



Adaptability and Flexibility Journal

Adaptability and Flexibility: Individuals can use their understanding of workplace change and variety to be open to new ideas and handle ambiguity.

In this journal you will find tools and activities to help you develop a better understanding of what adaptability and flexibility mean. Through self-reflection, activities, examples, and questioning, you will see why being adaptable and flexible are necessary in the workplace and how you can demonstrate those qualities to the best of your ability. You will be able to see your own growth by completing a self-check at the beginning and end of the process.

Self Check

A. Consider This.....

An adaptable and flexible person sees difficult situations as a challenge yet an opportunity for growth. They prioritize tasks based on which are needed first and the importance of the task to the situation. An adaptable person looks at many different angles. They see that the same task can be approached in a variety of ways. They ask questions when something is unclear and use information presented to work toward the goal. They accept and implement any changes that are made and use those changes to improve their own performance.

B. Self-Reflection Questions (consider your own experiences—classroom, work, or activities—and answer the following)

1. In your experience, what are three characteristics that would describe a person as being adaptable or flexible?
2. What are three characteristics that would describe behavior that is NOT adaptable or flexible?
3. Why is it important to have adaptability-flexibility skills for the workplace?

Recorded Lesson and Employer Interview

Watch this recorded lesson for a quick overview on the importance of adaptability and flexibility in the workplace. Learn from an employer how to demonstrate the skill:

- Recorded Lesson and Employer Interview: <https://youtu.be/SBioEwfPqIc>

Case Study

Carefully read the Case Study, then answer the reflection questions based on what you read.

Adaptability and Flexibility

Steve has been working for the local TV news station, WXYZ, for the past three months. He started out as an assistant to the social media manager and has recently been promoted to production assistant. His roles include editing footage for the nightly news, setting up cameras and mics, turning on monitors and teleprompters, handing out production agendas,

setting up the audio board, and breaking the set down for the day. He reports to Jewel, the studio floor manager who in turn reports to D'Andre, the producer. Steve works with Beth and Jamal, the nightly news anchors, Ying, the meteorologist, Raul, the sound engineer, as well as the rest of the production crew.

Usually his days are predictable, but on this day, a breaking news story is putting the entire set in a frenzy. Steve's routine is interrupted, and he needs to think quickly. To top that off, the other production assistant is home sick. Steve is being told by Raul to do checks of the sound equipment. Ying wants him to adjust the green screen. An assistant producer says she needs him to make sure the anchors have their mics and other equipment set up. He cannot find Jewel anywhere and one of the cameras is not working.

He has never been in this type of situation before. He is not sure which task to perform first, or which role he should take on in this situation.

Reflection Questions

1. What is the first step Steve should take?
2. What three items should Steve tackle first?
3. Since Jewel is not available, with whom should Steve consult?
4. What questions should Steve ask the person he consults?
5. What are some procedures that Steve could put in place to prevent these types of problems should a situation such as this arise again?
6. After the breaking story and nightly news is finished, D'Andre makes changes to the nightly news procedure that would improve the team's response to breaking stories. These changes significantly alter Steve's routine. How should Steve handle this news?
7. What other ideas do you have to improve Steve's work and experience?

Activity - PAUSE Method

Adaptability can be practiced using the PAUSE method. It is a way to work through the steps necessary to plan a new approach. This method can be applied to many different situations in real-life, particularly in the workplace. The PAUSE method is an iterative process. This method helps participants to identify problems and develop next steps.

Pause – Pause and reflect. Stopping gives you time to think about the situation.

Alternatives – Make a list of alternatives and options to formulate a new approach. Think about which option is best for the situation and develop a plan.

Utimize – Utilize the resources, people, systems, or tools, available to help accomplish the goal.

Start – Implement the new plan.

Evaluate – Evaluate often to determine if the new approach is working. Repeat the PAUSE steps as necessary.

Put it to use – Read the following two scenarios. Use the PAUSE method to adapt to the situation.

1. *A co-worker has pointed out that you may be infringing on several copyrights with the materials you are using in a presentation. Your supervisor says the presentation must be reworked. You have only a short time before the deadline.*

Pause, take a breath. Ask yourself what needs to be changed.

Alternatives – What alternatives do you have?

Utilize – What resources are available to assist you?

Start – How will you go about making revisions?

Evaluate – How will you be certain you are in compliance with copyrights? How can you prevent this from occurring again?

2. *Key materials that you planned to utilize for a building project have been discontinued. You still must meet your deadline.*

Pause, take a breath. Ask yourself what needs to be changed.

Alternatives – What alternatives do you have?

Utilize – What resources are available to assist you?

Start – How will you go about making revisions?

Evaluate – How will you be certain you are in compliance with copyrights? How can you prevent this from occurring again?

Reflection Questions

1. Think of a tricky situation you have experienced in a work or school environment and reflect on how you responded. Apply the PAUSE method and explain how the outcome may have changed if it was applied.
2. How could this process be applied to your life outside of the workplace?
3. How might this process prevent conflicts?
4. How does this process move a situation forward?

Video and Article Links

Watch at least two of the following videos and read at least two of the listed articles. Based on what you saw and read, answer the reflection questions listed at the bottom of the section.

Video Links

- Recorded Lesson and Employer Interview: <https://youtu.be/SBioEwfPqlc>
- Adaptability Explanation
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rlmX1yWt_SI
- Adaptability Explanation
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDPCPmBY4Pw>
- Adaptability – What Not to Do
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y1NEdFLujw>
- Adaptability – Green Beret
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WkpUOI1C6Aq>
- Adaptability – Considering Other's Viewpoint
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3qVEvUBzqyY>
- Flexibility and Adaptation: how to adapt and change plans, goals, and actions
<https://www.northernpublicradio.org/post/failure-bites-dr-anne-kaplan-big-fish-small-pond>
- Adaptability-Podcast from WNIJ Failure Bites "A Great Teacher Failure Is"
<https://www.northernpublicradio.org/post/failure-bites-dr-lisa-freeman-great-teacher-failure>
- Adaptability-WNIJ Podcast, Failure Bites. "A Mile in their Shoes"
<https://www.northernpublicradio.org/post/failure-bites-mile-their-shoes>

Article Links

- <https://www.illinoisworknet.com/Pages/Article.aspx?ArticleId=150>
- <https://www.illinoisworknet.com/Pages/Article.aspx?ArticleId=168>
- <https://www.ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-articles/adaptability-1-idea-3-facts-5-tips/>
- <https://work.chron.com/demonstrate-adaptability-job-15407.html>

- <https://targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/skills-and-competencies/817714-adaptability-and-flexibility-the-skills-that-equip-you-for-any-challenge>
- <https://www.careeraddict.com/demonstrate-adaptability-on-the-job>

Reflection Questions

1. Please give an example from the resources that was particularly noteworthy to you as a positive example of being adaptable-flexible.
2. Please give an example from the resources that was particularly noteworthy to you as an example of NOT being adaptable-flexible.
3. Have you ever found yourself in a situation that requires you to be adaptable and flexible? How did you handle it?
4. After watching the videos and reading the articles what would you have done differently?
5. What are some ideas that you can apply to your own work experiences?

Career Development Activity

Over 50 different employers came together to develop GPEAK. They agreed that adaptability and flexibility skills are in the top 10 essential skills desired by employers. They identified certain behaviors on the job that indicate good adaptability and flexibility skills. Our GPEAK employers described these behaviors as:

- Embraces new ideas and approaches when opportunity arises
- Seeks opportunities to improve processes and accomplish goals
- Effectively changes plans, goals, actions, and priorities to deal with changing situations
- Reflects on and modifies own work behaviors based on feedback
- Asks questions in the face of ambiguity to gain clarity and identify next steps

Resume Bullets Activity

In this Career Development exercise, you will describe your past experiences where you demonstrated or developed the adaptability and flexibility skills. For many positions, it will be important to note these skills on your job application materials and resume.

Think back on some of your past experiences (classes, jobs, activities, sports, and volunteer positions). Are you proud of certain moments where you demonstrated or developed your adaptability and flexibility skills? If you were interviewing for a job tomorrow, which story would you tell to demonstrate that you have experience with this important workplace skill?

Focusing on your past experiences, write six bulleted statements about your adaptability and flexibility skills. A resume bullet should start with an action verb (past tense or present) and be concise. You will want to write the bullets without the use of personal pronouns (refrain from using me, my, or I in the statement). These bulleted statements can be used on a resume, application form, or for interview prep. Here are a few examples:

- Developed adaptability and flexibility skills for the workplace in a GPEAK training session
- Learned new procedures for handling the customer service protocols
- Adapt quickly to new leadership styles and embrace change
- Known for being flexible when supervisor is scheduling shifts
- Enjoy learning new procedures and brainstorming on solutions for projects
- Seek feedback from supervisors and believe in continuous improvement

Now it is your turn. Think about your experiences and write six resume bullets that highlight your adaptability/flexibility skills.

Post Self-Check

Now that you have a better understanding of what employers are looking for in adaptability and flexibility skills, answer the questions below:

1. What is something that you can do in 3 months, 6 months, and 1 year to further develop adaptability and flexibility skills?
2. What is your interest level in this competency (adaptability and flexibility)?
3. Are you drawn to projects or work that require this skill?
4. Would you say that you have natural abilities around this skill or is it something you have to work at?
5. In the future, would you apply to a job in your field that asked for a high level of adaptability and flexibility skill?