The lessons are grouped by grade level within MCGP Strands/Big Ideas/Concepts. In some instances, several activities are bundled together because of their inter-relatedness. Together the lessons provide a systematic and sequential approach to addressing a specific issue, e.g. conflict and its resolution. With slight modification, the bundled lessons may be used individually.
- **The student/PSC materials and resources (Notebook Sections 6, 7, 8, 9):** The student thinking papers and the student/PSC resource materials have been copied from the lessons into a separate document to facilitate access for those who are looking for materials related to an existing classroom guidance unit and/or lesson. In this document, resources may be reviewed, accessed and used separately from the supplemental lessons.
- **Glossary (Notebook Section 10):** A common vocabulary is an important aspect of any K-12 curriculum. The Glossary includes definitions/explanations of words and phrases used consistently in the K-5/6 MCGP Supplemental Lessons.
- Missouri Comprehensive Guidance Program (MCGP) K-12 Curriculum Framework (Notebook Section 11): The MCGP Strands/Big Ideas/Concepts and K-12 GLEs.
- **Listing of the K-3 and 4-6 activities in The Box(es) (Notebook Section 12):** This list includes numbers and titles of The Box activities and the supplemental activities based on The Box activities (some of The Box activities have not been revised).
- **Listing of the MCGP Classroom Guidance Units and Lessons (Notebook Section 12):** Also found at: <http://www.missouricareereducation.org/for/content/guidance/>

REVISION OF *THE BOX* ACTIVITIES (K-3 & 4-6)

The revision of *The Box* activities was led by the over-arching belief that classroom teachers and Professional School Counselors (PSCs) are equal partners in the achievement of school and life success for **every student**:

- Their common goal of student success requires meaningful and frequent communication, consultation and collaboration between and among classroom teachers and the school counselor.
- The PSC's role includes awareness of school/district-wide academic content expectations and issues and integrating processes and procedures that complement classroom learning.
- Understanding the scope and developmental sequence of classroom academic content enables PSCs to integrate and reinforce the district's goals for acquiring the knowledge, skills and understanding; thus, the PSC is an active participant in the district's Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP).

The Following Premises Guided Revision of the Elementary Primary (EP) and the Elementary Intermediate (EI) Activities:

Premise #1: The goal for every student in each school is the maximization of his or her school success in order to maximize life success—now and in the future.

- The lessons emphasize success AND no excuses.
- Every student is to be engaged in the work during each classroom guidance lesson.
- The lessons include processes that help students learn HOW to participate in group conversations.
- Every student verbalizes his or her interpretation and/or personal application of the concepts presented, e.g., students work in small groups or with partners; students are expected to encourage each other to contribute ideas. In whole class conversations, students may pass (i.e., not contribute a thought); however, they must do so with responsibility by verbalizing something as simple as "I pass today."
- PSCs systematically observe students to identify those who have difficulty with any aspect of the lesson as well as those whose strengths make them potential role models; PSCs follow-up with classroom teachers to plan interventions that ensure success for every student.

Premise #2: A fully implemented local K-12 Comprehensive Guidance Program is vital to the total development of each student and thus to maximizing each student's school achievement.

- The importance of the concepts of the MCGP Guidance Curriculum to the life and school success of every student is evidenced in the depth of the lessons.
- Rigor and Relevance are an integral part of each lesson. Every student is expected to demonstrate developmentally appropriate knowledge, skill and understanding of the Comprehensive Guidance Curriculum concepts being taught in each lesson.
- Rigor is evident through the expectation that every student participates in every lesson and through the assessment of content gained or reinforced during each lesson.

- Relevance is emphasized and is assessed through an assessment of each student's personalization of lesson content.

Premise #3: Classroom Guidance lessons are critical not only to the full implementation of the local K-12 Comprehensive Guidance Program, but also to the fulfillment of the district's academic achievement goals for every student. Classroom guidance content and processes are aligned with and facilitate meeting the goals of the district's Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP).

- The supplemental lessons emphasize the importance of PSCs' integration of the school's agreed-upon increasingly complex common core knowledge, skill and understanding into each classroom guidance lesson. The PSC uses the same common vocabulary and processes that are used in the classrooms. For example, a lesson based on conducting short-term research about the factors that influence workers' work satisfaction includes the common vocabulary for graphing and the process used in the classroom for calculating percentage.
- PSCs' systematic observations (see Premise #1) offer an opportunity for PSCs to consult and collaborate with classroom teachers as they work to meet the targets established in the district's CSIP.

The Premises are Evident in COMMON THREADS Embedded in Each Lesson.

- Throughout the lessons emphasis is on **every student** becoming a "smarter thinker" and more respectful of and caring about self AND others: through the processes as well as the content of each lesson, for example:
- **Every student** is expected and encouraged to become actively engaged in personalized **thinking** about the meaning of the purpose of the lessons.
- **Every student** is expected and encouraged to actively **participate** in the processes AND encourage and invite others to participate as well.
- **Every student** is expected and encouraged to become **an advocate for self and for others** during the classroom guidance lessons, in the classroom and throughout the school every day as well as outside of school.

The Premises are further supported in the classroom guidance Supplemental Lessons by promoting the following:

- The **thinking and engagement of every student** throughout each lesson. For example:
- Instructions in the *Student Involvement* column are written as if the writer is talking with **every student** to emphasize the importance of student's understanding of the lesson—to know what to do with heads, hands and heart during lessons.
- Worksheets are titled "**Student Thinking Papers**" to emphasize the importance of expecting **every student** to engage in the process of thinking during each lesson.
- The development of every student's expressive and academic vocabulary. For example:
 - PSCs are encouraged to consult with school leadership and classroom teachers to identify the increasingly-complex common academic vocabulary used throughout the school.
 - PSCs' use of the common vocabulary provides students consistency and reinforcement of vocabulary that is basic to learning increasingly complex academic skills.

- Most lessons include opportunities for **every student** to express herself or himself orally and in writing.
- Words used in all academic content (e.g., describe, compare, narrative [referred to as **Tier 2 vocabulary**]) are used regularly.
- In many lessons “domain specific” vocabulary (e.g., mathematical terms and processes [referred to as **Tier 3 vocabulary**]) are used.
- **Every student** is taught the **Tier 3 vocabulary** that is related to the domain of **comprehensive guidance**; words such as, conflict resolution and decision-making.
- **Rigor**—without saying so, rigor is a common thread of every lesson. For example:
 - **Every student** is encouraged to participate and ask questions in every lesson—no excuses.
 - The **assessments emphasize the demonstration of lesson content**; PSCs are provided broad guidelines for reviewing students’ thinking papers lessons.
This may be seen as “more work”; however, if we are serious about the importance of the MCGP and the Guidance Curriculum, we must hold ourselves accountable for making sure students are proficient in the concepts we believe to be important parts of every student’s learning.
- **Relevance:** The MCGP slogan, *Missouri Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling: Linking School Success to Life Success*, indicates the importance of relevance to life in all aspects of a district’s Comprehensive Guidance Program. Each lesson’s assessment contains 2 aspects: Assessment of Content and Assessment of **every student’s** Personalization of Content. For example:
 - In each lesson **every student** is expected to articulate (in writing or conversation) how he or she will use the knowledge, skill and understanding...today AND in the future.
 - Most lessons include activities that require students to apply what they learned during the lesson. **Every student** reports his or her success/challenges during subsequent lessons. This promotes accountability as well as relevance.

USING THE SUPPLEMENTAL LESSONS

Writing for a mass audience is always a challenge. It brings to mind the story of Goldilocks and her assessment of the three bears’ beds: one was too hard; another was too soft and the third was just right. Some will find there is too much information, others will wish for more and others will find just enough information to implement the lessons efficiently and effectively. Following are ideas to guide your use of the Supplemental Lessons.

Format of Lessons: The Supplemental Lessons use a modification of the format used for the Guidance eLearning Center’s sample MCGP Units/Lessons.

(http://www.missouricareereducation.org/index.php?view=content_area§ion=guidance)

- In some instances, several lessons on the same topic have been “bundled” together because they have a common focus. In these instances, an overview is provided for each lesson and the lessons follow one another in the “PSC Procedures” columns, e.g., Lesson Two begins immediately after Lesson One (the Unit overview and separate lesson overview pages have been omitted).
- Links are provided to Guidance eLearning Center sample Units/Lessons for which the Supplemental Lessons might be appropriate.
- Student and PSC resources are included with lessons. “Student Activity Sheets” are re-named “Student Thinking Papers” to emphasize every student’s thinking.

- Engagement and participation of every student are encouraged with SHOW-ME...SHOUT-OUTS in various forms e.g., one-at-a-time, all at once, hands or thumbs-up (see Glossary).

Getting Ready to Use a Lesson: A suggestion: Require each student to develop a *Classroom Guidance Notebook*. This might be a loose-leaf or spiral bound notebook with pockets for completed thinking papers and student resources or it might be a 3-pronged folder with pockets into which is inserted blank lined paper and completed thinking papers and student resources; use the notebook during each classroom guidance lesson.

- In preparation for each lesson, **read through lessons** to:
 - Develop the “**position-of-the-mind**” of each lesson’s purpose. HOW the lesson is presented will determine the **engagement** of **every student**.
 - Understand **what every student is expected to know and be able to do** as a result of the lesson.
- **Prepare** materials in advance.
- **Develop an individual “style” in the classroom.** Be **courageous AND outrageous**—start lessons with a surprise or a thought provoking question (see lesson Hooks).
- Use the provided “**Student Involvement**” instructions to **develop every student’s understanding of the participation and engagement expectations** during the lesson.
- The **lessons are guides**—recognize and utilize “teachable moments” even though they may take the lesson in a new direction.
- **Use invitations to learning and participation** AND teach students to invite each other to participate. Work toward conversations between and among students.
- **Every student** needs to **hear others** as well as the adult leader (teacher or PSC). **Guard against becoming the “master filter”** for students’ contributions, i.e.,
 - Avoid repeating what students say;
 - Expect every student talk with all members of the class and to make eye contact/look at their peers when talking.
 - Develop a signal for all to use that lets students know when they need to speak louder.
- **Expect every student** to respond using the **standard oral and written English**.
- **Monitor the participation of every student.** Use “wait time” when asking students to respond to questions; this helps **every student** develop his or her ideas and precludes the few responding for the many.
- **Systematically observe every student** to assess his or her level of involvement and achievement of purposes of lessons.
- Provide **opportunities for reflection and projection** at the close of each lesson. Review learning as a group and develop anticipation for next lesson.
- Use **systematic observations** to follow-up lessons with classroom teacher—classroom teacher/PSC partnerships lead to greater school (and life) success for **every student**.
- **Most Important: Be sure everyone has some fun before each lesson is done!** Some of the topics are heavy...having fun leaves students with hope for greater success.

Please let us know if you find errors, something is not clear or you have a favorite BOX activity that was not included in the Supplemental Activities. These are living documents—and your suggestion will make them more meaningful to YOUR life!