

Flexible Thinking - Teacher Notes

Objective: Students will learn the concept of flexible thinking and how it can help them solve problems, handle challenges, and adapt to new situations. They will practice using flexible thinking in different scenarios.

Rationale: Flexible thinking is an important cognitive skill that helps students navigate the complexities of life. By learning to think flexibly, students can approach challenges with an open mind, adapt to changes, and find creative solutions to problems.

CASEL Competency: Self-Management, Social Awareness

Warm-Up Activity: "What Is Flexible Thinking?"

- **Script:** "Good morning, class! Today, we're going to talk about something very important—flexible thinking. Flexible thinking means being able to change your mind or try new ways to solve a problem. It's like when you're playing a game and you find a new strategy to win, or when you're working on a project and decide to try a different approach. Let's start by thinking about what flexible thinking means to you. Can anyone share a time when they had to change their plans or try something new to solve a problem?"

Examples: Encourage students to share examples like "I had to come up with a new way to build my Lego tower when it kept falling down" or "I had to change my plans when it started raining during our picnic."

Step 1: Explanation

Title: "What Is Flexible Thinking?"

Script: "Flexible thinking is all about being open to new ideas and different ways of doing things. It's like having a mind that can stretch and bend when you need it to. When we think flexibly, we can solve problems more easily, adapt to changes, and understand different points of view. Let's explore why flexible thinking is so important and how we can practice it every day."

Questions:

Why do you think flexible thinking is important when solving problems?

Possible Answer: "Because it helps us find new solutions when our first idea doesn't work."

How can flexible thinking help you when something unexpected happens?

Possible Answer: "It helps me stay calm and think of a new plan instead of getting upset."

Step 2: Activity

Title: "Practicing Flexible Thinking"

Script: "Now, we're going to practice using flexible thinking. I'm going to show you some scenarios where you might need to think flexibly. For each scenario, I want you to think of a new way to solve the problem or a different way to look at the situation. Let's start with this one: Imagine you're building a tower with blocks, but it keeps falling over. What could you do to solve the problem using flexible thinking?"

Activity: Present different scenarios and have students discuss or write down how they would use flexible thinking to solve the problem. For example, they might suggest building the tower with a stronger base or trying a different design.

Questions:

What flexible thinking strategy did you use to solve the block tower problem?

Possible Answer: "I decided to make the base wider so the tower would be more stable."

How can flexible thinking help you when you're working on a group project?

Possible Answer: "It helps me listen to others' ideas and try new ways to get the project done."

Flexible Thinking - Teacher Notes

Step 3: Reflect and Share

- **Title:** "Sharing Our Flexible Thinking"
- **Visuals:** Display a "Flexible Thinking Board" where students can share their ideas and solutions from the scenarios. Include images of students collaborating, brainstorming, and trying new approaches.
- **Script:** "We've practiced using flexible thinking in different situations. Now, let's share how we used flexible thinking to solve problems. When we share our ideas, we can learn new strategies from each other and see how flexible thinking can help us in many different ways. Who would like to share first?"
- **Questions:**
 - a. **Can you share a time when flexible thinking helped you solve a problem?**
 - **Possible Answer:** "Flexible thinking helped me figure out a new way to organize my desk when it was too messy."
 - b. **Why is it important to be open to new ideas and different ways of doing things?**
Possible Answer: "Because it helps us find better solutions and makes us more creative."

- **Wrap-Up:** Title: "Keep Practicing Flexible Thinking!"
- **Script:** "Today, we learned that flexible thinking is a powerful tool that helps us solve problems, adapt to changes, and work well with others. When we practice flexible thinking, we can come up with new ideas and find better ways to do things. Let's all keep practicing flexible thinking every day, so we can be ready for whatever challenges come our way!"
- **Questions:**
 - a. What's one way you can practice flexible thinking this week?
 - **Possible Answer:** "I can try a new way to study for my spelling test if my usual way isn't working."
 - b. Why should we keep practicing flexible thinking?
Possible Answer: "Because it helps us stay positive and find solutions when things don't go as planned."

Assessment: Have students draw a picture or write a short reflection about a time when they used flexible thinking to solve a problem or handle a change. Review their work to assess their understanding of flexible thinking and its benefits.

Parent Connection: Take-Home Activity: Send home a worksheet with a flexible thinking scenario and encourage parents to discuss it with their child. Suggest that parents share examples of how they use flexible thinking in their own lives and encourage their child to practice it at home.