



# ADAPTIVE ACTION

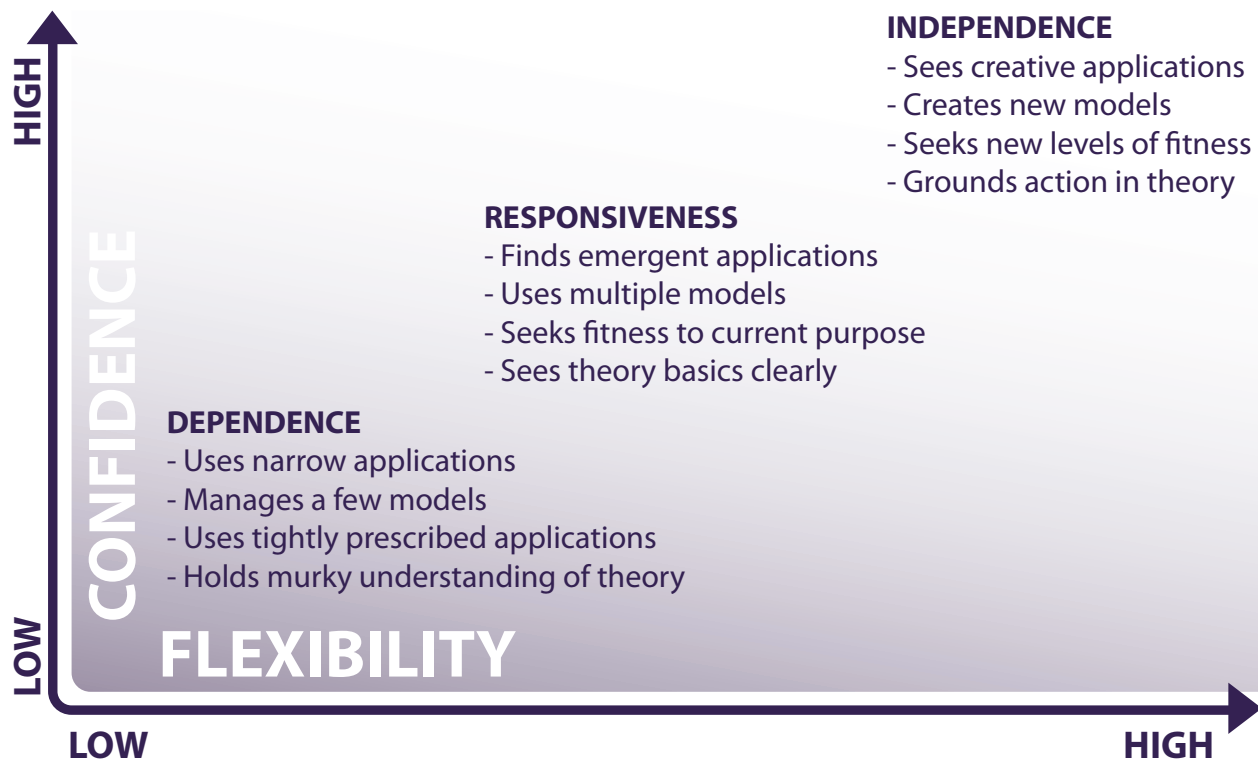
Leveraging Uncertainty in your Organization

## SKILL DEVELOPMENT LANDSCAPE:

**The dimensions are relatively simple and can be applied in any new learning.**

**CONFIDENCE** - We ask learners to indicate how confident they feel in using new concepts, models, and methods. Each individual indicates his or her own level of confidence in using the models and methods in their own thinking, sharing them with clients and colleagues, and in teaching them to others. We believe this is a powerful indicator of skill building because learners won't use what they don't feel confident about. As they feel more confident in their learning, they are more likely to move into application of the ideas and then into "expert" standing. When individuals have the confidence of "expert" standing, they may move beyond teaching the ideas and their applications into using the concepts to build new models and methods that are useful in even broader, more generalizable ways.

**FLEXIBILITY** - We ask learners to talk about how flexible they feel using concepts, models, and methods. It is our experience that as learners gain skill and facility with the models and methods, they also become more flexible in their use. They can generalize the applications across a variety of situations; they see the underlying dynamics of the models and methods, teasing out the pieces that inform decisions in particular places and times; and they can use their own understandings of the models and methods to create new ways of seeing, understanding, and influencing patterns around them.





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**Briefly, we define each “zone” on the grid in the following ways:**

**DEPENDENCE** - At this level, the learner has only begun to grasp the meaning and usefulness of the concepts, models, and methods that are being taught. The theory base that supports the learning remains murky, so the learner is able to use only narrowly defined, tightly described applications for a small number of models and methods. Learners who are functioning in this zone need small, short-term engagements; few differences to consider; concrete instruction, feedback, and support.

**RESPONSIVENESS**- As the theory base becomes stronger for the learner, he or she gains confidence and becomes more flexible in understanding and using the concepts, models, and methods that emerge from that theory. Confidence shifts their inquiry to see diverse situations and applications, choosing freely from among the models and methods to find the one(s) that are best fit to the current purpose. This flexibility and confidence enable the learner to respond in the moment: seeing, understanding, and influencing the patterns they face. To help learners move further out, they need larger, longer-term engagements; greater degrees of freedom to make choices that are fit to purpose; and they benefit from more generalized feedback and questioning.

**INDEPENDENCE** - When an individual finds the theory is inseparable from the application, he or she is likely to be able to develop new applications of the concepts, creating new models and methods. At this level of development, the individual can face new challenges of fitness, trusting that his or her knowledge base supports creative and productive action. In this area, practitioners need thought partners who can help them test and refine their ideas, continuing to seek both true and useful applications.

To learn more about skill development,  
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...OR



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