

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, participants will be provided with a definition of each of the four levels, along with an example from the perspective of any everyday skill that they have developed (tying their shoes). Then, they will apply this model to a cultural situation using the Participant Instructions (in [Downloads](#)).

Facilitator Notes:**Objectives:**

As a result of this activity, participants will be able to:

1. Recognize the four levels of cultural awareness: unconscious incompetence, conscious incompetence, conscious competence, unconscious competence.
2. Apply the four levels to a cultural situation.

Time:

45 minutes.

Group Size:

Small Group.

Materials:

Four Levels of Cultural Awareness PowerPoint; Four Levels of Cultural Awareness Participant Instructions (in [Downloads](#)).

Optional: the lesson/quiz from the University of the Pacific's What's Up with Culture? modules or the Peace Corps Cross-Cultural Workbook (in [Links](#)).

Intercultural Development Continuum Stages:

- Denial
- Polarization
- Minimization
- Acceptance

AAC&U Intercultural Knowledge and Competence Goals:**Cultural Self-Awareness**

- To articulate insights into own cultural rules and biases (e.g., seeking complexity; aware of how their experiences have shaped these rules, and how to recognize and respond to cultural biases, resulting in a shift in self-description).

Openness

- To initiate and develop interactions with culturally different others.
- To suspend judgment in valuing interactions with culturally different others.

Other Skills:

Emotional Resilience.

Activity Instructions:

1. Begin by introducing the four levels of cultural awareness and defining each of them using slides 2-4 in the Four Levels of Cultural Awareness PowerPoint (in [Downloads](#)).
2. Help participants better understand the model by presenting it in terms of an everyday activity/skill that they have developed: tying their shoes. The explanations of each level from this perspective are on slides 5-8.

Note: If the facilitator wants participants to take one of the linked quizzes on the four levels of cultural awareness, they might do that before proceeding to step 3.

3. Separate participants into small groups and ensure that each group has a copy of the Four Levels of Cultural Awareness Participant Instructions (in [Downloads](#)). The facilitator should also use slide 9 to explain the activity and display the directions. In their groups, they will apply the model to a cultural situation and discuss how someone might behave at the four different levels of cultural awareness. They will also consider what it would take for someone to get to the next level in that situation.
4. After participants have finished discussing the situation, ask each group to share their answers.