

# UNCONSCIOUS COMPETENCE

## Component: Self awareness

ILO: To be aware of one's own progress in learning

### TOOL

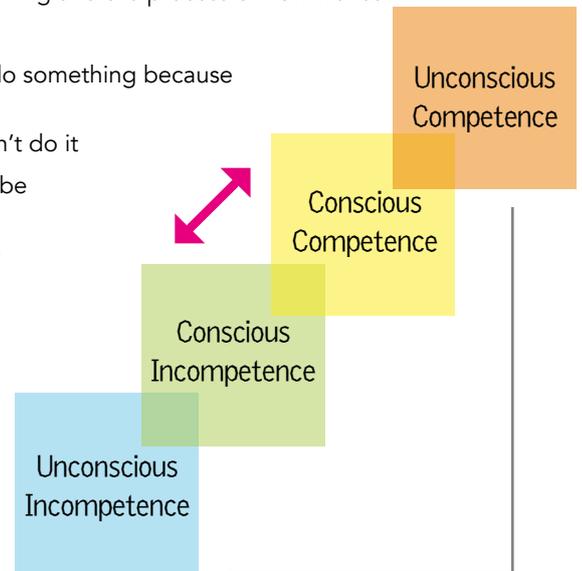
This model is a useful explanation of the psychological process we go through when learning a new skill. It suggests that we pass through 4 stages of awareness. It is particularly useful when trying to master a skill such as learning an instrument. This TLA is about getting students to be aware of their learning and the process of how we learn.

The four stages of the model:

1. Unconscious Incompetence - we start unaware of our inability to do something because we haven't tried it yet.
2. Conscious Incompetence - once we try it we are aware that we can't do it
3. Conscious Competence - with practice and awareness we start to be able to do it
4. Unconscious Competence - once mastered we aren't aware of the effort to do it. Like riding a bike - it becomes automatic.

The progression to mastery isn't direct, we may pass many times between the middle stages as we practice and refine the skill. There is struggle and friction in working between these 2 middle stages and the teacher can support and guide that process.

This was initially described as "Four Stages for Learning Any New Skill" and was developed at Gordon Training International by Noel Burch in the 1970s.



### ACTIVITY

Describe the model and ask students to reflect on their learning journey so far. Ask them to discuss how it feels when they are in the middle 2 stages, which helps them to progress from stage 2 to 3 and how they think they will know when they reach stage 4.

Next, ask them to plan how to stay focused when they feel they may be stuck in stage 2 and what help they will seek.

### HOW

If students are completing a learning journal have them write these reflections down along with their goals for progression and plans for practice.

Once students have reflected on their own learning it may be useful to have a group discussion to identify common points for each stage to help students understand the similarities we all go through in learning and see that practice and challenge are the common factors in achieving success.

*Mastery is playing whatever you're capable of playing ... every time ... WITHOUT THINKING*  
(Werner, 1996)

### LARGE GROUP TEACHING

This works equally well in large groups as it is a solo activity with a group discussion to draw conclusions.

### SUCCESS

Students will have a clear idea of how we learn and how that feels in practice. This will help to keep them motivated in their practice.

### NEXT STEPS

It is useful to return to this over time as students become more aware of their learning.

### RESOURCES/REFERENCES

<a href="http://www.musostudy.com/resources/2E/uncon-comp.png">www.musostudy.com/resources/2E/uncon-comp.png</a>	Image for use on slides etc.
Werner, K. (1996) Effortless Mastery - Liberating The Master Musician Within. Jamey Aebersold Jazz, Inc.	Kenny Werner's seminal book to help musicians consider their self-worth as an artist