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A LEADER'S GREATEST VOICE: WHAT THEY DON'T SAY!

by

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Abstract

The Air University Online Masters Program (OLMP) Leadership Concentration provides its students professional military education at the company grade level which in part focuses on speaking and listening. In addition, the Air Force (AF) Institutional Competency List provides competency goals and proficiency behaviors an officer must meet in order to be considered skilled. Skilled competencies in both speaking and listening require knowledge in the use of effective body language and nonverbal communication. An evaluation of the OLMP Leadership Concentration curriculum was conducted to measure how well the current curriculum met the competency goals and proficiency behaviors desired by the AF in the competencies of speaking and listening. Key findings revealed a largely cursory level of knowledge was provided in the curriculum content. This contributed to gaps in competency goal attainment, as well as an imbalance between the knowledge provided for the speaking verses listening competencies. Changes to the program curriculum are recommended to address the gaps in competency goal attainment and balance content provided between the speaking and listening competencies.

Introduction

In a world where information is transmitted everywhere in a matter of seconds and common use consumer products permit near continuous recording, officer Professional Military Education (PME) must teach the knowledge and skills necessary to exploit the effective use of body language and nonverbal communication. The greatest assets to the United States Air Force (USAF) mission are the people. The men and women, both enlisted and officer, provide the center-point of knowledge, skills and capabilities to meet and exceed the security demands of the nation. This knowledge, skill, and capability do not just happen by accident. Considerable time and resources are invested into the force development of each Airmen ensuring they are educated, trained and properly experienced for all actions they are required to perform.

AF officers are required to have at least a bachelor's level of education prior to being considered for commissioning. From the moment an officer takes the oath, they begin their force development journey through the AF continuum of learning (CoL) where their knowledge, skill and capabilities are enhanced through professional military education.¹ Every officer starts with the most basic of learning requirements, such as the proper wear of the uniform or when and how to salute. As they progress through their careers, numerous PME opportunities permit them to assume responsibilities that encompass entire squadrons, wings, departments, or regions of the globe. Much of an officer's role as a leader involves effective communication in all mediums.

The unique aspects of the AF mission requires specific resources such as the *Tongue and Quill*, which officers use at all levels of their careers to ensure their written messages are communicated properly.² While communication in the written form can be improved with knowledge from resources such as the *Tongue and Quill*, the officer's role as a leader can place him or her in many situations where actions often speak louder than words. Considering this, AF

officer PME needs to provide education and training in effective body language and nonverbal communication techniques. The AF is constantly evaluating their PME programs, looking for areas to improve and better ways to meet the ever-changing demands on the service. The growing visibility on officers as they perform their leadership roles is a demand on the service that must be addressed.

There are many venues through which the AF provides PME to its officers. As stated above, an officer's force development starts from the very first moment he or she crosses over the blue line. As the officer advances through the CoL, AFI-36-2301 requires the attendance of Basic Developmental Education (BDE) followed by Intermediate Developmental Education (IDE), and finally Senior Developmental Education (SDE).³ The OLMP Leadership Concentration is an important step in this continuum of force development. Therefore, the question must be asked: Does the USAF Online Masters Program (OLMP) Leadership Concentration satisfy the desired force development goals of AF officers regarding the role of body language in both speaking and listening?

The USAF OLMP Leadership Concentration needs to include more detailed information on the role of body language in speaking and listening to satisfy the desired force development goals for AF officers. Current OLMP Leadership Concentration curriculum mentions the importance of body language in speaking and listening, but remains at a cursory level, falling short of the desired force development goals.

Current technology can place an AF officer both anywhere and everywhere at the same time. In the past, phone conferencing permitted officers to verbally communicate across vast distances, allowing only the nonverbal elements of tone and rate of speech to be conveyed. Today's, virtual teleconferencing technology facilitates officers in video-linked rooms to

communicate as if they were all physically together. The full view of each person's body language and nonverbal behavior is scrutinized in these virtual environments. Technology has also provided journalists and press elements with the ability to embed down to some of the smallest of operational levels, placing junior officers in full view of the public eye.

The OLMP Leadership Concentration occurs at a specific point in an officer's force development. At this point the officer is growing their competencies from the level of intermediate to proficient and, in some cases, skilled. To be proficient or skilled in communication through body language and nonverbal methods requires more than a cursory level of knowledge. There are many specific sub-competencies addressed in the OLMP Leadership Concentration, such as negotiation or developing and inspiring others, that cannot ignore the need for knowledge in body language and nonverbal communication.⁴ The very nature of a negotiation can yield more benefit to the officer if they can understand their own as well as other's behavior.

Body language expert, Tonya Reiman, estimates over 93% of communication is done through body language or nonverbal means. This consists of thousands of different messages, some discernible and some not; many of which often speak louder than the words with which they are associated. The world of body language and nonverbal communication is familiar to every member of the AF, as well as society as a whole. During each officer's first few years as a baby, they learned much about how to function in a nonverbal world where the message can only be transmitted and received through an understanding of body language.⁵ As verbal skills are acquired, the use of body language does not leave the equation. It just takes more of an unconscious role.

The framework for this research paper will be an evaluation. The OLMP Leadership Concentration curriculum considers the role of body language in speaking and listening. However, an evaluation is warranted to see if the courses are providing knowledge that is adequate to the desires of the AF. Beginning with a brief introduction of the research question, followed by the thesis, the basics of body language in human interaction will be reviewed specifically in relation to speaking and listening. Consideration will be provided for AF policy that lists the goals of officer force development, which ultimately determines what is to be trained, how the training is to be executed, and who is to conduct it.

The goals and intent of the OLMP Leadership Concentration must also be considered, specifically its lessons and curriculum pertaining to body language and nonverbal communication. The analysis will compare what is included in the current OLMP Leadership Concentration about body language and nonverbal communication to what experts in the field consider important to reach the Air Force's definition of "skilled."

The results will paint a picture of how well the curriculum meets the level of proficiency the AF mandates of the speaking and listening competencies. Any recommendations as to what changes should be made to meet the force development goals of the AF will become apparent.

What is Body Language?

Prior to any verbal communication taking place between two or more people, it is likely multiple messages have already been received and interpreted. These messages are transmitted through an orchestra of body language and nonverbal communication rooted in posture, gestures, expressions, body positioning, tone, speech rate; the list goes on and on. This orchestra continues

its melody in concert with the subsequent verbal portion of any interaction and completes the final overture long after the verbal component has departed. Body language can be divided into three categories. In those categories are gestures which themselves can be classified into three categories of their own. When exploring body language and nonverbal communication it can be best understood through the face, the body or both.⁶ Once a person has a method of understanding and cataloging the different signals or gestures of an interaction, they can then apply the truths and tips of body language and nonverbal communication. Joining all of this with an established behavioral baseline for the person who is speaking or listening, a leader can enhance their ability to find the level of congruence that accompanies any message.

The three types of body language are kinesics, which defines the motion of the body relating to facial expressions, as well as gestures; haptics, which explains how touch is used in communication; and proxemics, which focuses on the physical distances people display through various forms of communication. All of these types apply to both the face and body.⁷ Every physical encounter between two or more people involves all three categories. However, today's virtual meeting technology has the ability to remove in many situations, the proxemics component.

When a person is speaking or engaging in active listening while being spoken to, it is easy be drawn to the body language or nonverbal signals of the face. Expressions such as a smile, a smirk, a chin lift or a frown will often speak louder than the accompanying words. What is less known is that up to 38% of all communication comes in the form of vocal cues other than speech.⁸ This is done through the analysis of the pitch, speed, tone, and volume of a person's voice. Additionally, it was widely believed for some time facial expressions in humans were unique to a particular region or culture. While there are regional and cultural influences on body

language and nonverbal communication, the expressions with which humans show the most common feelings are universal. The research of two experts in the field of body language found facial expressions of surprise, fear, anger, sadness, disgust, happiness, and contempt were universal the world over.⁹ While this information presents a compelling argument towards the role of the face in nonverbal dialogue, the body provides an even better resource of communication.

The body also communicates both intended and unintended messages in concert with the face in all three body language categories: kinesics, haptics, and proxemics. This communication can come from any part of the body including the head, arm, shoulder, torso waist, legs or feet. Any movements by any parts of the body are referred to as gestures which are also grouped into three different categories: adaptors, emblems, and illustrators.¹⁰ Many researches also include other signals such as skin color (flushed), temperature (goose bumps) or condition (sweaty) as body language. However for the purposes of this research, the focus will be on the three gestural categories mentioned.

Adaptors are any movement or behavior indicating a person's feelings such as anxiety or puzzlement. These feelings can affect the levels of energy a person experiences in a given situation. They usually occur unconsciously and, as their name indicates, help a person adapt by providing a vector for their energy. Basically they are the physical communication of a person's thought and feeling processes. Commonly experienced adaptors include the tapping of the feet, cocking of the head to one side, or scratching.¹¹

An emblem gesture is an agreed upon meaning in society based on its popularity across a culture or region. Emblems are not to be mistaken with an established gestural language such as those used for the hearing impaired. They are commonly used when convenience or limitations

to the situation make them preferable to other forms of communication. The best example of this would be the thumbs up sign a hitchhiker uses to flag down a ride. However, context is very important when interpreting an emblem gesture because the thumbs up signal of a hitchhiker is also the same signal a person may use to indicate they approve of the current situation.¹²

Illustrator gestures specifically accompany any form of communication, most commonly verbal. These gestures are unique both to the message of the situation as well as to the person doing the communication. They are the most commonly used of all three types of gestures and are almost always unconscious. The best example of an illustrator is any hand movements a person uses while speaking. Being specific to the situation illustrators can only be interpreted in context such as hand movements to indicate intensity, size, impact, etc. The use of an illustrator without any other form of communication often leads to a miss-communication.¹³

The benefit of understanding the basics of body language and nonverbal communication opens new lanes of analysis from which more information can be gained in a given situation. However, to avoid a miscommunication, there are some truths and tips to remember when interpreting body language or nonverbal cues. Figure 1 is a collection from two experts in the field of body language and nonverbal communication on their truths and tips concerning interpretation.

Figure 1 Truths and Tips of Body Language

Reiman's Five Truths of Body Language		Goman's Four Tips for Reading Body Language	
1	Body language is constant	1	Pay attention! Do not miss a signal
2	Body language is always determined by context	2	Identify the baseline of a person
3	Body Language can never be judged by one single event	3	Evaluate gestual clusters
4	Body Language reveals the discrepancies about what one person says and what they truly believe	4	Consider Context
5	Mirco-expressions are brief gestures that betray our inner feelings	Source: Carol Kinsey-Goman, <i>The Silent Language of Leaders</i>	
Source: Tonya Reiman, <i>The Power of Body Language</i>			

The most apparent observation between the truths and tips from both experts is how much they are in agreement. Both clearly state body language is constant, needs to be considered in context, and cannot be purely judged by a single signal or gesture. The experts diverge when Reiman focuses on the ability to identify when the communicated message does not match the truth.¹⁴ Goman insists on the importance of identifying a person's baseline.¹⁵ The opinions of both experts are important when a speaker or a listener seeks to rely on body language or nonverbal communication to enhance their performance in a given situation. Knowing how to determine a person's baseline allows for the detection of the truth.

Both Goman and Reiman provide good advice to help identify a person's baseline. Determining a baseline is frequently called "norming" or becoming familiar with someone's normal body language habits. Reiman's approach focuses efforts on reading the face. She recommends the use of a series of questions in which a person would have no reason to answer untruthfully. They are asked in succession and the person asking them would look for repeated clusters of facial expressions. Any deviation from these clusters of expression in subsequent interactions suggests the subject may be altering the true message.¹⁶ Goman advocates a more

hands-off approach of observing a person's behavior in a relaxed low stress environment. She looks for clues in the person's eye contact, posture, hand gestures, general animation while speaking, and forced vs. genuine facial expressions.¹⁷ Using the techniques from both experts will provide a solid baseline from which congruence between the displayed message and the truth can be measured.

A leader's ability to deliver a message or judge the message being delivered to them will be measured based on the level of congruence they can detect. Congruence is basically a determination of how consistent a message is across all forms of communication such as, verbal vs. gestures, facial expressions vs. language of the body, or verbal vs. nonverbal speech cues. A good example of effect of congruence is provided in Malcom Gladwell's observations of Cesar Millan as he worked with troubled dogs. Dogs, being unable to communicate verbally, must rely on body language and nonverbal communication in their interactions with humans. Cesar must do what is called "phasing" which is to find congruence across all his nonverbal signals as best as possible or the efforts toward helping the troubled dog are wasted.¹⁸ Humans, however, can communicate verbally. Therefore, congruence between nonverbal forms as well as congruence with the verbal message is paramount.

Two studies on congruence and incongruence provide insights to its importance in human communication. The first study sought to determine how well the intended message could be interpreted through congruent vs. incongruent body language. The results found congruence between the body and the face produced accurate recognition of the intended message 86.3% to 91.6% on the time. However, when the intended message was displayed with an incongruent face and body combination, accuracy was seen as low as 21.1%.¹⁹ The second study linked the body language cues of the face and body together, with the verbal component of communication

in an effort to detect incongruence in a message. The results found incongruence was best detected when people were able to compare the visually displayed body language against what was communicated verbally.²⁰ Understanding the importance of congruence in both speaking and listening is essential to a leadership position. When speaking, a leader's congruence will be determined by their belief in the message. When listening, leaders must measure the level of the speaker's congruence to ensure they are getting the true message. The AF wants leaders with these skills, has mandated it in their force development policy, and has delegated the responsibility to PME resources throughout an officer's career.

What is force development policy and execution in the Air Force?

AF policy seeks to meet force development goals through the use of competency-based development behaviors. As an officer advances through the CoL, knowledge in these competency behaviors is built upon to grow the officer's capabilities. There are many avenues or educational opportunities available for officers to ensure their force development remains in step with their rank and responsibility. The AF has assigned the responsibility of force development execution to Air Education and Training Command (AETC); which in turn uses Air University (AU) and the OLMP Leadership Concentration to meet policy goals.

AF policy states competency-based development will be used to produce organizational goals.²¹ These competencies have been identified on the institutional competency list (ICL) and apply to all Airmen. Details of the ICL will be presented in the next section. The policy also directs the continued evaluation of the institutional competency programs to measure their effectiveness and make necessary changes. The programs must be able to adapt to changes in the

strategic environment, address challenges of technological advances, be capabilities based and be dynamic. Multiple avenues are established to facilitate this training including PME, Advanced Academic Degree (AAD) education, and Professional Continuing Education (PCE).²² While policy directs the establishment of the ICL and training avenues, there still remains the responsibility to execute force development.

Execution of force development is a career-long process that leverages the CoL to maximize an officer's capabilities against the demands of their environment. To become a qualified candidate for further responsibilities, officers must know what force development opportunities are available to them at any point in their careers. The expectations of those opportunities must be clearly stated with detailed information concerning each specific institutional competency (IC). The training must be geared toward anticipated assignments, technology or deployments with the goal of building the institutional and occupational competencies of the officer. It must also occur at the appropriate time in an officer's career when they have had the opportunity to master competencies identified for their current grade. Simply understanding where an officer should be in the CoL is not enough to meet the responsibilities of their position. Officers must be aware of and encourage their subordinates to advance their skills appropriately as well.²³ The execution of force development is designed to invest the right education, training, and experience into the right people at the right time. This is done through specific training avenues like the OLMP Leadership Concentration.

The most common avenues of force development for officers are the PME courses of Squadron Officer School (SOS), Air Command and Staff College (ACSC) and Air War College (AWC).²⁴ These courses are also referred to as Institutional Competency Development Programs (ICDP) as they are an important step in advancing an officer's IC levels.²⁵ The OLMP

Leadership Concentration is an additional step an officer can take to ensure their mastery of ICs while advancing through the CoL. Air University is responsible to ensure that the OLMP Leadership Concentration meets the IC policies of the AF as well as the requirements to award attendees an AAD.²⁶ Captains preparing to attend the OLMP Leadership Concentration will have met the proficient competency levels required by the AF due to their completion of prerequisite PME. SOS allows AF Captains to reach this proficient level in body language and nonverbal communication through their own curriculum.²⁷

With an understanding of force development policy, execution, and avenues of training the methods of evaluating the OLMP Leadership Concentration can be determined. Specifically, the areas of body language and nonverbal communication in a leader's role of both speaking and listening.

How to evaluate the OLMP Leadership Concentration.

An evaluation of the OLMP Leadership Concentration is warranted to see if the program satisfies desired force development goals of AF officers regarding the role of body language in both speaking and listening. This can be focused into two areas: First, an identification of the ICs that the AF deems necessary to the development of officers through the CoL. Further examination of these ICs will identify the specific areas where body language and nonverbal communication play an important role. Second, a look at the OLMP Leadership Concentrations goal's and curriculum to see how the ICs are included. Much of the OLMP Leadership Concentration curriculum focuses lessons on the specific ICs where body language and nonverbal communication have this important role.

Before the deep dive into AF Manuals, instructions and policy documents it is important to note the overall goal. What is it the AF wants to teach its leaders? The best place to begin is the AF Institutional Competency List (ICL), Figure 2. This list was developed to identify strategies, policies, and processes from which education programs can be built to ensure Airmen have the necessary leadership expertise to accomplish the mission.²⁸ Working from the left to the right of Figure 2 there are three categories from which the AF has developed eight competencies. Further right, these competencies are expanded to provide specific sub-competencies of which many are heavily influenced by effective understanding of body language and nonverbal communication. This evaluation will focus more specifically on the two sub-competencies listed in Figure 3 and their connection to body language and nonverbal communication.

Figure 2 AF Institutional Competency List		
Category	Competency	Sub-competency
Personal	Embodies Airman Culture	- Ethical Leadership
		- Followership
		- Warrior Ethos
		- Develops Self
	Communicating	- Speaking and Writing
		- Active Listening
People/Team	Leading People	- Develops and Inspires Others
		- Takes Care of People
		- Diversity
	Fostering Collaborative Relationships	- Builds Teams and Coalitions
		- Negotiating
Organizational	Employing Military Capabilities	- Operational and Strategic Art
		- Leverage Technology
		- Unit, Air Force, Joint, and Coalition Capabilities
		- Non-adversarial Crisis Response
	Enterprise Perspective	- Enterprise Structure and Relationships
		- Government Organization and Processes
		- Global, Regional, and Cultural Awareness
		- Strategic Communication
	Managing Organizations and Resources	- Resource Stewardship
		- Change Management
		- Continuous Improvement
	Strategic Thinking	- Vision
		- Decision-making
		- Adaptability
Source: AFDD Annex 1-1 Force Development		

Figure 3 Body Language and Nonverbal Sub-Competencies
Sub-competency
- Speaking and Writing
- Active Listening

Source: AFDD Annex I-1 Force Development

Air University (AU) was identified as the authority for the creation, implementation and evaluation of many institutional competency development programs; SOS, and ACSC being some of the more commonly recognized ICDPs.²⁹ The OLMP Leadership Concentration is administered under ACSC but remains an outlier, as it is a program that unlike other concentrations does not give IDE credit. However, the course was built around the ICL and is designed as an avenue for junior captains to attain an AAD as well as get a jump-start on their upcoming IDE.³⁰ This being the case, the program is restricted to captains who have at least two years in grade, have completed SOS, and do not already possess a Masters degree.³¹ From this standpoint, the criteria for measuring what level of understanding OLMP Leadership Concentration captains should attain of the ICs can be determined.

In Figure 4, the AF has stated the institutional competency proficiency definitions and descriptive behaviors. Of importance are the definitions of proficient and skilled as these explain to what level an AF officer should understand a specific sub-competency upon completing either SOS or ACSC. Figure 5 shows the proficiency levels as they are mapped to both SOS and ACSC as well as a brief description of the behavior that would represent an appropriate level of understanding for the associated ICDP. The OLMP Leadership Concentration can best be evaluated by comparing between the two ICDPs. Figure 5 has been simplified to include only two sub-competencies from the 25 in Figure 2. Analysis shows that between the completion of SOS and the completion of ACSC the AF desires its officers to transition from proficient to

skilled in the sub-competencies of speaking and active listening.³² The ICL provided the answer to the question of what the AF wants to teach its leaders. In addition, the definitions and descriptive behaviors have been identified and correlated to the corresponding ICDPs in the officer CoL. The opportunity has arrived to dive one level deeper by looking at the goals and curriculum of the OLMP Leadership Concentration.

Figure 4 Proficiency Level Definitions

Basic – Airmen are focused on learning and developing a foundation skill set. They face similar challenges and have limited responsibilities and are given narrowly focused tasks.
Intermediate – Airmen continue to learn and develop professional skills, understand how to leverage other professionals and knowledge sources, and begin to apply knowledge of the assigned objectives to their work.
Proficient – Airmen leverage knowledge of issues and objectives to design and develop solutions. They understand how actions taken in one area of competence impact other related areas, and establish and manage the scope and quality of those areas of an assignment for which they are responsible. They may manage complex organizations.
Skilled – Airmen leverage knowledge of strategies and issues to develop, present, and implement solutions. They consult with other subject matter experts and have a deep understanding how actions taken in one area of competence impact other related areas within proposed solutions. They contribute to the development of new levels of capabilities by articulating the added value of proposed solutions to leadership and staff and are considered subject matter experts within their organizational area. In addition, they may manage large, complex multi-tiered organizations.
Advanced – Airmen impact the organization and the Air Force by leveraging their knowledge and expertise across the theatre to identify and address the critical success factors for complex areas. They apply knowledge of the strategic alignment of solutions with Air Force mission objectives and serve as recognized subject matter experts and thought leaders inside and outside their own organizations and/or represent the Air Force externally. In addition, they may manage large, complex multi-tiered organizations.

Source: AFMAN 36-2647, Institutional Competency Development and Management

Figure 5. Proficiency Level Descriptive Behaviors for Each IC Sub-competency.

Sub-Competency	SOS	Behaviors
Speaking and Writing	Proficient	Interprets receiver's level of understanding by seeking input and validating understanding of written and verbal communications.
Active listening	Proficient	Seeks clarification and can repeat message to sender.
Sub-Competency	ACSC	Behavior
Speaking and Writing	Skilled	Synthesizes, composes, and adjusts or frames message and delivery style. Adjusts message to audience's experience, background, and expectations. Uses terms, examples, and analogies that are meaningful to the audience.
Active listening	Skilled	Correctly interprets and synthesizes messages from others and responds appropriately.

Source: AFMAN 36-2647, Institutional Competency Development and Management

The following is an examination of the objectives of each of the four LC courses which were specifically designed to address all the institutional competencies.³³ The OLMP Leadership Concentration's four courses are; EL 5301 Expeditionary Leadership in Intercultural Environments, FO 5301 Foundations of Officership, OL 5301 Organizational Leadership and TL 5301 Team Building Leadership.³⁴ An analysis of the syllabi of all four find that each course has at least one section applicable to the two identified sub-competencies.

Expeditionary Leadership 5301 has the overall goal of helping the military officer prepare for operations in the expeditionary environment. The focus is on an officer's role of relocating to a foreign land, engaging in military operations for extended periods of time and maintaining a hardness of spirit through the unique context of cultural and regional experiences. The Communication Skills lesson has significant connections to the two sub-competencies associated with body language and nonverbal communication. The lesson explores the role of communication through the cultural lens with an emphasis on tone, gestures, facial expressions, and posture; all of which are key elements of body language and nonverbal communication.³⁵

Fundamentals of Officership 5301 seeks to encourage the AF officer to take responsibility for their own development as well as support them in reaching their full potential. The emphasis is to get the officer to commit to the idea of life-long learning, continuous self-assessment, and understand the importance of feedback. Two lessons in this course are of particular importance, Communication and Public Speaking. The Communication lesson focuses on the officer's requirement to be clear, concise and convincing while communicating.

Knowledge of communication concepts, as well as potential barriers, will enable the officer to adjust his or her approach to unique environments and/or audience needs. The Public Speaking

lesson teaches the importance of professional communication in physical venues. The officer will be taught the process of speechmaking and the goals of delivery through different forms of public address.³⁶

Organizational Leadership 5301 is designed to develop officer organizational and leadership skills particularly through times of change. Leading change requires the officer to consider the complexity of the organization, the human element as well as the process and products needed to effectively communicate. The lesson on organizational communication highlights the important fact that goals will not be met or exceeded if people cannot communicate. The different patterns and links of communication will provide the stability and structure needed for messages to be delivered effectively.³⁷ To lead through times of change, the AF officer will need to rely on congruent body language and nonverbal communication knowledge.

Team Building Leadership 5301 is focused on the perspective of junior officers as they learn to lead with skills from a wide variety of academic disciplines. The course blends the theory of these disciplines with practical examples. The overall goal is the enhancement of the officer's skill sets. The lesson on communication, collaboration, culture and command starts with strategies on the communication of good ideas followed by collaboration to make them better. From there, the student will think about ways to build organizational structure for the purpose of command. The lesson also pulls in information from earlier sections allowing students to look at successes and failures of the past commands. Each part of this lesson has significant connections to the body language and nonverbal communication techniques commanders display in all situations.³⁸

The stage has been set for identifying the methods and criteria needed to evaluate the body language and nonverbal knowledge in the OLMP Leadership Concentration. The narrowing of the 25 sub-competencies into two that have significant connections to body language and nonverbal communication has limited the focus of this evaluation to a level that will yield effective results. Proficiency definitions and descriptive behaviors, mapped to both the SOS and ACSC levels of the officer CoL, provide an intimate guide to evaluate the four courses of the OLMP Leadership Concentration. Further exploration into the goals of each course and identification of which lessons are connected to the two sub-competencies will permit the review of curriculum to see where body language and nonverbal communication knowledge is included. Comparing this to the background knowledge on body language discussed earlier will render solid results.

Results of Evaluation

Evaluating OLMP course content for body language and nonverbal communication can be daunting as they are vast disciplines ranging from the tone of a person's voice to the smell of their body. This evaluation produces complete information on what the AF currently teaches OLMP Leadership Concentration students on the role of body language in speaking and listening. ICDP descriptive behaviors as well as goals listed on the ICL were compared to the knowledge from each communications lesson to produce the results. These results identify where there is cursory knowledge, detailed knowledge or no knowledge at all that satisfies the goals of the AF.

The four courses of the OLMP Leadership Concentration each contain eight lessons for a total of 32 in the entire program. Five lessons, or about 16% of the program total, directly involve communication competency; a list of those lessons can be found in Figure 6.³⁹ The

curriculum of those five lessons contain 27 individual references to sources of communication knowledge. Upon review of all 27 communication sources, 60% were found to reference body language or nonverbal communication in speaking and listening.

Figure 6 OLMP
Communications Lessons

EL, Lesson 7	Intercultural communication skills
FO, Lesson 5	Communications
FO, Lesson 6	Public speaking
OL, Lesson 4	Organizational communication
TL, Lesson 7	Communication, collaboration, culture, command

Source: AU catalog

Figure 7 below lists the evaluations results. In this figure, the "skilled" level descriptive behaviors of the ICDP chart, as well as the speaking and listening descriptions found on the ICL, were compared and grouped into eight different categories representing the Air Force's competency goals in both speaking and listening. The top half of Figure 7 has four categories for speaking listed from left to right. The bottom half of Figure 7 has the four categories for listening, also from left to right. In the rows below are the individual lessons on communication from the OLMP Leadership Concentration courses (Figure 6) each with its own ability to be measured against all eight categories. The descriptors of "Cursory" and "Detailed" are used to indicate the level of knowledge the curriculum provides in the specific field associated with either speaking or listening. In some fields the descriptor of "Cursory & Detailed" is used to indicate that mostly cursory knowledge was found. However, a small amount of detailed information was also discovered. The absence of any descriptor in a field indicates that there was no specific knowledge provided.

Cursory level knowledge is found where there is a mention of the importance of body language but no elaboration to provide any detailed guidance or specific information. Detailed knowledge consists of steps, examples, exercises, studies, practices, and so on; that will grow a

person's speaking and listening capabilities in body language or nonverbal communication. Just because a category may have a field not containing a descriptor does not mean the curriculum does not meet AF competency goals. Most lessons in the OLMP Leadership Concentration will not cover knowledge falling in all evaluation fields. Therefore descriptors from every individual communication lesson as a whole need to be considered in their associated category.

Figure 7 OLMP Leadership Concentration evaluation results

		Speaking			
		Synthesizes, composes, and adjusts or frames message and delivery style.	Adjust message to audience's experience, background and expectations	Uses terms, examples, and analogies that are meaningful to the audience.	Effectively creates communication bridges among units, organizations and institutions
EL, 7	Intercultural communication skills	Detailed	Detailed		Detailed
FO, 5	Communications	Detailed	Cursory		
FO, 6	Public speaking	Cursory			
OL, 4	Organizational communication	Cursory & Detailed	Cursory		
TL, 7	Communication, collaboration, culture, command	Detailed	Detailed		Detailed
		Active Listening			
		Correctly interprets and synthesizes messages from others and responds appropriately.	Fosters the free flow of ideas in an atmosphere of open exchange.	Actively attempts to understand others' points of view and clarifies information as needed.	Solicits feedback to ensure that others understand messages as they were intended.
EL, 7	Intercultural communication skills	Cursory & Detailed	Cursory	Cursory	Cursory
FO, 5	Communications	Cursory			
FO, 6	Public speaking	Cursory	Cursory		
OL, 4	Organizational communication	Cursory		Cursory	
TL, 7	Communication, collaboration, culture, command	Cursory & Detailed		Detailed	Cursory

The five lessons and eight categories for both speaking and listening create 40 total fields to measure the curriculum. A total of 23, or 58%, of the evaluation fields found curriculum references that met the criteria for cursory, detailed, or cursory & detailed descriptors. Further

examination of those 23 fields showed 35% containing detailed level knowledge, 52% containing cursory level knowledge, and 13% containing cursory & detailed level knowledge. All eight categories had at least two fields populated with a descriptor with the exception of the third category in speaking which had no descriptors in its fields. Over 72% of the detailed knowledge fell in the speaking fields where conversely 75% of the cursory knowledge fell into the listening fields. Overall the total number of descriptors in all fields was split almost evenly with 48% in the speaking fields and 52% in the listening fields.

Individual evaluation of the 16 communication references containing body language and nonverbal communication yielded the following results. Detailed knowledge was found to come from almost 38% of the total 16 with one reference alone accounting for 40% of that total. The remaining 62% of references contained cursory knowledge. The references containing both cursory & detailed knowledge came from 25% or just 4 references out of the 16 total. The most important observation to note is the single curriculum reference, providing 40% of the detailed knowledge, was entirely focused on cross-cultural body language and nonverbal communication.⁴⁰ Another reference providing an additional 17% of detailed knowledge was focused on negotiation strategies.⁴¹ While detailed information contributed much to meeting the AF competency goals, many gaps remained, accounting for 42% of the fields in figure 7.

As stated previously, the absence of a descriptor in a field does not by itself indicate where the curriculum is not meeting competency goals. All the rows of a particular category must be looked at together to evaluate the effect of the individual communication lessons as a whole. Easiest to see are categories where there are no descriptors in any of the fields. This indicates where the OLMP leadership curriculum has no communication lessons meeting the associated competency goal of the AF. Mentioned earlier, only one of the eight categories fits

this description. However, to understand where knowledge is truly falling short of the "skilled" goal, the categories with fields containing only cursory knowledge must be examined in the same fashion. This adds two more categories from the speaking sub-competency, *fosters the free flow of ideas in an atmosphere of open exchange* and *solicits feedback to ensure that others understand messages as they were intended*. In addition, the category, *correctly interprets and synthesizes messages from others and responds appropriately*, also in speaking, comes close as it only contains cursory and cursory & detailed descriptors. Finally, taking a step back and comparing the speaking categories vs. the listening categories as a whole we see an overwhelming amount of detailed knowledge references supporting the speaking categories, demonstrating a knowledge imbalance between the two.

Clearly, if the AF desires to meet the "skilled" criteria it has mandated for communication competencies, there needs to be a change to the OLMP Leadership Concentration curriculum. Detailed knowledge needs to be sought and included to help fill the gaps not only in the underserved categories of Figure 7 but also to balance the knowledge deficit between the speaking and listening sub-competencies. Analysis of this evaluation will provide insight to what is needed and where to implement it.

Analysis of results

The most important factor to consider while analyzing the results of this evaluation is that the AF wants the OLMP Leadership Concentration to provide captains with a skilled proficiency in communication. Evidence of this is apparent in the current size of the AF when compared to any time in its history. Since 1968, the AF has encountered a slow, precipitous decline in manpower to the point where today it is accomplishing diverse missions in more domains with

roughly a third of the 1968 personnel numbers.^{42 43} The Regional Affairs Strategist (RAS) is an example of a diverse mission in which an AF captain will rely heavily on body language and nonverbal communication. The RAS program places captains in specific regions all over the world where they are required to interact with different cultures, learn as much as they can, and then return as a subject matter expert for policy decision makers.⁴⁴ The diversity of missions such as RAS, across more domains, with less personnel has required the AF to rely more on the competencies of its leaders.

A simplification of the skilled proficiency level definition provides three important considerations when analyzing what should be taught to officers about body language and nonverbal communication. An officer must first, present solutions: second, consult with others on those solutions: and, finally be able to articulate the value of those solutions.⁴⁵ Presenting, consulting and articulating must be considered when analyzing examples of skilled references in the OLMP Leadership Concentration curriculum. Analyzing knowledge from categories that provided a skilled descriptor will highlight the caliber of body language and nonverbal communication references needed to meet the collective goals of the AF. Examples and resources from experts in body language and nonverbal communication will be referenced to show where they would add knowledge to the underserved categories of Figure 7. Finally, these expert examples and resources would also be implemented in a way to balance the knowledge deficit between speaking and listening.

In the current OLMP Leadership Concentration curriculum, references that contain detailed knowledge almost always focus specifically on the subject of body language and nonverbal communication. In other words, there is a strong correlation between detailed knowledge being found in a reference when the intention of that reference is to specifically teach

body language and nonverbal communication. The first category under speaking in Figure 7, *correctly interprets and synthesizes messages from others and responds appropriately*, contains many detailed knowledge references. In the Expeditionary Leadership course, one of the references in lesson seven is a book on intercultural competence by Myron Lustig and Jolene Koester. This reference contains an entire chapter that is dedicated to nonverbal intercultural communication. Knowledge from this reference gives details on nonverbal codes, nonverbal relationships to verbal communication, universal characteristics, cultural variations, touch, time, voice, etc. Earlier in this research, three different types of gestures were identified; illustrators, emblems, and adaptors. Surprisingly, not only did the Lustig and Koester reference include the three, it added two more, affect displays, and regulators.⁴⁶

Another reference from lesson five of the Foundations of Officership course also focused specifically on body language and nonverbal communication. This reference was a chapter from the Peace Corps *Language Learning Manual* on nonverbal styles. Detailed knowledge was provided in the form of interactive reading and workbook exercises in which the reader was introduced to body language topics. They were asked questions and encouraged to participate in activities ranging from eye-contact observations to gesture differentiation.⁴⁷ While the desired skilled competencies are easily met by references that have a direct focus on body language and nonverbal communication, it is important to examine cursory & detailed references to understand the difference.

Lesson seven on public speaking, in the Foundations of Officership course has a reference on negotiating from Dr. Norma Carr-Ruffino's book *Building Innovative Skills*. This is important because negotiation is one of the 25 sub-competencies identified on the ICL. However, the main goal of the entire reference is to provide detailed knowledge in negotiation, where body

language and nonverbal communication play a significant role. The reference touched on four examples of detailed body language knowledge, such as addressing the person in power by looking directly into their eyes or listening for anxiety with speech rate changes. The greater body language theme however, was cursory knowledge such as recommending to pay attention to responses or reminding of the importance of congruence.⁴⁸ On the surface, this is good information but the OLMP student is still not provided with enough information to gain skilled competencies.

Examples of cursory knowledge can be found in most references from the four active listening categories. Body Language and nonverbal communication, being such a big part of communication itself, are mentioned frequently in many of the OLMP communications lessons that specifically focus on other topics. The Expeditionary Leadership course is testament to this, as it uses the chapter on building relationships with interpreters from Army Field Manual 5-34 to teach knowledge about intercultural communications. The goal of this reference is to provide students with knowledge about how to recruit and interact with interpreters from expeditionary areas of responsibility. The reference highlights the importance of working to establish rapport with the interpreter, but from the focus of body language provides little detail.⁴⁹ Use of body language and nonverbal communication is a huge step in establishing rapport, especially during initial encounters. It is a key ingredient in reinforcing another's opinion of enthusiasm, persuasiveness, personality, and confidence in a particular person.⁵⁰ Providing an OLMP Leadership Concentration student with skilled competencies in rapport requires specific knowledge on body language and nonverbal communication.

The categories of Figure 7 that contained only cursory knowledge would better meet the skilled competency requirements with detailed references from body language experts. As can be

seen with the current curriculum, references that focus specifically on body language and nonverbal communication frequently accomplish this. These types of references are readily available and the knowledge they contain can be customized to meet the specific competency categories that are underserved.

Without question, the category of Figure 7 that would benefit the most from expert references is the third category under speaking, *uses terms, examples, and analogies that are meaningful to the audience*. The ICL in Figure 2 states the full name of the speaking sub-competency as both speaking and writing. Therefore, it is possible the intentions of this category apply more to writing. However, at times, an officer may be presenting, consulting or articulating in a way where emphasizing a written term, drawing out examples, and demonstrating analogies demand the skills of body language and nonverbal communication.

In the case of presenting a written term, the use of a pause can have more of an effect than 1,000 words. Experts identify two types of pauses: grammatical pauses are represented by punctuation such as the commas, periods, or semi-colons that are used to help in the reading of written communication. Non-grammatical pauses are a result of the cognitive or emotional imperfections with our verbal speech such as the *umm*'s, *ahh*'s, or periods of silence. Too many silent pauses may suggest anger, anxiousness, or contempt in a message, while too many *umm*'s or *ahh*'s could be a sign of anxiousness, boredom or unfamiliarity with the topic.⁵¹ In either situation use of these nonverbal cues during the delivery of a written term can have a significant effect on its meaning to the audience.

When articulating an example during a presentation or report, drawing or writing it out in front of the audience can be the most meaningful method of presentation. The actions of drawing or writing will also permit the use of gestures, which have a two-fold effect on the desired

message. First, combining gestures with the explanation of written communication allows the listener to better follow or align with the cognitive process of the speaker. Second, by interacting with written words a person can boost their ability to understand and retain a topic by as much as 15%.⁵² This idea also holds true when officers must consult with others in any environment both in-person and virtual.

One of the most unique communication situations an officer will face in their career is the video tele-conference (VTC). Being a significant improvement over a phone conversation, the VTC can be an awkward experience as body language that historically was not scrutinized on the phone is now available in plain view. Additionally, the equipment configurations of VTCs vary such as camera and screen placement, which can confuse attempts to interact normally. As an example, to maintain good eye contact the speaker or listener will naturally look directly into the eyes of the person on the screen. However, in many cases the camera is not co-located with the screen and the speaker will view the audience's attention as being elsewhere or disinterested.⁵³ Normally, face-to-face conversations experience a wide range of nonverbal cues such as voice direction, timely turn-taking, conversational pacing and personal distance. In a VTC many of these cues are absent or misdirected, which increases the cognitive demand on all involved. Experts believe this increased cognitive demand boosts the likability of a speaker but also reduces the quality of their argument.⁵⁴ An officer needs to keep this in mind during consultations with others through a VTC. Important pieces of their argument should be presented through a mediator in a face-to-face manner, either before or during the VTC. Detailed information such as this is vital to helping officers become skilled in presenting, consulting and articulating.

Looking at Figure 7 as a whole it is not difficult to see the deficit between the speaking and listening competency goals when looking at detailed references. More curriculum references that focused directly on body language and nonverbal communication were found to better meet the competency goals of speaking. The good news is that much of the detailed knowledge that was found in the first category of listening, *correctly interprets and synthesizes messages from others and responds appropriately*, also came from the same references that provided detailed knowledge in many of the speaking categories. Therefore, the theme of having more references like Lustig and Koester's book on intercultural competence, or the Peace Corps' interactive manual will also help to balance the competency goal deficit. When evaluating new references for the OLMP Leadership Concentration, content managers should look for single references whose detailed knowledge meets the competency goals in the categories of both speaking and listening. These single references will apply to both competency goals and avoid situations like the current imbalance.

More mission diversity, more operating domains, and a smaller force require officers to rely on skilled competencies in presenting, consulting and articulating. Knowledge from references that directly teach students about body language and nonverbal behavior continually meet the skilled competency goals of the AF. cursory knowledge can and will be found in references that address other competencies but should be understood to be an accessory rather than a source of body language and nonverbal knowledge. References that are intended to provide detailed information should also be evaluated to provide the balance necessary to meet the competency goals of both speaking and listening. In light of the above analysis there are a number of recommendations to be presented that could help the OLMP Leadership Concentration meet the skilled competency requirements of AF officer development.

Recommendations and Conclusions

Evaluation and analysis of the OLMP Leadership Concentration reveals more detailed body language and nonverbal communication curriculum needs to be included to help students reach a skilled competency in speaking and listening. Lessons identifying the importance of body language and nonverbal communication are found in all four Leadership Concentration courses, but are not meeting the competency goals of the AF. Additionally, between speaking and listening competencies, detailed curriculum references are focused on speaking causing a knowledge imbalance. The AF has three options at its disposal to help address the situation, all of which will be presented.

If it is not feasible to add detailed references to the OLMP curriculum to meet a skilled proficiency level of speaking and listening sub-competencies, then a logical solution is to change the sub-competencies themselves. This is not to advocate a removal of speaking and listening as sub-competencies rather, it is to re-define them in a language satisfying the cursory level of knowledge the curriculum provides. The AF has a process in-place to accomplish this through the AF Learning Committee (AFLC). Any need for change is identified by an ad hoc collection of members from AETC, Air University, MAJCOMs etc. working within the AFLC. Proposals are provided to the Force Management Development Council who approves or disapproves the changes.⁵⁵ While this solution would address the situation, it is not the best solution as the skilled speaking and listening competencies needed by AF Captains would still not be met. Further, the deficit of detailed knowledge between the speaking and listening competencies would not be

addressed. A change in the OLMP Leadership Concentration is the best way to a solution. However, better options are available at the level of Air University.

Being a resource for Captains to get a head start on ACSC and attain an AAD, The OLMP Leadership Concentration subjects itself to the scrutiny of the ICDP process.⁵⁶ If Air University were to remove the Leadership Concentration as a jump-start to ACSC and focus solely on it being a conduit towards an AAD, the requirements of the ICDP would no longer apply. In other words a change could be made at the Air University level to invalidate the skilled competency requirements of the ICDP. Critics might argue that this solution would invalidate the value OLMP Leadership Concentration as whole. However, many positions in the AF mandate an AAD as a prerequisite for promotion and responsibility.⁵⁷ While this option is perhaps the easiest solution available and can be made at the Air University level, it removes the ability of the OLMP Leadership Concentration to be a PME force multiplier. The course would not be required to ensure Captains meet a skilled competency level in speaking and listening which clearly is needed by the diversity and domains of today's missions. Once again, the deficit of detailed knowledge between the speaking and listening competencies would not be addressed. A solution is needed that keeps changes at the Air University level, maintains the concentration as a PME multiplier and addresses the analysis of the body language and nonverbal curriculum references.

Air University would best meet the skilled competency levels in speaking and listening by adding a specific body language and nonverbal communication lesson to the Foundations of Officership course FO5301. In this course, lessons three through seven focus specifically on competencies that are related to communication, providing an excellent environment for a body language lesson.⁵⁸ Figure 8 below demonstrates the change to FO 5301 that a body language and

nonverbal communication lesson would look like. The current organization is displayed in the top half of the figure while the new organization is displayed in the lower half.

Figure 8 Foundations of Officership Section organization

Section 1		Section 2		Section 3			Exam
Followership		Develops self		Communication			
Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3	Lesson 4	Lesson 5	Lesson 6	Lesson 7	Lesson 8
Followership	Active Followership	Develops self	Aware of personal impact on others	Communication	Public speaking	Writing for the Military	Final Exam

Section 1		Section 2		Section 3			Exam
Followership		Develops self		Communication			
Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3	Lesson 4	Lesson 5	Lesson 6	Lesson 7	Lesson 8
Followership	Active Followership	Develops self	Aware of personal impact on others	Communication	Body Language & Nonverbal Communication	Writing for the Military	Final Exam

Source: *Foundations of Officership (FO), Course Syllabus*

In the current organization almost half of the course is reserved for communication. Lesson 6 is designed to teach the student the process of speechmaking and public speaking, to include preparation organization, and delivery.⁵⁹ Public speaking demands the discipline of skilled body language and nonverbal communication in both speaking and listening providing the prefect area to add detailed knowledge that not only meets the competency goals of Figure 7, but also balances the knowledge deficit between speaking and listening. The new organization of FO 5301 has lesson 6 focusing specifically on body language and nonverbal communication making the delivery aspects of public speaking a sub-routine of that lesson.

Having a specific lesson on body language and nonverbal communication would allow for the removing of detailed body language references from others areas of the course such as lesson 5. This relief in lesson 5 would allow for the organization and preparation portions of the original public speaking lesson to be moved to lesson 5. Now there is room for the inclusion of detailed body language and nonverbal knowledge references in lesson 6 that would meet the competency goals and balance the speaking and listening deficit.

New knowledge references would have to be carefully scrutinized to make sure they are similar to other detailed references, like the book on intercultural competence by Myron Lustig and Jolene Koester. This reference provided detailed knowledge through the use of a specific chapter on body language as well as contained knowledge applicable to both the speaking and listening competencies thus addressing the imbalance. There are many sources of knowledge similar to Lustig and Koester's book, such as *Nonverbal communication in human interaction*, 8th edition by Mark Knapp, Judith Hall, and Terrence Horgan. While this is the best solution for the OLMP to meet AF competency goals, balance current curriculum deficits and maintain the benefits of the program, there are areas for further study that would perhaps provide more solutions.

Many of the other sub-competencies that are taught in the OLMP Leadership Concentration such as *Develops self*, *Negotiation*, and *Warrior Ethos* may have body language and nonverbal communication as part of their curriculum. Further research of the curriculum addressing these sub-competencies is warranted to see if detailed knowledge exists applying to speaking and listening. There are also areas outside of the OLMP Leadership Concentration where further study is needed.

The PME courses in the CoL that flank the OLMP Leadership Concentration, SOS and ACSC, would benefit from an evaluation of their speaking and listening references. A cursory look at the SOS in correspondence course catalog reveals lessons such as C-5140A and B *speaking for success* which address body language and nonverbal communication in speaking and listening.^{60 61} On the other end, at the completion of ACSC an officer is expected to demonstrate a skilled competency in speaking and listening. An evaluation of the speaking and listening competencies in the ACSC course would ensure no competency goals are missed in the Air Force's efforts to train skilled communicators.

Body Language and nonverbal communication are foundational elements in the way officers speak and listen. The multiple domains of operation and the diversity of today's missions continually demand skilled competencies. The AF has answered this demand by identifying and instituting a force development policy providing officers the knowledge they will require to be successful in their leadership roles. Multiple organizations have been assigned the responsibility to work together in the execution of force development with a clear definition of goals at each level in the CoL. Part of this responsibility is to continually evaluate the knowledge and curriculum of each course to ensure it best meets the competency goals. Analysis of those evaluations will reveal areas of success and areas in need of improvement. Areas of success should be used as a model to help address the areas where improvement is needed. The process of making changes to courses or curriculum needs to be weighed against the goals of the course, where it belongs in its respective program, the programs role in the CoL as a whole, and whether or not the changes will help the course better meet the goals of the AF.

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This is a good paper. You've laid out the problem, analyzed it, and provided actionable recommendations in your Conclusion. You had a wide selection of sources to support your research and you did not overly rely on any one of them (though you do seem to favor a couple of the books).

There are minor mistakes that tend to slip through anytime a person is working for so long on one text. A second proofreading pass would catch them. Also, there are some points that were still included that belong in your research proposal, not your research paper.

