

Lower Mekong Initiative

Professional Communication Skills for Leaders

Core Curriculum

1st Edition



**ENGLISH
LANGUAGE
PROGRAMS**

Department of State
United States of America

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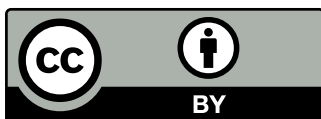
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PCSL Core Curriculum Overview



Overview

This introduction provides readers with information on **The Lower Mekong Initiative Professional Communication Skills for Leaders** project, the curriculum development process, the intended audience, and the overall curriculum structure.

Project Background

The **Lower Mekong Initiative (LMI)**, launched in 2009, is a multinational partnership among Cambodia, Laos, Burma, Thailand, Vietnam, and the United States to create integrated sub-regional cooperation among the five Lower Mekong countries. LMI serves as a platform to address complex, transnational development and policy challenges in the Lower Mekong sub-region.

LMI members develop shared responses to cross-border challenges in six main “**Pillar**” areas:

- Agriculture and Food Security
- Connectivity
- Education
- Energy Security
- Environment and Water Security
- Health

LMI’s Education Pillar encompasses programs that improve English language capacity, increase technical and teacher training, and foster greater regional cooperation.

Under the LMI Education Pillar, the United States is supporting LMI partner countries through bilateral and regional programs that improve English language capacity, increase technical and teacher training, and foster greater regional cooperation. This pillar is co-chaired by Thailand and the United States.

One of the signature projects of the Education Pillar is the **Professional Communication Skills for Leaders** (PCSL) project, a 5-year undertaking in all five LMI countries that seeks to build the capacity and confidence of mid- to upper-level government officials to use English for conferences and meetings. Presentation skills form the main focus of the project.

During the five years of the project, over 2,000 government officials and professionals from the five LMI countries participated in 5-6 day, pillar-themed, intensive face-to-face seminars, with approximately 30 seminars occurring in each country. During these seminars, participants improved their ability to communicate effectively in regional and international meetings and developed PowerPoint™ and oral presentations in their fields of expertise.

Curriculum Development

The LMI PCSL Core Curriculum was originally created to support and standardize the LMI PCSL seminars. It was developed by U.S. English Language Fellows, one in each of the 5 LMI countries, who worked on an instructional team with local co-teachers to implement and teach the LMI PCSL seminars. The instructional objectives, activities, and materials in this Open Source curriculum were drawn from the active, project-based learning that happened in the seminars, and honed by feedback from participants, local co-teachers, and EL Specialist Donna Brinton in order to be accessible to a wide range of educational settings. The curriculum contains seven units: **Professional Introductions, Conferences as Professional Development, Conference Abstracts, PowerPoint™ for Conferences, Public Speaking and Oral Presentations, Communication for Conferences,** and **Pronunciation.**

Curriculum Audience

The LMI PCSL Core Curriculum is a series of **English for Professional Purposes (EPP)** seminars designed to equip students with the skills necessary to successfully participate in multi-cultural, professional conferences. The curriculum units are constructed to guide students through the mandatory steps for a productive conference experience, including navigating the application process, developing a PowerPoint and oral presentation, communicating with other conference professionals in a variety of settings, and successfully delivering a conference presentation. While the curriculum's primary function is to be utilized by teachers and trainers who are instructing working professionals, it may also be applied in other educational settings, such as university courses or advanced high school courses. The curriculum is designed to expose teachers to a range of communicative and student-centered classroom activities in order to introduce new teaching techniques which can be adapted and used in a variety of instructional settings.

Curriculum Structure

The LMI PCSL Core Curriculum is flexibly structured in order to be implemented in a variety of teaching situations. Teachers may choose to teach the units in an intensive seminar, covering multiple units over the course of one or two weeks, or integrate specific units or lesson plans as needed to enhance the communication skills of students' during a stand-alone workshop or over the course of a regular class. Since the curriculum units are all designed to be taught as stand-alone, the teacher is able to select the topics that are the most appropriate to their students' needs, without needing to teach the entire curriculum. Each unit contains a short unit overview, providing teachers with the background and approach of the lesson plans, as well as implementation recommendations in order to bring the greatest benefit to the students. The beginning of each lesson plan provides teachers with an overview of the objectives, student copies and resources, and technology requirements.

The examples provided in the lesson plans have been kept general enough to be accessible to teachers working in a variety of content areas. However, each of the lesson plans contains integrated content boxes, which provide suggestions to the teacher on how to tie the lesson content to students' professional areas of interest and to integrate content-specific language into the activities.