

Do You Know That You Know?

The development of core competency is an important process for leaders. It is not enough to BE competent as a leader. The critical demand placed on leadership is to develop core competencies in others.

The mark that matters most is the mark of improvement made with a team. The care and feeding of core competencies should be an important standard for evaluation of a leader's performance.

Consider the journey to competency.

As we enter a new field of study, we all start at about the same place:

UNCONCIOUS INCOMPETENCE—We don't know what we don't know.

The role of a leader with unknowing workers is to expose knowledge gaps. I like to think of a spotlight as the tool of choice for exposing knowledge gaps. It's not enough for the leader to observe or rant about gaps. The leader must see knowledge gaps as a teaching opportunity.

CONSCIOUS INCOMPETENCE—We know that we don't know.

The study of calculus comes to mind!

The first sign of progress for a teacher is the point at which a student admits a knowledge deficiency. Specific advancement in learning occurs when the student is willing to admit a need to be taught. Willingness to learn is preceded by an awareness of deficiencies.

CONSCIOUS COMPETENCE—We know that we know.

It still takes effort.

As learning occurs over time, the student becomes aware of the

development of productive competency. The learner is aware of what she knows and demonstrates confidence. Effective organizations are filled with teams of consciously competent, highly motivated people.

UNCONSCIOUSLY COMPETENT—Second-nature knowledge.

Leaders love to work with a team of people who are so good at what they do, they don't have to think about it. The workers perform at a very high levels and probably spend time multitasking. The ever-present danger with unconscious competency is the speed of change in most fields. The trip to unconscious incompetence is quick and sure.

REFLECTIVE COMPETENCE—Conscious of lurking incompetency.

Leaders must actively reflect on the cycle of knowledge. The competency "ladder" is not a ladder at all. It is a circle.

Unconscious competence is a fleeting state. Competency is ethereal.

The spotlight should always shine brightest on the leader.

"For now we see as through a glass, dimly, but then, face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know, even as I also am known" (1 Cor. 13:12).