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# Towards a Citizens' Curriculum

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**#citizenscurriculum**



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## The English and maths challenge ...

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- The **Skills for Life Survey** (2011): 1 in 4 adults have low levels of numeracy skills; 1 in 6 have low levels of literacy skills.
- **OECD Survey of Adult Skills** (2013): 16.4% scored at the lowest level for literacy; 24% for numeracy.
- **Census data** (2011) records around 850,000 adults 'non-proficient' in the English language.
- **BIS / SFA data** shows that from 12/13 to 13/14, adult (19+) participation in English, maths and ESOL provision has fallen by 7.6%, 10.7% and 4.8% respectively.



So ....

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More flexible, creative and innovative models are needed to engage and motivate learners and meet the challenge of poor basic language, literacy, numeracy and digital skills in the context of rapid social change.



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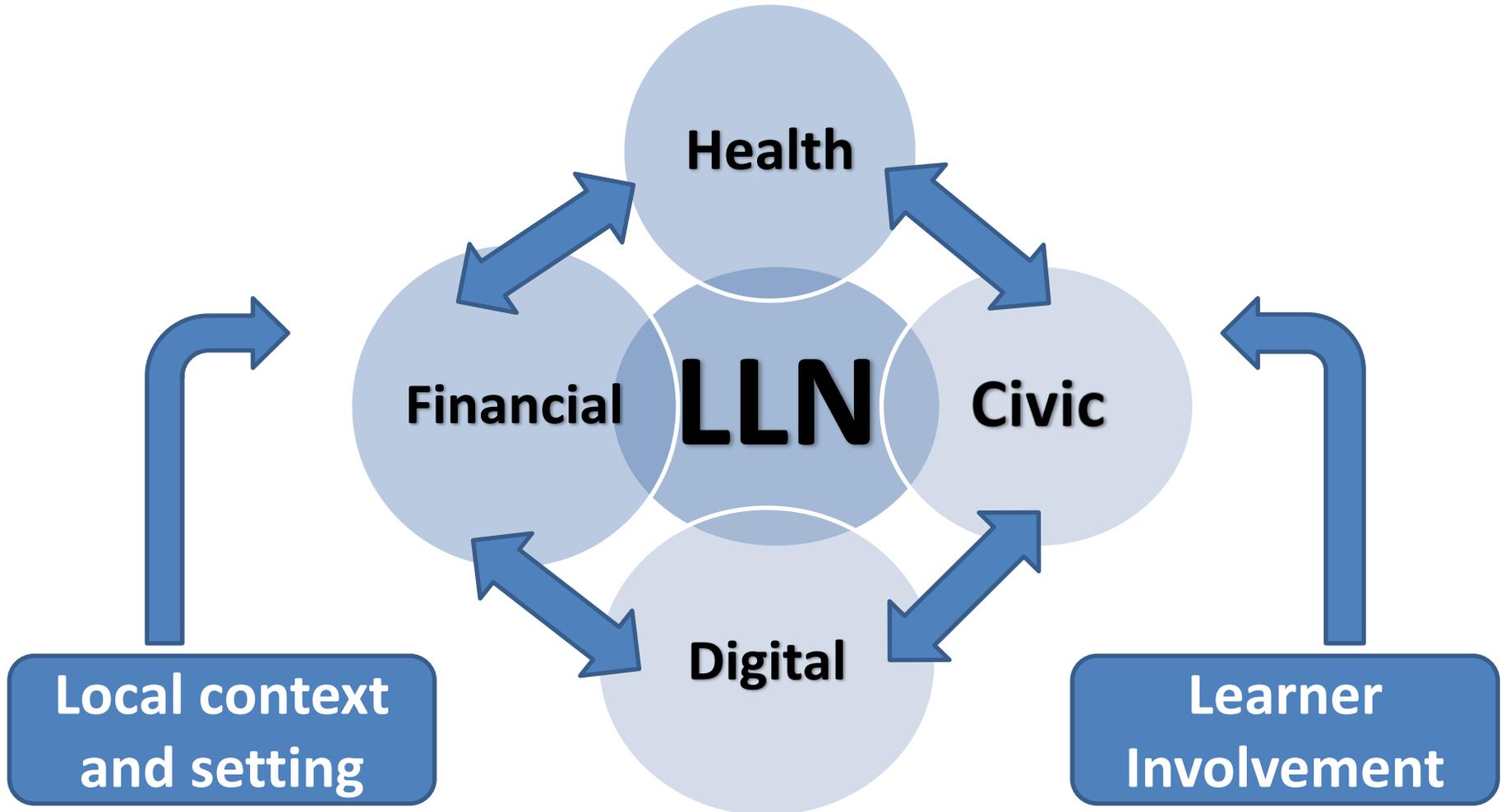
“A citizens’ curriculum is learning which is locally-led, developed with the active participation of learners, and interlinks the life skills of language, literacy and numeracy with health, financial, digital and civic capabilities.”



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# Citizens' Curriculum **Capabilities**



Tom Schuller • David Watson

# Learning Through Life

Inquiry into the Future for  
Lifelong Learning

Summary



- Schuller and Watson (2009)
- NIACE / NRDC Evidence on impact of embedded basic skills – Eldred (2005); Casey (2006)
- Co-design of the curriculum - *A New Curriculum for Difficult Times* (Beer, 2013)



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## Our work

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- Our **pilots** helped us to learn more about how a Citizens' Curriculum approach works
- The participating pilots were: St Mungo's Broadway, Ashley Housing, English for Action, Leicester College, Women in Prisons, Tomorrow's Women Wirral, Milton Keynes College (HMP Ranby), The Manchester College (HMP Deerbolt, HMP New Hall, HMP Blantyre) Outsource Training, Rochdale Borough Council, Bradford City Council, Birmingham City Council, Manton Children's Centre.



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## Key Overall Findings - Providers

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- Added value to the curriculum offer, which became more engaging through the interlinking of English, maths and language skills with other capabilities
- An improved curriculum offer which, through greater learner involvement, was felt to be more responsive to the needs of learners



## Key Overall Findings - Practitioners

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- Improved ability to make learning relevant to adults' lives and articulate the wider benefits of participation in learning, through a focus on the interlinked capabilities of the Citizens' Curriculum approach.
- For practitioners with less experience in the creation and co-design of flexible provision tailored to the needs of individuals, a greater appreciation of the value and benefits of this approach and keenness to embed this further in their practice.



## Key Overall Findings - Learners

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- Improved attitudes to learning, particularly with regard to English/language and maths, leading to progression into further learning opportunities.
- Improved skills and attitudes supporting employability, including increased motivation to seek work and/or participate in voluntary work, and for some learners, progression into employment or work placements.
- Improved engagement in the wider community and improved confidence and ability to use public services



## Frequently Asked Questions ...

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- Do we have to deliver all of the capabilities?
- What content should we teach for each of the capabilities? What about resources?
- Tutors don't have expertise in some of these areas, what can we do?
- What's the role of accreditation in the Citizens' Curriculum approach?



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## NIACE Policy 'Asks'

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*“More emphasis on informal, non-formal, as well as formal learning to enable people to gain economically and socially useful skills.”*

“Continued investment by the UK Government in Community Learning in England, with a review of the distribution of the funds.”

“A new study-programme approach, using the NIACE Citizens' Curriculum, to meet the needs of those with the lowest skills levels, which incorporates informal, non-formal as well as formal learning”.



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## Next Steps for the Citizens' Curriculum

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- More pilots in new settings – English and Maths for unemployed adults, ESA claimants and plans for work with young migrants
- More detailed evaluation and impact assessment including longer term analysis
- Further practitioner support around health and civic capabilities
- A 'technical consultation', looking at how the Citizens' Curriculum might form the basis of any 'study programme for adults'
- Potential work on ESOL and Offender Learning

