



# GLC Newsletter

JULY 2020



## ACHIEVEMENT

**Freddy Bitchong Sanama** 

**Congratulations to Mr. Bitchong Sanama who received the highest number of Certificates of Appreciation at GLC with a total of 5!**



Recipient of the following awards:

- 1) Special Act: For rising to the challenge of a sudden transition to remote instruction with grace, professionalism and agility at the onset of the global health crisis.
- 2) For his commitment and substantive contributions to the French language program.
- 3) For outstanding application of skills, teamwork, and dedication in the conception and delivery of the Africa Orientation Program that complements the language studies of the Foreign Service Officers in EUA.
- 4) In recognition of their expertise and professionalism in creating an invaluable training experience for FSOs in the In-Language Media Practicum.
- 5) For excellence in teaching and teamwork.





**GLC** Global  
Language  
Center

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## What Are the Steps for a Successful Task-based Teaching Activity?

Before even stepping into the classroom and using a task-based activity, it is important to have a firm objective in mind: *Why are you using this activity?* What do you want your students to learn and accomplish through it? Is it designed so that they can meet those goals? If you can answer each of these questions logically or positively, then you are well on your way to success in the classroom! What steps do you need to take there in order for your students to succeed?

1. Start with a pre-task activity. This stage starts with the instructor explaining to her students what will be expected in the task cycle and post-task review stages. In a lower-level class, it will likely include an introduction or review of key vocabulary or grammatical concepts the students will need to accomplish the assigned task. This is very much in line with the PPP (presentation, practice, performance) approach to instructional design. In a higher-level class, where the grammar and vocabulary have already been introduced, the students might be asked to brainstorm as to what language and linguistic features they would expect to need in order to complete the task successfully.

2. Follow the actual task cycle. In this stage, the students complete the task either in pairs or small groups. The instructor is generally reduced to the role of observer, stepping in only when the students seem to be going too far astray from the assignment at hand.



3. Classroom work ends with the post-task review. This is where the students present their work in some fashion. They might report their findings to the class as a whole. They might perform a dialog or skit. They might share their written story or video or poster with their classmates. Depending on your goals and the time available, you can ask your students to perform some type of peer assessment at this point. This also assures you that your students pay attention to the presentations of their classmates!

4. Give a relevant homework assignment. Unless the activity is the culmination of a unit, chapter or class, you will likely need to come up with an appropriate homework assignment and a logical follow-up to the activity just completed in class. This too can take a number of forms. You might want to ask your students to write an essay based on their in-class work. They might write a reflective piece, a self-critique about what they accomplished and learned. They might write an assessment of the others in their group, of the other groups or of the project as a useful learning mechanism. They might turn in their own version of the project, as they would have done it if they could have worked independently, explaining why they would have done things differently had they had the opportunity.

Share with us some of your favorite task-based activities used in your virtual class at [llarancuent@glcenter.com](mailto:llarancuent@glcenter.com)



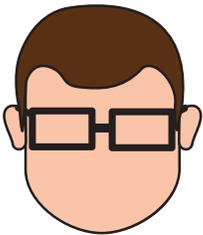


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## Iouri's Corner

## *On Knowledge and Knowledge Management (Part 2)*



This is a continuation (and the last part) of my previous writing. The purpose was and still is to set the ground and the vocabulary for moving to the more important topic for us – Proficiency-Oriented. Teaching and Learning. Sounds somewhat trivial but it's not, in my opinion. We will find out next month.

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).

Here is a classic example of the interplay between perceived “tacitness” of knowledge and its unveiling:

When Matsushita started developing its automatic home bread-making machine in 1985, an early problem was how to mechanize the dough-kneading process, a process that takes a master baker years of practice to perfect. To learn this tacit knowledge, a member of the software development team, Ikuko Tanaka, decided to volunteer herself as an apprentice to the head baker of the Osaka International Hotel, who was reputed to produce the area's best bread. After a period of imitation and practice, one day she observed that the baker was not only stretching, but also twisting the dough in a particular fashion (“twisting stretch”), which turned out to be his secret for making tasty bread. The Matsushita home bakery team drew together eleven members from completely different specializations and cultures: product planning, mechanical engineering, control systems, and software development.

The “twisting stretch” motion was finally materialized in a prototype, after a year of iterative experimentation by the engineers and team members working closely together, combining their explicit knowledge. For example, the engineers added ribs to the inside of the dough case in order to hold the dough better as it is being churned. Another team member suggested a method (later patented) to add yeast at a later stage in the process, thereby preventing the yeast from over-fermenting in high temperatures.

This is a perfect example of “Oh, I didn't know that...” “Well, now, since you do, use it and teach others,” would be a natural answer. Aside from absolutely mysterious cases, the border between the two types of knowledge is fluid and the label can change the carrier in a hurry if new data and information are discovered. But that is the beauty and an immense amount of satisfaction of knowledge creation. Tables 1 and 2 show the contrasting (maybe even competing) attributes of tacit and explicit knowledge.

**Table 1**

<i>Attributes of tacit knowledge</i>	<i>Attributes of explicit knowledge</i>
Personal	“Impersonal,” public
Intangible	Tangible
Mental objects	Physical objects
Processing changes understanding	Processing changes representation
Context affects meaning	Context independent
Sharing involves learning (through practice)	Easily sharable
Not identically replicated	Reproducible
Potentially codifiable	Potentially divested or re-codified

Table 1 Comparative attributes of tacit vs. explicit knowledge.

Attributes are drawn from certain actions and entail those actions – each type of knowledge enables us to perform our tasks in a different way.

**Table 2**

<i>Procedural properties of tacit knowledge</i>	<i>Procedural properties of explicit knowledge</i>
Ability to adapt and deal with new situations	Ability to disseminate and re-apply by others
Expertise, know-how, know-why, and care-why	Ability to teach and train
Ability to collaborate, to share a vision, to transmit culture	Ability to organize, systematize, and translate a vision into a mission statement and operational guidelines
Coaching and mentoring to transfer experiential knowledge on a one-on-one, face-to-face basis	Transfer knowledge via products, services, and documented processes

Table 2

Comparison of attributes and procedural properties of tacit and explicit knowledge (partially adopted from Dalkir, 2012)

Explicit knowledge overtly exists in usable formats: numbers, text, pictures, video, infograms, etc. or a combination of any of them. It is available and used if valuable or divested when the opposite is the case. However an important feature of explicit knowledge is its contextual potential. Any “nugget” of knowledge has a direct and context-neutral meaning, but it also has that “black matter” that allows for contextual variations, amendments, and further development through further codification of new tacit knowledge.

It is common to say that tacit knowledge is “locked in the heads of individuals” and requires deliberate efforts to be coded and transferred to others. To become explicit, knowledge has to be valuable for others, demanded, processed and evaluated. And yet again, it will be ultimately in the mind of the beholder. The interplay between tacit and explicit follows the path of a spiral (incremental?) knowledge creation.

# VIRTUAL HANGOUT

## Newsletter Challenge #1

Some of you are lifelong professional teachers but others of you started teaching by accident; Please share how or why you became interested in teaching and/or sharing your culture and language. Or simply share why or what you love about teaching now!

Zeinab Noor—

I started teaching in 1993, and I was an ESL teacher in Saudi Arabia. I worked with students of all ages, from elementary to high school students. For me, the best part of being a teacher is working with my students. I love teaching them because it feels wonderful to help someone else learn something new, but I also learn so much from them. I love interacting with them because they teach me as much as I teach them. When I moved to the US, I started teaching ESL to adults. My students were mainly immigrants, so my classroom was like a wonderful world of different nations, cultures, and a diversity of personalities.

My students inspire me to learn and help me become a better teacher.



Aliaa Shimmary—

Here is my story that made me start wanting to teach my language and culture: It started in 2003. I was 19 years old when the Iraq war began in what they call "Operation Iraqi Freedom". My life has never been the same ever since. I got a job working for a US company. It is where I noticed that we as civilians have no fault in this war. We are all human beings thriving to live our best life. So I was telling my American coworkers about my life and university. They were excited to learn more about my culture and style of life. Some concepts had to be told in Arabic words. So I would teach them some words and celebration names. I even had a friend ask me grammar questions with his own notebook to take notes and examples. That is when I

realized that I have the skill and patience to share my language and traditions. Thank you for reading.



Sabine Anderson—

Some of you may have heard of the Japanese concept of Ikigai. I found mine as a language and culture teacher.

Although it looks as if I happened upon teaching by accident, I started off as a student teacher. After school in Germany I interned for a year in a school for cognitively and physically disabled students. Later, I moved to the United States with my then-military husband - and I did a lot of other things: Went to college, learned English, worked/volunteered in a variety of positions, had a few babies, started several social clubs and cultural organizations, fell in love with learning, took more courses, went to grad school and completed a graduate degree - all while moving around the country and world. I have learned so much more than I thought possible, and all the moves, cultures, languages, sites, and people I've encountered have certainly made me who I am today. But the opportunity to be an instructor at FSI came at an especially serendipitous time: My last child, a junior in high school, was diagnosed with a life-changing medical condition. And even as I started teaching language part-time, it took roughly two years to adjust to our "new normal". My first two weeks in NIO were completely unforgettable: Language instructors from around the world together to learn, engage with ideas and with each other, and form lasting relationships. I was so hooked. Once in the classroom I met the most gifted, diverse and interesting groups of professionals. I especially like the DS personnel – they remind me of the military environment I spent time in. No matter the student, I always feel that it is a true honor to share my native language and culture and I love to find that approach that makes language acquisition approachable. And my colleagues! I've been having so much fun building relationships with my section and beyond. Many of my international co-workers are among the kindest and most genuine people I have ever met.

You see what I mean about having found my Ikigai?

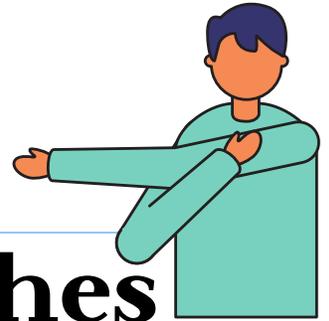


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## Best Desk Stretches



According to [backintelligence.com](https://backintelligence.com)

### 1 Mobility



**How to do it:-** Start by squeezing your shoulder blades together and bring your arms into a "W" letter.- Now, Stretch both of your arms into a "Y" letter.- Bring your arms down again into a "W".- Do 5-10 reps throughout the day.\* Don't shrug your shoulders up as you do this exercise.

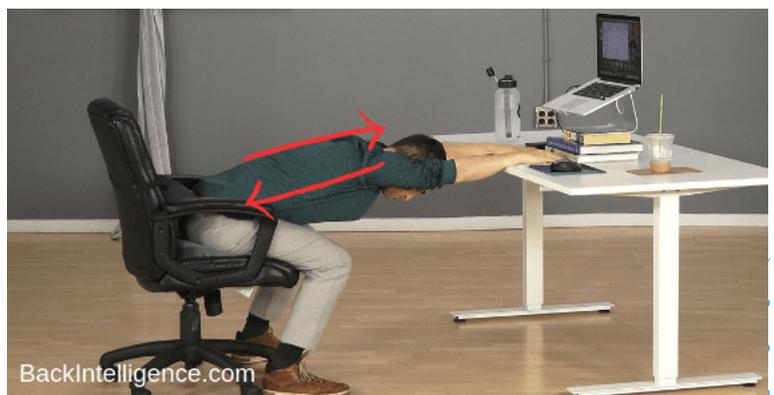
### 2 The Twist



**How to do it:-** Twist your body to one side.- Interlace one arm over the back of your chair.- With the other hand push against your desk.- Breathe normally as your twisting.- Hold for 10 seconds and then repeat on the other side.

### 3 Full Back Extension

**How to do it:-** Place both arms on the desk.- Now roll your chair back and stretch away from your palms.- Feel the stretch in your upper back and arms.

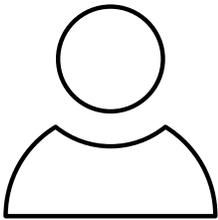




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**\$275**



## GLC 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 Amy Murphy at [amurphy@gltcenter.com](mailto:amurphy@gltcenter.com)

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