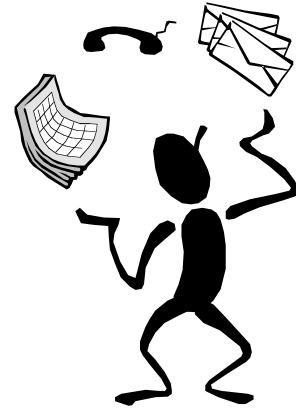


How we learn new skills

We all feel awkward and clumsy about some things some of the time. These feelings are a **message**, telling us that we have an **opportunity to develop new skills** in an area. As the following 'learning model' shows, becoming aware of our limitations is the first step to developing ourselves.



Unconscious
Incompetence



Conscious
Incompetence



Conscious
Competence



Unconscious
Competence

There are many skills that we simply don't know we don't have, or that we think aren't relevant to us. We don't realise that difficulties in our lives might be overcome by learning new skills.

A crucial step is to become aware of the existence or relevance of a skill. We also realise our deficiencies in the skill, and that we must commit to learning if we want to master it.

At this stage we are able to carry out the skill by concentrating on it and thinking about it. However, for most skills it is only through repeated practice that they become ...

... 'second nature'. When we are fully competent in a skill, the unconscious part of the brain can carry it out without us being aware of it. The skill has become a habit.