

# Wider Benefits of Adult Learning

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# Aim of the study

- What are the wider benefits of participation in liberal adult education?
  - What people study and learn? What kind of impact participation has? What wider benefits people experience? What is the meaning of adult learning in general?
  - Outcomes and benefits...
    - (1) as an individual
    - (2) as a citizen
    - (3) as an employee.

*Manninen, J. 2010. Wider Benefits of Learning within Liberal Adult Education System in Finland. In: Horsdal, M. (ed.) Communication, Collaboration and Creativity: Researching Adult learning. Odense: Syddansk Universitetsforlag.*

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# Wider benefits -approach

- Participation → Learning → wider benefits
  - For individual ("human, cultural, economical capital")
  - For family, community... ("social capital, social cohesion")
  - For labour markets ("economical growth")
  - For society in general ("active citizenship, learning society")
- How individuals, groups, organisations and society benefit from education?

# Liberal adult education in Finland

- Non-vocational courses
- Organisational structure:
  - Adult education centres
  - Folk High Schools
  - Summer Universities
  - Study Centres
  - Physical Education Centres
- **1.066.932** adults participated in 2005 (population is 5,3 million)
- State support 192 million € (2008) + municipalities + participation fees



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# Data

- Two types of data:
  - Qualitative → understanding (“what happens and how?”)
  - Quantitative → generalisation (“for how many?”)
- $n = 1840$  adult learners
  - Individual theme interviews ( $n = 19$ )
  - Focus group interviews (12 study groups, 77 adult learners)
  - Survey ( $n = 1744$ )
    - Open questions → qualitative content analysis
    - Structured questions (scale 1-5) → statistical analysis

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# Key questions (interviews and open questions in survey)

## 1. What direct benefits learning have provided?

*I work in a voluntary organisation where **language skills** are useful and related to my tasks and role as a active citizen.*

## 2. What wider benefits there have been?

*Joint actions of people who have similar values and common objectives **help me to feel better both mentally and physically**. At home I am able to **make use of the skills** I have learned on the course.*

## 3. What other outcomes there have been in your life?

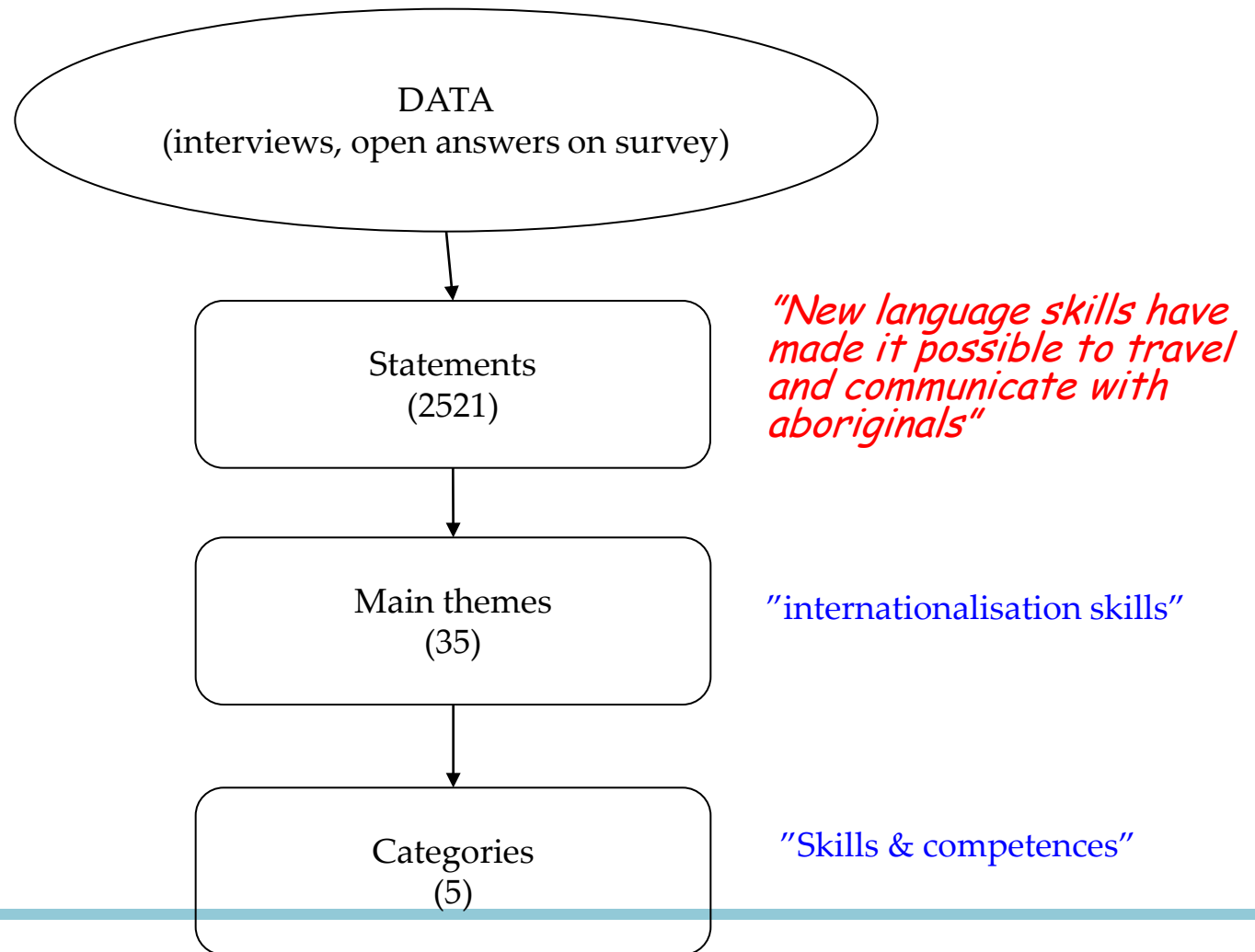
*My hobby gives me **strength for daily life**. In Spring I was unemployed, and singing course gave me feelings that I am succeeding in something.*

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## Examples from data:

- *When I started in the poem circle, I had just moved into the village as a new resident. The group welcomed me very cordially, which made it easier to create other social contacts in the village. Learning new presentation skills and gaining new contacts have helped and motivated me to join other local societies as well.*
- *After I was widowed, I was able to focus myself on new activities.*
- *I have got a lot from course gatherings, joy and positive things to think about. Funny and hearty group have helped me to manage my stressful life.*

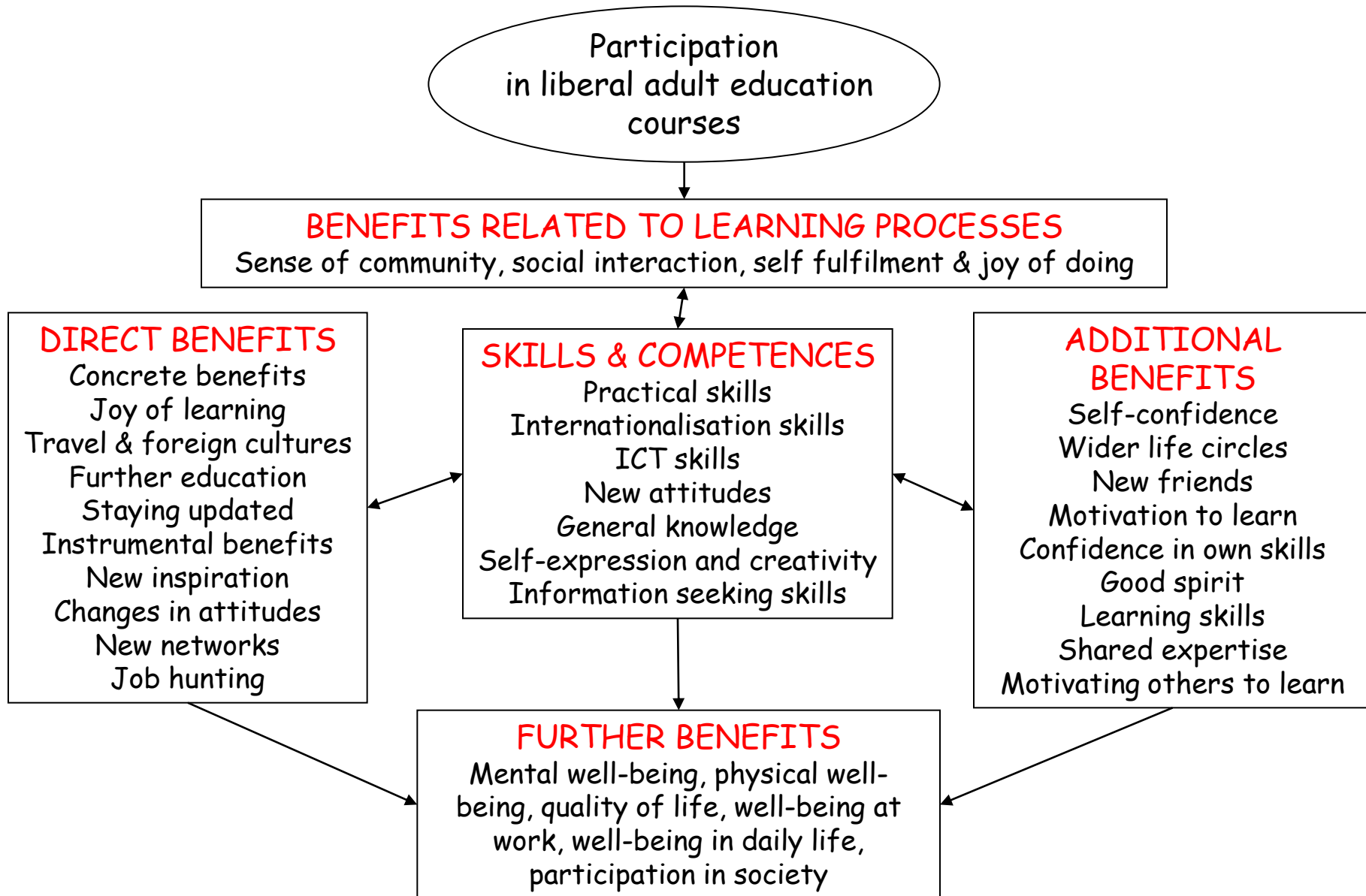
# Analysis of qualitative data





# Summary of the qualitative content analyses

(2521 statements → 35 main themes → 5 Categories)



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Hard data for for politicians & decision makers

# **STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF QUANTITATIVE DATA (N = 1744)**

# Has participation made better your...

	MENTAL WELLBEING		
	N of persons	% of respondents	Weighted N of all participants (1,066,932)
Not at all	83	6,4 %	
(Quite) a lot	1214	93,6 %	998,648

- Especially courses including self-expression, music, dance, handicrafts, + regular learners

	PHYSICAL WELLBEING		
	N of persons	% of respondents	Weighted N of all participants (1,066,932)
Not at all	686	56,8 %	
(Quite) a lot	521	43,2 %	460,914

- Especially courses including self-expression, music, dance, sports, + regular learners

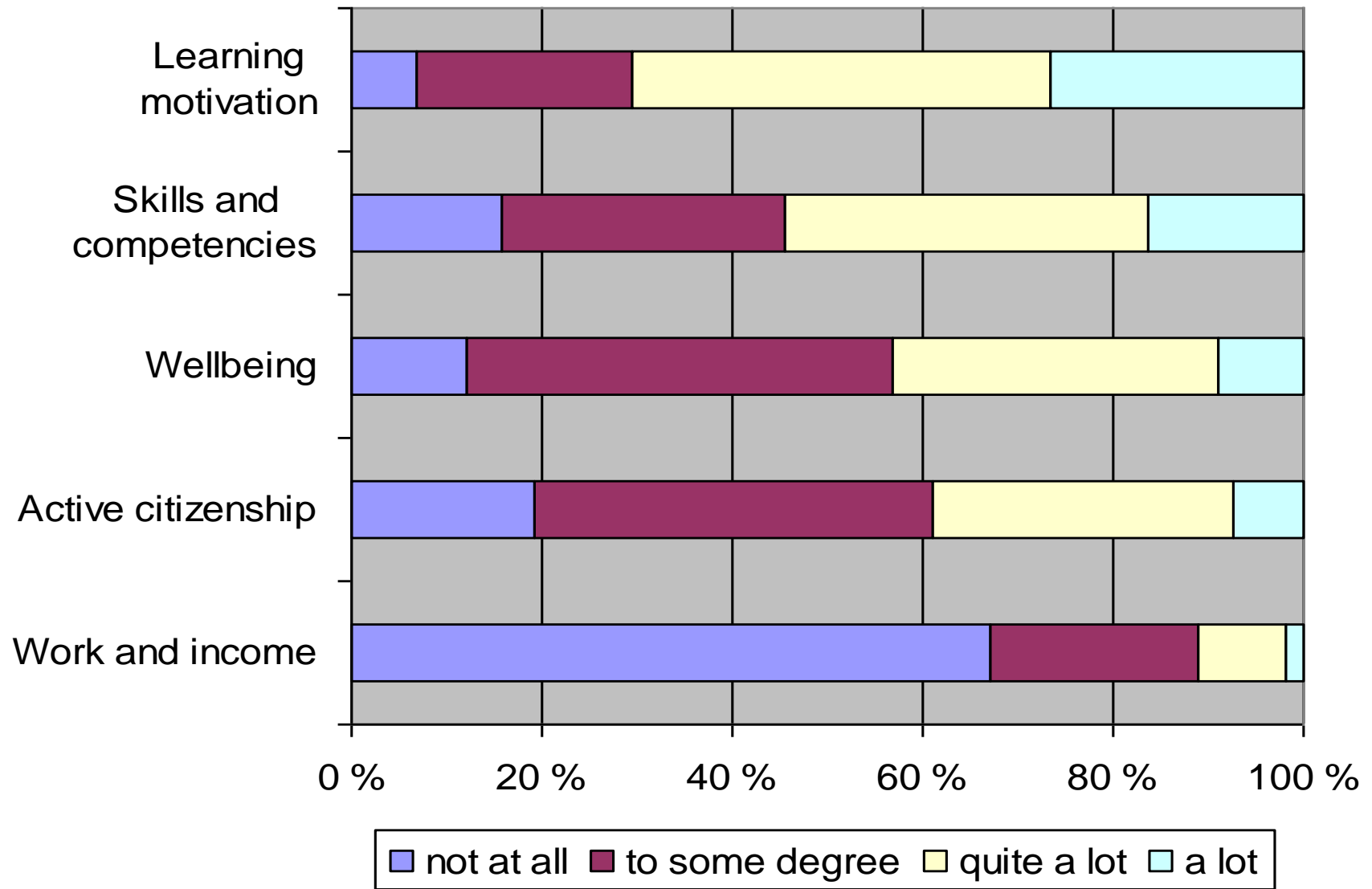
\* Older, lower educated participants benefit more

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# Factor analysis

- **Active citizenship**
  - Sense of responsibility
  - Societal involvement
  - Social skills
  - Social networks
  - Critical thinking
  - Self-confidence
- **Wellbeing**
  - Endurance
  - Physical health
  - Mental health
  - Creativity
  - Self-esteem
- **Skills & competencies**
  - Knowledge
  - Skills
  - General knowledge
- **Work & income**
  - Earning opportunities
  - Career development
- **Learning motivation**

# How much participation have had impact on the following factors...



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Next project:

## BeLL – Benefits of Lifelong Learning

- Funding: EU LLL-programme
- Based on Finnish data collection procedure and analytical tools
  - Interviews + survey in 9 European countries → national profiles + comparative analysis
- Coordinator DIE (German Institute for Adult Education)
- Partners include EAEA (European Association for the Education of Adults); UEF (Finland); SIAE (Slovenian Institute for Adult Education); ATHENA (Association for Education and Development of Women, Czech Republic); NIACE (UK)....
- 2012-2013

# Definitions for “Lifelong learning”

## 1960's (UNESCO):

- culture
- learning
- **personal growth**
- humanistic ideals
- “human being”
- life situation

Faure 1970: Learning to be. Unesco.



## 2000 (EU):

- competitiveness
- training
- **employability**
- economical rationale
- “active citizenship”
- labour market

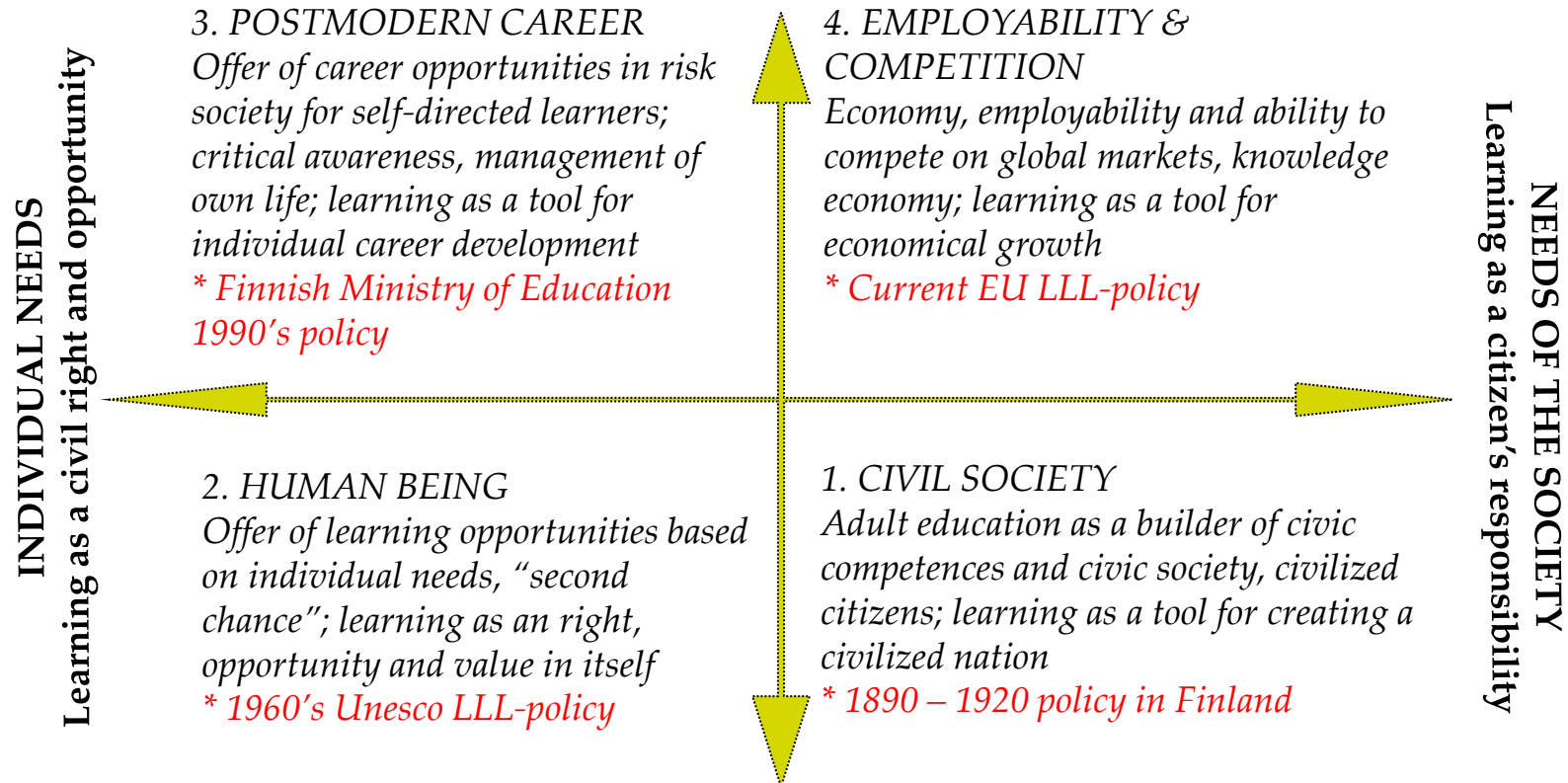
Commission 2000: Memorandum on Lifelong Learning



## ARTES SERVILES

### ECONOMICAL COMPETITIVENESS

Labour market, employability



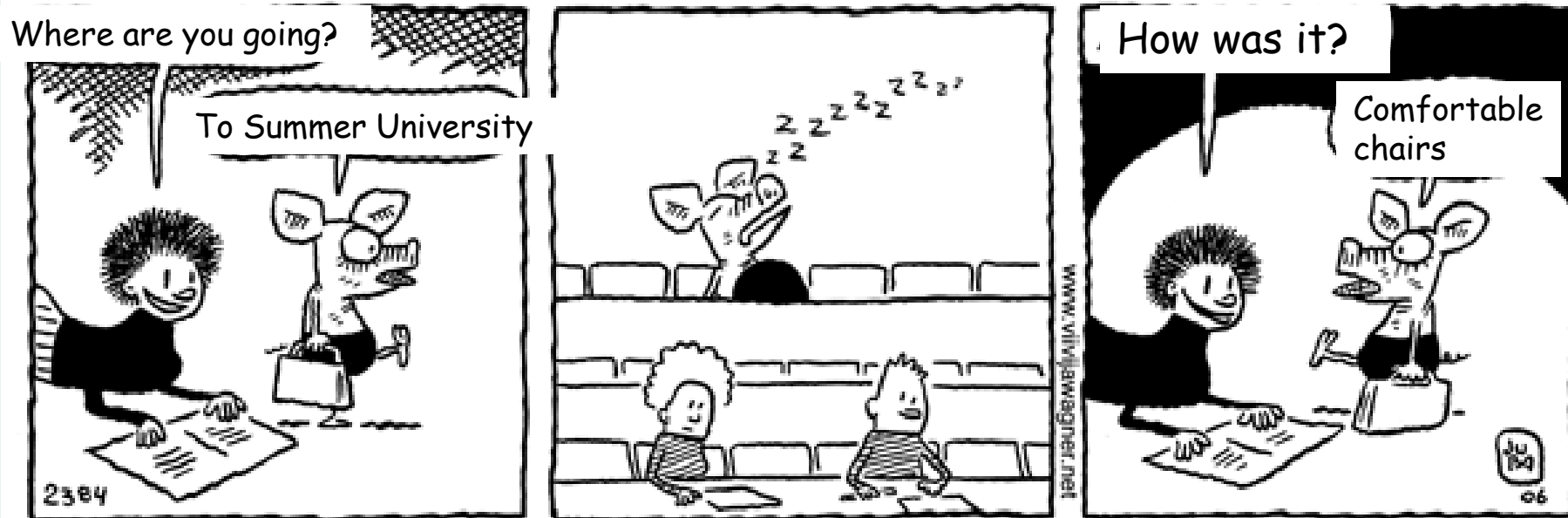
Personal development

CIVILIZATION, HUMANISTIC IDEALS

## ARTES LIBERALES



# Thank you!



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# Some references

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