



4 Developmental Stages of Learning for Novice Teachers

Unconsciousness Incompetence	Consciousness Incompetence	Conscious Competence	Unconsciousness Competence
Teacher is unaware of the skill and their lack of proficiency. This is prior to entering the classroom for the first time.	Teacher becomes aware of skills that are necessary to become proficient in an effective classroom, and also recognizes that they are not as prepared as they thought. Teachers leave this step only by receiving mentoring and coaching by other experienced educators. This is generally in the first year of a teacher's career.	Teacher gains the skills necessary to promote an effective classroom by thinking about everything he/she does within each lesson. However, they continue to need coaching and mentoring, often up to five years.	Teacher is proficient in skills and performs work automatically without needing to think lessons through. In the classroom, everything flows, management is created with ease, and this teacher is considered a master of their field. These teachers make great mentors, if they can successfully recall how it "felt" to be a new teacher.

Implications for Mentoring Novice Teachers during Each Stage

- Assess the current stage of competence.
- Meet each teacher where they are and think: "What is the next step?"
- Provide coaching and support - including the modeling of effective skills and provision of specific and timely feedback - and allow time for teachers to improve with ongoing support.
- Assume best intentions. New teachers may not know what they need.
- Provide teachers with specific and aligned academic feedback including concrete examples. Statements such as "Hang in there" or "It will get easier" will not improve instruction.