From classroom to career: unveiling trainee teachers' insights on course preparedness for school employment

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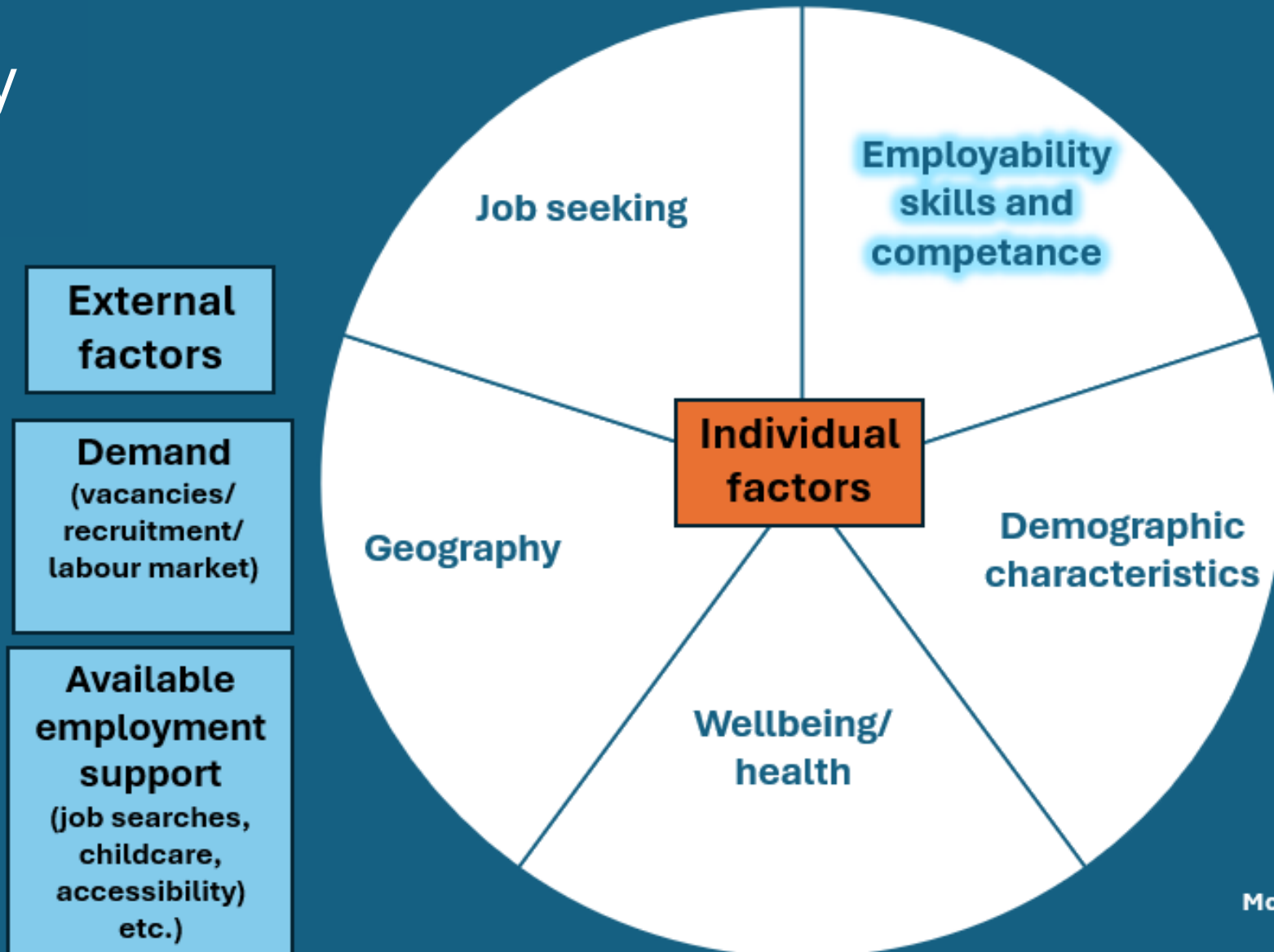
What are the aims of this study?

1. To investigate students' views about the support their programme of study is offering in terms of developing their employability skills

2. To investigate students' views about the aspects in their curriculum they would like to see in order to become more employable

Factors impacting employability & our focus

External factors

Demand
(vacancies/recruitment/labour market)

Available employment support
(job searches, childcare, accessibility) etc.

Job seeking

Employability skills and competance

Individual factors

Geography

Demographic characteristics

Wellbeing/health

What is employability and what is ITE's role?

Current Employment Trends:

- Declining employment rates for PGCE students in state schools (DfE, 2023).

- Employment varies by subject; shortage subjects have more job opportunities.

Understanding 'Employability':

- More than just securing a job; involves developing skills and lifelong learning (Dacre Pool & Sewell, 2007).

- Includes flexibility, adaptability, teamwork, sector-specific skills, and self-awareness.

Role of ITE Providers:

- Must prepare trainees with skills to meet future employers' needs (Ofsted, 2023).

- Curricula should focus on employability skills and adaptability to changing school demands.

Challenges and Gaps:

- Limited UK-based research on PGCE students' perceptions of employability.

- Need to understand PGCE students' experiences and support needs in developing employability skills.

A Call for Contextualisation:

Barriers and Recommendations

Potential barriers to building employability skills in an ITE context	Recommendations
1 Context-specific requirements vs Standardization	Dynamic and flexible curricula
2 Ambiguities in frameworks	Clearer guidelines
3 Barriers specific to international PGCE students	Support for international students (visas) plus workplace mentoring/industry placements (Fakunle and Pirrie, 2020)
4 Differences between university training and school/placement expectations	Collaborative partnerships, diverse placements, outside local context (Casinader and Clemans, 2018)
5 Risk of social inequality when hiring from/teaching to locale only (Espinoza et al., 2020)	Rich, diverse curricula and experiences

Methodology

- Aim: to explore students' views about support and opportunities they have regarding employability during their course

- Sample: PGCE Secondary Education students (Geography, Computer Science, Science, Drama)

- Data collection methods: 30-40 semi-structured interview
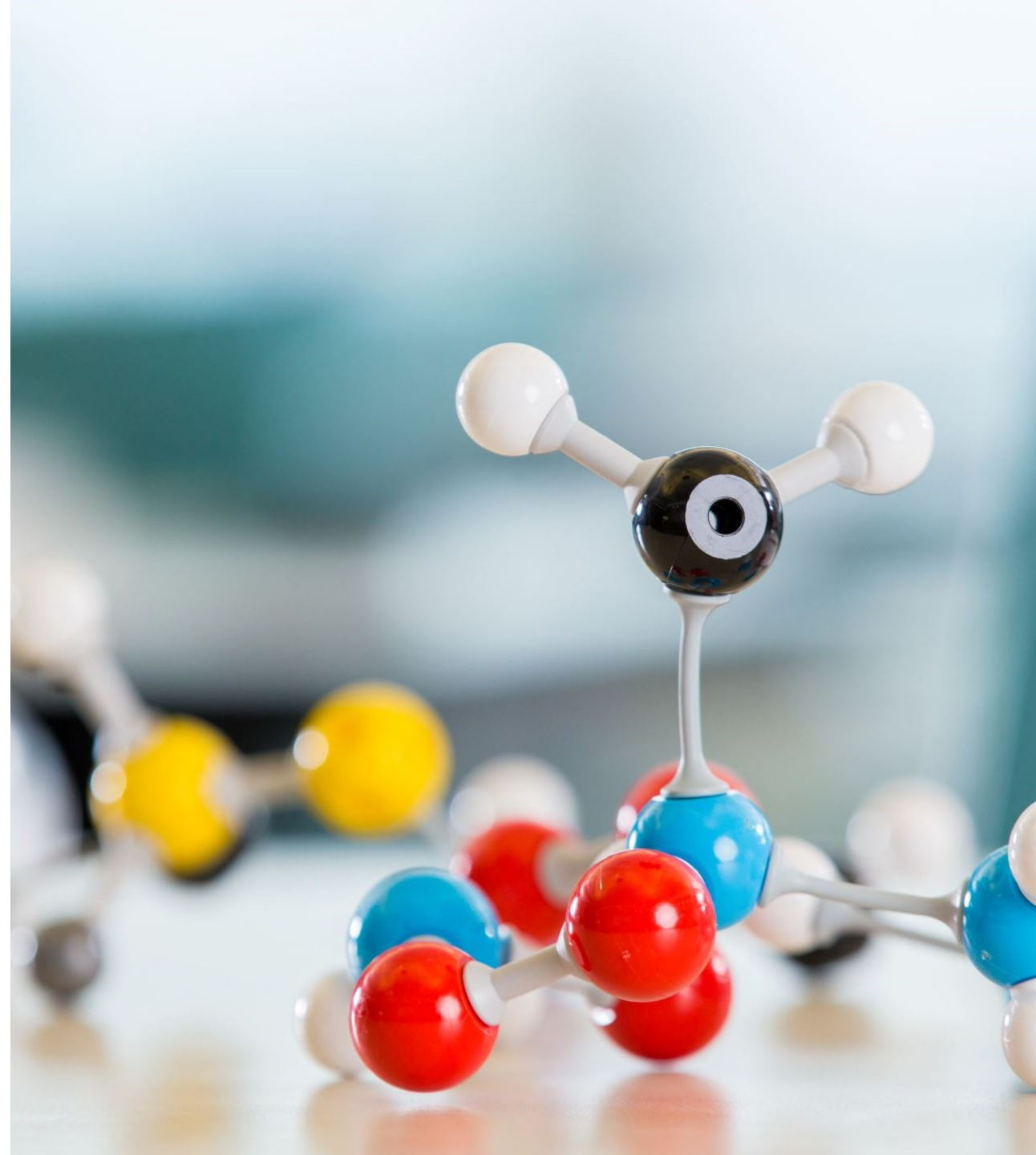
Data analysis and Discussion

Context & Background

Who are our students?

- 10 PGCE Secondary students from a London university.

- Diverse backgrounds: different subjects, ages, genders, and prior teaching experience.

- Motivated by family influence, prior teaching experience, and course flexibility.

What does 'employability' mean to them?

- Primarily seen as the ability to secure a job in teaching.

- Also understood as developing skills to be successful and marketable in the education sector.

- Key skills identified: communication, adaptability, empathy, and social skills.

Data analysis and Discussion

Objective 1

To investigate students' views about the support their programme of study is offering in terms of developing their employability skills

- Collaboration (group/peer work and opportunities)

- Trust and respect (supportive, safe environment)

- Classroom culture (building cohort identity)

- Classroom participation (embedded, collaborative, psychological safety)

- Reflective practices (directly linked to increased employability)

- Opportunities for self-improvement (skills-building)

Data analysis and Discussion

Objective 2

To investigate students' views about the aspects in their curriculum they would like to see in order to become more employable

- Developing 'out-of-field' subject knowledge

- Maintaining CPD post-graduation

- Developing practical hands-on learning

- Developing general pedagogical skills

- Need for networking

Conclusion & Recommendations

- Offer professional development programmes focused on enhancing subject-specific knowledge.

- Foster university-school partnerships to ensure these professional development opportunities are widely accessible.

- Integrate practical, hands-on experiences in arts curricula to boost employability through concrete skills.

- Adopt innovative language teaching methods, including digital tools, immersive experiences, and interdisciplinary approaches.

- Collaborative activities and working with peers as a means of building employability skills

Thank you for listening!

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