

The Awareness/Competence Grid

(adapted from Wilson Learning Corporation's "Four States of Knowledge/Skill")

	unskilled	skilled	
partially aware	partially aware yet unskilled	partially aware and skilled	partially aware
unaware	unaware and unskilled	skilled yet unaware	unaware
	unskilled	skilled	

unaware and unskilled

- Some people in this quadrant are unemployed, under-employed, or recently assigned to a new role.
- Team members not seeking growth likely fit here. Some are satisfied with where they are. Others have never instilled in themselves an appreciation for personal growth (it's not among their values).
- Teenagers often fit here. They lack life experience. They think they are very skilled, and they think they are very aware. However, anyone who is genuinely skilled and aware knows otherwise.
- Lest we feel cocky, leaders sometimes find themselves in this quadrant (and may not realize it!). We all risk "self-deception." We can be seduced into believing that we know, understand, and are capable.
- Some bosses, sadly, may be here much of the time. Proudful individuals rarely seek feedback and likely don't welcome it when offered. You see things they don't. You'd love to help if they'd only let you!
- Most of us are grateful that in our past, someone helped make us more aware of the truth around us!

partially aware yet unskilled

- These are individuals who realize (often through feedback) that they have huge growth potential.
- Many individuals in this quadrant seek opportunities to enhance their competency; they're "hungry."
- Some individuals live with the awareness of their potential but choose (sometimes for reasons they believe are beyond their control) to not seek learning, experiment with, or practice new skills.

unaware yet skilled

- We all have natural talent. Many people take these talents for granted or don't have an adequate appreciation of their value. Some have exceptional skills, such as a child prodigy, a gifted athlete, or a "natural born" leader. However, all of us can gain increased awareness, increasing our contribution.
- Some individuals have executed a skill so often that they have established patterns of behavior (habits) that require little or no conscious thought. Examples are typing, driving a car, or listening well.
- Individuals in this quadrant make good role models, but rarely are good mentors (difficulty explaining why and how they do what they do, so it is hard for them to develop the skills or awareness of others).

partially aware and skilled

- These are individuals who are using their natural talents, have sought education, and are practicing skills that lead to desired results. They often are overt in seeking feedback and acting on it.
- These individuals make good role models (that is, you can learn by watching what they do).
- They also make good mentors. That is, you can learn by observing their behaviors as well as by asking them why and how they do what they do. They can help others grow in both awareness and competency (and in so doing, typically improve their unique awareness and competencies!).
- The more you know about something, the more you realize how much you don't yet know. Therefore, some people may feel less competent than others consider them to be (the impostor syndrome).