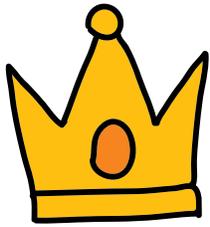




# GLC Newsletter

JUNE 2020



## GLC CERTIFICATES OF ACHIEVEMENT

### Victor Oliver Espinoza

“Victor exhibited outstanding language training abilities and student motivational skills during his time with our class. Victor proved able to identify the class level early on and adjust his teaching style and technique to a more ambitious scope. He continually challenged his students to strive for accuracy and fluency by practicing presentation drills and extended opinion-eliciting discourses. While setting up his students for success on the particularities of the FSI test, he also strove to instill the fundamental diplomatic skill of phrasing relevant, detail-orientated questions and offering brief coherent responses at a high level.” – Student Feedback regarding Mr. Victor Oliver Espinoza, Spanish LI





## Mette Gleason

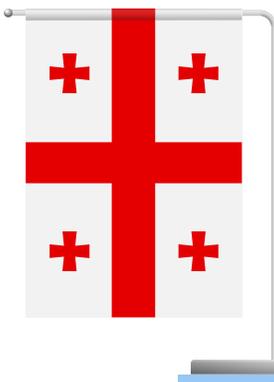


“Ms. Mette Gleason is an excellent instructor who peaks students’ engagement in the culture of Denmark to help motivate them through their study of the language. She pushes her students rapidly to a high proficiency level by also emphasizing speaking skills throughout the program.” – Feedback from the GTM regarding Ms. Mette Gleason, Danish LI

## Julia Marquez Otero

“Julia Marquez Otero, was very kind and patient in phase one. She provided a relaxed and encouraging atmosphere to practice the language without fear of making mistakes.” - Feedback from the GTM regarding Ms. Julia Marquez Otero, Spanish LI

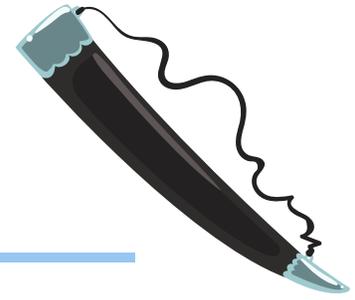




**GLC** Global Language Center

# GLC Newsletter

JUNE 2020



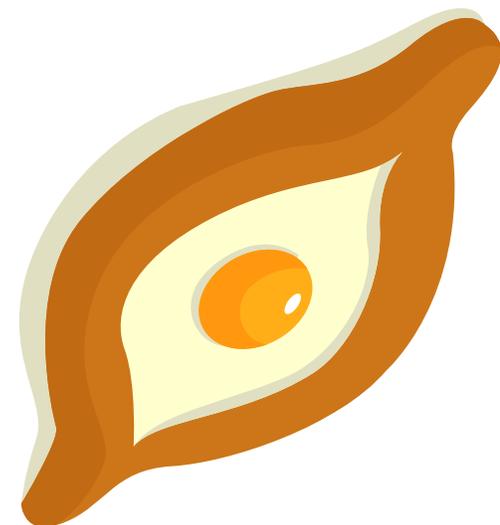
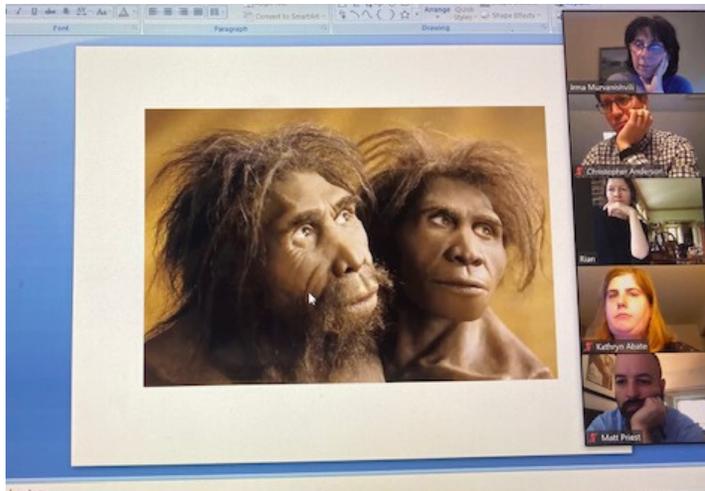
## Georgian Language Section Virtual trip to the Georgian Archaeological Museum in Georgia

"On May 22nd, the Georgian language section went on a virtual trip to the Georgian Archaeological Museum in Georgia. Our museum tour was being hosted by an employee of the museum, who in the Georgian language explained to us the themes and meanings of each exhibition which were displayed at the museum. Along with viewing lots of unique works we also heard interesting facts about works such as the first archaeological discoveries of the first Europeans in Georgia, the world's oldest clay artifact called "kvevri" which is 8,000 years old and in which even 8,000 years ago Georgians were storing wine. In the museum we also saw, the world's first "tamada" with a drink in his hand. With the help of our guide, we learned that the world's oldest golden treasure was in Georgia and we got to know the gold objects, their symbols and its importance in ancient Georgian culture." - Londa Khaburzania





**GLC** Global Language Center





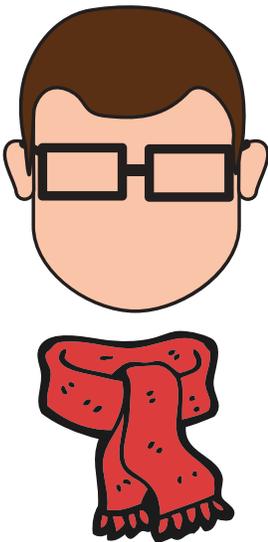
# GLC Newsletter

JUNE 2020

**Louris's  
Corner**

## On Knowledge Management

What is knowledge?



The concept of knowledge and its understanding has been capturing great and simply curious minds since time immemorial. Just like everything humans do, knowledge and its multiple attributes have existed way before any conscious attempts to understand and describe its evolution, mechanisms, relational relevance, applicability, and practical implications. The stature by Anna Hyatt Huntington named *Los portadores de la antorcha* (Carriers of the torch) depicts the essence of what knowledge means to humans. It exudes two obvious notions: knowledge must be shared and passed to; furthermore, knowledge must be captured, otherwise it will match the lifespan of its carrier and will have to be “reinvented” – too often it resides in the mind of the carrier. However, the torch metaphor fails to reveal the most essential property of knowledge: when knowledge is shared, it doesn’t change hands.

The use of knowledge doesn’t consume it, the transfer of knowledge doesn’t result in its loss. As humanity is steadily moving from the industrial era to the age of knowledge, it is becoming more than evident that knowledge is the commodity of now and the foreseeable future. It takes astonishingly fewer people to make things now than half a century ago, and knowledge – through the technological and social advances – is claiming its undeniable power. Besides the stunning beauty and the power of expression, the stature alludes to some stimulating questions for those interested in understanding what knowledge is beyond “something that we know.” The most important and arguably most productive question is “How do we know that this is knowledge – not just an opinion, a biased belief, or even a random statement?” Another question comes from the notion that knowledge has meaning - “To what extent is the meaning of shared knowledge relevant for others?” Answers to both questions invariably lead to results from one underlying assumption: to be qualified as knowledge, any captured and shared meaning has to be (1) justified and (2) current.

While the need to justify any type of knowledge is rather obvious, the attribute “current” has a two-fold potential. We all know how many times in history something given or taken for granted has lost its previously perceived as final relevance and had to be re-justified and re-defined (in physics, biology, etc., not to mention history). On the other hand, every step of discovering knowledge has its historic and evolutionary value – incremental progression is one of the inherent features of the overall progress of human development both in societies and organizations. “Old” knowledge depicts history, just like “yesterday’s news” defines yesterday. Organizational memory, in this context, is not just about capturing current knowledge; it is also about capturing the knowledge progression.

Plato, in his tripartite definition, saw knowledge as “justified true belief” and identified three conditions for existence of knowledge: believed, justified, and true. Believing that something is true needs justification. On many occasions this (intentionally, I believe) simplified definition has been reshaped or rejected, but it still remains valid as a starting base for further exploration. Believing that something is true gently implies a progressive or variable nature of knowledge – something is believed to be true “now” and might change later or in a different context. In any case, the ultimate indicator of knowledge is its justification. Now it is usually called pragmatic knowledge that works.

So, how can we define knowledge? As it usually comes to a substantial level of ambiguity when we consider abstract and complex concepts, “knowledge” is known to cause various and sometimes contradictory explanations (particularly in philosophy: epistemologists spend their lives looking for the most adequate answer). Thus, it is not surprising that there is no unchangeable definition of what knowledge is. However, its salient attributes provide enough guidance to move to more practical considerations.

The most generic definition of knowledge frequently used today boils down to the following: Ideas or understandings of an entity over time ... used by a beholder to take actions to achieve goals.

This obviously broad definition sends us in the opposite directions: back - to the sources of ideas and understandings, and forward - to the implications of their adequate use. This distinction between knowledge assets and the agent(s) compelled many to consider knowledge as an apogee of the following continuum:

Data (as a unit of a fact) – Information (as an aggregation of data) – Knowledge.

The progression seems logical and is justified at least by the increasing level of complexity, but it has a very important qualitative distinction, a turn, an elevation to a new level: data and information have intrinsic properties; the quality of knowledge depends on the properties of the agent, which brings the issues of subjectivity (including idiosyncrasies, intuition, and sub consciousness) and context in play. Just like beauty, knowledge becomes what it is in the mind of the beholder. When the torch is in a new hand, it obtains additional meaning.

## The level of knowledge exposure: explicit vs. tacit

There are two dimensions of knowledge creation, existence, and distribution. The first relates to the carriers of knowledge and spans from individuals to teams and to organizations. The second is relative to the nature of knowledge and is usually differentiated between explicit (impersonal, available, graspable by our senses and abilities) and tacit (implicit, intangible, not obvious, hard to define, etc.). There is a semantic war here, obviously. Explicit should be countered by implicit, but tacit won the place instead. The tangible vs. intangible dichotomy has never really put up a fight. We could go further, e.g. meaning vs. connotations or stated vs. implied, or expressed vs. assumed. No matter how you “slice it,” the main difference remains the same: there is something you can pass on easily and indirectly – through spoken or written word, images or formulas; and there is something you can’t. “You had to be there...” or “You know it when it happens...” give a sense of the sentiment. This doesn’t mean that tacit knowledge is not definable; it is just so hard to capture and share it. This is probably what knowledge management is essentially about – mitigating the two types. And there is some mystery to it. The mystery grows exponentially with increased complexity and when more people are involved.

Individual knowledge is self-explanatory because it is heavily linked to personal experiences, personal processing and internalization. It is also shared in a one-directional way – from the ones who possess the knowledge to those who might find it relevant for what they do or their personal development. Team knowledge is much less tangible due to internal complexity of each particular team, be it a musical band, a sailing crew, a sports team, or a project team. The intangible part comes from the fact that team knowledge is not a “zero sum” phenomenon. Just as a sentence in any language where the sum of meanings of the words rarely results in the actual meaning of the utterance, the sum of personal experiences, competence and competencies of team members doesn’t limit the possible outcome and ultimately the knowledge of a team – there is more to it. If individual knowledge is more or less nominal and exists in either positive or negative form, team knowledge is dependant on good teamwork and the desire (multiplied by the ability) of the team members to cooperate in creating, capturing, and sharing what they have learned and know to achieve success. Organizational knowledge is even more complicated, since it is much more loosely connected and is by definition attributed to the overall goals of the organization. All three types of knowledge carriers are inherently interconnected and exist in a fluid reciprocal form where the “life” of knowledge moves back and forth between individuals, their various teams, and the organization as a whole. So does the knowledge: the personal/tacit becomes public/explicit; when outdated and not adequate any longer, it becomes either divested or “newly tacit” when new questions come up and new answers are found, just to be explained, shared, and questioned again.

The undeniable magic of tacit knowledge is rather remarkable. One of the gurus famously said that we know much more than we can tell. It is true but not in absolute terms. Yes, it is inexplicable how people can recognize a familiar face out of millions – when you see a face, you are almost always not aware of individual features, even though you could describe them if asked, what you can’t describe is how the whole face composition doesn’t fail your recognition. Nobody can enable you to ride a bicycle by explaining or demonstrating.

The same is with swimming or native language acquisition at a young age. Another, more trivial, example of the intangible work of one's mind is the immediate result of an eye contact.

More often than not we are able to make a judgment of a person when looks intersect and eyes are connected. What is even more surprising, we kind of catch up with what has already happened – we are subtly informed from the inside what the judgment will be. And we often “blame” our intuition when we figure something out without really realizing how that happened.

“This is great! How did you do that?”

“Not sure, don't really know ..., hard to explain.”

“Can you do it again?”

“Of course.”

“With the same result?”

“Most likely.”

This type of occurrence is not rare. The first time it happened to me was when I was playing chess in a tournament as a kid. The rules were that it was possible to postpone a game after forty moves – one just had to write down the next move and seal it in an envelop to be opened next day. In that particular game, I knew that the win is there but couldn't find the way. Having realized that my mind was wondering in circles, I decided to postpone the game and to analyze the position at home, hoping that thinking “with my fingers” (moving the pieces back and forth) would help. It didn't. There was no clear plan and I went to sleep somewhat nervous about continuing the game tomorrow. In the morning, when I opened my eyes, a miracle happened – I knew exactly what to do. And it worked, at least that time. Looking back now, I recognize the quiet, deep, and to a degree autonomous power of the mind. It can (and does!) work on its own, sifting through experiences, selecting feasible solutions, and finally putting the pieces of a puzzle together. Or was it just a refreshed brain that was finally able to get me where I wanted to be? Something was telling me it wasn't.

Intangibility is rarely absolute. Deliberate efforts and adequate terminology can demystify tacit knowledge to a reasonable extent.

Expressing the seemingly intangible is never easy. Remember that escaping “definition” of culture – It's just how we do things around here? Really, those who created and carry their culture can't tell what it is? Well, we know that it is done, not without difficulty and ambiguity though – when the concept and attributes of culture were described, the analytical procedures were established, and the tools were designed. It became not such a tall order after all. The most disarming technique in this regard for me has always been a drawing exercise: instead of asking people to describe their culture, ask them to draw their organization as a plant, or a vehicle, or a building; agree upon basic terminology (artifacts, norms, values, assumptions, behavioral and communication patterns in a business environments, etc.) and they will surprise themselves with a pretty sound description of their culture.

A similar but more personal example: you ask a person of a certain nationality, e.g. an American, what makes them be part of that nationality. Here is what usually happens.

“So, you are American?”

“Oh, yes!”

“What makes you American?” ...

“Well, I speak English ... and live in America ...”

“So do many Asians and Europeans.”

... after the last statement, the pause usually cannot be long enough. I did try this mini “experiment” on many occasions and rarely received a reasonable answer without additional guiding questions. How come? Why is it so difficult to explain or just verbalize the ostensibly obvious? There was no difference in national attribution between those who struggled and those who could tackle the question reasonably well. The difference was in two areas: knowing the language to express one’s cultural identity and having previous opportunities to reflect on one’s belonging. In other words, having the tools (terminology in this case: values, beliefs, behavior and communication patterns) and experience using them allowed the transfer of intuitive or tacit understanding of a fact or situation into explicit knowledge – it becomes coded and easily sharable. We can’t tell all we know because it is hard and because we hadn’t really tried before – it seems almost insurmountable the first time. The reason is natural and simple: tacit knowledge precedes its explicit display – the magic is gone when the “trick” is discovered and the words are found. And when that happens, some or most are wondering how come they couldn’t come up with it (a simple tune that captured so many minds or a seemingly uncomplicated painting that keeps attracting eyes of new generations, or a technical solution to an elusive problem).





# GLC Newsletter

JUNE 2020



## AMY'S REFERRAL BONUS

Global Language Center is accepting candidates and referrals for language instructors, curriculum developers and testers. If a candidate is selected, both the person making the referral and the person being referred will each receive \$275.00. Candidates should send their resumes to [at glcrecruiting@slsoperations.com](mailto:glcrecruiting@slsoperations.com)

**\$275**



## Follow Us



globallanguagecenter1800



global-language-center



@GlobalLangCtr



glcenter.com

# HAPPY FATHER'S DAY!



Here's a shout-out to the wonderful dads of GLC!