

Training for Adaptability in the Workplace

You might recall the beginning of the COVID pandemic in March 2020. Within days of the World Health Organization declaring a pandemic, nearly all in-person activity stopped except for essential services. Employers and workers had to quick figure out how to continue operations remotely online. Workers also had to figure out how to juggle job responsibilities with unexpectedly home-schooling their children or caring for aging parents in their homes.

In a complex, interconnected world, conditions change frequently: like a rapid change in societal conditions or public policy, a change in market conditions changing competitive conditions, or a once successful organization finding itself in financial distress. These, in turn, require that workers adapt to changing circumstances.

And as workplaces increasingly integrate digital technology, automation, and Artificial Intelligence (AI), even everyday activities require adaptations by workers. That's why employers consider adaptability an essential competency according to Monica Santana and Mirta Diaz-Fernandez in their 2023 article, *Competencies for the artificial intelligence age: visualisation of the state of the art and future perspectives*. As a result, Employment and Social Development Canada identified adaptability as a Skill for Success.

To learn how employers teach adaptability skills in their workplaces and share teaching techniques learned from the literature, a team from the Institute for Performance and Learning, Concordia University, and George Brown College reviewed the research and professional literature. This report shares what the team learned. It first explains what adaptability is, followed by a high-level overview of what we found in the literature, then shares specific suggestions for teaching adaptability in the workplace. The report closes with key-takeaways.

What Is Adaptability?

According to the Skills for Success website of Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), adaptability refers to:

“the ability to achieve or adjust goals and behaviours when expected or unexpected change occurs, by planning, staying focused, persisting, and overcoming setbacks. For example, [people] use this skill to change work plans to meet new deadlines, learn how to work with new tools and improve our skills through feedback.

ESDC notes that employers seek adaptability skills because ongoing changes in Canadian society affect how people “work, live, and learn and require [that people] constantly adapt to change.” This involves effectively dealing with change, learning new skills and adjusting behaviours when needed, while staying focused goals, and persisting, even when adapting becomes difficult. They add that adaptability skills also help people reduce feelings of stress and maintain positive attitudes.

The literature reviewed elaborates on this definition. For example, in their 2014 article *Performance adaptation: A theoretical integration and review*, authors Samantha Baard, Tara Rench, and Steve Kozlowski, noted that adaptability is the capacity to respond to changes in the work, home, and societal environment to produce constructive results in practice.

The literature also suggests that researchers approach adaptability from different perspectives. One such perspective is behavioural. According to a 2024 definition from the American Psychological Association, adaptability is “the capacity to make appropriate responses to changed or changing situations” and “the ability to modify or adjust one’s behavior in meeting different circumstances or different people.

In their 2014 article, *Employees’ adaptability and perceptions of change-related uncertainty: Implications for perceived organizational support, job satisfaction, and performance*, Kristin Cullen, Bryan Edwards, Wm. Camron Casper, and Kevin Gue note that one dimension of adaptability is the willingness to change to fit differing circumstances. These authors add that adaptive performance explores how well people actually adjust to changing circumstances.

Adaptability can also be defined as iterative cycles of people and teams adjusting their feelings, thinking and behaviours in response to change, according to Rosemarie Fernandez, Elizabeth Rosenman, Martiza Plaza-Verduin, and James Grand in their 2022 article, *Developing adaptive performance: A conceptual model to guide simulation-based training design*.

Baard, Rench, and Kozlowski also explored adaptability as a personality trait. As a personality trait, adaptability can be:

- Measured and used for recruiting adaptable workers
- A set of skills for reviewing career goals and revising actions
- The result of adjusting the priorities of an organization

Personality may account for 50-60% of adaptability according to the 2017 article *Career adaptability: A meta-analysis of relationships with measures of adaptivity, adapting responses, and adaptation results* by Cort Rudolph, Kristi Lavigne, and Hannes Zacher.

Within a career planning context, adaptability refers to a combination of personality and skills needed to find new work according to the 2017 article *Career adaptability: A meta-analysis of relationships with measures of adaptivity, adapting responses, and adaptation results* by Rudolph, Lavigne, and Zacher and the 2007 article *Forms of graduate capital and their relationship to graduate employability* by Michael Tomlinson, 2007.

Training plays a key role in helping workers adapt within the context of their jobs because the capacity for flexibility within a topic arises from how the topic was learned according first, to the 2001 article *Effects of training goals and goal orientation traits on multidimensional training outcomes and performance adaptability* by Steve Kozlowski, Stanley Gully, Kenneth Brown, Eduardo Salas, Eleanor Smith, and Earl Nason, and

second, the 1997 chapter *Building adaptive expertise: Implications for training design strategies* by Eleanor Smith, J. Kevin Ford, and Steve Kozlowski.

The literature also suggests that although people and organizations express a desire for adaptability and adaptable workers, actual priorities undermine adaptability in practice. For instance, most organizations prioritize control, efficiency and error-free performance, according to researchers Mary Uhl-Bien and Michael Arena in their 2017 article *Complexity leadership: Enabling people and organizations for adaptability*. Smith, Ford, and Kozlowski add that such priorities depend on routine expertise, the ability to quickly match known solutions to known problems, while avoiding errors based on experience in their 1997 book chapter, *Building adaptive expertise: Implications for training design strategies*.

In the same chapter, Smith, Ford, and Kozlowski also note that training can actually undermine the building of adaptability skills. That's because training typically repackages routine expertise, rather than encouraging workers to adapt to new practices. Several authors, including Alessandra Marinetti and Patrick Dunn in their 2002 article *The challenge of cultural adaptation: A question of approach* Vandra Huber and Geri Gay in their 1985 article *Channeling new technology to improve training* both comment that adjusting content to meet learner preferences is not promoting adaptability; such training remains focused on rewarding, and enforcing routine.

Suggestions for Teaching Adaptability in the Workplace

This section offers specific suggestions for teaching adaptability in the workplace. It starts with a general comment about the literature we reviewed and another about the challenge of teaching adaptability skills in the workplace. Then it offers suggestions for four general techniques for teaching adaptability to all workers, and four more techniques for teaching managers how to support adaptability in their workplaces. This section closes with a series of self-assessment questions from the Skills for Success website from Employment and Social Development Canada that people can use to assess their own adaptability skills.

A General Comment about the Literature

We limited the focus of our review to training for adaptability in the workplace. We reviewed 23 peer-reviewed articles (articles from journals that use a double-blind review process, in which neither the authors nor the reviewers know one another's identities, often report research studies, and are generally considered to have the strongest quality within the research community). We also reviewed 12 professional articles: ones from magazines and webzines whose content is determined by an editor-in-chief. We did not review blogs and other self-published materials. For each article, we captured the following information: class of article (peer reviewed or professional), type of research (research articles only), organization type, industry, definition of adaptability, type of intervention, success of the intervention, and other notes.

Despite the extensive search, we found that only half of the peer-reviewed articles actually reported empirical research on this subject (that is, studies of data collected from the field).

More fundamentally, we found that the majority of training in the workplace did not focus on the more personal aspects of adaptability such as resilience and adapting to life changes (with the exception of the transition from school to work), but on more specific aspect of adaptability such as training for adaptive performance and adapting careers.

Because of the limitations with the findings from the literature, we also conducted a convenience search of commercially available courses for the workplace, to see if perhaps those reflected different patterns. They did not.

A General Comment about Teaching Adaptability Skills

This does not mean that the entire educational system ignores the teaching of adaptability. Rather, this literature merely suggests that this subject is not covered widely in the workplace, which might suggest why employers have an interest in it.

CareerOneStop, an online service of the US Department of Labor, identifies adaptability and the related skill of flexibility as personal effectiveness competencies, which are not only essential for work but also for “all life roles—roles as a member of a family, a community, and a larger society.” CareerOneStop also notes that “personal effectiveness competencies are generally learned in the home or community and reinforced and honed at school and in the workplace. They represent personal attributes that may be challenging to teach or assess.” This might also explain why training in adaptability is lacking in the workplace. This might also explain why the training that does exist focuses on particular aspects of adaptability, such as adaptive performance: which primarily focuses on adjusting and responding to changes in the work environments such as changes in tasks and work demands, and changing work circumstances.

By contrast, many universities offer courses on adaptability-related topics in their co-curricular programs: series of courses on work-related skills that are not covered in academic courses.

Career development literature also addresses adaptability. However, like the teaching of adaptability in K-12 and higher education, this was beyond the scope of our literature review, which was exclusively focused on teaching adaptability skills in the workplace.

General Techniques for Teaching Adaptability

Although some limitations exist to teaching adaptability, the research does suggest some techniques can be helpful in building adaptive performance in addressing training for career development occurring in response to changing business circumstances. Following are four general techniques for Learning and Development professionals to consider.

Technique 1. Determine the type of adaptability that needs to be addressed with learners and the extent to which training can address it. As the definitions suggest, adaptability is a broad topic, encompassing everything from adjusting to a major life shock to adjusting to changes in work processes and routines. Different people respond differently to the range of adaptations.

Synthesizing the insights from the 2014 article Career adaptation: The relation of adaptability to goal orientation, proactive personality, and career optimism by Laramie Tolentino, Patrick Garcia, Vinh Lu, Simon Restubog, Preshant Bordia, and Carolin Plewa and the 2001 article by Kozlowski, Gully, Brown, Salas, Smith, and Nason mentioned earlier, research suggests a variety of aspects of adaptability that learners might need to develop, ranging from adaptivity and adaptability resources to adapting responses and adaptation results, though few need to address all of these at a given time. Those, in turn, suggest the extent to which training alone might help to develop the skills Table 1 summarizes the different aspects of adaptability learners might need to develop.

Table 1.

Types of Adaptability

Type of Adaptability	Definition	Examples	Extent to Which this Type of Adaptability Can Be Taught
Adaptivity	Willingness to change	Demonstrated through personality such as goal orientation, proactivity, and optimism	Although the specific aspects of this type of adaptability can be described in class as can tactics for developing them, because this is ultimately an affective skill, coaching and other on-the-spot guidance might be needed to nurture its development.
Adaptability resources	Competencies that can be improved	• Reviewing the past and using that reflection to consider a desired future • Exploring opportunities for fit between situations available and	Formal instruction can guide the reflection process and explore general responses to various types of reflections and resulting actions. Because of the personal nature of the reflection and resulting responses, however, although the

		ones that might work well • Making responsible decisions • Building confidence in skills from experiences	tactics might be developed in training, the resulting actions require personal development that might require other types of interventions.
Adapting responses	Behaviours used to address change and improve skills	Planning, exploring, and making decisions to progress with challenges	Training can provide opportunities to experience challenges and even failures, and how to respond to those. But as will be shared later, developing such skills might work best if incorporated into training on other subjects rather than as a stand-alone course.
Adaptation results	Outcomes of behaviours	Types of success or failure experienced such as those related to identity, satisfaction, income)	Formal instruction can guide the review of outcomes and explore general responses to various types of outcomes. Because of the personal nature of the responses, however, although the tactics might be developed in training, the resulting actions require personal development that might require other types of interventions.

Technique 2. Note the impact of different instructional strategies on adaptability for training that focuses on other subjects. In their book chapter Building adaptive expertise: Implications for training design strategies, researchers Eleanor Smith, James Ford, and Steve Kozlowski note that traditional training is rooted in the development of routine expertise: the ability to respond to known situations with known solutions.

Research teams such as Kozlowski, Gully, Brown, Salas, Smith, and Nason, and Tolentino, Garcia, Lu, Restubog, Bordia, and Plewa have found that the different types of instructional strategies—that is, the way that lessons are structured and the types of outcomes on which they focus—can affect the level of adaptability that learners develop, even in programs that focus on other types of content, such as technical training, managerial training, and sales training.

Bradford Bell and Steve Koslowski further developed this idea in their 2008 article *Active learning: Effects of core training design elements on self-regulatory processes, learning, and adaptability*, offering suggestions on how to integrate adaptability skills into training programs on other subjects. They specifically noted that certain instructional approaches like discovery (exploratory) learning encouraged learners to feel more comfortable with errors and comfortable adapting their approaches than mastery approaches (also called direct instruction), which encouraged learners to avoid errors to perform skills the “right way and receive positive recognition. They also noted that including emotional control strategies in the training that supports learners through errors versus no emotional control strategies also helps learners become more adaptable.

Table 2 synthesizes and applies these insights, and shows the impact of different types of strategies on the development of adaptability among learners.

Table 2.

Impact of Instructional Strategies on the Development of Adaptability Among Learners

Strategy	Impact on the Development of Adaptability
Performance replication: replicating an existing process or protocol as is	Prioritizes replicating the desired performance using a specified approach. Programs that emphasize performance replication typically use strategies like mastery learning, in which students master a particular skill following a particular approach. On the one hand, researchers have found that such approaches build learners’ self-efficacy: that is, it helps them feel more confident in performing tasks. But this does not necessarily improve performance and might even promote performance avoidance: that is, avoiding risks, mistakes, and failure. As a result, learners might try to replicate the strategies needed to avoid failure, which may be at odds with becoming adaptable, a process that often involves failure.
Performance results: that focuses on achieving specified results	Prioritizes achieving intended results, with a bit more flexibility in how those results are achieved than performance replication. Although this approach might use mastery learning, achieving the results is emphasized over the means of achieving them.

	Or such an approach might use discovery learning with the goal of achieving the intended results. The goal of a performance results strategy is promoting praise and recognition for achieving the results. Like performance avoidance, researchers have found that performance results can build learners' self-efficacy. But also like performance avoidance, this does not necessarily improve performance and might even promote the continuation of strategies needed to earn and recognition, which may be at odds with becoming adaptable.
Learning orientation: a process that focuses on learning from the experience regardless of the results	Prioritizes learning from experiences—either by surfacing previous experiences or ones arising in the program—so that learners can become aware of their approaches to handling particular situations, accurately assess the extent to which those approaches have succeeded, and use that information to inform responses to similar situations in the future. Such programs often use discovery learning strategies and ones that also allow for 'failure' in the task without compromising the success of learning. As a result, learners might become more self-reflective in their approaches to their work, and more adaptable to changing conditions.

Technique 3. Build adaptability when teaching other subjects. As noted earlier, rather than focusing on the teaching of adaptability as a separate skill, the research reviewed primarily focuses on building adaptability through the experience of learning how to adapt performance when developing skills in other areas.

And building on Technique 2, which applies the findings of Smith, Ford, and Kozlowski that traditional training is rooted in the development of routine expertise: the ability to respond to known situations with known solutions, researchers Baard, Rench, Kozlowski suggest focusing on adaptive performance: helping learners adjust to changing circumstances within the context of everyday work tasks.

These researchers note that training for adaptive performance focuses on helping learners develop the ability to create and adjust strategies to meet challenges. Baard, Rench, and Kozlowski specifically suggest using these tactics when designing training to promote adaptive performance:

- Introduce topics with advance organizers, formal introductions to topics that state the purpose of a topic and its application in the workplace, provide an overview of the structure of the topic, state the expectations of learners; and link the new material to material previously learned.
- Use the teaching strategy of discovery learning, in which learners build their knowledge and skills by setting and testing hypotheses through actions,

monitoring results, and adapting their performance when results do not match expectations. In the process of doing so, learners develop a personal awareness of concepts underlying the skills.

- Or use the mastery learning strategy, which employs Gagne's Nine Events of instruction, starting with gaining learners' attention, continuing with teaching of the underlying terminology, concepts, and processes, next presenting a demonstration of the skill, and then providing opportunities for learners to practice the skill until they master it. Researchers suggest letting learners 'productively' fail in the process of practicing the skill: that is, let learners try out a skill, figure out if their performance is on track on their own and, when it is not, providing support for adjusting course with prompts, leading questions and hints until learners master the skill on their own. This contrasts with the instructor merely telling learners how to achieve the intended results, which would result in performance replication.

When mastery learning focuses most on the practice and mastering the process and its underlying intent, rather than replicating a protocol and getting the 'right' result, mastery learning can promote adaptable performance by helping learners become comfortable with adapting their performance of a task in response to unintended results and changing circumstances, while also helping to build their self-efficacy (confidence) in performing those skills.

- Support learners in making errors by first identifying expected errors and explaining what those errors mean and their consequences, then encouraging learners to use those errors for learning, a tactic added by Sohee Park and Sunyeong Park through their 2019 article, Employee adaptive performance and its antecedents: Review and synthesis. This can be incorporated into both discovery and mastery learning strategies.

On the one hand, learners with higher cognitive capacity benefit from incorporating techniques for promoting adaptive performance into training. On the other hand, despite its benefits in building adaptability in the context of specific work tasks, incorporating techniques for promoting adaptive performance into training do not lead to the same level of performance as training that is focused on results only.

Technique 4. Make training and other career development activities voluntary rather than mandatory. Although the intentions underlying training and other developmental activities aimed at career development are to benefit workers, researchers Ellen Kossek, Karen Roberts, Sandra Fisher, and Beverly Demarr reported in their 1999 article Career self-management: A quasi-experimental assessment of the effects of a training intervention found that such efforts have greater impact when they are voluntary rather than mandatory.

In their study, workers were sent to mandatory career development training in a company that had, at one time, promised lifetime employment but was no longer able to do so. Six to eight months after the training, the researchers found that participants' career perceptions got worse following the training and were less likely to apply the

career management behaviors presented in the program. The researchers suggest that perhaps participants resented yet another expectation imposed on them, were consciously or unconsciously engaged in backlash to mandatory training, or the content did not meet their expectations. In response, Kossek, Roberts, Fisher, and Demarr concluded that career development training be voluntary and open to employees who have positive attitudes about adaptability and seeking feedback.

Techniques for Teaching Managers to Support Adaptability in Their Workplaces

In addition to general techniques for teaching adaptability, the literature suggests specific techniques for teaching managers to support this Skill for Success in their workplaces. This section explores three of them, including helping managers to figure out which workers are most adaptable in terms of job performance, helping managers to support workers in work-related transitions, preparing managers to coach workers on issues of adaptability, and adopting a learning organization approach to promote long-term adaptability organization-wide.

Technique 5. Help managers figure out which workers are most adaptable in terms of job performance. One of the challenges that managers face when introducing changes to their workplaces is supporting workers in adjusting to them. One way to do so is to figure out which workers are more or less adaptable, and adjusting their approaches accordingly. Researchers have found ways to identify the performance adaptability of workers: that is, workers' ability to adjusting and responding to changes in the work environments such as changes in tasks and work demands, and changing work circumstances.

In their 2002 article, *Predicting adaptive performance: Further tests of a model of adaptability*, Elaine Pulakos, Neal Schmitt, David Dorsey, Sharon Arad, Walter Borman, and Gerry Hedge suggest one way of doing so. These researches specifically identified three characteristics predict adaptive performance: past experience, interest, and task-specific self-efficacy (that is, workers' perceptions of their ability to perform a task). These researchers also identified cognitive ability and motivation towards achievement as characteristics of people who have adaptive performance. One way training can help managers their teams adapt to performance is helping them to assess these characteristics in their workers.

A second way to help managers identify the adaptive performance of their workers is to help them assess the "Big 5" traits of their workers, a suggestion by Cort Rudolph, Kristi Lavigne, and Hannes Zacher. The Big 5 traits include:

- Openness to experience, intellect, or imagination (the extent to which a worker is intellectual and creative)
- Conscientiousness (the extent to which a worker is attentive or haphazard in responding to the details of the job)
- Extraversion or surgency (the extent to which a worker is assertive and outgoing)

- Agreeableness (the extent to which a worker is sympathetic and cooperative or cold and competitive)
- Neuroticism or low emotional stability (the extent to which a worker is relaxed and calm)

Researchers prefer the Big 5 to the better-known Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) because the Big 5 have research validity, which the MBTI lacks.

By gauging these characteristics, they can gain insights into which workers are more likely to have an easier time adjusting to workplace changes and which ones will have a harder time. Instruments exist to assess these traits but recommending one is beyond the scope of this report

Technique 6. Help managers to support work-related transitions. In the 2017 article, *Forms of graduate capital and their relationship to graduate employability*, Michael Tomlinson (2017) focused on the adaptability needed by recent graduates to make the transition from school to work. This school-to-work transition is a widely-explored topic in the literature on career development.

Tomlinson noted that the transition requires more than just acquiring workplace skills. It also involves:

- Social capital to begin making connections to the labour market
- Human capital (the ability to connect skills learned in school to the workplace)
- Cultural capital (the ability to develop the knowledge and skills to operate in a particular culture, including a work culture)
- Identity capital (the level of investment that a recent graduate makes in their career)
- Psychological capital (the ability to adapt and respond to career challenges).

By training managers to recognize the different levels of these five types of capital and take appropriate responses, Learning and Development professionals can help managers effectively support graduates with the transition to work.

But these same factors also affect other work-related transitions that workers face including transitions to new job roles and positions; transitions to new organizational structures; transitions to new work locations; transition to retirement; and separation. By extending Tomlinson's model and broadening its focus, Learning and Development professionals should help managers support work-related transitions throughout the course of a career.

Technique 7. Prepare managers to coach for adaptability. As CareerOneStop noted, adaptability skills are generally learned in the home or community and reinforced and honed at school and in the workplace. To support workers in honing adaptability skills they were assumed to have learned much earlier in life, coaching might be most effective.

Coaching is a process of helping individual workers achieve valuable goals. As part of that process, the coach might provide feedback on behaviors by the coachee that are

not effective, such as behaviors that hinder collaboration, and help coaches find ways to work around those behavior issues.

A 2015 study by researchers Rebecca Jones, Stephen Woods, and Yves Guillaume suggests that internal coaches—such as managers—can be more effective than external ones. By building coaching skills in general among managers and skills at recognizing and addressing issues with adaptability in particular, managers can provide individual members of their team with the type of targeted guidance needed to become more effective.

Technique 8. Encourage managers to support the development of learning organizations within their groups. In his 1994 article, *Learning to alter mental models.*, author Peter Senge, advised organizations to focus learning more broadly than on individual workers. He advocated for learning organizations, ones in which workers together reflect on the external environment and internal experiences, determine where the organization continues to succeed and where it is either not effective or at risk of becoming less effective, and adapting approaches in response. As significantly, the adaptations are captured and made explicit so that all members of the organization can benefit from the insights gained.

Learning organizations adapt at the level of the enterprise. As Mary Uhl and Michael Arena note in their 2017 article, *Complexity leadership: Enabling people and organizations for adaptability*, at the least, this ensures that an organization learns from past experiences and environment, and integrates the lessons learned into ongoing operations to ensure the long-term health of the organization. At the most, promoting a learning organization and encouraging the organization as a whole to adapt models adaptability for individual workers.

So one way that Learning and Development professionals can support managers and senior leaders in promoting adaptability is by encouraging them to adopt a learning organization approach within the groups they oversee to ensure the long-term health of these organizations.

Technique 9: Assess Adaptability

Employment and Social Development Canada has also developed an online assessment in which people can assess all their Skills for Success. The assessment of adaptability skills asks participants to rate themselves on these statements:

- I stay focused on what I am doing
- I finish the tasks assigned to me
- I recognize when changes will come my way
- I decide when to continue or to change direction
- I stay calm when faced with a challenge
- I recover quickly if I get overwhelmed
- I set goals
- I determine when to adjust my expectations

- I identify what to do in order to achieve my goal(s)
- I set priorities
- I reflect on my own strengths and weaknesses
- I learn from setbacks/mistakes

The responses to these questions help workers and the managers and Learning and Development professionals with whom they work to pinpoint the specific aspects of adaptability in which workers have strengths and ones in which the workers would benefit from further development.

To take this particular self-assessment, visit:

https://implus.ca/snapshot/start/?&frm_page=3

For the complete assessment, visit <https://implus.ca/snapshot/start/>.

The site also links to <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/jobs/training/initiatives/skills-success/understanding-individuals.html>.

Key Takeaways

- Employment and Social Development Canada defines collaboration as the “ability to achieve or adjust goals and behaviours when expected or unexpected change occurs, by planning, staying focused, persisting, and overcoming setbacks. For example, [people] use this skill to change work plans to meet new deadlines, learn how to work with new tools and improve our skills through feedback. Researchers also note that adaptability also applies to contexts other than work.
- Employers seek adaptability skills because ongoing changes in Canadian society affect how people “work, live, and learn and require [that people] constantly adapt to change.” This involves effectively dealing with change, learning new skills and adjusting behaviours when needed, while staying focused goals, and persisting, even when adapting becomes difficult. Adaptability skills also help people reduce feelings of stress and maintain positive attitudes.
- Researchers approach adaptability from different perspectives:
 - Behavioural, which approaches adaptability as “the capacity to make appropriate responses to changed or changing situations” and “the ability to modify or adjust one’s behavior in meeting different circumstances or different people.
 - Adaptive performance, which explores how well people actually adjust to changing circumstances.
 - Personal, which explores adaptability as iterative cycles of people and teams adjusting their feelings, thinking and behaviours in response to change
 - A personality trait, which can be measured and used for recruiting and responding to workers.
 - A construct useful in career planning, which refers to a combination of personality and skills needed to find new work

- Training plays a key role in helping workers adapt within the context of their jobs because the capacity for flexibility within a topic arises from how the topic was learned according first: if it supported people in being flexible and learning from errors or if it rewards people for replicating existing protocols or solely on achieving specified results.
- Although 26 peer-reviewed and 16 professional articles address training for collaboration in the workplace, the team concluded that the body of literature did not offer strong guidance on this Skill for Success.
- CareerOneStop, an online service of the US Department of Labor:
 - Identifies adaptability and the related skill of flexibility as personal effectiveness competencies, which are not only essential for work but also for “all life roles—roles as a member of a family, a community, and a larger society.
 - Notes that “personal effectiveness competencies are generally learned in the home or community and reinforced and honed at school and in the workplace. They represent personal attributes that may be challenging to teach or assess.” This might also explain why training in adaptability is lacking in the workplace.
- By contrast:
 - Many universities offer courses on adaptability-related topics in their co-curricular programs.
 - Adaptability is addressed in the literature on career development.
- General techniques for teaching adaptability include:
 - Determining the type of adaptability that needs to be addressed with learners and the extent to which training can address it
 - Noting the impact of different instructional strategies on adaptability for training that focuses on other subjects
 - Building adaptability when teaching other subjects.
 - Making training and other career development activities voluntary rather than mandatory.
- Techniques for teaching managers to support adaptability in their workers include:
 - Helping managers figure out which workers are most adaptable in terms of job performance.
 - Helping managers to support work-related transitions.
 - Preparing managers to coach for adaptability.
 - Encouraging managers to support the development of learning organizations within their groups.
- Also take advantage of resources like self-assessments of adaptability skills from Employment and Social Development Canada.

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Credits

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