



Introduction:

This lesson introduces a model for understanding the development of intercultural competence: the four levels of cultural awareness. Those levels include the following: unconscious incompetence, conscious incompetence, conscious competence, and unconscious competence. In this activity, you will be provided with a definition of each of the four levels, along with an example from the perspective of any everyday skill that you have developed (tying your shoes). Then, you will apply this model to a cultural situation using the handout attached on the following page.

Participant Instructions:

1. You will be introduced to the four levels of cultural awareness:
 - Unconscious Incompetence
 - Unaware of cultural differences
 - Don't realize you're making cultural mistakes while interacting with individuals from other cultures
 - Conscious Incompetence
 - Realize that there are cultural differences but don't know what they are or how to navigate them
 - Realize you're making mistakes while interacting with individuals from other cultures, but you don't understand the nuances of those cultural behaviors/expectations
 - Worry that you won't be able to figure it out
 - Conscious Competence
 - Realize that cultural differences exist, know what they are, and attempt to make adjustments when you're interacting with individuals from a different culture
 - Still have to make a conscious effort to change your behavior
 - Still aren't completely comfortable and worry about making mistakes
 - Unconscious Competence
 - Don't have to think about the cultural differences between you and others any longer
 - Behaving in a culturally appropriate way comes natural to you and you no longer have to think through every move
2. You will be separated into small groups with a copy of the Four Levels of Cultural Awareness Handout (on the following page). In your groups, you will apply the model to a cultural situation and discuss how someone might behave at the four different levels of cultural awareness. You will also consider what it would take for someone to get to the next level in that situation.
3. Share your answers.

Four Levels of Cultural Awareness Handout

Discuss how someone in the following situation might behave at the four different levels of cultural awareness. Write your notes below and be prepared to share with the entire group:

A student from the United States is studying abroad in Spain for an entire semester. Since they will be living in an apartment, they will periodically need to shop for groceries and other essentials. This may seem like a simple task, but they will be immersed in a new culture and will therefore have to learn how to navigate new cultural expectations and behaviors in everyday situations.

- How might someone who is at the level of **unconscious incompetence** think and behave in this situation? What would it take to get them to the next level?

- How might someone who is at the level of **conscious incompetence** think and behave in this situation? What would it take to get them to the next level?

- How might someone who is at the level of **conscious competence** think and behave in this situation? What would it take to get them to the next level?

- How might someone who is at the level of **unconscious competence** think and behave in this situation?