The Judo Compass

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Competence - Thinking Inside the Box - Part I

The advice we so often hear, give, and applaud is "Think outside the box". Now that this advice has itself become a cliché, often qualifying in the shiai of life as a penalty-worthy false attack, some scoring points might be gained by looking *inside* the box. The Levels of Competence Box.

The Levels of Competence concept is not new, many people are familiar with it, yet many are not. Its primary value is to serve as a self-awareness road map, and thereby a personal-improvement tool. Once a person looks at the levels of competence and says, "Hey, that's cool," the next question becomes, "What's the point?"

Firstly, the implication is that this is an developmental process, one step leading to the next. This is not always the case. However, as far as a simple, inside the box approach is concerned, let's look at it as such, and for simplicity apply it to throwing skills - with the agreement that it can be applied equally for grappling skills.

U - I *Unconsciously Incompetent*	At this point you are unaware - you don't know what you don't know.
C - I *Consciously Incompetent*	Now you are aware of something you need to change or learn. Now you do know what you don't know.
C - C *Consciously Competent*	You have learned how to do something, but you have to be very deliberate and conscious that you are using the new behavior or skill.
U - C *Unconsciously Competent*	You are so competent at the skill or behavior, you're not even conscious that you are doing it.

- **Discover the Skill**
- **Learn the Skill**
- **Learn the Drill**
- **Do the Drill**
  - **UCHI KOMI**
- **Apply the Drill**
  - **NAGE KOMI**
- **Randomly Apply the Skill**
  - **RANDORI**
  - **SHIAI**

Here is the process, and the application in sequence is important. It is essential to success.

♦ Each bulleted item is essential to the next. Doing each correctly is going to strongly effect the next.

♦ In order for a skill to be ingrained, it must be repeated. If repeated incorrectly, the next step is tainted.

♦ Randori and then shiai often provides greater value in presenting failure rather than success. This makes the judoka aware of the Unconscious Incompetence beneath what might otherwise seem a highly polished skill.

♦ When the cycle of competence enhancement stops, stagnation often begins.

♦ Some judoka are or become Unconscious Competents in the area of attaining competence. For most people, a conscious effort and attaining competence is a never-ending, conscious cycle of enrichment.

The longer and more frequently you contemplate the above chart, thinking inside the box, the better you will understand your own learning process and be able to enhance it.

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