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**Is Initial Teacher Education (ITE) based on the Capabilities Approach likely to foster inclusion for autistic learners in the Further Education sector?**

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**Abstract**

This discussion will argue that Initial Teacher Education (ITE) for students planning to teach in Further Education (FE), which includes schools, colleges and training providers for learners aged 14+, should be revised to encourage ITE students to view their own approach to inclusion through the framework of American philosopher Nussbaum's Capability Approach (CA). Autistic people are more likely than their peers with more profound physical and cognitive disabilities to go to mainstream school. These learners are often misunderstood and excluded from school due to a lack of understanding amongst professional teaching staff and as a result are at an increased risk of exclusion from school. Exclusion from education leads to exclusion from society, impacting life chances, dignity, self-esteem and mental health. Grounded in human dignity, the CA will provide a framework for exploring inclusion of autistic learners within initial teacher education (ITE) and will be a preferable future for moving towards a more inclusive society.

**Keywords**

Capabilities approach; autism; initial teacher education; inclusion; exclusion.

**Introduction**

This discussion will argue that Initial Teacher Education (ITE) for students planning to teach in Further Education (FE), which includes schools, colleges and training providers for learners aged 14+, should be revised to encourage ITE students to view their own approach to inclusion through the framework of American philosopher Nussbaum's Capability Approach (CA).

Categorised as a Special Educational Need and Disability (SEND), autism is a hidden, neurological, lifelong disability characterised by difficulties in 'reciprocal social interaction, communication, and restricted, stereotyped, repetitive behaviour' (ICD-10, 2016). Autistic people are more likely than their peers with more profound physical and cognitive disabilities to go to mainstream school. Current figures suggest that 70% of autistic learners will be educated in mainstream provision (NAS, 2017). Brede *et al* (2017) state that young autistic people appear to have an increased risk of exclusion from school. Moore (2016) suggests these learners are often misunderstood and excluded from school due to a lack of understanding amongst professional teaching staff. Indeed, the Department for Education (2015) found that autistic learners are more likely to be excluded than their peers without the condition. Exclusion from education leads to exclusion from society, impacting life chances, dignity, self-esteem and mental health. Grounded in human dignity, the CA will provide a framework for exploring inclusion of autistic learners within initial teacher education (ITE) and will be a preferable future for moving towards a more inclusive society. Robeyns (2006:76) suggests 'that the right to education is not only a legal but also a moral right' and that 'everyone who is in a position to help realise this right should see it as her moral obligation to contribute'. This puts a responsibility on educational establishments, teachers and initial teacher educators to bring this issue into focus.

**Citation**

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Language impacts on our perceptions and attitudes and although Kenny *et al.* (2016) found that there is not one favoured term to describe autism, the terms used are changing. Autism cannot be separated from the person and is an integral part of an individual's make up, therefore, the historically favoured person-first language such as 'person with autism' will not be used. Instead the often preferred term by the adult autism community 'autistic person' will be adopted (NAS, 2017).

This paper will conclude by highlighting that ITE based on the Capabilities Approach is more likely than our current curriculum to foster inclusion within the FE education system. A normative theory which helps us conceptualise the notions of inequality, Nussbaum (2011: xii) tells us her CA is 'the counter-theory we need, in an era of urgent human problems and unjustifiable human inequalities'. The first section will discuss the CA and why this framework is useful for ITE students to examine their own approach to inclusion.

### **The Capabilities Approach**

'All liberal philosophies give primacy to the protection of basic liberty' (Gutmann, 2001:8784). However, it is only in recent years that the relation between education and capability has started to be examined (Hinchcliffe, & Terzi, 2009). The CA is a liberal, political philosophy which seeks to achieve justice, equality and democracy for all. It does not attempt to explain inequality but supports us to conceptualise these ideas. The CA, therefore, is a normative theory concerned with global social justice and individual well-being providing a tool we can use to conceptualise and assess inequality (Robeyns, 2005). It is liberal in the sense that it values individual freedom and autonomy to choose. Human diversity is central to this approach and human dignity for all is a guiding principle of the CA. Capabilities are those freedoms and opportunities available to a person, functionings are the enactments of these liberties. At its core it asks what people are able to do and to be.

Nussbaum (2011:92) describes the CA as 'a form of political liberalism' which looks at the outcomes for people within a political situation. Influenced through Rawls' (2001) social contract principles, Nussbaum recognises that her CA is about reducing the inequalities of capabilities and does not claim her approach to achieve full equality. Nussbaum (2003:36) likens her list to the human rights movement, highlighting entitlements such as 'political liberties, the freedom of association, the free choice of occupation, and a variety of economic and social rights'. Her list of ten capabilities, each to be explored in further detail within this paper, sets out the basic minimum conditions for a just society and Nussbaum (2006:78) stresses that a life without each capability is a life not worthy of human dignity. She states that the creation of a list 'gives important precision and supplementation to the language of rights' (Nussbaum, 2003:37) claiming that this approach brings together problems which are often treated in isolation from one another' (Nussbaum, 2011:143) and pledges a new perspective from which to view these issues. Nussbaum (2006:75) asserts that each of the capabilities are mutually important and supportive, as promoting one over the other will result in a 'failure of justice'. She highlights that the ten capabilities are general goals to be 'further specified by the society in question', thus enabling the capabilities to cross cultures, supporting global human rights. 'It is essentially a 'people-centered' approach, which puts human agency ... at the centre of the stage' (Dreze and Sen, 2002:6, cited in Robeyns, 2005: 108).

However, the CA is not without criticism. It has been described as vague and fanciful, based within a Western agenda (Okin, 2003). Nussbaum (2011:102) counteracts the argument that the CA 'reinforces the subordination of non-western cultures to a western ideology' by suggesting that we all borrow from other cultures and disputes the opinion that human rights are 'historically Western'. She adds to this discussion that human rights, the idea that we all have equal worth, are formulated by a range of nations, and are not imperial as critics suggest. She ensures her theoretical concept is accessible to 'real people' by asking the questions "'what am I able to do and to be? What are my real options?'" (Nussbaum, 2011:106). Asserting that the list is applied to all nations, Nussbaum herself questions the value of 'a single set of norms' being applied to people the world over and seeks to address this within

her work. Nussbaum (2011:108) invites criticism of her approach and acknowledges the 'somewhat abstract and general way' her list reads as a deliberate decision, allowing for realisation across nations, cultures, and constitutions, thus allowing for historical influences of individual nations to be taken into account. She is also clear about the open-endedness of the list which is subject to revision as time goes by. Introduced explicitly for political purposes and not those of religion or culture, the CA can be utilised universally, respectful of the diversity of cultures.

The next section will provide a brief overview of the conceptualisation of inclusive education in order to contextualise the current landscape and frame the discussion around the importance of examining education from a social justice perspective.

### **Inclusion**

Historically autistic people have experienced oppression and exclusion from society (Silberman, 2015). Barton (1998, p. 84, cited in Terzi, 2014) states, 'inclusive education is not an end in itself, but a means to an end, that of establishing an inclusive society'. However, the very term 'inclusion' is a contentious one. Norwich (2014b:406) points out the difficulties with defining inclusion as 'there are no agreed definitions of inclusion or an inclusive school in England'. Inclusion, when introduced by Warnock (1978) was thought by some to mean everyone educated under the same roof. Later, Tomlinson (1997) discussed inclusion in the FE sector as the 'match' between the learners' individual needs and the components of the learning environment. Based on the social model of disability and supported by disability rights movements, the emphasis on 'inclusive education' accelerated under the Labour government (1997-2010). Underpinned by the principles of the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994), legal duties were placed on educational establishments to include learners with SEND (DfES, 2001). However, inclusion was mainly viewed as where students were placed, within a mainstream, ordinary school, or within specialist provision. Many people opposed the bias towards inclusion (Runswick-Cole, 2011) into mainstream schools, challenging that merely placing a person in a mainstream setting without adequate adjustments was not inclusive practice. This led to Warnock (2005) stating that inclusion should be understood as educational engagement regardless of the setting, and that some children would benefit more from a specialist provision (Norwich, 2014). Arguing for inclusion within mainstream schools, asserting that this is more effective than discrete provisions, Lindsay (2007) describes inclusion as meeting the needs of all learners through making reasonable adjustments. This reflects the recently reformed SEND Code of Practice (Doh & Dfe, 2015) which appears to be moving away from separate provisions and ensuring learners are placed within mainstream settings except in specific circumstances (DfE & DoH, 2015:25). This has placed extra responsibility on mainstream teachers to ensure teaching that is 'differentiated and personalised' (Doh & Dfe, 2015: 1:24). Further legislation including the Autism Act 2009, the Equality Act 2010, and the Children and Families Act 2014, have supported the rights of autistic people to be fully included in education and society. Indeed, the Carter Review (2015) declares that all teachers are teachers of SEND. However, many teachers do not feel prepared and have described what they see as 'additional expectations' as 'scary' (Hellawell, 2015:15). This demonstrates that despite the years of striving for inclusion, teachers may see meeting the needs of someone with SEND as something extra to their responsibilities. Nind (2002:78) has also highlighted the challenges of the inclusion movement for teachers to take responsibility for all learners and to view their differences as ordinary. The additional pressure placed on teachers 'to raise standards' results in them 'seeking to remove troublesome pupils from their classrooms' (Allan & Youdell, 2017:71). Webster and Blatchford (2017:4) highlight 'the continued failure to adequately cover SEND as part of initial teacher training' and suggest that school leaders need to cultivate a more inclusive ethos.

The SEND Code of Practice (Doh & Dfe, 2015) policy guidance of inclusion includes making reasonable adjustments to ensure that personalised needs and wishes are met within a choice of mainstream or specialist provision. When discussing inclusion, I will adhere to Barton's (2003: 14) definition: 'Inclusive

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education is about why, how, when, where and the consequences of educating all learners. It involves the politics of recognition and is concerned with the serious issue of who is included and who is excluded within education and society generally’.

Cosier and Pearson (2016) highlight the failings in ITE programmes to prepare teachers for including people with SEND in their classrooms and talk of the ‘siloed’, isolated approach to teacher education programmes. This results in separation of mainstream and special education and is reflected in ITE programmes. There are ‘generic’ programmes and programmes for teachers specialising in SEND. In our ever increasing diverse classrooms it is imperative that we raise awareness of the issues people with SEND face in society, for disability is a form of human diversity. By supporting criticality and reflection with ITE students on issues related to disability and inclusion we can go some way to promoting social justice. If we understand disability as socially constructed due in some respects to a lack of awareness, an ITE curriculum framed around the CA would support the inclusion of autistic learners within all programmes and not just those choosing to specialise in SEND. Taking each capability in turn, I will attempt to explain how an ITE curriculum based on the CA will be more likely to foster inclusion than our current frameworks.

### **The list of capabilities as a framework for exploring inclusion for autistic learners**

The first capability on the list is life, if ‘one’s life is so reduced as to be not worth living’ (Nussbaum, 2006:76) this is a failure in social justice. Bishop-Fitzpatrick & Kind (2017:3380) state that autistic people ‘experience increased morbidity and decreased life expectancy compared to the general population’. Lack of social contact can lead to isolation and depression and in some cases may lead to the individual considering that their life is not worth living. One such case was expressed by Mikami *et al.* (2014) who cite lack of friendship, social isolation and feelings of worthlessness as predisposing factors for the attempted suicide of a young autistic man. Richa *et al.* (2014) also report bullying, changes in routine and sexual abuse as causes of attempted suicide amongst autistic young adults. Other studies have highlighted the accumulated evidence of risk factors concerning individuals with autism (Kato *et al.*, 2013, Hannon & Taylor, 2013) namely the core deficits in communication, social interaction and flexibility of thought as impacting on the ability to develop and maintain social relationships. Furthermore, Cassidy *et al.* (2014) concluded that people with Asperger Syndrome, a form of autism, are more likely to describe suicidal thoughts than their typically developing peers, citing social isolation, unfulfilled educational experiences, and unemployment as contributing risk factors. If these issues were explored within an ITE curriculum strategies could be put in place to reduce social isolation and support learners to live a full and meaningful life.

The second capability is bodily health. Autistic people are disadvantaged by society and health disparities are often compounded by poverty and access to adequate care. Co-occurring medical conditions for autistic people may include epilepsy, feeding issues, gastrointestinal disorders, and mental health conditions (Bishop-Fitzpatrick & Kind, 2017). Poor eating habits, due to restricted and repetitive types of behaviour associated with the condition could also impact on bodily health, for example overeating can lead to obesity and under eating can lead to malnourishment. Teachers must understand how bodily health may be compromised in order for an appropriate person-centred plan to be formulated and for meaningful change to take place. This might include a programme of healthy living to support the individual to be adequately nourished. Lawson (2001), autistic psychologist and author, describes her difficulties in sometimes recognising that she is unwell and suggests these physical changes may go unnoticed in autistic people and even if they do recognise illness they may be unaware of what to do about it. If this is understood by teachers, then they could look out for changes in behaviour which may be indicative of illness.

Another aspect of bodily health is being able to have adequate shelter. The impairment of social functioning often has implications on a person’s ability to live independently (Harker, 2004). If

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independent living is an aspiration of the autistic learner, then a curriculum designed by teachers to support this goal is desirable.

Bodily integrity is third on the list of capabilities. This includes the freedom to move from place to place, security against violent and sexual assault, the choice to engage in satisfying sexual relationships, and choice over reproduction (Nussbaum, 2006). According to Sullivan & Caterino (2008) 16 to 25% of autistic people have been sexually abused. Risk factors include 'their intrinsic social and communication impairments' (Sullivan & Caterino, 2008:385). This, in addition to a lack of social interaction with peers, leaves these learners vulnerable to sexual predators.

Social impairment does not negate sexual desire, yet Curtiss & Ebata (2016) highlight how practitioners are often not prepared to teach sex education to autistic learners. There are misconceptions surrounding sexuality and autistic people, for example that autistic people are asexual. Teachers' preconceptions and assumptions about what should be taught to autistic learners often influence the education the learners receive. Building capacity in teachers to understand what is required from a sex education programme for learners is essential to promote healthy socio-sexual functioning with autistic people and will support more inclusive practice which will raise this capability for autistic learners.

The very term 'disability' focuses on a person's limitations of capabilities (Mitra, 2006). Collins (2013:284) suggests 'disability is a socially and politically constructed response to perceived difference' and states that the exclusion of people with disabilities dis-empowers and marginalises those who are seen as inferior by the dominant culture. Within ITE we need to challenge values and assumptions around disability and how this impacts on inclusion both within education and the wider society. The new SEND Code of Practice (DoH & DfE, 2015) highlights 'greater choice of schools and services', 'successful preparation for adulthood', and 'the removal of barriers to learning with a focus on inclusive practice' (DfE & DoH, 2015:19). For many autistic learners their right to basic choice is removed, which is a deficiency in social justice. Contrasting non-autistic population with the autistic population, Pellicano (2014) described the insufficient opportunities for autistic people. The emphasis on choice for learners is currently not able to be actualised due to austerity measures and cuts to funding impacting on resources.

When discussing the fourth capability, senses, imagination and thought, and specifically how 'being able to use the senses' and 'being able to have pleasurable experiences and to avoid nonbeneficial pain' (Nussbaum, 2006:77), it is important to mention that autistic people may have sensory processing differences which impact on their ability to communicate and function within certain environments. Bogdashina (2011) describes how this vulnerability to sensory stimuli may result in heightened stress levels and can lead to behaviour which challenges. An understanding of the impact of the environment on the autistic learner is important for the teacher and for the leadership and management team to be aware of in order that they can make reasonable adjustments to support inclusion. The CA will provide a framework for exploration around these issues, as Nussbaum (2011:100) highlights that freedom and self-definition are of central importance to the CA and states 'the end in view is always the full empowerment of each individual'.

Emotions is the fifth on the list, 'being able to have attachments to things and persons outside ourselves and not having one's emotional developing blighted by fear or anxiety' (Nussbaum, 2006:77). Higashida (2013), an autistic writer, discusses the despair at being laughed at or told off repeatedly for actions or behaviour displayed and questions his own humanity as a result of the denial of value on the lives of autistic people. Nussbaum (2003:53) echoes this denial of 'their full humanity' when discussing people with lifelong disabilities. A reflexive approach from ITE students could support self-awareness through the framework of the CA.

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Practical reason, 'being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life' (Nussbaum, 2006:77) is sixth on the list. Person-centred planning supports autistic learners to plan their own lives, however, the cost involved in ensuring an autistic person reaches their capabilities and potential level of functioning can be a major barrier to inclusion. Nussbaum (2006: 188) highlights the 'persistent tendency of all modern societies ... to denigrate the competence of people with impairments and their potential contribution to society'. However, autistic learners are 'equally entitled to education as people who are expected to have a high economic return on education' (Robeyns, 2006:75). Unfortunately, many autistic learners do not reach their full potential due to a lack of understanding from teachers. Williams (1996:22), an autistic woman, observed how some people 'function at a lower level than they are capable of' due to 'ignorance and arrogance or lack of services or funding'. There are many examples of autistic people who given the right support have achieved far more than others expected of them. For example, Temple Grandin's (1992) mother was told her autistic daughter would never speak. This person now has a PhD and educates all over the world on both autism and animal behaviour. Lawson (2011), also an autistic woman, talks about the empowerment of learners to achieve when teachers understand their unique styles of learning.

The seventh capability is affiliation. This involves 'being able to engage in social interaction being able to be treated as a dignified being whose worth is equal to that of others' (Nussbaum, 2006: 77). However, autistic adult learners are often infantilised, which is an infringement of their human rights. Teachers may see autistic adult learners in a similar way to children 'whose choice capabilities are immature' (Nussbaum, 2011:156). This is despite the Mental Capacity Act (2005) which was introduced to ensure that a person is not deprived of the right to make a decision because it is not in their best interests. This basic human entitlement is expressed in the list of capabilities. By restricting opportunities for learners to make choices, the teacher negates the rights of the learners. The power differential at play here requires the teacher to have the reflexivity to explore the conditions in which they practice. Nussbaum (2006: 203) draws attention to the 'lack of teacher training' and 'widespread public ignorance' in relation to learners with impairments. A focus on the CA within ITE would make it obligatory to examine this social justice issue. Placing an emphasis on agency freedom, the CA provides a framework for empowering learners with the freedom to choose what they want to do and to be. However, autistic learners are often infantilised which is an affront to their human rights as decisions are taken out of their hands. This leads to dependency and learned helplessness. A pedagogy based on the CA is more likely to result in human dignity afforded to all individuals. This rights based approach will encourage ITE students to put into place systems which will support their learners to make a meaningful transition to adulthood. Robeyn *et al.* (2006) found infantilising attitudes amongst professionals working with people with disabilities and although not the focus of their work, a secondary finding was the extensive, negative connotations used relating to disability. Some professionals openly declare their views, for example, research undertaken by Agmon *et al.* (2006:6) heard statements such as 'they are like children to me' in relation to adult learners with SEND. Activities suitable for children, the manner of physical touch, and the use of endearing language were also highlighted as actions displayed by professionals towards adults with disabilities. 'Children's status requires adults to protect their interests and meet their needs, and, hence, children's agency freedom or the exercise of autonomous choices are fundamentally limited' (Terzi, 2007:763). However, as autism is a developmental disorder, autistic people may continue to be treated like children when they become young adults, thus compounding the violation of their human rights. Higashida (2013:29) describes how he feels 'utterly miserable' when 'talked down to'... 'as if I'm being given a zero chance of a decent future'.

Edwards and Usher (2002:4) suggest that 'education is perhaps the most important way we relate to the world... and to the ways we which we understand ourselves and our relations with others'. It is

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not surprising therefore, that autistic learners may come to view themselves as 'less than' and become dependent on others, developing learnt helplessness due to the oppressive nature of their education. In her book about her own experiences of autism, Williams (1996:13) discusses how autistic people adhere to others' perceptions of 'assumed limitations to their capabilities' and highlights the story of an autistic man who did not speak, even though he was able to, as his parents often talked of his 'inability to speak' and he did not want to shock his parents. This is a clear example of how we live up to the expectations of others.

Professionals often wish to 'fix' autistic people, and the curriculum for these learners frequently includes subjects such as 'social skills'. This happens, in part, as professionals feel that autistic learners are not 'normal' and that their 'disability is unquestionably a burden that they should assist in the unburdening of' (Williams, 1996: 18). Rather than ignoring the differences between us, it may be wiser to embrace these differences, and create a joined up way of working which does not see one group of people controlling another and trying to make them fit into the way they view 'normality'. Williams (1996:19) asserts that attempts to change autistic people by encouraging them to 'behave in a way which is unnatural to them may be a world that is lacking in tolerance and empathy'. A better future for all would be one where all human life is valued equally and people's skills are nurtured in order that they fulfil their own potential, live rewarding lives, and contribute to society in a productive way. Using the CA to encourage ITE students to see the viewpoint of autistic learners may support more inclusive practice. Acceptance of the condition and of the diversity of the human species could support understanding and greater tolerance of difference.

Eighth on the list is other species, 'being able to live with concern for and in relation to animals, plants, and the world of nature (Nussbaum, 2006: 77). At first glance this capability may seem automatically available to everyone. However, as some autistic people live in residential accommodation whilst at school or college, and many will live in supported living programmes for the duration of their lives, the choice to care for a pet may be restricted. Animals can provide emotional affection and comfort to humans and improvements in health for those who look after an animal have been reported by Grandgeorge *et al.* (2012). They also suggest that bonding with a pet may support the development of pro-social behaviours. Indeed, animal-assisted therapies are prevalent in supporting autistic people to improve stress levels and social interaction (O'Haire, 2013, Pop *et al.*, 2016). Wright *et al.* (2015) also report that owning a pet dog may improve family functioning and reduce anxiety for autistic people. When considering that all of the capabilities must be met in order to achieve social justice, the ability to bond with animals should not be excluded and is something that educators, especially in residential establishments, should consider.

The ability to 'laugh, to play, and to enjoy recreational activities' (Nussbaum, 2006: 77) is ninth on the list. One of characteristics of autism is a difficulty in social communication. It is common for autistic learners to spend time alone and although this is often assumed to be through choice, Higashida (2013:47) contests this viewpoint, arguing that human beings are social creatures who enjoy the company of others. He cites anxiety at 'causing trouble for the rest of you, or even getting on your nerves' as reasons for not seeking social interaction.

The tenth and final capability is control over one's environment (Nussbaum, 2006:77). There are many teaching strategies created to support the development of autistic learners, Applied Behavioural Analysis (ABA) is one such method. More widely popular in America and not endorsed by the National Autistic Society (NAS, the leading charity supporting autistic people and their families) in England, there are examples of ABA methods used in some schools across the country. Rooted firmly in behaviourism, ABA is a medical model approach which seeks to change the undesirable behaviour presented by autistic individuals and replace with more socially accepted behaviours. Historical beliefs perpetuated by professor Lovaas who claimed that autistic children 'are not people in the



psychological sense' (Lovaas, 1974:76, cited in Kirkham, 2017:111) may still be prevalent. Lovaas endorsed the use of physically aversive practices such as slapping and mild electric shocks to change behaviour (Goldson, 2016). Autism advocates have described such practices as abuse, stating that the 'treatments' used on autistic people 'would be called torture if applied to non-autistic children' (Autism Friends Network, 2013, cited in Kirkham, 2017:115). This compounds feelings of unworthiness for those who experience such practices. The CA would support discussion and interrogation of these methods in relation to human rights. Activists for autism rights movements have challenged the use of ABA which sees autism as needing a cure and has the goal of making autistic people 'indistinguishable from their peers' (Silberman, 2015). Since the voices of autistic people began to be published (Grandin & Scariano, 1986; Lawson, 2001, Williams, 1992) understanding of autism has grown and the rights of autistic people have been brought to the fore. Even when a physical aversive is not used to change behaviour, the discouragement of behaviour, which is form of communication, is an example of how a person's voice and therefore political choice is impinged. The slogan 'nothing about us without us' which originated with the disability rights movement (Charlton, 1998) has been adopted by the neurodiversity movement and supports effective participation in 'choices that govern one's life' (Nussbaum, 2006:77).

### Conclusion

Rather than excluding autistic learners, which denies achievement of their capabilities, the CA examines functionings in terms of resources and suggests that some people may need additional resources in order to achieve equal functionings. Thus putting extra funding into educating teaching staff, buying necessary resources and making adjustments to the environment will support inclusion for all learners. Under the CA, the curriculum that the ITE students develop for their learners will be influenced by their understanding of social justice and would be more likely to be person-centred. A reconsideration of the humanity in education seems crucial if inclusion in education, and ultimately society, is the goal. The CA is a concrete basis for ITE students to start exploring ethical issues around disability and inclusion. It may, as Norwich (2014b) suggests even replace the language we use which currently labels people with needs and not capabilities. The CA approach, it is suggested by Terzi (2010) 'can help define disability in a way that goes beyond the traditional opposition of medical and social models' (Norwich, 2014:17). It will encourage ITE students to consider their actions and question how they uphold the dignity and freedom of their learners. 'If education is to have the role of enabling young people to develop their human potential, then the minimum must be ample enough, and delivered in a way that respects the equal entitlement of all citizens' (Nussbaum, 2009: 345).

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