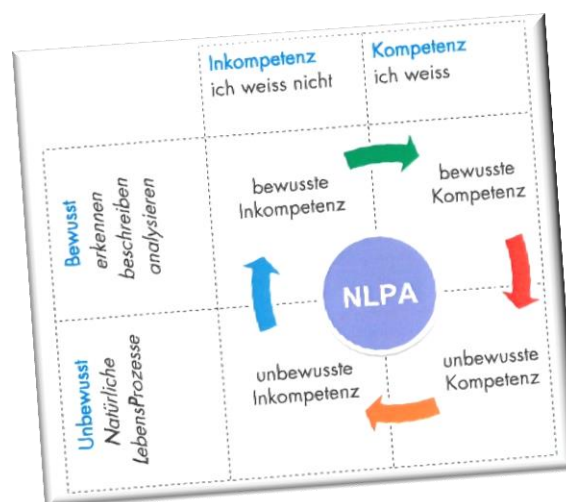


# 4 Phasen des Lernens

## Conscious competence learning model

Eine Recherche  
zur Herkunft des Modells.

Ueli R. Frischknecht  
Juli 2016

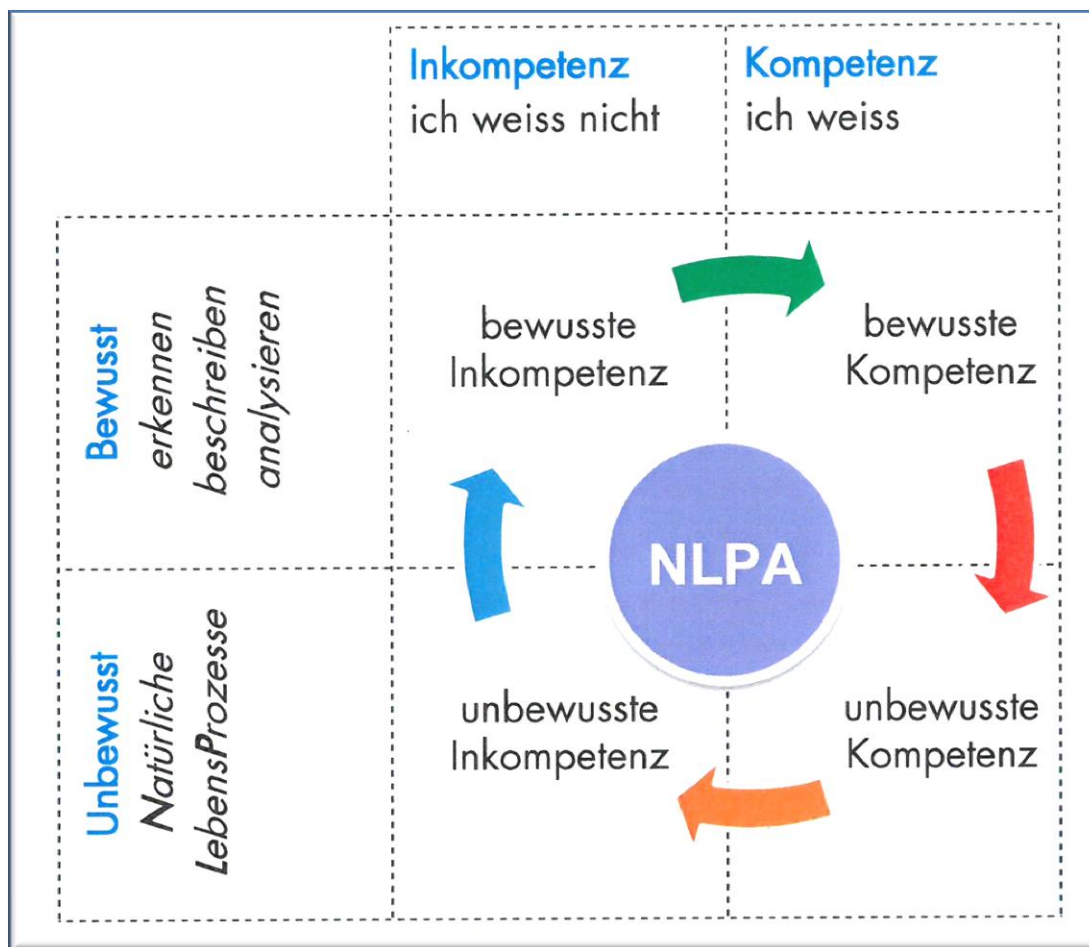


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# 4 Phasen des Lernens

Dieses Modell wird an der NLP Akademie Schweiz (NLPA) wie folgt vermittelt:



Script zur Ausbildung Leadership & ProzessSteuerung (NLP Trainer), Seite 76, NLP Akademie Schweiz

Unsere Recherchen zur Quelle (Herkunft) des Modell finden Sie auf den nächsten Seiten dieses Dokuments.

## Herkunft unsicher

Auszug aus  
<http://www.businessballs.com/consciouscompetencelearningmodel.htm>  
 siehe nächste Seiten in diesem Dokument

Several claims of original authorship exist for the 'conscious competence' model's specific terminology, definitions, structure, etc., as we recognize it today. The most notable claims are as follows, among which the evidence showing Martin M Broadwell as originator seems to be the earliest.

- For many years the US organization **Gordon Training International, Noel Burch** has claimed a major role in defining the theory and promoting its use since the 1970s.
- Separately, a 1974 technical personnel paper, 'Conscious Competency - The Mark of a Competent Instructor', effectively asserts creation/definition of the concept and basic ('conscious competence') terminology by its author, **W Lewis Robinson**, an industrial training executive.
- And in August 2013 I was informed (thanks Earl L Wiese, Jr) of an earlier description of the modern-day 'conscious competence' model, featured in the 'Teaching for Learning' article by **Martin M Broadwell**, dated 20 February 1969, in The Gospel Guardian, an American Christian periodical published from the 1950s-1970s.

These claims, with discussion of other influential/contributing/promotional origins of the 'conscious competence' theory and its modern definitions are shown below, see [conscious competence model origins](#).



Eines scheint klar zu sein: Das Modell wurde *nicht* von Albert Bandura entwickelt, wie verschiedene Quellen im Internet postulieren.

Die folgenden Informationen stammen von  
<http://www.businessballs.com/consciouscompetencelearningmodel.htm>  
 Download am 18.7.2016

# conscious competence learning model

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## four stages of learning theory - unconscious incompetence to unconscious competence matrix

Here is a summary of the explanation, definitions and usage of the 'conscious competence' learning theory, including the ['conscious competence matrix' model](#), its extension/development, and [origins/history of the 'conscious competence' theory](#).  
 [...]

The earliest origins and various definitions of the 'conscious competence' learning theory are uncertain and could be very old indeed; perhaps thousands of years.

Several claims of original authorship exist for the 'conscious competence' model's specific terminology, definitions, structure, etc., as we recognize it today. The most notable claims are as follows, among which the evidence showing Martin M Broadwell as originator seems to be the earliest.

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## conscious competence theory - summary outline

The conscious competence theory and related matrix model explain the process and stages of learning a new skill (or behaviour, ability, technique, etc.)

The concept is most commonly known as the 'conscious competence learning model', or 'conscious competence learning theory'; sometimes 'conscious competence ladder' or 'conscious competence matrix'. Other descriptions are used, including terminology relating to 'conscious skilled' and 'conscious unskilled' (which incidentally are preferred by Gordon Training).

Occasionally in more recent adapted versions a [fifth stage or level is added to the conscious competence theory](#), although there is no single definitive five-stage model, despite there being plenty of very useful and valid debate about what the fifth stage might be.

Whether four or five or more stages, and whatever people choose to call it, the 'conscious competence' model remains essentially a very simple and helpful explanation of how we learn, and also serves as a useful reminder of the need to **train people in stages**.

### learning and training in stages

Put simply:

Learners or trainees tend to begin at stage 1 - 'unconscious incompetence'.

They pass through stage 2 - 'conscious incompetence', then through stage 3 - 'conscious competence'.

And ideally end at stage 4 - 'unconscious competence'.

Perhaps the simplest illustration of importance of appreciating the need for staged learning is that **teachers and trainers can wrongly assume trainees to be at stage 2, and focus effort towards achieving stage 3, when often trainees are still at stage 1**. Here the trainer assumes the trainee is aware of the skill existence, nature, relevance, deficiency, and that there will be a benefit from acquiring the new skill. Whereas trainees at stage 1 - unconscious incompetence - have none of these things in place, and will not be able to address achieving conscious competence until they've become consciously and fully aware of their own incompetence. **This is a fundamental reason for the failure of a lot of training and teaching.**

If the awareness of skill and deficiency is low or non-existent - ie., the learner is at the unconscious incompetence stage - the trainee or learner will simply not see the need for learning. It's essential to establish **awareness** of a weakness or training need (conscious incompetence) prior to attempting to impart or arrange training or skills necessary to move trainees from stage 2 to 3. People only respond to training when they are aware of their own need for it, and the personal benefit they will derive from achieving it.

## conscious competence learning matrix - progression, examples, definitions

Here is explanation of how learners/trainees pass from stage to stage in the conscious competence model, and definitions and meanings of each of the stages.

The progression is from quadrant 1 through 2 and 3 to 4. It is not possible to jump stages. For some skills, especially advanced ones, people can regress to previous stages, particularly from 4 to 3, or from 3 to 2, if they fail to practise and exercise their new skills. A person regressing from 4, back through 3, to 2, will need to develop again through 3 to achieve stage 4 - unconscious competence again.

For certain skills in certain roles stage 3 (conscious competence) is perfectly adequate, and in some cases for the reasons which follow, may actually be desirable.

It can be argued that learners who become skilled at level 4 - unconscious competence - cease to be learners. In one respect this is a statement of the obvious, but a more subtle appreciation of this status is that people at this stage can be vulnerable to complacency, by which learning ceases and 'unconscious competence' may in time become an ignorance of or blindness to new methods, technologies, etc., and the expert finds himself once again unconsciously incompetent. There are excellent and revealing parallels here with [John Fisher's Process of Personal Transition](#).

This aspect of 'fourth stage vulnerability' - the implication that stage 4 (unconscious competence) may become complacency or ignorance of new methods - has in part prompted suggestions (by various people since the model first emerged popularly) to extend the 'conscious competence' model to a **fifth stage**, and understanding these [ideas for a fifth stage stage](#) is certainly helpful in addressing complacency and other weaknesses/opportunities relating to continuing development.

Interestingly, progression from stage to stage is often accompanied by a feeling of awakening - 'the penny drops' - things 'click' into place for the learner - the person feels like he/she has made a big step forward, which of course they have. Very clear and simple examples of this effect are seen when a person learns to drive a car: the progression from stage 2 (conscious incompetence) to stage 3 (conscious competence) is obvious, as the learner becomes able to control the vehicle and signalling at the same time; and the next progression from 3 to 4 (unconscious competence) is equally clear to learner when he/she is able to hold a conversation while performing a complex manoeuvre (usually some while after passing the driving test..).

There are other representations of the conscious competence model besides a 2x2 matrix. Ladders and staircase diagrams are popular, which partly stem from the Gordon Training organization's interpretations. The principles remain the same though - it's a simple model and regardless of the varying formats and terminology it is always best presented and used as a basic stage-by-stage progression.

The matrix is particularly useful in addressing training obstacles. Trainers and learners can ask themselves: "What stage is the learner at and what is preventing the learning from progressing?"

In this way the conscious competence theory helps trainers and learners to understand far better why an obstacle exists, and how best to deal with the challenge.

And since the conscious competence theory forces analysis at an individual level, the model encourages and assists individual assessment and development, which is easy to overlook when so much learning and development is delivered on a group basis.

We each possess natural strengths and preferences, (due to [brain-type](#), and [personality](#), and [life-stage/experience](#), etc) and this affects our **attitudes and commitments** towards learning, as well as our **abilities in developing competence in different disciplines**. People begin to develop competence only after they recognise the relevance of their own incompetence in the skill concerned. Certain brain-types and personalities prefer and possess certain aptitudes and skills. We each therefore experience different levels of challenge (to our attitudes and awareness in addition to pure capability) in progressing through the stages of learning, dependent on what is being learned. Some people will resist progression even to stage 2 (becoming aware of incompetence), because they refuse to acknowledge or accept the relevance and benefit of a particular skill or ability. Denial may also be a factor where there is a level of personal fear or insecurity. Other people may readily accept the need for development from 1 to 2, but may struggle to progress from 2 to 3 (becoming consciously competent) because the skill is not a natural personal strength or aptitude. Some people may progress well to stage 3 but will struggle to reach stage 4 (unconsciously competent), and then regress to stage 2 (consciously incompetent) again, simply through lack of practise. We see this last scenario very commonly in the teaching of new computer skills, or the use of complex machinery, and in such situations the conscious competence theory quickly enables a reliable analysis of what the problem is, and how to rectify it.

The conscious competence model can be useful in all sorts of training situations. You will see other applications when you explore the definitions and progressions outlined in the matrix here.

## conscious competence matrix

	competence	incompetence
conscious	<p><b>3 - conscious competence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the person achieves 'conscious competence' in a skill when they can perform it reliably at will</li> <li>the person will need to concentrate and think in order to perform the skill</li> <li>the person can perform the skill without assistance</li> <li>the person will not reliably perform the skill unless thinking about it - the skill is not yet 'second nature' or 'automatic'</li> <li>the person should be able to demonstrate the skill to another, but is unlikely to be able to teach it well to another person</li> <li>the person should ideally continue to practise the new skill, and if appropriate commit to becoming 'unconsciously competent' at the new skill</li> <li><b>practise</b> is the single most effective way to move from stage 3 to 4</li> </ul>	<p><b>2 - conscious incompetence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the person becomes aware of the existence and relevance of the skill</li> <li>the person is therefore also aware of their deficiency in this area, ideally by attempting or trying to use the skill</li> <li>the person realises that by improving their skill or ability in this area their effectiveness will improve</li> <li>ideally the person has a measure of the extent of their deficiency in the relevant skill, and a measure of what level of skill is required for their own competence</li> <li>the person ideally makes a commitment to learn and practice the new skill, and to move to the 'conscious competence' stage</li> </ul>
unconscious	<p><b>4 - unconscious competence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the skill becomes so practised that it enters the unconscious parts of the brain - it becomes 'second nature'</li> <li>common examples are driving, sports activities, typing, manual dexterity tasks, listening and communicating</li> <li>it becomes possible for certain skills to be performed while doing something else, for example, knitting while reading a book</li> <li>the person might now be able to teach others in the skill concerned, although after some time of being unconsciously competent the person might actually have difficulty in explaining exactly how they do it - the skill has become largely instinctual</li> <li>this arguably gives rise to the need for long-standing unconscious competence to be checked periodically against new standards</li> </ul>	<p><b>1 - unconscious incompetence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the person is not aware of the existence or relevance of the skill area</li> <li>the person is not aware that they have a particular deficiency in the area concerned</li> <li>the person might deny the relevance or usefulness of the new skill</li> <li>the person must become conscious of their incompetence before development of the new skill or learning can begin</li> <li>the aim of the trainee or learner and the trainer or teacher is to move the person into the 'conscious competence' stage, by demonstrating the skill or ability and the benefit that it will bring to the person's effectiveness</li> </ul>

Anmerkung NLP Akademie Schweiz:

Diese Art der Darstellung scheint uns nicht sehr 'gehirngerecht'. Für menschliches Denken ist 'Vergangenheit' tendenziell links angesiedelt und 'Zukunft' tendenziell rechts. Deshalb ist es verständnisfördernd in dieser Matrix die Spalten 'competence' und 'incompetence' auszutauschen so, dass 'incompetence' links ist und 'competence' rechts. Damit stimmt die Matrix auch für unser Unterbewusstsein besser mit der durch das Modell stipulierten Aussage überein, dass im Allgemeinen das Lernen von Inkompetenz zu Kompetenz (Vergangenheit zu Zukunft) verläuft. (s. Darstellung auf Seite 2 in diesem Artikel)



## suggested fifth stage of conscious competence model

As with many simple and effective models, attempts have been made to add to the conscious competence model, notably a fifth stage, which is commonly represented, among other suggestions, as:

'Conscious competence of unconscious competence', which describes a person's ability to recognise and develop unconscious incompetence in others.

Arguably this is a development in a different direction: ability to recognise and develop skill deficiencies in others involves a separate skill set altogether, far outside of an extension of the unconscious competence stage of any particular skill. As already mentioned, there are plenty of people who become so instinctual at a particular skill that they forget the theory - because they no longer need it - and as such make worse teachers than someone who has good ability at the conscious competence stage.

Alternatively a fifth stage of sorts has been represented as follows:

"One will only know a maximum of 80% of anything ... and the remaining 20% is never the same." (Thanks to W McLaughlin for this, who suggested separately that 'Bateman' may be the source of the conscious competence model itself.)

Here are other contributions to the subject of a possible fifth stage of the conscious competence model, most recent last:

From David Baume: David wrote, May 2004: As a fifth level, I like what I call 'reflective competence'. As a teacher, I thought "If unconscious competence is the top level, then how on earth can I teach things I'm unconsciously competent at?" I didn't want to regress to conscious competence - and I'm not sure if I could even I wanted to! So, reflective competence - a step beyond unconscious competence. Conscious of my own unconscious competence, yes, as you suggest. But additionally looking at my unconscious competence from the outside, digging to find and understand the theories and models and beliefs that clearly, based on looking at what I do, now inform what I do and how I do it. These won't be the exact same theories and models and beliefs that I learned consciously and then became unconscious of. They'll include new ones, the ones that comprise my particular expertise. And when I've surfaced them, I can talk about them and test them. Nonaka is good on this (Nonaka, I. (1994). "A Dynamic Theory of Organizational Knowledge Creation." Organization Science 5: 14-37. (David Baume, May 2004).

And from Linda Gilbert along similar lines, May 2004: Responding to your inquiry about "fifth stage of learning model" on your conscious competence learning model webpage... I've heard of one that belongs - I think it was called "re-conscious competence." It indicates a stage where you can operate with fluency yourself on an instinctive level, but are ALSO able to articulate what you are doing for yourself and others. That stage takes attention to process at a meta-cognitive level. Many people never reach it - we all know experts who can't tell you how they're doing what they're doing. (Linda Gilbert, Ph.D., May 2004) If you can shed further light on origins of this thinking please get in touch.

And from John Addy, Aug 2004: "I suggest the 5th stage can be 'complacency.' That is, when the person continues to practise the skill which has become automatic and second nature, but, over time, allows bad habits to form. For example, an exemplary driver makes a silly mistake. Or, a trainer, believing himself or herself to be an expert, fails to prepare adequately for a training session and

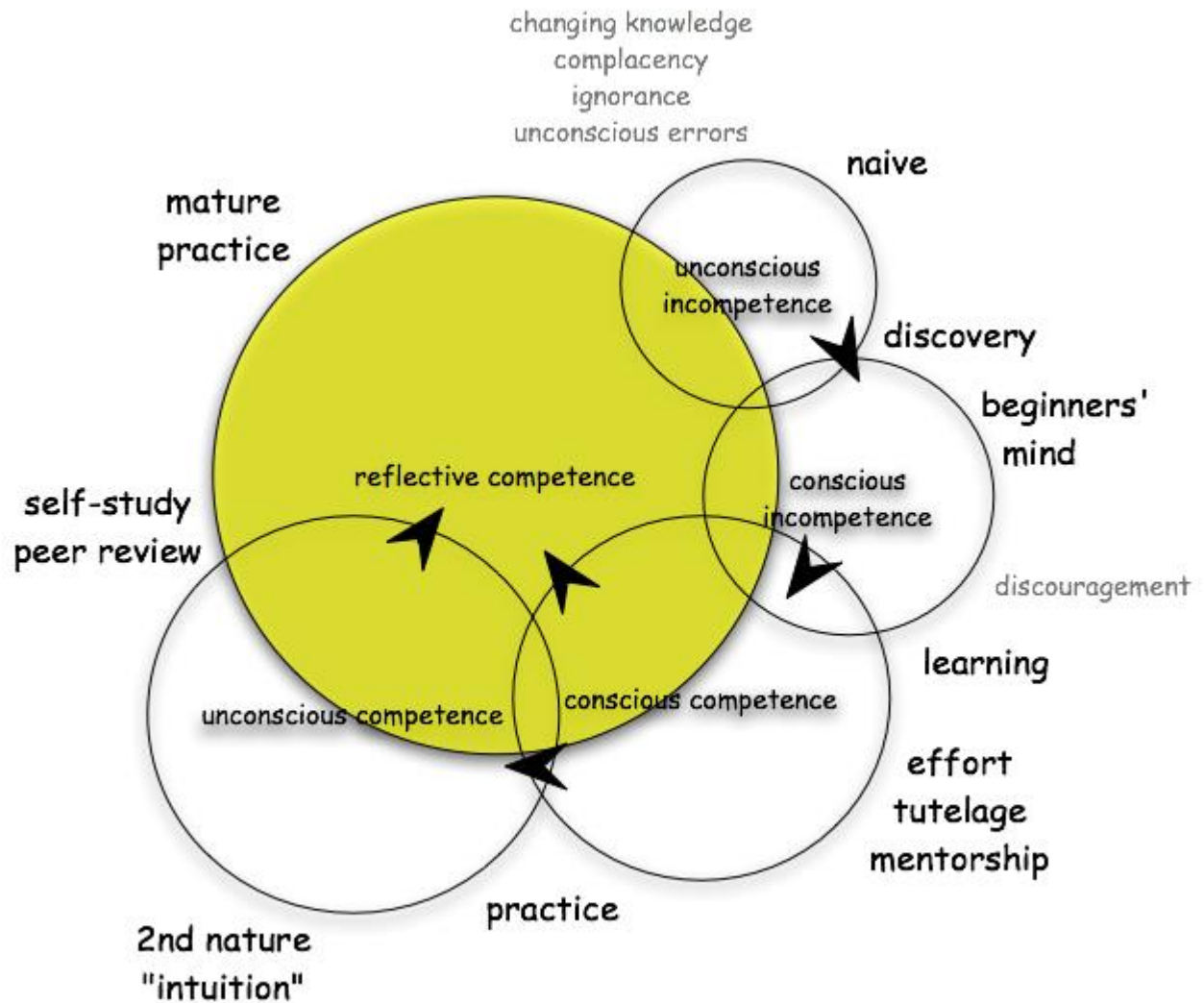
drops a clanger. These are the dangers of thinking you can do something so easily, you become complacent. Complacency can also cause problems if the person doesn't keep up-to-date with the skill. As techniques and approaches move forward, the person remains behind using set methods which have perhaps become stale, out-dated or less relevant to today. In each case above the person must reassess personal competence (perhaps against a new standard) and step back to the conscious competence stage until mastery is attained once again. Complacency provides a useful warning to those who think they have reached the limit of mastery. It can also encourage people to search for continuous improvement." (John Addy, Aug 2004)

[...]

From Andrew Dyckhoff, January 2007: "My suggestion for the 5th level would be 'Chosen Conscious Competence'. People often use the driving analogy to explain the model. In the analogy people normally relate the transition from a learner having to think: mirror, signal, manoeuvre, engage, etc., to jumping in and driving off without consciously thinking about the process. When we go on an advanced driving course we learn that there are certain things we should ALWAYS CONSCIOUSLY CHECK. These include looking to see whether there is an idiot coming the other way through a red light, and stopping so you can see the road behind the tyres of the car in front of you, etc. The sales example is that excellent sales people discipline themselves never to assume and always to check.. To summarise, there are some elements of what we do that are so critical to successful performance that the highest level of learning is to choose to remain consciously competent, as with the advanced driving analogy: unconscious competence is fine when we are changing gear, but not when passing through a green light..." (Ack Andrew Dyckhoff, January 2007)

From Will Taylor, March 2007: "Re '5th stage' - see the ideas in the diagram. This is more of a spiral model than a hierarchical matrix. It would seem that mature practice involves a mature recognition that one is inevitably ignorant of many things one does not know (i.e., we revisit 'unconscious incompetence' repeatedly or continually; i.e., 'consciousness of unconscious incompetence'). Repeatedly, we are continuously rediscovering 'beginner's mind'.

"We revisit conscious incompetence, making discoveries in the holes in our knowledge and skills, becoming discouraged, which fuels incentive to proceed (when it does not defeat). We perpetually learn, inviting ongoing tutelage, mentoring and self-study (ongoing conscious competence). We continually challenge our 'unconscious competence' in the face of complacency, areas of ignorance, unconscious errors, and the changing world and knowledge base: We challenge our unconscious competence when we recognize that a return to unconscious incompetence would be inevitable. We do this in part by self-study and use of peer review - such that mature practice encompasses the entire 'conscious competence' model, rather than supercedes it as the hierarchical model might suggest."



(Courtesy of Will Taylor, Chair, Department of Homeopathic Medicine, National College of Natural Medicine, Portland, Oregon, USA, March 2007. Please reference the diagram accordingly if you use it.)

And these wonderful observations from from Richard Moore, May 2007: "...I studied with Chris Argyris at Harvard and always had a bit of discomfort at his notion of 'incompetence.' Most people will not acknowledge that they are incompetent. They will, however, acknowledge that they are unaware, possibly ignorant of something, or simply unmotivated by it. Indeed, until one has a purpose for a thing, it is simply irrelevant. That then introduces the issue of power relationships, a debate I had with Chris. If one person defines another as 'incompetent,' but the other sees no need for the 'competence,' then the one is imposing a worldview on the other, which if permitted to prevail is essentially imperial - or at the least, dominating. This fits the model which Paulo Freire critiqued in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and his other works. In the spirit of a 'liberating praxis' and related notions of empowerment through one's ability to define one's world and one's self and relations within it, I would propose 5 stages somewhat along the lines of [Will Taylor's](#): accidental, intentional, skillful, masterful, and enlightened. The accidental stage is simply the stage in which one recognizes no particular need for a skill or competency, but may come across it accidentally nonetheless. Whether one chooses or comes to value it is determined by an intentionality or willful choice ('desire'). That intentionality then can lead to skillfulness. Skillfulness can become mastery. Mastery has the potential for enlightenment.

[...]

What should be apparent is that there is learning distinct from awareness. One 'learns' through means independent of awareness, although awareness may accompany learning. Awareness can also interfere with learning. The two are simply not the same. One may in fact be a capable teacher with awareness and lack the actual skill one is teaching. This may be unusual, but is certainly not unheard of. It can arise with persons who become disabled, but are still aware, or it may arise with persons who are aware but never acquired the physical skill. Certainly Einstein was never 'God' to have thought experiments enabling him to imagine how 'God' might have designed the universe. More illustratively, athletes can improve their performance through visualization. Visualization, in fact, can improve the efficacy of exercise in general, whether physical or mental. This should be telling us that awareness and the physical process of learning occur somewhat independently, albeit interactively. Anyhow, I suggest that 'conscious competence' is really just 'learning' in 5 stages, from accidental to enlightened, passing through intentional, skillful, and masterful. Many other labels can be applied, as many other cultures have done. The learning must be accompanied by a corresponding degree of awareness that then differentiates automatic learning from sentient learning. We can 'teach' a machine, but enlightenment requires some degree of 'spiritual' transcendence or insight. Whether artificial intelligence can attain this is of less concern than the simple acknowledgement in functional or operational terms that 'enlightenment' is attained through intentionality that unifies mastery with awareness - even if the mastery in physical terms is exhibited by someone or something other than the enlightened master (shades of 'the Force'). Effective leaders in organizations accomplish this through the organizations. Gurus accomplish this through their disciples. I would also remark, in closing, that Buddhism distinguishes the Arhat from the Bodhisattva. Both are considered 'enlightened,' except the Arhat is essentially selfish about attaining nirvana, whereas the Bodhisattva sticks around to bring everyone else along. One might ask if it is truly 'enlightened' to cash in on nirvana without mentoring others. This is the essential distinction between Hinayana, or 'small boat (or vessel),' and Mahayana, or 'big boat (or vessel),' in regard to schools of Buddhism. I like the idea that an 'Enlightened Master' is one who acts compassionately toward others by mentoring them."

And a follow-up note from Richard on five stages:

Evelyn Underhill, in her classic work *Mysticism*, identifies five stages of development:

1. Awakening
2. Purgation
3. Illumination
4. Dark Night of the Soul
5. Union with the Ultimate

(Courtesy of Richard H Moore, US Dept of Energy Professor, Assistant Professor of Behavioral Science, Leadership and Information Strategy Department, Industrial College of the Armed Forces, National Defense University, Washington, DC, May 2007. Please reference Richard Moore if you use any of his comments.)

[...]

## origins of conscious competence model

The earliest origins of the 'conscious competence' learning concept are uncertain. Various theories and maxims - some very old - could potentially have inspired the model. Ancient sources such as Confucius and Socrates are cited as possible early originators of seminal thinking and writings relating to the 'conscious competence' model, together with more recent authors and academics.

In August 2013 I was informed (thanks Earl L Wiese, Jr., owner of ProTek Statistical & Quality Consulting and Training) as to perhaps the earliest definition of the Conscious Competence learning model in its modern form, namely by Martin M Broadwell, the author of the article titled 'Teaching for Learning' in The Gospel Guardian, dated/published 20 February 1969. I am seeking clarification and further details about this which will be published here when available.

[...]

### **The Gospel Guardian**

**Devoted to the Propagation and Defense of New Testament Christianity**

(VOLUME 20 February 20, 1969 - NUMBER 41, PAGE 1-3a)

**Teaching For Learning (XVI.)**

author: Martin M. Broadwell

[...]

[...]

Der obige Artikel wurde durch uns stark gekürzt. Alle Auslassungen sind mit [...] markiert.

Ueli R. Frischknecht, NLP Akademie Schweiz, Juli 2016