

# Conscious Competence Learning Matrix

CONSCIOUS COMPETENCE LEARNING MATRIX	Competence	Incompetence
	3. We Know We Know	2. We Know We Don't Know
Conscious		
Unconscious	4. We Don't Know We Know	1. We Don't Know We Don't Know

## Activity

Step 1. Take 1 minute, think about what you know about the people at your table

Step 2. Take another minute, brainstorm and identify one thing you believe you know about...  
that no one else at the table does (e.g. skydiving, playing accordion, etc.)

Step 3. Take 2 or 3 minutes, share around your table (any surprises?)

Step 4. Share with the larger group...*Do we have someone with a rare bit of knowledge?*  
- Group Discussion -

# Explanation of the Conscious Competence Learning Matrix

Stage	Ignorance Level	Description	Manager's Tip
<b>1</b>	Unconscious Incompetence: <b><i>We Don't Know</i></b> <b><i>We Don't Know</i></b>	"At this level you are blissfully ignorant: You have a complete lack of knowledge and skills in the subject in question. On top of this, you are unaware of this lack of skill, and your confidence may therefore far exceed your abilities."	"As a manager, it's your job to encourage feedback to make people aware of their 'improvement opportunities' and kick start their learning and development journey."
<b>2</b>	Conscious Incompetence: <b><i>We Know</i></b> <b><i>We Don't Know</i></b>	"At this level you find that there are skills you need to learn, and you may be shocked to discover that there are others who are much more competent than you. As you realize that your ability is limited, your confidence drops. You go through an uncomfortable period as you learn these new skills when others are much more competent and successful than you are."	"Be aware of the confidence crisis the learner may be experiencing, and expedite the transition from stage 2 to stage 3."
<b>3</b>	Conscious Competence: <b><i>We Know</i></b> <b><i>We Know</i></b>	"At this level you acquire the new skills and knowledge. You put your learning into practice and you gain confidence in carrying out the tasks or jobs involved. You are aware of your new skills and work on refining them."	"It's useful to consolidate learning at this point, so consider teaching or presenting back to your team about your new-found skill."
<b>4</b>	Unconscious Competence: <b><i>We Don't Know</i></b> <b><i>We Know</i></b>	"At this level your new skills become habits, and you perform the task without conscious effort and with automatic ease. This is the peak of your confidence and ability."	"You can keep on top of your learning by creating your own personal development plan and regularly reviewing your progress."

Note: The authors adapted this table to the needs of transit agencies from two online sources. Stage 1-4 descriptions are from "The Conscious Competence Ladder" and the manager's tips and matrix design are derived from Lindsay Swinton's "Smooth Your Learning Journey with the Learning Matrix," both available at Mind Tools.com. [http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newlSS\\_96.htm](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newlSS_96.htm).