



# TEACHER ADAPTABILITY: A SCOPING REVIEW OF CONCEPTUALISATIONS AND MEASUREMENT INSTRUMENTS

Arcivid Chorynia Ruby\*

Universiti Malaya, 24077190@siswa.um.edu.my

## ABSTRACT

Teacher adaptability has become increasingly salient as school systems navigate curriculum reform, digitalisation and post-pandemic recovery. In this review, it is defined as the capacity to adjust cognition, affect, and behaviour in response to changes. This scoping review maps how teacher adaptability is conceptualised and which measurement instruments have been used in school-related literature, along with the technical characteristics and psychometric evidence reported for those instruments. Guided by PRISMA-ScR, systematic searches of PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, and ERIC were conducted on 5 January 2026 and supplemented by citation tracking of included and foundational sources. From 300 records, 50 duplicates were removed, 250 titles and abstracts were screened, 50 full-text sources were assessed for eligibility, and 25 sources were included in the final evidence map. Across the reviewed sources, teacher adaptability was conceptualised most consistently as a triadic capacity for cognitive, affective, and behavioural adjustment to change. Measurement was dominated by brief self-report instruments derived from the same conceptual tradition, with psychometric reporting focused on internal consistency and model-based validity evidence. Secondary descriptive patterns indicated that these instruments were used most often in school-based job demands–resources research, crisis-era and online teaching research, and beginning-teacher or teacher-educator contexts. As an international evidence map, this review clarifies construct boundaries, dominant measurement patterns, and priority directions for future validation across contexts.

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\*Correspondence:

Arcivid Chorynia Ruby

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## INTRODUCTION

Teaching is inherently change-oriented, taking place within shifting policy expectations, evolving pedagogical demands, diverse students' needs, and continuous technological development. These pressures have become especially visible as school systems simultaneously pursue curriculum reform while responding to post-pandemic learning disruptions. Under such conditions, teachers are repeatedly required to adjust their thoughts, feelings, and actions in response to novelty, uncertainty, and change. This makes adaptability a plausible capacity underpinning sustainable professional functioning in both classroom practice and wider school organisations (Collie & Martin,

2017; Collie et al., 2018).

In this review, teacher adaptability is defined as the capacity to adjust cognition, affect, and behaviour in response to new, uncertain, and changing conditions. Maintaining this boundary is important because the literature sometimes overlaps adaptability with adjacent constructs. Adaptive teaching or instructional adaptivity refers more directly to enacted classroom practice, resilience concerns recovery or sustained functioning following adversity, and student adaptability concerns learners' responses rather than teachers' capacities. A clear cognition–affect–behaviour boundary supports conceptual coherence and improves the interpretability of measurement across sources (Martin et al., 2013; Ployhart & Bliese, 2006).

Although research on teacher adaptability has expanded, the field remains conceptually and methodologically fragmented (Collie & Martin, 2016, 2017; Martin et al., 2013). Definitions and construct boundaries are not always applied consistently, and measurement instruments vary in their alignment with the construct and psychometric evidence reported (Martin et al., 2013; Collie et al., 2018; Collie et al., 2020b). In addition, the literature spans diverse educational contexts and populations, making it difficult to determine which conceptualisations and instruments dominate the evidence base and how portable they are across settings (Martin et al., 2013; Collie et al., 2018; Collie et al., 2020b). Consequently, it remains difficult to determine how teacher adaptability has been defined and conceptualised, how it has been distinguished from adjacent constructs, how it has been measured, and in which contexts those dominant instruments have been applied. Therefore, a scoping review is appropriate for mapping the breadth, characteristics, and distribution of existing evidence while maintaining the primary analytic emphasis on conceptualisations and measurement.

Accordingly, this review addresses four questions: how teacher adaptability is defined and conceptualised in school-related literature, how it is distinguished from adjacent constructs such as adaptive teaching, instructional adaptivity, resilience, and student adaptability, what measurement instruments have been used to assess teacher adaptability, what technical or psychometric characteristics have been reported, and in which educational contexts, populations, and geographical settings these conceptualisations and instruments have been examined. Together, these questions clarify the current state of knowledge on teacher adaptability and highlight priorities for future measurement and validation work.

## **METHODS**

### **Design and reporting standard**

This review employed a scoping review design to map how teacher adaptability has been conceptualised and measured in school-related literature, while also charting the main contexts in which these conceptualisations and instruments have been examined. Reporting followed the PRISMA Extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR) (Tricco et al., 2018) and drew on established guidance (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Levac et al., 2010). Consistent with the scoping purpose, this review aimed to describe the range, characteristics, and distribution of the evidence rather than pooling effect sizes or estimating the overall magnitude of association.

### **Eligibility criteria**

Sources of evidence were eligible if they addressed teacher adaptability or directly informed its conceptual or measurement foundation as a capacity for cognitive, affective, and behavioural adjustment to novelty, uncertainty, or change in school-related work. The core corpus comprised quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods empirical sources focused on teachers, teacher educators, and pre-service teachers,

together with directly relevant instrument studies and conceptual or theoretical papers. In addition, a small number of seminal foundational sources outside the teacher samples were retained when they were essential for conceptual definition or measurement continuity, and one contextual evidence review/report was retained to support the mapping of change-related policy conditions. These non-empirical sources were included to clarify construct boundaries and measurement lineage, not to provide empirical association evidence of equal weight to teacher-focused sources.

### Information sources and search strategy

Systematic searches were conducted in PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, and ERIC on 5 January 2026 and were supplemented by backward citation tracking of the included sources and foundational papers. The search strategy combined three concept blocks: (1) population terms (e.g. teacher, pre-service teacher, teacher educator), (2) construct terms (e.g. teacher adaptability, sense of adaptability, adaptability), and (3) school-context terms (e.g. school, classroom, teaching, curriculum, instruction). The same conceptual structure was adapted to the field syntax of each database. Retrieval was limited to sources published in English, regardless of the country or study setting. The full database-specific search strings are listed in Table 1.

**Table 1** / Database-specific Search Strings

Database	Executed search string
PubMed	((teacher*[Title/Abstract] OR "pre-service teacher"[Title/Abstract] OR "pre-service teachers"[Title/Abstract] OR "preservice teacher"[Title/Abstract] OR "preservice teachers"[Title/Abstract] OR "teacher educator"[Title/Abstract] OR "teacher educators"[Title/Abstract]) AND ("teacher adaptability"[Title/Abstract] OR "sense of adaptability"[Title/Abstract] OR adaptab*[Title/Abstract]) AND (school*[Title/Abstract] OR classroom*[Title/Abstract] OR teaching[Title/Abstract] OR curriculum[Title/Abstract] OR instruction*[Title/Abstract])) Filters: English; publication years 2010-2025.
Scopus	TITLE-ABS-KEY ((teacher* OR "pre-service teacher" OR "pre-service teachers" OR "preservice teacher" OR "preservice teachers" OR "teacher educator" OR "teacher educators") AND ("teacher adaptability" OR "sense of adaptability" OR adaptab*) AND (school* OR classroom* OR teaching OR curriculum OR instruction*)) AND PUBYEAR > 2009 AND PUBYEAR < 2026 AND (LIMIT-TO(LANGUAGE, "English")).
Web of Science	TS=((teacher* OR "pre-service teacher" OR "pre-service teachers" OR "preservice teacher" OR "preservice teachers" OR "teacher educator" OR "teacher educators") AND ("teacher adaptability" OR "sense of adaptability" OR adaptab*) AND (school* OR classroom* OR teaching OR curriculum OR instruction*)) Timespan: 2010-2025; Language: English.
ERIC	TX ((teacher* OR "pre-service teacher" OR "pre-service teachers" OR "preservice teacher" OR "preservice teachers" OR "teacher educator" OR "teacher educators") AND ("teacher adaptability" OR "sense of adaptability" OR adaptab*) AND (school* OR classroom* OR teaching OR curriculum OR instruction*)) Limiters: English; publication years 2010-2025.

### **Selection of sources of evidence**

Records were exported from each database and de-duplicated before screening. Selection proceeded in two stages: title and abstract screening, followed by full-text eligibility assessment against the predefined eligibility criteria. The screening was conducted by the sole author. Because a formal dual-independent screening workflow was not implemented, borderline records were rechecked at the full-text stage, and all inclusion and exclusion decisions were logged with an explicit rationale to improve consistency and transparency. For reporting purposes, each excluded full text was assigned one primary exclusion reason within three mutually exclusive categories: conceptual misalignment with teacher adaptability, non-teacher or non-school populations, and insufficient school-related relevance or other scope mismatch.

### **Data charting and synthesis**

A structured charting form was used to extract: (a) bibliographic information, (b) source type, (c) teacher group and schooling level, (d) country or region, (e) governance and school-type reporting where available, (f) conceptualisation of adaptability, (g) measurement instruments and operationalisations, including item counts, dimensional structure, response format, reported psychometric evidence, and use status (original, adapted, validated, or context-specific), and (h) key contextual correlates and outcomes where reported to support interpretation of how instruments were being used. Data charting prioritises evidence mapping rather than effect-size aggregation.

### **Critical appraisal**

No formal critical appraisal or risk-of-bias assessment was performed. This decision reflected the scoping purpose of the review, which was to map the range and characteristics of a heterogeneous literature that included empirical, conceptual, and review or report sources, rather than estimating intervention effectiveness or determining the strength of causal evidence (Arksey & O' Malley, 2005; Levac et al., 2010; Tricco et al., 2018). Instead, source type and key reporting features were charted to support the cautious interpretation of the mapped evidence.

## **RESULTS**

### **Selection of sources of evidence**

The search identified 300 records in total. After the removal of 50 duplicates, 250 records were screened at the title and abstract stage, and 50 full-text articles were assessed for eligibility. The final set of 25 sources of evidence was included in the evidence map. Of the 25 full texts excluded after the eligibility assessment, nine were excluded for conceptual misalignment with teacher adaptability, four for focusing primarily on non-teacher or non-school populations, and 12 for insufficient school-related relevance or other scope mismatch. Figure 1 presents the final PRISMA-ScR flowchart.

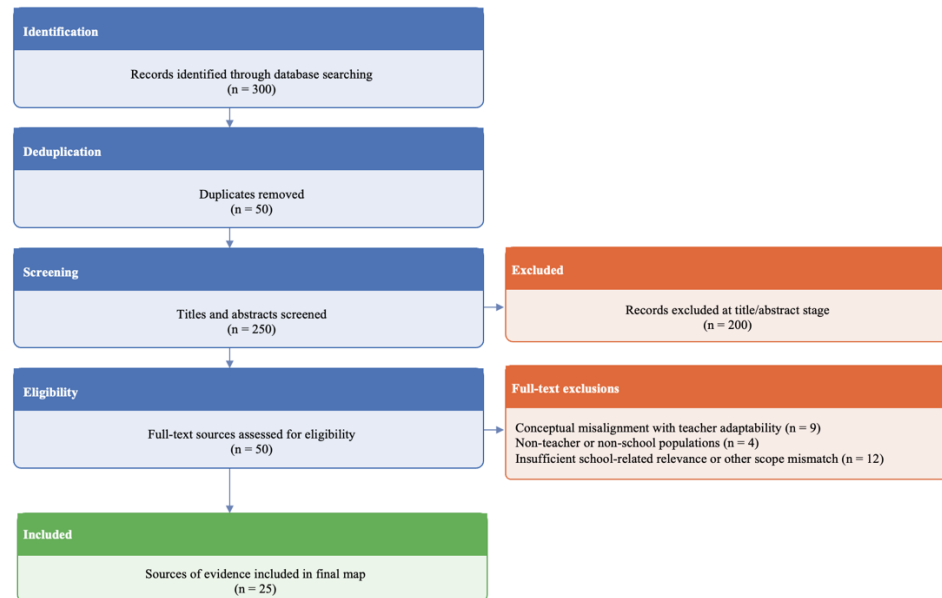


Figure 1 PRISMA-ScR Flow Diagram for Source Selection

### Source characteristics

Table 2 summarises the characteristics of the 25 sources of evidence included. The corpus spans 2006–2025, with 11 sources published between 2022 and 2024. Australia accounted for nine sources, followed by the United States (3), China (2), Indonesia (2), Romania (2), and single-source contributions from Italy, Turkey, and the United Kingdom, along with one multinational source. This pattern shows that a substantial share of the evidence is concentrated in a single national context.

Quantitative sources predominated (14 of 25), followed by qualitative studies (7 of 25), conceptual or theoretical sources (3 of 25), and one evidence review or report. These source types contributed differently to the evidence map: quantitative sources provided most association evidence and psychometric reporting; qualitative sources described adaptation processes and lived experiences; conceptual sources clarified definitional boundaries; and reports contributed contextual information about policy implementation rather than direct measurement evidence. Four sources did not report participant samples and are marked as N/A in Table 2.

Across quantitative sources, teacher sample sizes ranged from 71 to 2,189 (median approximately 266), whereas qualitative sources involved smaller samples of 4–72 participants (median 25). Adaptability was most often operationalised through brief self-report measures aligned with cognitive, affective, and behavioural adjustment. Several sources used context-specific operationalisations for online or distance teaching, and governance and school type were often not reported in the literature.

**Table 2 / Study Characteristics of Included Sources**

No	Source	Country/ Context	Participants	Design	Measurement/ operationalisation	Main contribution
1.	Davis et al. (2024)	United Kingdom; state-funded inner-city primary school	4 primary school teachers	Qualitative interpretivist inquiry; semi-structured interviews; thematic analysis	Interview-based exploration (no standardised scale)	Identifies themes in teachers lived adaptability experiences and links them to classroom management and psychological well-being.
2.	Collie & Martin (2016)	Australia (conceptual)	N/A	Conceptual/theoretical	Triadic definition (cognitive-affective-behavioural adjustment)	Positions adaptability as capacity for effective teaching
3.	Collie & Martin (2017)	Australia; high school mathematics	115 teachers; 1,685 students	Quantitative cross-sectional; multilevel SEM	Work Climate Questionnaire (autonomy support); Adaptability Scale (9-item; Martin et al., 2013)	Autonomy support to teacher adaptability; links to well-being/commitment and student numeracy
4.	Collie et al. (2018)	Australia; secondary schools	164 teachers	Quantitative cross-sectional; SEM	Autonomy support (Work Climate Questionnaire short); Adaptability Scale (brief/education-focused)	Autonomy support is reciprocally associated with adaptability; links to exhaustion, disengagement, commitment (JD-R)
5.	Collie et al. (2020a)	Multi-nation; secondary science teachers	2,189 teachers across 8 countries	Quantitative cross-sectional; multilevel modelling	Adaptability Scale (Martin et al., 2013) aggregated to school level	School-level adaptability associated with teacher & student self-efficacy
6.	Collie et al. (2020b)	Australia; secondary schools	264 teachers	Quantitative cross-sectional; SEM	Adaptability Scale (domain-specific teacher version; Martin et al., 2013)	Distinct roles of adaptability vs buoyancy; links with engagement, burnout, extra-role

7.	Dario et al. (2024)	Italy; COVID-19 remote schooling	25 primary & secondary teachers	Qualitative; remote interviews and diaries (March–June)	Qualitative operationalisation of adaptability/transformations	How practices & teacher–student relationships transformed during pandemic
8.	Garcia et al. (2024)	USA; Head Start virtual instruction	148 early childhood teachers	Quantitative survey; mediation model	Adaptability to virtual instruction; teacher well-being; executive function	Well-being related to adaptability directly/indirectly via executive function
9.	Granziera et al. (2019)	Teacher education (conceptual)	N/A	Conceptual paper	Draws on Tripartite Model of Adaptability	Strategies to cultivate adaptability among pre-service teachers
10.	Granziera et al. (2022)	Australia (NSW); elementary teachers	486 teachers (39 schools)	Quantitative; variable-centered SEM and person-centered profiling	JD-R measures incl. personal resources (incl. adaptability) and well-being	Complementary variable/person-centered JD-R approach; links to engagement, exhaustion, retention-related outcomes
11.	Jeong et al. (2024)	Indonesia; Merdeka Curriculum implementation (report)	N/A (evidence review)	Evidence review/report	N/A	Synthesises implementation evidence; policy context relevant to change demands
12.	Koç & Fidan (2022)	Turkey; COVID-19 distance education	30 primary & secondary teachers (public vs private)	Qualitative; phenomenology ; interviews	Adaptation to distance education (experience-based)	Comparative adaptation experiences; role of resources, job security, organisational culture
13.	Nurhattari et al. (2023)	Indonesia; Islamic primary school (COVID-19)	School principal/ leadership team and 29 teachers	Qualitative case study; observations, interviews, and document analysis	Qualitative operationalisation (no standardised scale)	It describes how principals and teachers adapted curriculum design and lesson planning (e.g. essential curriculum, learning tools, digital platforms) during the pandemic.

14.	Lin, Jiang, & Xiong (2025)	China; online math competitions (gifted education)	289 teachers	Quantitative online survey; PLS-SEM	Teacher adaptability (short scale adapted from Collie & Martin, 2016)	Adaptability moderates the effects of teacher competence and engagement on student development
15.	Lin & Liu (2025)	China; beginning teachers	269 first-year teachers	Quantitative cross-sectional; SEM and latent profile analysis	Adaptability Scale (domain-specific); autonomy support; time pressure	Autonomy support predicts adaptability & innovative behaviour; time pressure predicts stress
16.	Loughlan d & Alonzo (2018)	Australia; school classrooms	71 teachers; 278 classroom observations	Quantitative cross-sectional; CFA/SEM and structured observations	Teacher Adaptability Scale; observed adaptive practices	Links among self-efficacy, autonomy support, adaptability and adaptive practices
17.	Loughlan d & Alonzo (2019)	Australia; assessment-for-learning (AfL)	6 teachers (selected via AfL tool)	Qualitative enquiry; interviews and coding of practice	Teacher Adaptability and Adaptive Practice Scales used for analytical coding	Adaptive practices as key to implementing AfL; genotype–phenotype metaphor
18.	Martin et al. (2013)	Australia; secondary students (scale foundation)	969 students (9 schools); 1-year longitudinal	Quantitative longitudinal; CFA/SEM	Adaptability Scale (9 items; cognitive, behavioural, affective)	Scale validation; adaptability predicts academic and non-academic outcomes
19.	McLean et al. (2023)	USA; first-year teachers (K–8)	133 teachers	Quantitative cross-sectional; path analysis (moderation)	Adaptability (self-report) and perceived school climate	Adaptability and school climate predict self-efficacy, relational climate, career optimism
20.	Ployhart & Bliese (2006)	Conceptual theory (I-ADAPT)	N/A	Conceptual/theoretical chapter	I-ADAPT framework (multifacet adaptability)	Antecedents, consequences, and measurement of individual adaptability
21.	Răducu & Stănculescu (2021)	Romania; COVID-19 online teaching	330 preschool & primary teachers	Quantitative; path analysis; multiple mediation	Adaptability to Online Teaching (AOT); EI; general self-efficacy; ELT learning modes	EI/self-efficacy predict AOT via facilitator role and concrete-experience mode

22.	Salinas & Garrido (2022)	Teacher educators; pandemic remote teaching	72 teacher educators	Qualitative; grounded theory; two interviews over 10 months	Process-focused qualitative operationalisation of adaptability (emotion–cognition–praxis)	Adaptability process shaped by uncertainty/ emotion and tech competence constraints
23.	Sheridan et al. (2022)	Australia; early-career teachers	11 early-career STEM teachers	Qualitative; semi-structured interviews	Conceptualised as cognitive/ behavioural/ emotional adaptation; contrasted with resilience	Socio-relational context (leadership, collegial support) shapes enactment of adaptability/resilience
24.	Roseth & Blackwell (2023)	USA; music teacher educators (2020–2021 academic year)	85 music teacher educators	Quantitative survey; correlational and regression analyses	Adaptability Scale (9 items; cognitive–affective–behavioural adjustment)	Showed positive associations between adaptability attributes and psychological well-being among music teacher-educators.
25.	Vulpe & Pribac (2021)	Romania; COVID-19 online education	424 teachers (392 female; 32 males; 23-item questionnaire)	Quantitative cross-sectional survey	23-item online questionnaire (closed/ semi-closed /scalar items)	Adaptability differences (urban/rural; education level) and obstacles in online teaching

*Note.* This charting table summarises the sources on teacher adaptability (n = 25). N/A = not applicable (for example, conceptual papers with no participants). NR: not reported in the source.

### Principal evidence clusters in the teacher adaptability map

Five principal clusters were identified inductively from the charting matrix by grouping sources with recurring combinations of context, design, conceptual emphasis, and measurement approach: (1) school-based job demands-resources (JD-R) sources, (2) cross-national or multilevel school sources, (3) crisis-era and online teaching sources, (4) teacher educator sources, and (5) beginning-teacher and change sources. Table 3 compares these clusters in terms of their dominant conceptual emphasis and typical measurement or operationalisation patterns.

**Table 3 / Comparison of Principal Evidence Clusters in the Teacher Adaptability Map**

Evidence cluster	Dominant conceptual emphasis	Typical measurement / operationalisation	Representative contribution
School-based JD-R sources	Adaptability as a personal resource for functioning under changing school demands	Mostly quantitative cross-sectional surveys using brief teacher-adapted triadic self-report scales	Linked adaptability to autonomy support, collaboration, engagement, and exhaustion.

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Cross-national / multilevel school sources	Same triadic core examined at teacher and school levels	Multilevel survey models; brief teacher scales sometimes aggregated to school level	Shows how school-level demand/resource patterns are studied but with limited contextual detail.
Crisis-era and online teaching sources	Adaptability under disruption, uncertainty, and rapid pedagogical change	Mixed quantitative and qualitative sources; context-specific remote-teaching measures and interview accounts	Illuminates adaptation processes during disruption while creating the greatest risk of construct drift.
Teacher educator sources	Adaptability as a process in remote and changing pedagogical work	Qualitative process accounts rather than standardised scales	Adds process details on relationships, pedagogy, and professional role changes.
Beginning-teacher and change sources	Adaptability during early-career transition and response to change	Survey and profile / person-centred analyses using brief self-report measures	Connects adaptability with stress towards change, school climate, and emerging professional identity.

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### Conceptualisations and definitional boundaries

Across the mapped literature, teacher adaptability was most consistently described as an adjustment in cognition, affect, and behaviour in response to novelty, uncertainty, and change. This triadic framing appeared in both conceptual and empirical teacher-focused sources and was typically used to define adaptability as a capacity rather than a single skill or routine practice (Martin et al., 2013; Collie & Martin, 2017). Across the reviewed sources, this conceptualisation positioned adaptability as a bounded change-response capacity, not as a synonym for general effectiveness, coping, or instructional flexibility. The sources also distinguished adaptability from resilience by treating adaptability as a response to novelty and change, not just recovery after adversity. Boundary problems were most visible when adaptation language was used to describe adaptive teaching practices, technology uptake, or broad coping processes without directly measuring the change-response capacity.

### Measurement instruments and psychometric evidence

Measurements were dominated by brief self-report instruments grounded in triadic conceptualisations. Where reported, the dominant operationalisation was a 9-item adaptability measure or a closely related teacher-adapted version focused on adjustment in thinking, feeling and behaviour. Context-specific operationalisations also appeared, particularly in remote teaching and crisis-era sources.

Teacher-focused measures generally retained the same substantive core but varied in terms of referent, level of aggregation, and degree of adaptation. Some sources used teacher-adapted versions of Martin et al. Adaptability Scale, some aggregated teacher ratings for school-level analyses, and qualitative sources operationalised adaptability through interview accounts of change episodes rather than through a standard instrument. Table 4 maps these instruments and operationalisations in technical terms, including item counts where available, dimensional structure, response format, reported psychometric evidence, and whether the measure was used as originally developed, adapted, validated, or operationalised in a context-specific manner. A source-by-source technical audit is

provided in Appendix A (Table A1).

Psychometric evidence is usually limited to internal consistency and model-based construct support, such as CFA/SEM or expected associations within a nomological network. Stronger validation steps, including multi-source validation, extensive invariance testing across settings, and explicit reporting of adaptation procedures, were comparatively rare in the mapped sources. Measurement variation was greatest in remote and online teaching sources, where alignment with the bounded triadic construct was less consistent.

**Table 4 / Teacher adaptability measurement instruments**

<b>Instrument / operationalisation</b>	<b>Technical characteristics</b>	<b>Psychometric evidence</b>	<b>Use status / key sources</b>
Adaptability Scale (Martin et al., 2013)	9 items; triadic cognitive, behavioural, and affective adjustment; commonly interpreted as a higher-order/global adaptability factor in later applications; self-report Likert scale (typically 7-point where reported)	Foundational factor-analytic support and internal consistency in the scale-development source; later teacher-focused uses inherit this measurement lineage	Original conceptual and measurement anchor; used directly or as the basis for later teacher-adapted versions
Teacher-adapted 'sense of adaptability' scales	Usually, 9 items mapped to adjustment in thinking, feeling, and behaviour; teacher-specific wording; self-report Likert response options, often 7-point or similar ordinal formats	Internal consistency, CFA/SEM, and expected nomological associations commonly reported in school-based quantitative sources	Adapted teacher use in school-based sources (e.g., Collie & Martin, 2017; Collie et al., 2018, 2020b; Roseth & Blackwell, 2023)
School-level aggregated teacher adaptability	Brief teacher self-report with the same triadic substantive core analysed at aggregated school level for contextual modelling	Multilevel modelling and aggregation logic reported; psychometric support rests largely on the underlying teacher measure	Contextual application in multi-nation science teacher samples (Collie et al., 2020a)
Adaptability + observed adaptive practice combinations	Teacher self-report adaptability used alongside observation-based indicators of adaptive practice; combines capacity and enacted-practice evidence	CFA/SEM and cross-source linkage between self-report adaptability and observed practice reported in mixed operational designs	Analytical combination rather than a pure single-instrument application (e.g., Loughland & Alonzo, 2018)
Online / remote teaching adaptability operationalisations	Varies by source: some retain a triadic logic, whereas others broaden toward online-teaching adjustment, coping, or technology-related adaptation; item counts and response scales vary, and are not always fully reported	Internal consistency or model-fit indices sometimes reported, but construct alignment is less consistent than in the dominant teacher-adapted scales	Context-specific adaptations with higher construct-drift risk (e.g., Răducu & Stănculescu, 2021; Vulpe & Pribac, 2021; Garcia et al., 2024; Lin, Jiang, & Xiong, 2025)

Interview-based qualitative operationalisations	No fixed item set; interview, diary, or case-based accounts of cognitive, emotional, behavioural, relational, and pedagogical adjustment to change episodes	Credibility, analytic transparency, and thematic/process coherence rather than psychometric testing	Exploratory, process-oriented operationalisation (e.g., Dario et al., 2024; Salinas & Garrido, 2022; Sheridan et al., 2022; Davis et al., 2024)
I-ADAPT framework	Broader multifaceted individual-adaptability theory rather than a teacher-specific instrument; used as a conceptual comparator rather than a dominant teacher measure	Provides theoretical breadth and antecedent-consequence framing; not used as the main teacher-specific psychometric instrument in most mapped sources	Conceptual comparator rather than dominant teacher measure (Ployhart & Bliese, 2006)

**Contexts of instrument use and secondary recurrent correlates**

Because the main review focus was conceptualisation and measurement, associated factors were charted descriptively as a secondary context for understanding how teacher adaptability instruments and operationalisations were used in the literature. These patterns were clustered into four broad domains: individual, job-demand-related, organisational, and system-policy. At the individual level, adaptability is commonly positioned as a personal resource linked to healthier functioning, self-regulation, and coping with change demands. Crisis-era and virtual-instruction sources most often connect adaptability to self-regulatory and motivational processes such as self-efficacy and executive functioning.

Within JD-R-oriented school sources, organisational resources, especially autonomy support, collegial collaboration, and supportive school climate, were recurrently associated with higher adaptability and more favourable occupational functioning. These were among the most consistent empirical patterns on the map. Outcomes linked to adaptability were more often occupational than instructional: engagement, commitment, well-being, and exhaustion appeared frequently, whereas direct student or classroom-learning outcomes were examined less consistently and usually through indirect teacher pathways.

Job demands are commonly represented by time pressure, classroom complexity, disruptive behaviour, or stress associated with change. These demands were typically examined either as correlates that could suppress adaptability or as conditions under which adaptability might be especially consequential. System-policy conditions appeared less often as directly measured variables and more often as contextual backgrounds, especially in reform and crisis sources. Table 5 summarises these secondary contextual patterns and recurrent correlates alongside the main gaps identified in the mapped literature.

**Table 5 / Secondary Contextual Patterns and Recurrent Correlates in the Mapped Literature**

Domain	Example variables and contexts	What the mapped sources indicate	Main gaps
Individual	Well-being; executive function/ self-regulation; stress towards change; crisis and non-crisis contexts	Adaptability is commonly viewed as a personal resource associated with healthier functioning	More longitudinal designs are needed, as mechanisms remain under-tested beyond self-report.

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			and coping with changing demands.	
Job demands	Disruptive student behaviour; student diversity / complexity; time pressure; classroom and school settings	student	Job demands tend to be negatively related to adaptability or outcomes in which adaptability is protective.	Demand typologies have been inconsistently reported, and primary-level evidence remains limited.
Organisational (school-level resources)	Autonomy support; collaboration; leadership support; school climate; school settings and some multilevel work		Autonomy support and supportive climates are repeatedly linked to higher adaptability and improved teacher functioning.	Governance and school-type details are often absent, which limits policy interpretation.
System-policy context	Reform / implementation pressures; crisis governance shifts; policy implementation and crisis-era schooling		Adaptability is frequently invoked as relevant to reform and crisis management, but direct measurement of governance mechanisms are limited.	Policy instruments, governance structures, and implementation conditions are rarely directly operationalised.

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## DISCUSSION

### Interpretation of the Mapped Evidence

The mapped empirical sources support describing teacher adaptability as a capacity for cognitive, affective, and behavioural adjustment to novelty, uncertainty, and change. Across the evidence base, this capacity was more often examined in relation to occupational functioning than direct instructional performance. Recurrent associations with autonomy support, collegial climate, engagement, commitment, and reduced exhaustion were visible across several school-based quantitative studies (Collie & Martin, 2017; Collie et al., 2018, 2020b; Granziera et al., 2022).

Therefore, the empirical record is stronger for resource-related correlates and teacher functioning than for classroom or student outcomes. Although some sources have linked adaptability to student-related variables or adaptive practice, these links are less common and often indirect (Collie et al., 2020a; Loughland & Alonzo, 2018; Lin, Jiang, & Xiong, 2025). Crisis-era and qualitative sources add important process details by showing how teachers described adjusting routines, relationships, and pedagogical decisions under disruption, but these sources do not establish broad generalisable patterns (Dario et al., 2024; Salinas & Garrido, 2022; Sheridan et al., 2022).

The conceptual sources in the corpus contribute differently than empirical sources. Their main value lies in clarifying definitional boundaries, rather than providing evidence of associations. Similarly, the included review/report source helps contextualise reform and implementation pressures, but does not constitute direct measurement evidence of teacher adaptability. For this reason, these source types inform interpretation but should not be treated as carrying the same evidential weight as empirical sources.

Taken together, the reviewed sources support the distinction between teacher adaptability and adaptive teaching and resilience. Adaptive teaching refers more directly to enacted instructional adjustments, whereas resilience concerns recovery or sustained functioning in the face of adversity. The reviewed sources indicate that blurring these

boundaries risks construct drift, particularly in crisis-era and online teaching work, where changes in teaching practice, coping, or technology use are sometimes treated as proxies for adaptability without measuring the underlying capacity (Collie & Martin, 2016; Martin et al., 2013; Ployhart & Bliese, 2006).

Measurement was also a robust descriptive finding in this review. The literature is dominated by brief self-report instruments derived from the same triadic tradition, whereas behavioural, observational and longitudinal approaches remain scarce. Thus, the current evidence base says more about teachers perceived adaptability than about how adaptability unfolds across specific episodes of change. Another direct finding is the unevenness of contextual reporting. Governance arrangements, school type, and implementation conditions were often underspecified, even when sources discussed reform or crisis pressures. Consequently, the transferability across systems should be approached cautiously.

### **Interpreting the Observed Patterns**

Several features of the literature may help explain the patterns identified in previous section. First, teacher adaptability research has largely developed through job demands-resources and teacher well-being frameworks, in which adaptability is positioned as a personal resource that may help teachers function under changing demands (Collie & Martin, 2017; Collie et al., 2018; Granziera et al., 2022). This theoretical lineage helps explain why engagement, exhaustion, commitment, and related indicators appear more frequently than direct measures of instructional quality or student learning. Research on classroom or student outcomes usually requires more complex designs, longer time frames, or linked teacher-student data, which remain relatively uncommon in mapped sources.

Second, the repeated prominence of autonomy support, collaboration, and school climate suggests that adaptability is being studied less as an isolated trait and more as a relationally and organisationally situated capacity. In other words, the literature implies that schools may shape how adaptability is expressed by enabling or constraining teachers' responses to change. This interpretation is consistent with existing teacher adaptability scholarship, but the current map remains more persuasive regarding patterned associations than about causal direction (Collie & Martin, 2017; Collie et al., 2018; McLean et al., 2023).

Third, crisis-era and online teaching sources appear more conceptually variable because emergency conditions foreground coping, technology use, and rapid pedagogical adjustment. Under these conditions, adjacent constructs can easily be folded into adaptability unless the construct is defined tightly and the underlying change-response capacity is measured directly. This helps explain why crisis-related work is both highly informative and especially vulnerable to construct drift.

### **Methodological Implications for Future Research**

A persistent risk is constructing drift: papers sometimes conflate adaptability with adaptive teaching, resilience, general coping, or technology-related adjustment. The dominance of self-report survey evidence likely reflects both the history of the construct and the practical realities of the contexts in which it has been studied. Teacher adaptability entered the literature through a psychometric tradition centred on perceived cognitive, affective, and behavioural adjustment (Martin et al., 2013), and subsequent teacher-focused work has largely retained this logic. In addition, many sources were conducted during reform or crisis conditions, in which brief survey administration was especially feasible. This helps explain why internal consistency estimates, CFA/SEM, and correlational models are common, whereas behavioural validation, repeated-measures designs, and multi-informant evidence remain relatively uncommon.

The concentration of sources in Australia and the repeated use of closely related measures also deserve methodological attention. This pattern does not invalidate the

convergence observed in the literature, but suggests that some consistency may reflect a relatively narrow set of measurement traditions and recurring research programmes. Accordingly, apparent convergence should not be interpreted too quickly as evidence of broad international generalisability.

Future methodological work would benefit from clearer reporting of instrument adaptation procedures, stronger evidence on dimensional structure across settings, more extensive invariance testing, and greater use of mixed-methods, longitudinal, and multisource designs. Studies that combine self-reports with observations, diary methods, interviews, or linked classroom and student data would be especially valuable for examining whether perceived adaptability corresponds to enacted adaptation over time.

### **Context, Transferability, and Under-Researched Settings**

The reviewed sources indicate several contextual gaps in the literature. Primary school settings, Global South contexts, and systematically described governance conditions remain under-represented in the mapped literature. This is important because the meaning and enactment of adaptability are likely shaped by curriculum regimes, school governance, resource availability, and local professional cultures. When such conditions are only lightly reported, it becomes difficult to judge whether the patterns identified in one setting are likely to transfer to another.

One plausible explanation is that the construct has been adopted more quickly within research-rich, English-language, survey-based traditions than in contexts where local reporting conventions, measurement adaptation, or publication pathways differ. This is an inference rather than a direct empirical finding from the map, but it offers a reasonable explanation for why the contextual coverage remains uneven. Broader geographical and sectoral coverage is therefore important not only for representation but also for testing whether current conceptualisations and measures are sufficiently portable across school systems.

### **Future Research Priorities**

Several priorities follow the mapped patterns. First, future studies should maintain clearer construct boundaries between teacher adaptability, adaptive teaching, resilience, and related change-response constructs. Second, measurement development should move beyond brief self-reports through broader validation strategies and more transparent documentation of adaptation procedures. Third, longitudinal and episode-sensitive designs are needed to examine how adaptability fluctuates or stabilises across school years, career stages and periods of reform or disruption. Fourth, more work is needed on classroom- and student-related outcomes, particularly through designs that can examine indirect and context-contingent pathways. Finally, researchers should expand the evidence from under-represented school levels and regions while reporting governance, implementation, and school-type conditions more systematically.

### **Implications for International Research and Context-Sensitive Application**

As an international evidence map, this review provides a framework for keeping conceptualisations, instruments, and contexts analytically distinct in future research. The reviewed sources suggest that research in this area will be stronger when it combines a clearly bounded construct with transparent measurement and richer contextual descriptions. This is relevant not only for comparative research but also for policy- and practice-oriented work seeking to understand how teachers respond to ongoing change.

For context-sensitive applications, the review is best used as a guide for construct clarification and instrument choice rather than as a direct template. Future studies can draw on the triadic adaptability framework and recurrent resource-demand variables while explicitly measuring local governance arrangements, curriculum implementation conditions, and school constraints rather than assuming direct transferability from the current international evidence base.

## Limitations

This scoping review maps the breadth and characteristics of the literature rather than estimating the pooled effects or causal magnitudes. The corpus also includes heterogeneous source types (empirical, conceptual, and one evidence review/report), so different parts of the discussion rest on different kinds of evidence. In addition, screening was not conducted through a formal dual-independent workflow, and no formal critical appraisal was undertaken. The screening log also retained three broad rationale categories for full-text exclusions rather than a more fine-grained breakdown. These choices are consistent with the scoping purpose but limit the strength of evaluative claims that can be made from the map. Finally, the search was limited to English-language sources in the selected databases, which may have contributed to the under-representation of some regions and publication traditions.

## CONCLUSION

This scoping review maps 25 sources of evidence on teacher adaptability and shows that the construct is most consistently conceptualised as the capacity for cognitive, affective, and behavioural adjustment to novelty, uncertainty, and change in teachers' work. Across the mapped literature, measurement is dominated by brief self-report instruments derived from the same triadic conceptual tradition, with psychometric reporting focused mainly on internal consistency and model-based validity support. The literature also shows that these instruments have been applied most often in school-based occupational functioning research, crisis-era and online teaching research, and early career or teacher-educator contexts. In contrast, behavioural, observational, and longitudinal operationalisations remain comparatively limited.

The review also shows that the evidence base is unevenly distributed across different settings. A substantial share of the literature is concentrated in Australia, while primary school contexts, Global South settings, and clearly reported governance conditions remain under-represented. As an international evidence map, this review contributes to the literature by clarifying construct boundaries, identifying dominant measurement patterns, and highlighting methodological and contextual gaps that shape the current state of knowledge. Rather than offering definitive causal conclusions, the reviewed sources suggest priorities for future research: clearer construct discipline, stronger validation beyond self-report, richer contextual reporting, and broader geographical and sectoral coverage of studies.

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