Crossing borders with packed suitcases: A strength-based approach to readiness to teaching.

Devika Rathore | *New Zealand Tertiary College*

Pearl D'Silva | *New Zealand Tertiary College*

There has been a significant growth in the number of international students enrolled in initial teacher education programmes for early childhood education in Aotearoa New Zealand (Education Counts, 2024). This reflects the increasing number of teachers from overseas entering the early childhood education workforce. Educational practices and pedagogy differ across cultures and contexts which might prompt a culturally responsive pedagogical reorientation for migrant teachers. In this article, we examine migrant teachers' readiness to teach from a strengths-based cultural perspective. As migrant teachers ourselves, we explore the likely challenges faced by teachers in relation to cultural shifts, understanding of the ECE curriculum, and the resulting tensions underpinning their pedagogical practices. We also offer practical ways to support teachers in their culturally oriented readiness to teach.

Introduction

Aotearoa New Zealand has seen a notable rise in the enrollment of international students in initial teacher education (ITE) programs for early childhood education (ECE). According to Education Counts (2024), the number of first-time international students for ITE programmes increased from 390 in 2022 to 925 in 2023. This compared with a previous high of 715 students in 2020 which occurred prior to the full impact of COVID-19. In 2023, 76 percent of first-time international ITE students were enrolled in an ECE qualification. As part of their ITE qualifications, these migrant student teachers encounter and develop an understanding of a new and unfamiliar curriculum framework using their unique cultural lenses, which they then apply to their practice as qualified teachers in a diverse ECE context (Rathore, 2024). This is a particularly complex, dynamic, and multi-faceted process for them. Examining these transitional processes of cultural and pedagogical adaptation would offer valuable insights into this increasingly significant group of ECE teachers and their readiness to teach. Taking a strengths-based perspective, we (re)examine dominant discourses that are often used to determine whether migrant teachers are ready to teach in a superdiverse (Vertovec, 2019) country like New Zealand. Interspersed through the article, are also personal narratives from both authors, sharing experiences and insights of being migrant teachers.

Crossing borders with packed suitcases: A strength-based approach to readiness to teaching. – Rathore and D'Silva | *Volume 8 Number 2 – October 2024*

60

Metaphors have been known to help one make sense of abstract concepts. With the help of vivid imagery, metaphors enable one to make connections to previous knowledge or experience (Mason et al., 2023). Furthermore, metaphors could also be used to empower individuals to think critically, especially as underlying tensions might arise when topics are deemed sensitive (Jubas & Seidel, 2016). In this article, we use metaphors to celebrate the rich contribution that migrant teachers make to early childhood teaching and practice in New Zealand.

A suitcase packed to the rafters: Exploring cultural shifts

> *When I first travelled to New Zealand as a migrant with my husband and a 15-month old baby, we were faced with a dilemma - how much stuff do we take with us? We ended up having excess baggage and were told we would need to pay an exorbitant fee to carry it with us on the airplane. As I tried to distribute the excess baggage between our three suitcases, an internal tension arose. What do I leave behind? What is something that I absolutely must carry with me? What if need this particular item and can't get it easily in New Zealand? What if my suitcase gets lost during our travel?*

> *While there is a subtle tension inherent in this narrative, that of a sense of loss immigrants often face when leaving their country, there was also an undercurrent of excitement. I had so much to bring with me; so much knowledge accumulated over my life in my home country that I was bursting with- but would this be enough? Would my experience as a teacher educator be recognised as valuable to my workplace? - Pearl*

These tensions (among several others) were an integral part of the cultural shift that I was experiencing as a migrant. However, as the experience of living and working in New Zealand unfolded, these feelings of discomfort, of a sense of loss and inadequacy were transformed into a sense of confidence and achievement. This was obviously brought on by a range of factors including being part of a culturally diverse workplace and an acceptance of my experience and expertise in the sector. Croucher and Kramer (2016) explain this through their cultural fusion theory wherein both the migrant and host cultures fuse together to form a unique cultural identity. This describes New Zealand's growing responses and attitudes to cultural inclusiveness (Separa, 2023).

New Zealand's increasing superdiversity in the recent years is reflected across all societal domains, including education settings. The Education Review Office (2023) predicts that over the next twenty years, "more than one in four learners in New Zealand will be from an ethnic community" (p. 3). This has led to

Crossing borders with packed suitcases: A strength-based approach to readiness to teaching. – Rathore and D'Silva | *Volume 8 Number 2 – October 2024*

61

the need to move away from adopting widely accepted or the newest educational approaches. Instead, it would be more appropriate to tailor ECE to the "situated complexities" of the contemporary global landscape (Vintimilla & Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2020, p. 635). Within an increasingly multicultural early childhood education context globally, researchers highlight the importance of not compelling children into the dominant cultural mould at the cost of their own cultures (Chan, 2011; Moffat et al., 2016). This criticality can be extended as easily and significantly to the culturally diverse ECE teachers, where their cultural identities need to be acknowledged and included, especially with reference to their 'readiness to teach'. Student teachers and teachers from non-mainstream cultures are often constructed from a 'deficit' perspective in literature and through practice, leading to their marginalisation and exclusion (Allard & Santoro, 2004). This misappropriation of culturally diverse teachers could lead to a focus on their differences and addressing the resulting 'challenges' rather than on their strengths and cultural resources.

For instance, Qi and Campbell (2022) discuss the importance of supporting CALD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse) students to overcome various educational and practicum-based challenges within the multicultural Australian ITE programmes. They refer to pre-practicum programmes as a common form of assistance for CALD student teachers. However, at the same time, they also acknowledge the underlying rationale that the diverse student teachers need to fit into a pre-determined mould of a teacher as determined by the dominant discourse of the new context. Qi and Campbell (2022) suggest that this presents a paradox where on the one hand cultural diversity is recognised and valued, and on the other, culturally diverse teachers are expected to become "more Australian and less diverse" (p. 236).

In New Zealand, ECE practice is often shaped by the dominant discourse emphasising Western theories of child development and developmentally appropriate practices (Chan & Ritchie, 2020; Moffat et al., 2016). At the same time, maintaining and incorporating diverse cultures, including various identities and languages, is essential in the growing multicultural ECE context, an emphasis also evident in the ECE curriculum document, *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2017; Ritchie & Veisson, 2018). The ECE curriculum framework grounded in Te Tiriti o Waitangi | Treaty of Waitangi, acknowledges Māori as tangata whenua or the Indigenous people of New Zealand, and requires that all teachers recognise and prioritise this in their practice. Concurrently, this framework also acknowledges and embraces the growing diversity of tangata tiriti, or those who are not Māori, in New Zealand (Chan & Ritchie, 2020; 2023; MoE, 2017). Thus, *Te Whāriki* is a bicultural curriculum document that reflects the multicultural character of ECE in New Zealand. The framework emphasises the importance of cultural diversity and inclusion in ECE settings, with a strong emphasis on language, culture, and identity (MoE, 2017). The curriculum document also outlines the responsibilities of teachers in the development and inclusion of cultural identity in ECE settings (MoE, 2017). Teachers are expected to create opportunities for children to explore their cultural identities, which also implies that teachers themselves should have chances to explore and include their own identities within their practice.

Crossing borders with packed suitcases: A strength-based approach to readiness to teaching. – Rathore and D'Silva | *Volume 8 Number 2 – October 2024*

62

In addition, *Te Whāriki* draws upon the sociocultural theoretical perspectives of Lev Vygotsky, Jerome Bruner, and Bronfenbrenner among others (MoE, 2017). The framework is built on Vygotsky's concept, which has been further developed by others, that learning "occurs in relationship with people, places and things, mediated by participation in valued social and cultural activities" (MoE, 2017, p. 61). This holds true for children and teachers alike where social and cultural influences are considered significant determinants of development and learning. A sociocultural perspective is grounded in the idea that humans are inherently social beings. It posits that development and learning occur within specific social and cultural contexts, and therefore must be understood in relation to their particular time and place (Smidt, 2009). Teachers also form and make meaning of their identity, learning, and teaching through their involvement and interaction within one or more sociocultural groups (Smidt, 2009; Vygotsky, 1978). For migrant teachers, this process becomes complex and dual in nature, as they navigate between their home and host sociocultural systems (Rathore, 2024).

Did you pack your suitcase yourself? A 'messy' amalgamation of opportunities and challenges

> *My long journey from India to New Zealand was rife with anxiety and constant thoughts of my 18-month-old son left behind with my husband back home. I landed in the country by myself. My thoughts constantly returned home: How would my little boy cope with my prolonged absence? How long would it take for them to join me? How would I navigate my academic journey without a support system? At the same time, this concern was accompanied by a strong resolve to focus on and achieve the goal I was here for, my PhD. I arrived with my academic 'suitcase' packed to the brim. I believed I was carrying all that I would need, that was my accumulative knowledge and experience as a teacher and teacher educator. - Devika*

> *As I reached New Zealand, the way out of the airport terminal was replete with interruptions. I first encountered the Immigration Officers and then the Customs Officers who appeared intimidating as they asked questions about why I wished to live in the country and asked me to open my suitcase(s) as per their usual procedure. "Did you pack your suitcase yourself?" was a question I was asked as officials opened and moved items around, creating a 'mess'- items that I had arranged perfectly and according to their utility, were now jumbled. - Pearl*

As New Zealand's migrant population grows more diverse, the ECE landscape is becoming increasingly multicultural in terms of children, families and teachers (Chan, 2020; Rathore et al., 2020). Simultaneously, the teacher population in early childhood education is also becoming more varied in terms of culture and ethnicity (Shuker & Cherrington, 2016). Due to the various incentivised immigration provisions for overseas qualified teachers, there has been an influx of skilled migrant teachers and

Crossing borders with packed suitcases: A strength-based approach to readiness to teaching. – Rathore and D'Silva | *Volume 8 Number 2 – October 2024*

63

international students in initial teacher education programmes (Education Counts, 2023; Immigration New Zealand, 2023). These measures have led to a rise in the number of Asian teachers in ECE, with 23% of the workforce identifying with this ethnic group (Education Counts, 2024), including an increasing presence of teachers from India.

This growing multicultural composition of teachers requires further exploration considering they are an increasingly integral part of the ECE context. This is also pertinent in order to recognise, acknowledge and include the diverse cultural perspectives and worldviews that these teachers bring with them (Rana, 2020; Rathore, 2024).

Research on teacher identity and cultural diversity (Arndt, 2018) emphasises the importance of reassessing cultural differences and diversity among teachers in ECE and its impact on children's cultural identities and sense of belonging in early childhood settings. To achieve cultural sustainability goals for children, the growing number of migrant teachers must have their own cultural diversity recognised and addressed within the ECE context (Arndt, 2014; Rana, 2020) where they can be confident in their own sense of identity, place and belonging (Rathore, 2024).

However, although the number of culturally diverse migrant teachers in early childhood education is steadily increasing, limited research has focussed on this group (Chan & Ritchie, 2020; Cherrington and Shuker, 2012). Migrant teachers' cultural identity and its manifestation in, and through, their ECE practice have been the subject of limited studies (Arndt, 2015; 2018; Burke, 2024). There are even fewer studies that have specifically examined migrant Indian teachers' experiences in New Zealand ECE (Kaur, 2017; Rana, 2020; Rathore, 2024; Rathore et al., 2020).

For instance, most recently, Burke's (2024) research with migrant ECE teachers highlighted the role of culture in shaping migrant teachers' image of the child and participation within ECE. The research revealed the challenges faced by teachers in balancing their academically focused cultural orientation to ECE with the play-based holistic approach in the new context. Rana's (2020) study explored Indian student teachers' perceptions of their identity and enculturation process within ECE. The study highlighted the need to include all cultures and identities, especially those of the growing migrant teacher community, in the ECE context. Kaur's (2017) research examined the challenges, obstacles, and benefits of cultural adaptation for migrant Indian ECE teachers. The findings reflected mixed experiences where teachers encountered various challenges during the acculturation process, which were either eased or exacerbated by the level of support they received from their colleagues in their ECE settings. Rathore's (2024) study looked specifically at Indian teachers' culturally oriented environmental identity transitions from their home to their host cultural contexts. The findings discussed teacher participants' perceptions of their cultural and environmental identity transitions and acculturation process.

Crossing borders with packed suitcases: A strength-based approach to readiness to teaching. – Rathore and D'Silva | *Volume 8 Number 2 – October 2024*

64

These recent studies bring a much-needed and significant focus on migrant teachers within the ECE context and reveal the challenges and difficulties the teachers face during the enculturation process. These challenges arise primarily from the differences in educational pedagogies and practices between their home and host cultures (Burke, 2024; Rana, 2020; Rathore, 2024). While it is evident that migrant teachers face challenges in the process of cultural transitions, there is a need to consider that the pedagogical dilemmas they face are also a result of the dominant Western ideology and discourse prevalent in the ECE context. As a result, migrant teachers may not receive the opportunities or encouragement to share and include their indigenous perspectives on early learning (Rana, 2020; Rathore, 2024).

Unpacking

> *As I commenced my research study, I gradually began to unpack my proverbial academic suitcase. The suitcase revealed the expected and obvious knowledge and skills built over the years. However, as I began developing my research study, so much more was revealed in the depths of the academic suitcase. As I searched for what I had packed into it, I found so much more that I had not packed intentionally but carried with me anyway. I only needed to trust its worth, bring it forth, and use it to shape and enrich my new journey.*

> *As I eventually completed the challenging yet extremely rewarding PhD journey, I thought I might have to re-pack the proverbial suitcase and put it in storage. I was fortunate to be able to make my next changeover at the most opportune time, in the form of a professional opportunity, just as I was about to complete my doctorate. I did not need to re-pack. I realised I would continue to need and use all that I had intentionally and unintentionally packed into my suitcase. While I had shared and used much of what I had brought in my academic suitcase with me, I had simultaneously added so much to that very suitcase since being in New Zealand. The result is an ever-evolving suitcase as a result of valuable academic and professional exchanges, tools that I need within reach constantly. - Devika.*

Unpacking- this is jargon that is probably over-used within academic discourse. It is generally used to indicate an explanation of concepts or any new ideas within the field. In our lives, the literal unpacking of our suitcases brought out a whole lot of unconnected bits and pieces that sometimes caused more tension and at other times made us realise that we were well prepared and equipped.

In this section, we weigh up the advantages that migrant teachers bring to the centre. We 'unpack' the *taonga* they bring by way of their strengths, interests and cultural nuances. At the same time, we

Crossing borders with packed suitcases: A strength-based approach to readiness to teaching. – Rathore and D'Silva | *Volume 8 Number 2 – October 2024*

65

acknowledge that there are opportunities for learning to take place; for making space in that original suitcase for new ideas.

Literature often discusses the nature of orientation or scaffolding migrant teachers might need in a new cultural context. This translates into a one-way 'teaching' or 'moulding' process where migrant teachers are often viewed as lacking the appropriate teaching dispositions or skills. Coming from diverse cultural and educational contexts, these teachers would undoubtedly benefit from an orientation to the host cultural and educational context to facilitate their readiness to teach and enact a more context-specific curriculum.

However, this perspective implies an equally significant requirement for teachers from the host cultural context, who might also benefit from an orientation to the migrant teachers' cultural and educational funds of knowledge (Moll, 2019; Moll et al., 1992). This kind of exchange would also challenge the status quo of dominant discourses that position the Western notion of teaching-learning to be viewed as most desirable or valued. At the same time, alternate educational perspectives could enrich the ECE context and facilitate the cultural inclusion of diverse children and families within ECE. These ideas resonate with the cultural fusion theory proposed by Croucher and Kramer (2016).

Cultural differences may affect migrant Indian teachers' identities by presenting perspectives that challenge their Indigenous views on ECE pedagogy and practice. In such situations, teachers may either reorient their identities to suit the cultural context or encounter difficulties in their teaching practices. Conversely, teachers might find similarities between the two contexts that offer a sense of familiarity and confidence, facilitating smoother transitions and allowing them to incorporate their Indian-ness into their ECE settings (Rathore, 2024). For instance, Rathore's (2024) study showed that migrant teachers made significant and numerous connections between the Indian and Māori cultures and philosophies that enabled them to make smoother transitions into ECE.

We agree with Rana (2020) that our dynamic Indian cultural identity provides us with unique pedagogical perspectives and opportunities based on our Indigenous values. This positionality encourages critical questioning of neoliberal ideologies and diverse interactions with learners, such as viewing learning and education as a collective process rather than an individual pursuit (Rana, 2020).

Another look before putting the suitcase away: Exploring funds of identity of migrant teachers

Despite the complex cultural crossover migrant teachers experience, they are expected to apply their teaching skills effectively in a new cultural context, regardless of whether they originally identify with that particular culture or not (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2004; Yip et al., 2022). Teachers transitioning from one cultural context to another possess a distinct pedagogical awareness and experience compared to local teachers

Crossing borders with packed suitcases: A strength-based approach to readiness to teaching. – Rathore and D'Silva | *Volume 8 Number 2 – October 2024*

66

(Rathore, 2024). They bring their past experiences and funds of identity with them as they build upon these further in the new context.

While there is still no definitive consensus on the meaning and interpretation of the concept of readiness to teach, it is however determined by the dominant Western discourse of what teaching entails (Coleman, 2022). Perhaps this idea could use further exploration, especially from the perspective of culturally diverse teachers. Migrant teachers could be ready to teach in non-dominant non-Western ways that might require reorientation but could be equally valid and significant for children's cultural identity development. In other words, migrant teachers bring their funds of identity that can be valuable in the new context.

Inspired by their 'funds of knowledge' approach (Moll, 2019; Moll et al., 1992), Esteban-Guitart and Moll (2014) proposed a 'funds of identity' theory based on a Vygotskian sociocultural perspective. Funds of identity are "historically accumulated, culturally developed, and socially distributed resources that are essential for people's self-definition, self-expression, and self-understanding" (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014, p. 37). This theorisation positions identities as "social products, cultural devices, a kind of "box of tools" used to define oneself (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014, p. 35).

In the New Zealand multicultural ECE context, this would include an "understanding of the funds of practices, beliefs, knowledge, and ideas" (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014, p. 31) that teachers bring with them and make use of in their ECE practice. Migrant Indian teachers are likely to draw on their Indian perspectives and cultural resources to navigate cross-cultural transitions and address any challenges they face (Rathore, 2024).

What are some of these *tools* that we carry with us that facilitate our readiness to teach?

An ability to adapt across different contexts

Like all migrant teachers, Indian teachers also bring with them their funds of cultural, and professional identities (Rana, 2020; Rathore, 2024). One of these strengths in their toolbox is their rich experience in highly diverse educational settings. First, migrant Indian ECE teachers come from a range of subcultural contexts in India, bringing with them a variety of culturally oriented personal and professional perspectives on ECE and teaching. Second, akin to our experiences, most teachers also bring diverse experiences of studying and teaching in highly multi-subcultural contexts, reflecting the extensive cultural diversity within their own countries. Their own childhood and teaching experiences with children from diverse sociocultural backgrounds provide them with the skills and tools to understand various perspectives and sensibilities. This helps the teachers address both the individual and collective needs of the children within the ECE settings. It also serves as a psychological cultural tool (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996) that teachers can utilise in the multicultural educational ECE environment.

Crossing borders with packed suitcases: A strength-based approach to readiness to teaching. – Rathore and D'Silva | *Volume 8 Number 2 – October 2024*

67

Diverse perspectives and ways of doing and living can provide a wealth of knowledge and resources that can be used to add to the existing ideas and pedagogy (Rogoff, 2003). Thus, Indian teachers' culturally diverse funds of identity provide a strong foundation for their readiness to teach in a highly multicultural ECE context.

An ability to create authentic and meaningful relationships with culturally diverse children and families

After Europeans and Māori, Asians are the third largest ethnic group in the country (Stats NZ, 2023). This is evident in the composition of diverse migrant families participating in ECE, especially with both parents working to provide for the family and the absence of family support systems. Some studies have investigated teachers' perceptions and experiences of working with and including these diverse children and families within their ECE settings (Guo, 2015; Shuker & Cherrington, 2016). Teachers identified common strategies they used to ensure the successful inclusion of diverse children and families within their settings. While some ECE teachers drew on the knowledge of teachers who shared children's diverse cultural backgrounds (Guo, 2015), other services reported particularly employing staff from cultures representing the children's cultures to facilitate the teaching teams' cultural understanding and children's inclusion (Shuker & Cherrington, 2016).

At the same time. Indian teachers specifically, have reported using their experience and knowledge of their broader Indian culture to understand and interact with Indian children (Guo, 2015; Rathore, 2024). Indian teachers who use the same language often took up the role of primary carers for newly joined children from the same culture or linguistic background. This shared cultural and linguistic space was also found to be critical to avoid misinterpretations of children's interests (or the lack thereof) in the routine or activities within the setting (Guo, 2015; Syeda & Richards, 2022). Indian parents and families also appear to feel more confident when the ECE setting has at least one teacher who has the same cultural and linguistic identity as their child. They believe this helps their children settle in, build relationships, and learn better (Syeda & Richards, 2022).

In addition to facilitating children's sense of belonging and inclusion, teachers from diverse cultures can swiftly develop trusting relationships with parents and families. This enables the teaching team to gain an authentic understanding of children from diverse cultural backgrounds which is not likely without input from their parents (Guo, 2015). Thus, there is an indication towards the need to enhance teachers' dispositions and skills to effectively acknowledge and leverage the benefits of working within diverse teams (Cherrington & Shuker, 2012).

Hence, Indian teachers, and possibly other teachers from diverse cultures, use their cultural funds of identity to enhance Indian and Asian children's sense of belonging within the ECE setting. They employ their multilingualism as a tool to broker relationships with Indian/Asian children and their families. These

Crossing borders with packed suitcases: A strength-based approach to readiness to teaching. – Rathore and D'Silva | *Volume 8 Number 2 – October 2024*

68

shared cultural funds of identity within the context reinforce children's and families' diverse identities through enhanced agency and power (Guo, 2015). For instance, these teachers could help whānau from different cultural backgrounds to develop an understanding of *Te Whāriki* and its pedagogical implications. Syeda and Richards (2022) discuss the importance of migrant parents being aware of early childhood education structure and curriculum in New Zealand to make the best choices for their children. Having migrant teachers in a centre could help facilitate this and in so doing, support a seamless transition for diverse children and their families.

In order to facilitate children's and families' transitions effectively, it is necessary that the teachers have opportunities to be able to apply their learnt interpretations of the curriculum within their ECE settings. However, given that migrant teachers are more likely to complete one-year ITE qualifications, they have limited time to apply their knowledge of *Te Whāriki* gained during initial teacher education programmes. These teachers could benefit from professional development regarding their ECE setting-specific purpose, interpretation, and day-to-day implementation of the curriculum document. Further, team meetings in which migrant teachers have opportunities to continue to assimilate and accommodate their knowledge of *Te Whāriki* and other aspects of practice in the form of professional conversations will be beneficial to them. This support becomes even more significant given the non-prescriptive nature of the curriculum, where the teachers might then be more equipped to develop pedagogical expertise in the implementation of the curriculum in a manner specific to their ECE setting. It gives them an opportunity to reaffirm and apply their understanding and at the same time, use their funds of knowledge to align it to their own values and beliefs.

Conclusion

Can our suitcases ever be stowed away? By nature of being migrants, there may be opportunities to move from place to place within the host country before 'settling down'. Metaphorically, this implies that migrant teachers may be in a constant state of having to be prepared for shifts- both geographically but also in their pedagogy and teaching skills. Migrant Indian teachers make their cultural and pedagogical journeys across two diverse cultural and educational contexts. They pursue their ECE qualifications in a relatively short duration and are expected to apply this learning to practice as qualified teachers. However, in addition to this vital preparation, their readiness to teach is an accumulation and aggregate of the past wealth of knowledge and experiences they have accrued over their life journeys. Hence, as argued in this article, migrant teachers are equipped with prior knowledge and skills that are assets to their practice. Their culturally oriented pedagogy needs to be acknowledged as part of their readiness to teach.

Crossing borders with packed suitcases: A strength-based approach to readiness to teaching. – Rathore and D'Silva | *Volume 8 Number 2 – October 2024*

69

References

Allard, A., & Santoro, N. (2004). Making sense of difference? Teaching identities in postmodern contexts. In *Doing the public good: positioning educational research; AARE 2004 International Education Research conference proceedings*, Australian Association for Research in Education, Coldstream, pp. 1–20.

Arndt, S. (2014). Shifting realities: Immigrant teacher transitions into early childhood settings in Aotearoa New Zealand. *Early Childhood Folio*, *18*(2), 28-32. https://doi.org/10.18296/ecf.0107

Arndt S (2015) Pedagogies of difference: Unknowing immigrant teachers as subjects forever in process. *Journal of Pedagogy* 6(2): 119–132. DOI 10.1515/jped-2015-0017

Arndt, S. (2018). Early childhood teacher cultural Otherness and belonging. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, *19*(4), 392-403. https://doi.org/10.1177/1463949118783382

Burke, R. (2024). From protecting to empowering tamariki: How beginner teachers from migrant backgrounds embody culture in New Zealand early learning settings. *He Kupu, 8* (1), 29-42. https://www.hekupu.ac.nz/bridging-theory-and-practice

Chan, A. (2011). Critical multiculturalism: Supporting early childhood teachers to work with diverse immigrant families. *International Research in Early Childhood Education, 2*(1), 63-75. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1151191

Chan, A. (2020). Superdiversity and critical multicultural pedagogies: Working with migrant families. *Policy Futures in Education*, *18*(5), 560-573. https://doi.org/10.1177/1478210319873773

Chan, A., & Ritchie, J. (2020). Responding to superdiversity whilst upholding Te Tiriti O Waitangi: Challenges for early childhood teacher education in Aotearoa New Zealand. In J. Fox, C. Alexander, & T. Aspland (Eds.), *Teacher education in globalised times: Local responses in action* (pp. 219-237). Springer Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-4124-7_12

Chan, A., & Ritchie, J. (2023). Exploring a Tiriti-based superdiversity paradigm within early childhood care and education in Aotearoa New Zealand. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, *24*(1), 5-19. https://doi.org/10.1177/1463949120971376

Crossing borders with packed suitcases: A strength-based approach to readiness to teaching. – Rathore and D'Silva | *Volume 8 Number 2 – October 2024*

70

Cherrington, S., & Shuker, M. J. (2012). Diversity amongst New Zealand early childhood educators. *New Zealand Journal of Teachers' Work*, *9*(2), 76-94. http://dx.doi.org/10.24135/teacherswork.v9i2.565

Coleman, C. (2022). Ready or not? Problematising the concept of graduate teacher readiness in Aotearoa New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Teachers' Work*, *19*(2), 119-136. https://doi.org/10.24135/teacherswork.v19i2.345

Croucher, S.M., & Kramer, E. (2016). Cultural fusion theory: An alternative to acculturation. *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication*, *10*(2), 1-18. https://doi.org/10.1080/17513057.2016.1229498

Education Counts. (2024). *Initial teacher education statistics.* https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/initial-teacher-education-statistics

Education Review Office. (2023). *Education for all our children: Embracing diverse ethnicities.* https://evidence.ero.govt.nz/documents/education-for-all-our-children-embracing-diverse-ethnicities

Education Counts. (2023). *Teacher ethnicity 2019-2022*. Ministry of Education. https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/staffing

Elbaz-Luwisch, F. (2004). Immigrant teachers: Stories of self and place. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *17*(3), 387-414. https://doi.org/10.1080/0951839042000204634

Esteban-Guitart, M., & Moll, L. C. (2014). Funds of identity: A new concept based on the funds of knowledge approach. *Culture & Psychology*, *20*(1), 31-48. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354067X13515934

Guo, K. (2015). Teacher knowledge, child interest and parent expectation: Factors influencing multicultural programs in an early childhood setting. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, *40*(1), 63-70. https://doi.org/10.1177/183693911504000109

Immigration New Zealand. (2023). *Green List roles*. https://www.immigration.govt.nz/new-zealand-visas/preparing-a-visa-application/working-in-nz/qualifications-for-work/green-list-occupations

John-Steiner, V., & Mahn, H. (1996). Sociocultural approaches to learning and development: A Vygotskian framework. *Educational Psychologist*, *31*(3-4), 191-206. https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.1996.9653266

Crossing borders with packed suitcases: A strength-based approach to readiness to teaching. – Rathore and D'Silva | *Volume 8 Number 2 – October 2024*

71

Jubas, & Seidel, (2016). Knitting as metaphor for work: An institutional autoethnography to surface tensions of visibility and invisibility in the neoliberal academy. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, 45* (1), 60-84. https://doi.org/10.1177/0891241614550200

Kaur, A. (2017). *Experiences of Indian immigrant teachers in New Zealand early childhood centres* [Master's Thesis, Auckland University of Technology].

Mason, K., Brown, A., & Carter, S. (2023). Capturing the complexities of collaborative partnerships in early childhood through metaphor. *Early Childhood Education Journal.* https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-023-01580-x

Ministry of Education. (2017). *Te Whāriki He whāriki mātauranga mō ngā mokopuna o Aotearoa Early childhood curriculum.* https://tewhariki.tki.org.nz/en/key-documents/te-whariki-2017/

Moffat T, Laureta B & Rana L (2016). Creating inclusive environments and catering for individual needs. *Kairaranga 17*(1): 44–49. http://dx.doi.org/10.54322/kairaranga.v17i1.203

Moll, L. C. (2019). Elaborating funds of knowledge: Community-oriented practices in international contexts. *Literacy Research: Theory, Method, and Practice*, *68*(1), 130-138. https://doi.org/10.1177/2381336919870805

Moll, L. C., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & Gonzalez, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory into Practice*, *31*(2), 132–141. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00405849209543534

Qi, Y., & Campbell, M. (2022). Encouraging diversity in the early childhood education and care workforce. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, *47*(3), 233-240. https://doi.org/10.1177/18369391221104353

Rana, L. (2020). Diverse perspectives of migrant student teachers in early childhood education. *Policy Futures in Education*, *19*(6), 691-702. https://doi.org/10.1177/1478210320956501

Rathore, D. (2024). *Culturally-oriented environmental identity transitions: Migrant Indian teachers in Aotearoa New Zealand early childhood education.* [Doctoral thesis, The University of Waikato]. The University of Waikato Research Commons. https://hdl.handle.net/10289/16502

Crossing borders with packed suitcases: A strength-based approach to readiness to teaching. – Rathore and D'Silva | *Volume 8 Number 2 – October 2024*

72

Rathore, D., Eames, C., & Kelly-Ware, J. (2020). Indian teachers and environmental identity in Aotearoa New Zealand early childhood education. *Teachers and Curriculum*, *20*(1), 13–21. https://doi.org/10.15663/tandc.v20i1.350

Ritchie, J., & Veisson, M. (2018). Early childhood education professionals in New Zealand kindergartens: Commitment and challenges. In C. Pascal, T. Bertram, & M. Veisson (Eds.), *Early childhood education and change in diverse cultural contexts* (pp. 137-152). Routledge. http://dx.doi.org/10.4324/9780203732052-9

Rogoff, B. (2003). *The cultural nature of human development*. Oxford University Press, Incorporated.

Separa, L.A.C. (2023). Cultural adaptation experiences of people in New Zealand. *Review of Communication, 24* (2), 97-113. https://doi.org/10.1080/15358593.2024.2313238

Shuker, M. J., & Cherrington, S. (2016). Diversity in New Zealand early childhood education: Challenges and opportunities. *International Journal of Early Years Education*, *24*(2), 172-187. https://doi.org/10.1080/09669760.2016.1155148

Smidt, S. (2009). *Introducing Vygotsky: A Guide for practitioners and students in early years education*. Taylor & Francis Group. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315824185

Stats NZ. (2023). *2023 Census population counts (by ethnic group, age, and Māori descent) and dwelling counts*. https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/2023-census-population-counts-by-ethnic-group-age-and-maori-descent-and-dwelling-counts/

Syeda, M. F., & Richards, R. D. (2022). Insights into Indian immigrant children's and parents' experiences of New Zealand early childhood education. *Early Childhood Folio, 26*(1), 29–34. https://doi.org/10.18296/ecf.1106

Vertovec, S. (2019). Talking around super-diversity. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *42*(1), 125-139. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2017.1406128

Vintimilla, C. D., & Pacini-Ketchabaw, V. (2020). Weaving pedagogy in early childhood education: On openings and their foreclosure. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, *28*(5), 628-641. https://doi.org/10.1080/1350293X.2020.1817235

Yip, S. Y., Saito, E., & Diamond, Z. M. (2022). Professional identity and agency in immigrant teachers' professional transition to work in Australia. *The Australian Educational Researcher, 51*(1), 213-230. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-022-00600-w

Crossing borders with packed suitcases: A strength-based approach to readiness to teaching. – Rathore and D'Silva | *Volume 8 Number 2 – October 2024*

73