# 'Matching the Words to the Calculations – Making Sense of Functional Skills Questions and Tasks'

#### PROJECT BACKGROUND:

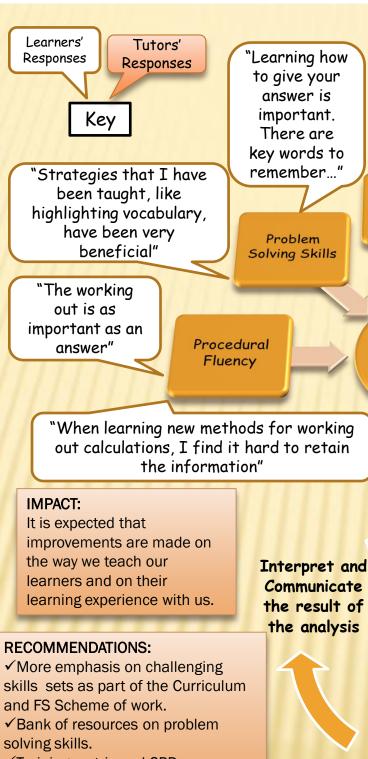
With the introduction of Functional Skills (FS), learners have to be able to demonstrate proficiency in skills including Conceptual Understanding, Procedural Fluency and Problem Solving. This project looks into the issues, barriers and constraints learners encounter when attempting mathematical word problems based around practical situations and everyday context, in order to gain a better understanding of the factors to consider when designing our Curriculum as well as when planning, resourcing and delivering our lessons.

#### **METHODOLOGY:**

Includes a combination of survey questionnaires; feedback forms; informal interviews; discussion; observation; reflective accounts and literature review.

### **SCOPE OF THE PROJECT: This**

was a small-scale project.
Limited to six 2013-14 FS
courses. It involved Level 1 and
2 learners and LALS maths
tutors delivering FS courses in
the Skills for Life Curriculum
area.



"I now "I always need to know WHY I should be doing it in a certain way, in order for it to have a wider make sense" view on Maths" "I am more confident with all aspects of Maths!" Conceptual "More confident in Understanding general. Actually, Motivation and starting to enjoy Maths!" Attitude to Learning "Grammar" Functional "Reading and Skills writing" Language Skills Maths Questions "Vocabulary, "Comprehension and both English understanding of and vocabulary [...] to mathematical understand questions and terms!" to answer them in an articulate manner"

Select "First problem...to convince learners of the relevance of FS to them!" represent and model a situation

"There are not enough resources to teach problem solving"

"I use, and explain to my learners, what I call the 'Belt and Braces' approach"

## SOME FINDINGS – TUTORS' SURVEY:

>78% of respondents to the tutor's survey agree that with the introduction of Functional Skills, aspects of their teaching practice have changed (e.g. approach and methods, scheme of work, resources, lesson plans) > Participants either agree or strongly agree that preparing learners for successfully achieving their Level 1 and/or 2 FS Qualification requires more time and effort than for the old National Test.

Learner's motivation and attitude; language skills and underpinning knowledge were identified by participants as the three most important aspects when teaching Functional Skills maths.

➤ 56% agrees that metacognitive skills can be taught to adult learners.
➤ Selecting the mathematical information to use; identifying & deciding on the operations, methods and tools and using language skills to communicate numeric concepts, interim findings, solutions or

explanations were identified

as the most challenging skill

sets to teach.

√Training matrix and CPD opportunities.

Plan and
Analyse a
pathway to
the solution



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