

Adaptive Expertise Reflection Tool

A reflection for examining when expertise means using a familiar routine – and when it means rethinking, adapting, or holding back.

Adaptive expertise is not mastery without uncertainty.

In teacher education, expertise includes fluency with useful routines and the capacity to rethink them when context, learners, ethics, or evidence demand something different. It can also require restraint: knowing when not to intervene, demonstrate, or resolve uncertainty too quickly.

1. Where am I efficient?

Name a teacher educator practice you can now enact with relative fluency – teaching, mentoring, supervising, facilitating, designing, or leading.

What makes this routine useful? What have experience and repetition allowed you to notice or do more effectively?

2. Where does the routine begin to fail?

Consider a recent situation in which the familiar move did not fit the learner, context, relationship, or purpose.

3. What is the situation asking me to rethink?

Dimension	Question	Notes
Vision	Does my usual response still serve what I want teachers to learn or become?	
Understanding	What am I learning about this teacher, learner, context, or problem that complicates my assumptions?	
Practice	What part of my enactment needs adaptation rather than repetition?	
Tools	Is the tool or protocol helping people think – or merely organizing compliance?	
Dispositions	What stance is required here: humility, openness, care, patience, courage, restraint?	

4. Innovation or restraint?

Which response best fits the situation?

- ☐ Adapt the routine
- ☐ Design a different approach
- ☐ Ask more before acting
- ☐ Invite another perspective
- ☐ Make my reasoning visible
- ☐ Allow productive uncertainty to remain
- ☐ Do less / intervene later

Why?

5. What would revision look like?

Complete the sentence: Instead of defending the practice because it usually works, I will...

A useful test

Adaptive expertise is visible when we can revise practice without treating revision as evidence that our previous expertise was false.

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