**Re-conceptualising Student Experience: Transition into Initial Teacher Education from a Capabilities Perspective**

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### Introduction
- The Scottish teaching landscape does not seem to be representative of the entire population. This raises questions for social justice and widening participation (Menter et al., 2005).
- Widening participation initiatives may increase the diversity of the student teachers, however, students from less affluent backgrounds may be less likely to successfully complete their studies (Hixenbaugh, Dewart and Towel, 2012).
- Successful transition may be influenced by psychological, physical and social factors, but the evidence is fragmented (Wilson-Strydom, 2012).
- It is argued that the Capability Approach (Sen, 1992), might provide a more comprehensive framework for evaluating students’ wellbeing that may lead to positive experience and successful transition within initial teacher education.

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### Capability Approach
- A normative framework for evaluating individual wellbeing (Robeyns, 2003).
- Conceptualizes wellbeing as the expansion of capabilities (Robeyns, 2005).
- Acknowledges human diversity in terms of different capabilities: opportunities and options (Gasper and Van Staveren, 2002).
- Differentiates between human capabilities (Sen, 1992).
- Personal conversion factors: e.g., practical reasoning, educational resilience, knowledge and imagination.
- Social conversion factors: e.g., social relations and networks, emotional and bodily integrity.
- Institutional context: e.g., availability of bursaries.
- Personal conversion factors: e.g., first generation university students.
- Social conversion factors: e.g., parental and peer support.

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### References

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### Potential Implications
- The application of a non-deficit approach (Smit, 2012) helps emphasizing the role of higher education institutions in the removal of various barriers students from less affluent backgrounds face and the provision of better tailored support.

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### Proposed Methodology
- The nature of the Capability Approach suggests the adoption of pragmatist approach through mixed methods design (Feilzer, 2010).
- Step I: Identification of valued capabilities and relevant conversion factors by participatory processes (e.g., focus group interviews, surveys, etc.).
- Step II: Location and collection of appropriate data: for example, use of admissions data as proxy for resources and several conversion factors.
- Step III: Identify barriers and sources of support during the transition process.

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### Proposed framework for the investigation of transition to initial teacher education

**Means and resources**
- Income
- Access to learning equipment and facilities
- Access to initial teacher education

**Personal conversion factors:**
- Physical condition
- Psychological condition
- Academic ability
- Language ability

**Proposed ideal-theoretical list of capabilities for initial teacher education (Walker, 2006; GTCS, 2006):**
- Practical reasoning
- Educational resilience
- Knowledge and imagination
- Learning disposition
- Respect, dignity and recognition
- Emotional and bodily integrity
- Social relations and networks
- Language ability
- Commitment to profession

**Achievements:**
- Successful transition
- Successfully completing the first year of university
- Successfully finishing university

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