

Learning Levels

There is a clever little tool developed by Noel Burch, from Gordon Training International, called the Conscious Competence Ladder. It's useful to help us realise where we are with our learning and the steps we need to take if we are going to become competent in a particular area. With training, it helps guide people through the difficulties of learning, and gives them an accurate perception of their skill level.

The model has four learning levels:

1. Unconsciously unskilled.
2. Consciously unskilled.
3. Consciously skilled.
4. Unconsciously skilled.

As people progress through the levels, competence is attained in a new skill:

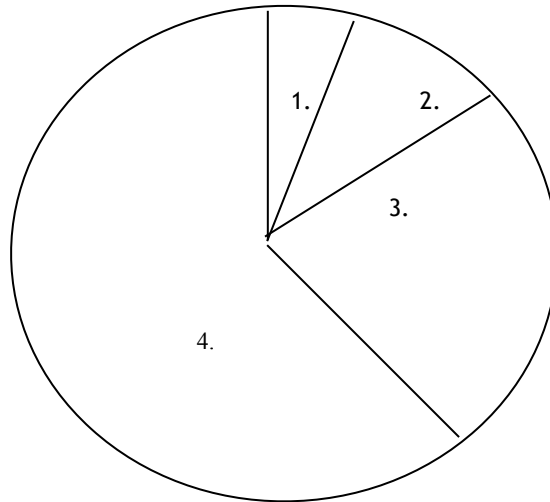
1. Unconsciously unskilled – we don't know that we don't have this skill, or that we need to learn it.
2. Consciously unskilled – we know that we don't have this skill.
3. Consciously skilled – we know that we have this skill.
4. Unconsciously skilled – we don't know that we have this skill (it just seems easy).

The classic line for this level of skill from an unconsciously skilled person is, "I don't know why they can't do it, it is just common sense", when in reality it is exposure and practice.

Below is a skill assessment that could be for any skill but, for a simple illustration, we've chosen posting a parcel.

The person has a pretty good skill level and a bit of an idea of what they don't know. Having done it before many times with a range of variations - nature of the contents, location, time to recipient - they know just how you go about doing this to get a good result. You would not need to help them post pretty much any parcel because they have so much knowledge already.

Example pie chart - skill assessment for posting a parcel.



You can use a pie chart framework moving the lines to give a more accurate picture of an individual's skill level in an area, or absence of skill, depending on the task.

If you would like to know more about up-skilling people, please go to the Delegation Model, in this resource section for more information.