Conversations with EFL Teachers:
Toward an Understanding of Whiteness in the Classroom
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Abstract

Few teachers would question that teaching is a contextual and situational process, yet as Gay (2000) reminds us, too few teachers have sufficient knowledge of how teaching practices reflect dominant cultural values. This qualitative study explored whiteness in the EFL classroom and the relation between teacher identity and pedagogy. This research was shaped by the overarching research questions: How does being white influence teachers’ educational practices? How can teachers successfully negotiate cross-cultural teaching?

Data included open-ended interviews, a content analysis of EFL training materials, and my research and personal journals. The experiences of five EFL teachers form the central focus of this study. My personal story, as a white EFL teacher, is also included throughout this thesis.

This study offers a detailed description of the complex and dynamic ways in which these five teachers understood their racial identities, and the classroom decisions they made in response to their understandings. Included in the discussion are the strategies that my participants and I used to subtly resist the notion and exploration of racial privilege. Implications for teacher education programs and possible directions for further study are offered.
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Rereading this page, I realize that the road to my goal was not as bumpy as it could have been. With warmest thanks to all!
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The students entered at nine and filled up the seats. They were silent and stared at me. It was a shock to see 38 brown faces before me. I was not prepared. It is one thing to be liberal and talk, another to face something and learn that you are afraid. (personal journal entry, September 5, 1994)

The above quote is taken from a journal I kept over a 3-year period while living and working in rural Japan. Rereading this page has always suggested for me my feelings of anxiety embedded within the activity of teaching, the fear of exposure, the sense of being seen “as I really am”; unprepared, vulnerable, and perhaps even as a fraud. Herbert Kohl (1967) expressed a similar sense of exposure and fear as he faced his sixth-grade class in Harlem for the first time. He admitted, “The weight of Harlem and my whiteness and strangeness hangs in the air as I drone on, lost in my righteous monologue” (p. 15). I had known that accepting an overseas teaching position would mean that my students would be culturally different; however, I was still unprepared for the shock of experiencing myself as “the other.” My whiteness was strange, not my students’ brownness.

That first day teaching represents the beginnings of my racial awakening and my understandings of myself as raced. The daughter of a military man, my family moved frequently throughout my childhood and every community we settled in was white like us. Every neighbour with whom I played, child I befriended, and student I sat next to was white like me. Every teacher in every school that I attended was white as well. I had neither thought about being white before, nor had been asked to think about it. Day upon day, standing in front of that classroom in rural Japan, the cultural meanings of my
whiteness, the privileges which I had hitherto experienced as normal or typical and therefore, invisible, were slowly exposed.

After 5 years of teaching internationally, I returned to graduate school. My beginning understandings of racial identity continued to develop as I found myself continually pulled into discussions on race, education, and the multicultural classroom. My teaching experiences in Japan and the Czech Republic proved a useful backdrop as I started to really consider what it meant for me as a white educator to teach in a culturally diverse setting. That initial questioning led to my current research interest and my hopes that in initiating a discussion with other white teachers, we could further reflect upon our experiences and gain a better understanding of how whiteness may influence and inform our teaching practices, especially within the framework of international education.

The Study

This study explored first, white educators’ experiences of teaching in culturally different contexts. Second, it explored educators’ perceptions of how their identities shape classroom practices. I was interested in the following questions: What are the experiences of white educators teaching in international, culturally different settings? How does being white influence teachers’ educational practices? How can teachers successfully negotiate cross-cultural teaching and what are the conditions that make that possible?

Background: Why Study White Teachers?

With an overall growth and expansion of international schools, as well as a proliferation of English language schools throughout the world, the need for certified teachers for overseas positions has increased. According to the directory of English as a
Second Language (ESL) in Canada, since September 2001 the demand for English has increased by 10% and requests for overseas teachers are up 60% (ESL in Canada, www.eslincanada.com). Using the key words "international English teaching job" on an Internet search engine resulted in an extensive list of over 900,000 Web sites related to, or postings available for, overseas teaching positions. The demand is present, teachers are needed, and Canadian teachers are heeding this call. No statistics are currently available on the racial breakdown of Canadian teachers teaching overseas. However, according to John Staple, Director of Economic and Member Services of the Canadian Teachers’ Federation, and based on statistics compiled from the 1996 Canadian census, only 5.6% of teachers in Canada were of visible minority backgrounds (J. Staple, personal communication, March 26, 2004). In other words, approximately 94% of Canadian teachers are white. These figures suggest that many of those travelling overseas to teach are part of this dominant group. It is essential that teachers and candidates in overseas teaching-preparation programs be well prepared to teach and effectively interact with diverse student populations.

The ESL in Canada directory details over 29 ESL teacher-training programs offered through Canadian universities and includes an overseas job postings board. The site also suggests a list of 12 qualities of "good" ESL teachers (www.eslincanada.com). Some of these qualities include: being patient at explaining things, having a sense of humour, understanding the ESL content, being detail-oriented, and being good managers of time. Yet, teaching is more than patience and time management.

Teaching is a contextual and situational process. As such, teaching is most effective when ecological factors, such as prior experiences, community settings, cultural
backgrounds, and ethnic identities of teachers and students are part of the pedagogical process (Gay, 2000; Osborne, 1996; Sleeter, 1996; Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995b). In *Culturally Responsive Teaching* (2000), Gay argues that an educator’s one challenge is to effectively teach children within a cultural context, however, content and pedagogical knowledge alone is not sufficient. Careful self-analysis of what teachers believe about the relationships among culture, ethnicity, and race and how these manifest in instructional behaviours is critical.

In this research study, I focused specifically on participants’ perceptions of how their racial identity influences their understandings of what it means to be a teacher. I acknowledge that focusing on race, and in particular whiteness, is in itself problematic as it ignores the complex dynamics of one’s identity. In particular, Black feminists (Collins, 1990a, b; hooks, 1990; Tatum, 1997) have called attention to “the simultaneity of identities” (Tatum) with intersections of gender, race, class, sexuality, and ability all mediating each other and one’s experiences. Whiteness cannot be isolated since it is connected to every other part of identity and is affected by every situation encountered.

The work of trying to theorize whiteness in the context of other social formations is made more difficult by the limited literature that actually integrates race with class, gender, and sexual orientation (Tokar & Swanson, 1991). I struggle with focusing on whiteness while simultaneously recognizing that it is not a universal experience. Yet, keeping the focus on whiteness is important. The integration of other sociocultural factors has the potential to take the focus off whiteness, something that many white people do all too easily. Maher and Tetreault (1997) argue that one of the most powerful mechanisms maintaining the dominance of particular voices is “the failure to acknowledge and understand how
assumptions of whiteness shape and even dictate the limits of discourse in the classroom” (p. 324). Thinking and talking about whiteness is difficult, precisely because it remains invisible and unmarked.

A Personal Story

As I explore the stories of white teachers, I must place myself in this community. I am drawn to this topic for both personal and professional reasons. As a traveller with a suitcase full of wanderlust and a well-used passport, my interest arises from my personal experiences both as an international student and as a white teacher who has taught abroad. I feel I have the responsibility to myself, and this writing provides me with the space, to examine my identity and how it informs how I experience the world around me.

On a professional level, this study is helpful to me in my continued work as an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher. I am responsible to the students I interact with through my teaching and facilitating, to explore how my identity development affects their experiences in my classes.

I began this study with an understanding that I perceive the world through a set of personal lenses. That is, how I view or judge other people is a function of my own experience and place in the world. Yet, having grown up shielded by the “luxury of my whiteness” (Gorski, 2000, p. 1), and safe from racial oppression, I had remained, for the most part, comfortably unaware of how my lenses are tinted. As I challenged myself to recognize how my worldview has been shaped, I developed a basis for better understanding my past and present teaching experiences and relationships with students. While I understand and continue to see the necessity of creating atmospheres in which historically unheard voices can be shared and heard, my own development depends, in
part, on another dialogue. In this dialogue, I stop relying on people of colour to teach me what it means to be raced. I take ownership and responsibility for examining my role, my prejudices, my assumptions, and how these may affect my teaching and my students’ learning. This study is the beginning of that conversation.

Pedagogical Significances

The intent of this research was to get the discussion started, to “interrupt the multicultural silences existing in the teaching experience” (Grant & Zozakiewicz, 1995, p. 269). I offered an invitation to 5 participants to join in a dialogue about how whiteness and being white influenced their experiences in the field of international education. I hoped that sharing our experiences would prove beneficial both to the research and to the participants in the evolution of their identities. “Understanding the process by which individuals develop racial and ethnic identities is an important part of understanding the total person” (Miller, 1992, p. 25). A further aim of the study was to advance teachers’ understandings of what it means to teach from a perspective that does not “decontextualize schools and pedagogy from larger structures of power relations” (Sleeter, 1996, p. 45). The findings of this study provide some recommendations for teacher training programs specifically designed to prepare educators to teach in international, culturally diverse contexts.

Outline of Subsequent Chapters

Chapter 2 presents an overview of the research literature related to white identity formation, the relationship between racial identity and pedagogy, culturally responsive education, and English language teaching. Chapter 3 outlines the qualitative research
methodology and procedures employed in the study, introduces the participants, and outlines possible limitations to the study. Chapter 4 explores in detail the four themes that emerged from my analysis of the data. Finally, chapter 5 offers a discussion of the implications of research findings for teacher training programs and English language teachers in international contexts. Future research directions are highlighted.
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

"Where do I begin?" (research journal, January, 2003). The growing mountain of articles sitting on my desk was overwhelming, and I was unsure as to where and how to begin my readings. Ultimately, I used my research questions to help guide and structure my literature review. My broad interest focused on investigating the experiences of white educators in international contexts. I did not want to focus on culture shock and the many challenges experienced when one is living and working in a new country. Rather, I was intrigued with the idea that many white teachers are presently going into culturally different classrooms to teach English. I was interested in how racial and cultural differences between teacher and students might play out. In particular, I wanted to explore how being white influenced (or did not) teachers’ attitudes, beliefs, and classroom practices.

I started reading in the area of whiteness. This was a body of literature new to me and through my readings I developed an understanding of whiteness as a system and ideology of white dominance that marginalizes people of colour, ensuring existing privileges for white people. Ruth Frankenberg’s (1993) White Women, Race Matters was helpful in articulating the complexity and layers of whiteness. Frankenberg argues that whiteness has a “set of linked dimensions” (p. 1). Whiteness is a location of structural advantage, of race privilege and from that “stand point,” it’s a place from which white people look at themselves, at others, and at society. Whiteness also refers to a set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed. I use the form “white” in this study as it was used by Bhaggyadatta and Brand (1986) without the initial capital letter. I chose to do this in keeping with the belief expressed that most white people in North
American society do not claim their colour as a distinctive heritage, and for the dominant race it is often not necessary. Very connected to the literature on whiteness are theories of white identity development, that is, an emphasis on how white individuals come to understand or experience themselves as raced.

My research focused specifically on white educators. I considered literature addressing the relationship between the racial identity (of teachers) and pedagogy. How did participants' understandings of their racial identity influence their teaching practices?

Many studies examine white teachers’ racial awareness (or lack thereof) and its connection to teachers’ attitudes, assumptions, and teaching practices but most often only with respect to students of colour. It is important to note that in much of the literature the terms students of colour or people of colour are used to represent the “other.” The term “of colour” is often used to refer to all people who are not considered “white” by white people. I recognize the potential problems of collapsing people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds under the umbrella term “colour” and do so only in keeping with how race and identity literature highlighted in this thesis report their findings. “People of colour” is a fluid term, defined by the social, political, and economic mainstream of a community and not necessarily representative of how individuals would self-identify in terms of their race and ethnicity.

In several of the studies investigating the challenges of addressing cultural diversity in the classroom, culturally responsive teaching was advocated as an effective pedagogy that crosses disciplines and cultures to engage all learners while respecting their cultural background and knowledge. According to Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (1995a), culturally responsive teaching “accommodates the dynamic mix of race,
ethnicity, class, gender, region, religion, and family that contributes to every student’s cultural identity” (p. 17). In my readings this was most often discussed within a North American context. A similar focus on culturally responsive teaching, where diversity between the teacher and students is almost guaranteed, was not as evident in literature addressing teaching EFL. I was interested in exploring what culturally responsive teaching might look like in EFL classrooms.

This present chapter provides an overview of theories of white identity formation and the relationship between racial identity and pedagogy. Culturally responsive education as an approach in the EFL classroom is introduced. As well, the current trends in English as a Second/Foreign Language (ESL/EFL) literature are discussed.

**Theories of White Identity Formation**

*Mirror, mirror on the wall
Who is the fairest of them all?*

*The Brothers Grimm, Snow White*

Two areas emerged from the review of the literature on white identity formation. The first of these areas emphasized a group of characteristics consistently associated with whiteness including white privilege, denial of the significance of race and racism, and the lack of knowledge related to systemic racism. The second focus related to white racial identity and the models constructed to help understand and analyze its development.

**Characteristics Associated with whiteness**

Researchers argue that many white people have difficulty perceiving whiteness, both because of its cultural prevalence and because of its cultural dominance (Frankenberg, 1993; Lawrence, 1996; McIntosh, 1988; McIntyre, 1997; Scheurich,
Whiteness is “perceived as both neutral and normative” (Powell, 1996, p. 12) so that, to those positioned within its boundaries, it is both unremarkable and unremarked on. In many cases, the lack of awareness of whiteness leads white people to “experience [them]selves as nonracialized individuals” (Scheurich, 1997, p. 122). Katz and Ivey (1977) observe, “Ask a white person what he or she is racially and you might get the answer ‘Italian,’ ‘English,’ ‘Catholic,’ or ‘Jewish.’ White people do not see themselves as white” (p. 486).

If whiteness is so meaningless as to not warrant acknowledgement, white people may assume that skin colour is irrelevant for everyone, in effect, denying the importance of race for themselves and for others. This produces what Ruth Frankenberg (1993) refers to as a “colour-evasive orientation” to race. In her 1993 study, Frankenberg worked with a group of 30 white women to explore the range of possible meanings of whiteness, race, and racism in contemporary American society. She found that many participants’ stories fell into this colour-evasive category. This approach involves colour-blindness or a mode of thinking about race organized around an effort to not “see,” or to not acknowledge racial differences. In Frankenberg’s research, some white women responded to questions of race by naming all the people they knew who came from cultural and ethnic backgrounds different from their own. Yet, at the same time, these participants maintained that they did not notice racial difference at all, and that people were all the same.

This colour debate, that is, whether to be colour-blind or colour-conscious is important in relation to teachers in culturally diverse contexts. English language teachers who choose to teach internationally will be confronted with cultural diversity, including
differences in race. The challenge for effective teaching, then, is to “see” and acknowledge difference. Powell (1996) argues that “ignoring racial difference generally means that we also ignore issues associated with race, such as the marginalization of persons of colour in our classrooms through promoting a predominately white, mainstream perspective” (p. 14). She continues, “Believing that ‘we are really all the same’ negates the institutionalization of racism; it denies that race has, and continues to be, pervasive in the structuring of relationships in our society” (p. 14).

Many white people often understand racism only as a manifestation of personal prejudice, that is, overt acts of specific individuals, removed from historical, political, or systemic contexts (Lawrence, 1997; McIntyre, 2002; Scheurich, 1997; Tatum, 1992). By focusing on individuals, structural barriers for the mobility of people of colour can be ignored (Scheurich, 1997), while the idea that North America is the land of opportunities for all people remains firm (Katz & Ivey, 1977; McIntyre, 2002; Tatum, 1992). One factor which contributes to, and in some cases, helps maintain the lack of understanding of the significance of race and lack of knowledge related to institutional racism is white privilege. In a much-cited working paper, Peggy McIntosh (1988) conceptualizes white privilege as “an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, assurances, tools, maps, guides, codebooks, passports, visas, clothes, emergency gear, and blank checks” (p. 291). She reflects on her employment of white privilege below:

There was one piece of cultural turf; it was my own turf, and I was among those who could control the turf. I could measure up to the cultural standards and take advantage of the many options I saw around me to make what the culture would call a success of my life. My skin colour was
an asset for any move I was educated to want to make. I could think of myself as “belonging” in major ways, and of making social systems work for me. I could freely disparage, fear, neglect, or be oblivious to anything outside of the dominant culture norms. Being of the main culture, I could also criticize it fairly freely. My life was reflected back to me frequently enough so that I felt, with regard to my race, if not to my sex, like one of the real people. (1988, p. 295, italics in original)

McIntosh and others have compiled lists of privileges that white people have been given as a result of their whiteness. McIntosh’s list consists of 46 things she “can” do, including: “go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed,” “talk with my mouth full of food and not have people put this down to my race,” “easily find academic courses and institutions which give attention only to people of my race,” and “criticize our government and talk about how much I fear its policies and behavior without being seen as a cultural outsider” (pp. 293-294). Paul Kivel (1996), drawing on McIntosh’s list, constructed a more general list, noting:

We can generally count on police protection rather than harassment. Depending on our financial situation, we can choose where we want to live and choose neighborhoods that are safe and have decent schools. We are given more attention, respect and status in conversations than people of color. We see people who look like us in the media, history books, news and music in a positive light. We have more recourse to and credibility within the legal system. Nothing we do is qualified, limited, discredited or acclaimed simply because of our racial background. We
don't have to represent our race, and nothing we do is judged as a credit to our race, or as confirmation of its shortcomings and inferiority. (pp. 28-29)

Kivel summarizes, "All else being equal, it pays to be white" (p. 29).

Multicultural psychologist Janet Helms (1984, 1990) links racism specifically to white privilege, asserting that white people are born as the beneficiaries of racism. They are educated to be colour-blind in terms of their own identity, encouraged to deny the significance of race for others, and presented with an individualistic ideology which ignores systemic racism, all the while carrying with them the privilege to ignore the whole cycle (Lawrence, 1996; McIntyre, 1997). Members of the dominant group can ignore their privileges that come at the expense of people of colour (McIntyre, 1997); and have the privilege to ignore that they benefit from racism, the privilege of refusing to take the responsibility to address this (Schurich, 1997), and the privilege to remain comfortable in the dominant culture. The literature suggests that in recognizing the significance of race and acknowledging race privilege, white people will have a greater understanding of themselves and their roles in society. In an attempt to start this process of understanding, researchers in the fields of education, psychology, and sociology have developed models and typologies on white racial identity.

White Identity Development Models

A number of models and typologies have been developed to articulate the stages of white identity development (Carney & Kahn, 1984; Gaertner, 1976; Ganter, 1977; Helms, 1984, 1990; Jones, 1972; Kovel, 1970). Helms (1990) describes two categories for these models and typologies. The first are those that focus on eliminating white racism, but were, according to Helms, "fueled by the implicit assumption that racism was
only damaging to the victims of the resulting oppression but did not consider their effects on the beneficiaries of racism” (Helms, 1990, p. 50). A typology originally produced by Kovel (1970) as descriptions of different types of racists, then elaborated by Gaertner (1976) and Jones (1972) to include other modes of whiteness, fits such a description. According to McIntyre (1997), the limitation of this and other models in this category is that they failed to consider the effects of white racism on white people (p. 17). That is, these typologies attempt to explain how white people at different stages of awareness understand colour and hold attitudes towards people of colour, yet they do not look at how these understandings and attitudes affect the experiences of white people. Katz and Ivey (1977) acknowledge the harmful effects that people’s denial of whiteness, and the resulting denial of responsibility for the racist system, have on people of colour, but also directly consider these effects on the development of positive racial identity development for white people:

What is needed is a constant focus on the reality of racism and on the behaviours that support it. Once we develop an awareness of our self-defeating behaviours it will be possible to move to a more liberated self and society. (p. 487)

According to Helms (1990), the second category of white identity models and typologies includes those which focus on white racism as damaging to the development of positive white racial identities for white people. While these models still offer considerable attention to eliminating racism, they do so in the context of examining how white people can develop a positive racial identity by better understanding their own whiteness as a social and cultural variable. As Lawrence and Bunche (1996) posit, “Only
when white persons fully examine their whiteness and recognize their position in the racial order can they go beyond positions of assumed superiority and work towards effective change by opposing institutional and cultural racism” (p. 532).

A number of educators, psychologists, sociologists, and others have developed models or typologies which fall under this category, including Carney and Kahn (1984), Ganter (1977), and Helms (1984, 1990). Though the stages or phases in these models are named differently, they describe virtually the same processes through a “continuum of statuses” in which white people confront increasingly difficult issues regarding their whiteness (McIntyre, 1997). The literature suggests that the most widely accepted and reviewed of these models is Helms’s six-stage process for developing a positive white racial identity (Carter & Goodwin, 1994; Jones & Carter, 1996; Lawrence & Bunche, 1996; McIntyre, 1997).

*Helms's (1984) Model of White Racial Identity Development*

Helms developed her original model by informally interviewing “a few white friends and colleagues to determine how they viewed the development of their racial consciousness” (1984, p. 155). The original model included five stages of white people’s racial consciousness: Contact, Disintegration, Reintegration, Pseudo-Independence, and Autonomy. Helms notes that each of these stages can end in either a positive or a negative resolution, propelling the individual to the next stage, locking the individual in the current stage, or pushing them back to a previous stage. A positive resolution results in “greater personal adjustment and better interpersonal relationships with people of other races” (p. 155).
The Contact stage is characterized by the denial of whiteness and a lack of knowledge regarding the importance of differences. It begins when a white person becomes aware that other ethnic minority groups exist (Helms, 1984). At this stage, the white person, depending on the attitudes passed down to her or him through parents, education, and the media, will react to people of colour with interest, naïve curiosity, or fear (Helms; Tatum, 1992). As white people become aware of the difficulties associated with cross-cultural interactions, they either decide to withdraw, avoiding any contact with people of colour, or attempt to satisfy their curiosity by befriending people of colour. Those who choose to withdraw will not develop cross-cultural communication skills, resulting in a small personal crisis each time they come into contact with people of colour. Those who choose to befriend people of colour slowly develop an awareness of “the social and political ramifications” of cross-cultural relationships, which thrusts them into the Disintegration stage (Helms, p. 156).

The Disintegration stage is characterized by an acknowledgement of whiteness. Initially, this acknowledgement may give rise to guilt and depression as white people develop an understanding of racism and their role in it. A dilemma presents itself when an individual must consider whether to play into white norms, continuing the history of discrimination against people of colour, or to advocate against discrimination and risk alienation from the white community (Helms, 1984). Generally, individuals in this stage choose from three possible solutions: (1) over-identifying with people of colour, perhaps trying to fit into an ethnic community; (2) becoming “paternalistic” toward people of colour, attempting to shield them from discrimination; or (3) remaining comfortably in white culture. According to Helms, those who choose the third solution and remain in
white culture may avoid moving into the Reintegration stage “by adopting those white values and beliefs that emphasize racial differences and encourage separation” (p. 156).

The Reintegration stage is marked by hostility toward people of colour and closer identification with the white community. People in this stage may be either overtly or covertly prejudiced, tending to “minimize cross-racial similarities, while evaluating negatively those characteristics on which [minority groups] are perceived to differ” (Helms, 1984, p. 156). This leads the individual to yet another decision. As the individual’s prejudices develop into a strong sense of fear and anger, she or he might choose to withdraw or participate in cross-cultural relationships from a safe distance until societal situations force them into contact with people of colour. Another option would be for individuals to acknowledge their whiteness and what that whiteness means socially, politically, and personally. According to Helms, if the latter is chosen, the individual will be able to work through the fear and anger, moving on to the Pseudo-Independence stage.

The Pseudo-Independence stage is characterized by “an intellectual acceptance and curiosity” about people of colour and white people (Helms, 1984, p. 156). White people in this stage are interested in issues between racial groups, but only at an intellectual level. Cross-racial interactions usually exist with only a few people of colour who seem similar to white people or “special” in some way. If individuals become more comfortable interacting with people of colour, they may enhance their awareness of racial issues. This should be seen as a positive resolution, preparing the individual for the Autonomy stage.

During Autonomy, the final stage, the individual accepts and acknowledges racial differences and issues. Differences lose their negative connotations and similarities
their positive connotations. People at the Autonomy stage seek to engage in interracial interactions, valuing diversity, and remaining secure in their racial identities (Helms, 1984, p. 156).

In later works, Helms (1990) included a sixth stage between Pseudo-Independence and Autonomy, called Immersion/Emersion to reflect, in her words, the contention that it is possible for whites to seek out accurate information about their historical, political, and cultural contributions to the world, and that the process of self-examination within this context is an important component of the process of developing a positive white identity. (p. 55)

The person in this stage works to replace stereotypes with accurate information about both white people and people of colour. To this end, individuals might immerse themselves in literature written by white people and people of colour who have worked through these issues. They might also revisit emotions regarding their identities which they had previously “denied or distorted” (Helms, p. 62). Acknowledging these negative feelings and allowing them to be expressed leads the individual to a feeling of “euphoria perhaps akin to a rebirth” (Helms, p. 62).

Overall, Helms’s model suggests that white racial identity development occurs at different rates and degrees within these stages for each individual. Each stage can be resolved in a positive or negative fashion, sending individuals on to the next stage, freezing some at the current stage, and pulling some back into a previous stage. According to Carter and Goodwin (1996), Helms’s model allows for the consideration of
emotional, intellectual, perceptual, behavioural, social, and cultural dimensions of individuals.

Early critics of identity development models questioned the development of identity as a linear progression through hierarchically arranged, permeable stages (Bennett, Behrens, & Rowe, 1993; Rowe, Bennett, & Atkinson, 1994). Rowe et al. (1994) acknowledge that individuals do develop racial attitudes, which change over time. Yet, they reject that this process of changing attitudes is developmental. Instead they choose the term type to describe the groupings or “clusters” of racial attitudes that characterize an individual’s outlook (p. 134). Helms’s revised model somewhat addresses this concern by focusing on the concept of identity statuses as opposed to stages. This shift recognizes it is possible for many different statuses to influence an individual and that there is no necessary linear progression between them.

A second critique is Helms’s overemphasis on white people’s attitudes towards people of colour as being constitutive of the whole of white identity. Rowe et al. (1994) argue that Helms’s model does not in fact explain how white individuals develop attitudes toward their racial group membership. Rather, it mainly describes how white people develop different levels of sensitivity to other racial groups (p. 131).

Although not a critique levied directly against Helms’s model, it is important to note, as discussed in the introduction, that one’s racial identity cannot be isolated from the multiple intersecting aspects of an individual’s identity. Alice McIntyre (1997) reminds us that “racial meaning-making is co-constructed within the context of one’s gender, age, social class, educational experience, and other less visible identities that inform and influence how we understand the world” (p. 4).
Although the 1970s produced numerous white racial identity models, most of the literature produced on the topic since the development of Helms's model (1984) has worked from her model. The literature reflects the influence Helms's model has had on both psychology – specifically counselling (the context in which Helms originated the model) – and education as the basis for understanding white racial identity development.

Racial Identity and Pedagogy

The recent emergence of whiteness as a discourse within multicultural education has prompted a number of educators to reevaluate their pedagogies and to question the ways whiteness informs and influences teaching practices and educational policies. How does being white, particularly in education, inform one's perspective on teaching? The literature regarding white racial identity and pedagogy focuses on the need for self-analysis and awareness (Banks, 2001; Lawrence, 1996, 1997; LeCompte & McCray, 2002; McIntyre, 1997, 2002; Sleeter, 1996, 2001). McIntyre (1997) challenges white teachers "to be more self-reflective about [their] own understandings about race and racism and to challenge [their] own constructions about what it means to be white in this country" (p. 14). Sleeter (1996) agrees, explaining that many white educators need to become more aware of their own "biases, limitations, and vested interests" (p. 152).

Lawrence and Tatum (1997a), Sleeter (1996, 2001), McIntyre (1997, 2002), LeCompte and McCray (2002), and Bollin and Finkel (1995) have explored white identity development and multicultural awareness and understanding of white teachers and white pre-service teachers, noting areas of consistent unawareness among these teachers and explaining how this lack of awareness manifests itself in the teachers' attitudes and teaching practices.
In her 1997 work, *Making Meaning of Whiteness*, Alice McIntyre explores how 13 white, female pre-service teachers made meaning of whiteness. She offers an inside look at taken-for-granted “white talk—talk that serves to insulate white people from examining their individual and collective role(s) in the perpetuation of racism” (p. 45). She claims that many white people have grown up learning about racial stereotypes, and these stereotypes inform their thinking. They often lack an awareness of the institutional racism including what exists in the education system in which they participate daily. McIntyre challenged her participants' beliefs in the existence of a fair and just educational system and argues that white teachers must reexamine “the system of whiteness that is the bedrock of the education system in the United States” (p. 13). She suggests that many white educators tend to “perform the multicultural tricks” without considering how their race positions them in a place of greater opportunity within and outside of the education system (p. 13).

In *Multicultural Education as Social Activism*, Sleeter (1996) identifies “the nature and impact of discrimination” as an issue related to teachers' lack of awareness (p. 141). She suggests that there is a tendency to underestimate the effects of racial discrimination (racism), and to see them as individual acts of prejudice only, instead of daily life experiences which minimize opportunity (Sleeter, p. 141). While the word *racism* is subject to numerous definitions, for the purposes of this thesis racism is defined as a “system of advantage based on race” (Tatum, 1992, p. 3). One of the most thorough definitions is the following, which also demonstrates the many different arenas in which racial discrimination takes place: “Racism results from the transformation of a race prejudice and/or ethnocentrism through the exercise of power against a racial group
defined as inferior, by individuals and institutions with the intentional or unintentional support of the entire culture" (Jones & Carter, 1996, p. 3). Barndt (1991) defines racism in fewer words as “prejudice plus power” (p. 28).

According to Sleeter (1996), the white teachers in her study tended to believe that the differences in financial and social success among North Americans result from individual effort in a context of equal opportunity. Sleeter posits that if white teachers begin to develop an understanding of discrimination as a systemic issue, they must also confront the un-level playing field which affords them greater opportunity than people of colour. In the classroom, this means confronting how some well-meaning teaching practices, such as treating all students alike, attributing all success to hard work, and encouraging individuality without addressing the importance of group identification, may play into the systemic discrimination against students of colour in schools (Lawrence, 1996; LeCompte & McCray, 2002; McIntyre, 1997).

The significance of group membership is another concept many white teachers have difficulty grasping. Because North American ideology is very individualistic (Scheurich, 1997; Sleeter, 1996; Tatum, 1992), group identification is often ignored, especially by white people who are not constantly reminded about being the “other” in terms of race and ethnicity. A common statement made by white teachers is that they are “colour-blind,” seeing only kids, not colours (Bollin & Finkel, 1995; LeCompte & McCray, 2002; McIntyre, 1997; Valli, 1995). The result of this approach is a failure by white teachers to directly address the ethnic and racial identities and cultures of their students, instead focusing on differences in foods, holidays, clothes, and other surface-level cultural themes without relating them to race or ethnicity (McIntyre, 1997; Sleeter,
1996). Such a focus allows white teachers to minimize multicultural education to discussions on differences with little social consequence, and to continue to ignore how group membership helps shape the lives of everyone involved, including both those who are privileged because of it and those who are discriminated as a result of it (Sleeter, 1996).

An additional area white teachers might need to become more knowledgeable about is the “nature of culture” (Sleeter, 1996, p. 145). In a 1990 study, Richard Alba found that the most recognized cultural experience, as defined by white people, is eating ethnic foods (as cited in Sleeter, 1996, p. 145). The literature suggests that this limited view of culture manifests itself in education, as well, where even multicultural education has become simply a celebration of ethnic foods and festivals (Sleeter, 1996). From a much broader view, the term *culture* refers to a “dynamic system of social values, cognitive codes, behavioural standards, worldviews, and beliefs” used to give order and meaning to people’s lives (Delgado-Gaitu & Trueba as cited in Gay, 2000, p. 8). Generally the term is used to encompass such aspects as religion, dress, food, surnames, language, customs, rituals, traditions, forms of expression, and place of origin (Brayboy, 2000). Bruner (1996) reminds us that “culture shapes the mind, that it provides us with the toolkit by which we construct not only our world, but our very conceptions of our selves and our powers” (p. x). Often, what individuals do and think does not appear to them to be “culture,” but rather the definition of what is normal and neutral, like the air they breathe, transparent from their perspectives. For white educators then, having been so entrenched in white culture through institutions such as the media and even their own education, and because they take that culture for granted, may have limited knowledge of
traditionally non-represented cultures (Lawrence & Tatum, 1997a; Sleeter, 1996, 2001). An often unexamined consequence of this is that many white educators continue to teach from an assumption of white culture as the “norm” or neutral, while using “diverse” or “different” to describe all things non-white (McIntyre, 1997; Sleeter, 1996).

In response to these points of unawareness for white teachers, the literature suggests approaches to help teachers to move toward greater awareness and self-analysis. These studies further suggest that examining the system of whiteness, and teachers’ racial identity and its relationship to teaching practices is one strategy to begin to disrupt inequitable teaching practices and move beyond a fragmented and superficial treatment of diversity.

Culturally Responsive Education

In Teaching to Transgress (1994), bell hooks argues that most students are taught in classrooms where styles of teaching still reflect the notion of a single norm of thought and experience which they are encouraged to believe is universal. Gay (2000) concurs, stating that “too few teachers have adequate knowledge about how teaching practices reflect European-North American cultural values” (p. 21). Many educators still believe that good teaching transcends place, people, time, and context. They contend it has nothing to do with the class, race, gender, ethnicity, or culture of the students and teachers. This attitude is manifested in the expression “Good teachers anywhere are good teachers everywhere.” This tenet fails to recognize that standards of “goodness” in teaching and learning are culturally determined and continuously shifting.

The notion of culturally responsive education is premised on the idea that culture is central to student learning. Based on her research of seven successful teachers of
African-American students, Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994, 1995) uses the term “culturally relevant pedagogy” to describe teaching that rests on three primary propositions. Students must experience academic success. Students must develop and maintain their cultural competence. Students must develop a critical consciousness to challenge the status quo. According to Ladson-Billings, “It [culturally relevant pedagogy] is an approach that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills and attitudes” (1994, p. 18). The use of cultural referents in teaching bridges and explains the mainstream culture, while valuing and recognizing the students’ own cultures. This metaphor of a bridge is often used to understand how culturally relevant pedagogy uses students’ cultures as a way to support their academic achievement. This approach places a student’s culture alongside the dominant culture supported by the standard curriculum by encouraging a deeper study, knowledge, and celebration of one’s own culture.

This link between culture and classroom instruction is supported by evidence that cultural practices shape thinking processes, which serve as tools for learning within and outside of school (Hollins, 1996). Thus, culturally responsive education recognizes, respects, and uses students’ identities and backgrounds as meaningful sources for creating optimal learning environments. Yet, it demands a focus beyond mere sensitivity training or enhanced multicultural teaching materials. For teachers to be able to recognize the strengths of culturally different students and capitalize on these strengths, teachers may need to begin with questioning their current teaching practices, including any preconceived notions of the white, dominant norm.
For example, although well-meaning, teachers may act in ways that actually discriminate against students from racial and ethnic minority backgrounds. Such discrimination occurs when teachers do not recognize that behaviour is culturally influenced; when they devalue, censure, and punish the behaviours of non-mainstream groups; and when they fail to see that their management practices alienate and marginalize some students, while privileging others. Unfortunately, the misunderstandings and misinterpretations that give rise to this kind of discrimination are likely to become more frequent as the cultural gap between students and teachers widens. Therefore, calls for "culturally relevant pedagogy" (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995, 2001) and "culturally responsive teaching" (Gay, 2000; Jackson, 1994; Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995b) emphasize the need for teachers to develop the knowledge, skills, and predispositions to teach students from diverse racial, ethnic, language, and social class backgrounds.

While culturally relevant pedagogy may be called by different names, including culturally responsive, sensitive, centered, reflective, mediated, congruent, and contextualized, the descriptive characteristics are all rooted in the importance of making teaching practices more consistent with the cultural orientations of diverse student populations. For proponents of culturally relevant pedagogy, effective teaching necessitates building on students’ prior knowledge, skills, and languages, and then providing the appropriate material so students can move more easily from what they know to what they need to know. In Possible Lives, Mike Rose (1995) travelled across the United States in search of "good" teaching. One conclusion that he drew from his observations of many classrooms is that good teaching demands that teachers have a
thorough knowledge of their students. Knowing students means that the teacher is sensitive to the students’ culture and understand how students’ cultural backgrounds shape their day-to-day learning.

Smith (1998) states that culturally responsible teacher education “prepares teachers to be respectfully sensitive to cultures of their students, to learn about and know the cultures of their students, and to use understandings about how culture influences learning in their daily planning for teaching students” (p. 20). Gay (2000) advises that teachers must become more culturally responsive by working to expand their knowledge of ethnically and culturally diverse heritages and social practices. For Gay, culturally responsive teaching uses the cultural characteristics of diverse students as tools for teaching and learning. Villegas and Lucas (2002) developed six characteristics that define the culturally responsive teacher. These include teachers who: (a) are socioculturally conscious, (b) have affirming views of students from diverse backgrounds, (c) see themselves as responsible for and capable of bringing change to make schools more equitable, (d) understand how learners construct knowledge, (e) know about the lives of their students, and (f) design instruction that builds on what their students already know (p. 20).

Ladson-Billings’s description of culturally relevant pedagogy implies that teaching for cultural competence assures that students achieve, while at the same time, develop a positive sense of their own identities. Thus, the role of culture and its importance in and influence on students’ lives is paramount to this teaching approach. However, the importance of teachers’ understandings of the influence
of culture on their own lives cannot be dismissed. In an article in *Rethinking Schools*, Ladson-Billings (2001) stated:

Helping students become culturally competent is not an easy task. First it requires that teachers themselves be aware of their own culture and its role in their lives.... Teachers who are prepared to help students become culturally competent are themselves culturally competent. (p. 3)

Beverly Daniel Tatum (2000) further states, “Teachers must understand their own racial identity to support the positive development of their students’ racial and ethnic identities” (p. 54). As well, bell hooks (1994) tells us that teachers must be actively committed to a process of self-actualization that promotes their own well-being if they are to teach in a manner that empowers students (p. 15). The teacher’s roles then, in addition to helping develop academic skills, is to help students retain cultural competence and develop a critical nature to challenge the status quo. To achieve this for their students, teachers must model positive self-efficacy beliefs, celebrate individual and collective achievements, respect the culture and experiences of various groups, and then use these as a resource for teaching and learning (Gay, 2000).

Led by Ladson-Billings (1994, 1995), the concept of and need for culturally relevant pedagogy has increasingly gained importance. This rapidly developing field motivated Osborne (1996) to conduct a review of the literature on culturally relevant pedagogy for students who had been marginalized and normalized. Based on Ladson-Billings’s propositions that students must experience success and develop cultural competence and critical consciousness, Osborne organized a body of ethnographies on teaching in cross-cultural and multiethnic settings over the past 30 years. He formulated
nine assertions and discussed each in detail, followed by studies that both confirm and disconfirm the assertions. These assertions centered on both fundamental understandings (e.g., socio-historico-political realities beyond the school, students’ previous experiences, first languages, and their cultural identity) and classroom processes (e.g., instructional approaches, cultural assumptions in the classroom, and classroom management). Ultimately, culturally responsive education works to “lift the veil of presumed absolute authority from conceptions of scholarly truth typically taught in schools. It helps students realize that no single version of ‘truth’ is total and permanent” (Gay, 2000, p. 35).

Although a review of the literature found that culturally responsive teaching sprung primarily from studies of teachers working with African American students, Bennett (1999) argues that this approach is “appropriate for all students, including those who are ill-served by the school because of their ethnicity or low-income background” (p. 267). In addition, the calls for a culturally responsive pedagogy were generally talked about with respect to having students of different cultural backgrounds within a North American classroom. But what happens when white teachers walk into international classrooms where differences between the teachers’ and students’ cultural background and cultural knowledge are certain to be present? Culturally responsive pedagogy is an important piece in understanding how white EFL teachers might successfully negotiate cross-cultural teaching.

ESL/EFL Teaching

In an effort to discuss the current trends in ESL/EFL literature, I chose TESOL Quarterly and ELT Journal, 2 English language-teaching journals, and viewed issues over a 2-year period. The choice of which journals to review was made on the basis of
availability. That is, I picked journals where I had access to the complete 2-year series of issues in my university library. A large percentage of articles discussed the content knowledge involved in teaching English as a second language. Topics such as the role of tone (Pickering, 2001), the challenges of motivation (Cheung, 2001), and the importance of incorporating authentic writing into class (Fedderholdf, 2001) were discussed. Individual research studies highlighting English language teaching in international contexts were also prominent (Leung, 2002; Sarwar, 2001; Wu, 2001). Another area of interest was the connection between language and identity in the field of language learning. Several articles addressed how language learners, through the acquisition of English, are constantly engaged in identity construction and negotiation (Cleghorn & Rollnick, 2002; Norton & Toohey, 2001). From my examination, what appears to be missing from current debate is the issue of race with respect to both the student and the English language teacher.

In her research, Nuzhat Amin (1997, 1999) begins to question the relationship between native and non-native ESL teachers and, in particular, how race is implicated in that relationship. Amin, a woman of colour who speaks English as her first language, details her own experience of being constructed as a non-Canadian and a non-native speaker of English as a result of her race and accent. She argues that students' construction of their minority teachers as non-native speakers and therefore less able teachers than white teachers impact the teaching and learning experiences of both the teacher and the students, and influence the minority teachers' identity formation.

However, the relationship between white ESL/EFL teachers and their understandings of their racial identities has received minimal attention in the literature.
Whereas there has been increasing interest in theories investigating how minority teachers, as well as language learners, construct their identities, the ways in which white EFL teachers’ identities influence classroom practices have been little explored. Yet, there are complex issues arising from the fact that white teachers are bringing their language and culture into foreign classrooms with little preparation, and often little understanding, of the far-reaching influences of culture on their teaching and students’ learning. In a study that explored the complex interrelationships between language and culture, and between teachers’ identities and teaching practices, it was found that “none of the teachers in the study perceived their roles as EFL teachers as necessarily involving the explicit teaching of culture…” (Duff & Uchida, 1997, p. 467). However, when the researchers observed these EFL teachers in the classroom, implicit cultural transmission was very much evident. Kramsch (1993) has pointed out that “language teachers are so much teachers of culture that culture has often become invisible to them” (p. 48).

In an early paper introducing the need for “practical theory” in EFL teacher-education, Scarbrough (1976) states that too few EFL teachers question why they teach in a particular way and how their teaching practices influence their students. He argues that too many EFL teacher-training courses are severely limited to methodological instruction at the expense of asking the deeper questions related to teaching. He suggests that the result of such programs may very likely be to send teachers out equipped with a stock of techniques for making lessons “interesting” and for “getting it across,” but completely unequipped for the moment that (hopefully) comes sooner or
later when they ask themselves, "Why am I teaching like this? What am I achieving?" (p. 104)

Similarly, in a study exploring EFL instruction in Nigeria, particularly teacher effectiveness, Oladejo (1991) concluded that a major problem facing the EFL profession is the "uncritical adoption of Western methods of teaching" (p. 197). Both Scarbrough and Oladejo seem to be advocating the need for EFL teachers to engage in reflection on how they teach, as well as the implications of their teaching practices on their culturally different students. Barlett (1990) states, "Improvement of teaching may be achieved through reflection. Reflection is more than 'thinking' and focuses on the day-to-day classroom teaching of the individual teacher as well as the institutional structures in which teachers and students work" (p. 204). In Barlett's opinion, this process of reflection should be aimed at teachers becoming critically reflective. In order to do this, they have to move beyond questions of methodology and become immersed in the wider context of teaching. Barlett provides some questions to aid this movement. These include:

What counts as knowledge in second language teaching? How is what counts as knowledge transmitted? What kind of multicultural society or cultural system uses this knowledge legitimately? And what is the nature of knowledge that guides my teaching of content? (p. 206)

Richards and Lockhart (1994) concur, suggesting that reflective teaching in the EFL classroom, in which teachers "examine their attitudes, beliefs, assumptions, and teaching practices," can trigger a deeper understanding of teaching (p. 1). Finally, Banks (2001) argues that before teachers can provide effective instruction for their culturally diverse students, they must be helped to critically explore and rethink
their notions of race, culture, and ethnicity, and to view themselves as cultural and racial beings. After reviewing the articles in the two selected EFL journals, I was left wondering why so few focused on teacher self-awareness and its relation to decisions and classroom practices and what the implications of such an absence might be.

Summary of the Literature

I used my research questions as a guide to help organize and structure the bodies of literature I reviewed. Although presented here in a linear fashion, the literature on white identity formation, the relationship between racial identity and pedagogy, and culturally responsive education are interconnected. There is a particular need in the field of EFL, although also important for teaching in the Canadian landscape, for teachers to acknowledge that their students are most likely culturally and racially different than themselves. More than acknowledgement, however, teachers need to value (and see as a resource) the cultural differences that students carry into the classroom. To recognize the significance of race, in part, involves teachers coming to recognize that they themselves have a race and culture. One way for white educators to become aware and more knowledgeable about their racial identities is through a commitment to investigating whiteness. As teachers become aware of their racial identities, they make connections to the role race plays in their classroom and its implication in the lives of their racially and culturally different students. Learning to use the students' cultural differences and particular knowledge(s) as a resource in the classroom is advanced through culturally responsive education.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I describe the qualitative research procedures that I followed in conducting this study. I introduce the participants and briefly discuss the notion of an outlier participant. In addition, I consider the biases I bring to the research and my decision to include myself as an additional participant. Finally, possible limitations to the study are outlined.

Research Paradigms

A number of sources, situations, experiences, and individuals have contributed to the methodology adopted in my research. A qualitative research methods course taken one semester introduced me to the work of feminist researchers and was enough to convince me that I wanted to try my hand at qualitative research when I conducted my own study. This decision represented, as well, a reaction against my background in commerce, which all too often negated the subjective analysis in favour of the objective statistic. I had reservations about the positivist tradition with its emphasis on hypothesis testing through a rational deductive method. I think there is inherent danger in conducting a study about teachers’ identities with the idea that there is a single objective reality waiting to be discovered. I wanted my study to be descriptive rather than one looking for universal rules. Although I hope that what is learned from my participants can be helpful to other educators wanting to explore their racial identities and ultimately teach responsively, I am not looking for a universalizing principle. I also know that this research cannot be objective and value free because it lies within the arena of identity development and racial politics.
Participants

To gain greater depth of understanding the number of participants was kept to a minimum. In total, 5 participants were involved in this study. Four white educators, 1 male and 3 female, who experienced teaching abroad in culturally diverse settings participated (see Appendix A: Research Ethics Approval). I invited Wendy, a self-identified Black woman and classmate in my earlier teacher-training program, as a 5th participant.

The Outlier Participant

In Doing Teacher Research, Donald Freeman (1998) talks of outliers in relation to data analysis. He describes the analysis process as looking for relationships in the data and stresses the critical importance of looking at what does not fit into the emerging structure of that analysis. Freeman calls these pieces that do not fit "outliers" (p. 100) because they lie outside the analysis. In this study that explores the experiences of white teachers, Wendy may be considered an outlier participant.

I met Wendy in an EFL training program where we connected over our mutual interest in Japan. I had just returned to Canada from 3 years in rural Japan and Wendy explained that she eventually wanted to work there. When we completed the training course Wendy accepted a teaching position in Japan and we kept in contact through letters. Wendy's letters occasionally told of incidents that were far removed from what I had experienced living and working in Japan. Several factors may have contributed to our different experiences. Wendy is younger than I, had less overseas experience at the time, and was placed in a more urban setting than I had been; although aware of all of these factors, I was also interested to what extent race was a salient attribute in our differing
experiences. Wendy offers a different perspective than my own and those of the 4 white participants in this study.

Including My Own Story

As a researcher I am aware that I step into the research experience with my own personal bias or “conceptual baggage” (Kirby & McKenna, 1989). That is, I have my own thoughts, ideas, and personal assumptions about my research topic. To record these thoughts, I arranged for an outside third party to interview me. Kirby and McKenna suggest that researchers must experience the interview as both an interviewer and a research participant early on in the data-gathering process. I hoped that in making my thoughts and experiences more explicit, another layer of data would be revealed for examination. In effect, I became another participant in my research.

“Despite general affirmation in education to the adage ‘we live and learn,’ little emphasis is placed in education research upon the study of one’s own personal history as a way of coming to understand the world” (Krall, 1988, p. 467). There has been a shift in this situation as narrative research has gained increasing popularity in the last decade. I agree with Krall’s pronouncement that “thoughtful recovery of one’s educational experiences can be an effective method for identifying and understanding broad curricular and pedagogical issues” (p. 467). For me, a “thoughtful recovery” of my experiences teaching abroad involved being interviewed and, in part, reading through personal journals I kept while teaching and letters I wrote home during my years overseas. Influenced by my readings on white identity formation and the relation between race and pedagogy, I examined my transcript, journals, and letters to gain a greater understanding of how these theories might apply to my own development as a white
In effect, doing what Krall (1988) calls “ordering old photographs into a new album...go[ing] back to the experience and stand[ing] at its center in an attempt to convey its essence rather than the events” (p. 470).

Description of Participants

The individuals portrayed in this thesis (Neil, Gretchen, Beth, Fiona, and Wendy) were given pseudonyms to protect their anonymity. In addition to assigning pseudonyms, I changed identifying information to ensure anonymity and confidentiality were maintained as much as possible. A Participant Data Chart that includes demographic information is located in Appendix B of this thesis. The following is a description of the participants.

Neil

I met Neil at a national TESL conference. He is a white, English language educator with extensive experience living and working in two Asian countries. Neil spent more than 5 years in two urban Japanese communities teaching English in private “cram” schools. In addition, he was later involved in teacher training over a 3-year period in Taiwan. Prior to accepting his first teaching position overseas, Neil had no formal EFL training. Below, Neil describes both how and why he initially got involved in teaching:

I had been in kind of a dead-end job and I was ready for a change from that. I had started studying Japanese at college. I had the opportunity and when I saw the ad for the overseas posting, teaching posting, I thought, “This is a good opportunity to get away from it all.” I wasn’t really thinking about what I could offer that culture, it was mostly, it was mostly very selfish reasons. (Neil, transcript 1, pp. 1-2 of 39)
The first private language school Neil worked for provided a mere 2-week training period for new foreign teachers. Training focused on offering some generalized information about Japanese culture as a means of preparing the new teachers for possible culture shock, and introducing the new employees to the 3P (Present-Practice-Produce) approach to language teaching.

Neil is presently upgrading his TESL qualifications and at the time of our second interview had immediate plans to return overseas for a teaching contract. Asked to describe the purpose of native English speakers teaching overseas, Neil was hesitant. Several times throughout the interviews he went back to the question and attempted to define this role and concluded with the description to “help individuals achieve their [language] goals.” In our second conversation, despite his difficulty in articulating his role as an EFL teacher, Neil distinctly recalled the confidence with which he initially accepted that position.

I remember thinking there is no way that someone could question that what I’m doing here is good because they [the local students] want to learn English and it’s education. I’ve got skills they need, what could possibly be wrong? I used to be [work] in a gas station that sold cigarettes you know (laughing), so I thought, “Wow, finally I found something that you can’t really criticize, can you?” (Neil, transcript 2, p. 17 of 28)

Gretchen

Gretchen learned about my research from a friend and contacted me about the possibility of being a participant. Pleased to have found another EFL teacher to interview, I sent her the Information Letter (see Appendix C: Information Letter), which described
the purpose of the study, in particular, my focus on whiteness and how whiteness influences one’s teaching practices. After reading the details of the study, Gretchen agreed to participate.

Gretchen’s father is a person of colour and her mother is white Canadian of European ancestry. Physically, she is light-skinned and with features such that others, myself included, would most likely label her as white. Interestingly, in our first interview Gretchen identified herself as an ethnic “mix” (Gretchen, transcript 1, p. 18 of 35). In that interview I did not directly ask Gretchen if she identified as white, and I was unsure of how to think about her involvement in my study. So, I returned to the literature.

France Widdance Twine (1997) conducted a study with a group of young mixed-race women, all of whom had identified, at one point in their lives as white. Twine found that the feeling of normality is a central part of what it has come to mean to be white in contemporary North American cultures, that it was a both a precursor and a necessary condition for the mixed-race women in her study to identify as white. The notion of “opting into” whiteness is also discussed alongside the idea of race as largely socially chosen. These two conditions support Twine’s conceptualization of “brown-skinned white girls.” Gretchen had asked to be involved in this study of whiteness, had an understanding of the study and access to the interview questions, and, in my opinion, could physically pass as white and saw herself as a possible participant for the study, so I asked her to take part.

Gretchen is a certified teacher who has spent 18 months, spread across two separate experiences, working in Taiwan. Born and raised in a small, predominantly white community, Gretchen described her reasons for teaching abroad as a “need to get
out and explore the world."

Originally the reason that I decided to teach overseas was to live in a
different culture where everything was completely new.... I really wanted
to place myself in a very kind of unique environment that I had never
experienced before. And I had the notion that Asia was a very intriguing
place. I wanted to go there and I wanted to go alone. I didn’t want to go
with anyone else, I just wanted to be completely isolated. (Gretchen,
transcript 1, p. 1 of 35)

Throughout her year and a half, Gretchen was employed with several different
private language institutes. She pointed to challenges in complying with institutional
norms and in particular, conflicts arising with management with respect to timely and full
payment, as the instigator to her several moves. These challenges also complicated
Gretchen’s ability to perform her role as teacher. Gretchen spoke passionately about the
"sacred" act of teaching, and she described the purpose of English language teachers:

I really feel, like, as an EFL teacher for those students [who plan to
immigrate or work abroad], we are giving them tools. We are kind of
preparing them for something very important. Everything becomes much
more sacred because you feel like you’re really giving these individuals
what they need to survive, to succeed in North America or in Europe or
wherever they’re going. There is purpose and intention. (Gretchen,
transcript 1, p. 24 of 35)

With future plans to continue teaching internationally, Gretchen is presently
completing her graduate studies.
Beth

Beth has a combined Linguistics degree and TESL certificate. She is a young, white educator with extensive language teaching experience in Canadian contexts. Personal interest in exploring "who I [she] was aside from my [her] environment," prompted her to consider teaching overseas. Beth was offered a 1-year contract, teaching conversation and listening skills at a university in the Caribbean, but negotiated that down to a shorter term. She cites her reason for accepting the position as "more personal than anything.... I wanted to be independent" (Beth, transcript 1, p. 2 of 26).

Beth defined the purpose of EFL teaching as "to share culture, learn culture, share language, and learn language." Referring back to her preparation courses she stated, "It’s one of the things they teach us, is that you can’t separate language from culture" (Beth, transcript 1, p. 3 of 26). Beth is currently teaching in a community-based, adult ESL classroom.

Fiona

Fiona is a white language teacher with 3 years of international experience. She had been working in the private sector and searching for new opportunities when she saw a teaching position advertised in a local newspaper.

I didn’t see myself working my way up the corporate ladder for my whole life. So I was looking for options and it was there in the paper. I had always been interested. I had done volunteer work with helping literacy so I went to the interviews and away I went about a month or two later.

(Fiona, transcript 1, p. 1 of 19)

Fiona relocated to a metropolitan city in Japan and worked for a private
conversation company. The company provided brief training, educating their new teachers on the learning styles of Japanese students, outlining sample lesson plans, and encouraging socialization with students. With only volunteer experience under her belt, Fiona took the teaching position expecting to "help improve the language skills of people who are interested in language" (Fiona, transcript 1, p. 2 of 19).

Since returning from her experience in Japan, Fiona has completed a TESL certificate and worked with international exchange students. She is presently taking a leave from teaching.

Wendy

Wendy is a Black-Canadian of Jamaican heritage. She spent nearly 2 years (21 months) teaching English in a private language school on the outskirts of Tokyo, Japan. Her introduction to EFL teaching came from a friend. "I wanted to go abroad and live in a different country.... A friend recommended it [teaching] as a good experience, a good life experience so I thought, 'why not?'" (Wendy, transcript 1, p. 1 of 32). Wendy made the decision to go abroad and enrolled in a 4-week intensive TESL course as preparation. With no prior teaching experience, Wendy accepted a job in Japan with no "fixed expectations."

I hadn't really done any kind of teaching. I hadn't even done any tutoring or anything, so I really didn't know what to expect. I didn't really have any sort of fixed expectations. It was just, "Yeah, it'll be great," or not necessarily great but it will be new. It will be different. That was my expectation. (Wendy, transcript 1, p. 11 of 32)

Despite not having taught English before, Wendy had considerable experience as
a language learner. Proficient in both French and Spanish, Wendy explained the role of native speakers when learning a new language.

I think the main thing is just to give people who are learning English as a second language exposure to native English-speaking people from different places... if you're not learning it [English] and getting to speak it with somebody who is a native speaker of the language then I think it can be somewhat stilted. I think learning a language from somebody who is a native speaker, makes it more interesting. It’s more encouraging. (Wendy, transcript 1, p. 3 of 32)

Wendy is currently working in the private sector and has no future plans to teach.

Kelly

I identify as a white, second-generation Canadian. I am a university-educated teacher with 5 years of international teaching experience. I accepted my first international contract with only a summer of prior teaching experience. For 3 years I worked in a rural Japanese community, in tandem with local Japanese teachers of English at a public junior high. Returning to Canada, I completed the same 4-week TESL certificate as Wendy and worked for 1 year teaching ESL to international students. Frustrated with what I perceived as a lack of student motivation, I left Canada for a 6-month travel adventure and secured a 2-year teaching position at a private language school in the Czech Republic. Currently I am completing my Master of Education degree.

The participants have a number of things in common. They were all born and raised in Canada and have English as their mother tongue. They are from middle-class backgrounds and all have postsecondary education. All participants have experience
teaching English in international environments. In addition, they have also taught English as a second language classes within the Canadian context.

Research Methodology Procedures

One-To-One Interviews

Before beginning my formal research I ran a pilot interview. The purpose was twofold, to review my interview questions and to practice my interview techniques. I invited one white educator, who is not part of the overall study, to participate. Changes to the interview schedule were made as a result of this pilot. Specifically, there were wording changes made to clarify the intended meanings of particular questions and I added a final question inviting participants to suggest how I could better understand their experiences (see Appendix E: Interview Schedule).

All 5 participants took part in two audiotaped, open-ended interviews of approximately 60-90 minutes each. The revised interview schedule, with questions informed by both the literature and my own personal teaching experiences, was the starting point for the first interviews. Questions reflected my interest in exploring how whiteness shaped teaching practices, and focused on participants' experiences in their foreign classrooms and their perceptions of the influence of culture within those experiences. To help ensure my participants were comfortable with the questions and to give them time to reflect on their teaching experiences, all participants received the interview questions prior to our scheduled meeting.

The second interview served two functions. It acted as a member check (Creswell, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) where the participant was able to comment on, clarify, or correct any of the information in the first interview transcript; as well, it provided me
with an opportunity to ask additional questions and further examine some of the key themes.

There were several ethical considerations in preparing to conduct my interviews. Fontana and Frey’s (2000) describe unstructured interviewing as “the establishment of a human-to-human relation with the respondent and the desire to understand rather than to explain” (p. 654, italics in original). Understanding concerns the extent to which we can imaginatively project ourselves into the position of another person in order to try to comprehend the reasons that person has for her or his actions (Acker, 2000). With each question I constructed I wondered to what extent I would be able to really understand my participants’ experiences. My belief is that face-to-face interviews can promote the building of a “research alliance” (Fontana & Frey, p. 655) between the researcher and participant. In addition, creating a trusting relationship may facilitate the gathering of data that are “authentically grounded in participants’ experience and are therefore more complete and rich” (Cowles, 1998, p. 166).

Geertz (1986) wrote, “Whatever sense we have of how things stand with someone else’s inner life, we gain it through their expressions, not through some magical intrusion into their consciousness. It’s all a matter of scratching surfaces” (p. 373). These words served to offer both comfort and caution to me as I began the interview process.

One concern that stemmed from this “trusting relationship” was how to negotiate the difficult relationship between public and private disclosures of the self. Once an interview begins, our voices may call for shifts in direction that cannot be foreseen or planned for, but at the same time cannot be ignored. I understood that my participants had volunteered to take part in a research interview about their experiences teaching abroad,
but not necessarily an exploration of their deep-rooted racial assumptions or personal psyche.

I felt that a sense of obligation to tend to my participants’ voices, rather than simply the formality of passing this study through an ethics review board, might cause difficulties for me as a novice researcher. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) write that as researchers we need to “define our responsibility and understand our obligation in context” (p. 53). Other qualitative researchers have also discussed the difficulties of conducting research in terms of responsibility to the other and to questions about the nature of representation in research reporting (Howe & Moses, 1999; Tilley, 1998).

A second concern was a struggle with where to locate myself in the interview. I was conscious of wanting to hear each participant’s experiences and not hog “airtime” with my own. In my mind, I was continually questioning (Fontana & Frey, 2000), how much do I reveal about myself? Despite my efforts, after completing my very first interview, I left wondering if my identification with my participant might have been a weakness to the interview.

I feel like I was talking too much in there [the interview]. I feel so connected to Neil, in terms of our past teaching experiences in Japan [and] our current research interests that I hope I wasn’t taking over, directing the flow of conversation, and ultimately answering my own questions.

(research journal entry, July 9, 2003)

Alice McIntyre (1997) wrote of the difficulties in conducting her white-on-white participatory action research in part because of the “seduction of similarity” (Hurd & McIntyre, as cited in McIntyre, p. 30). My participants and I share several characteristics
and I recognize that an interview is co-constructed, yet I wanted to provide space for my participants' retellings of their experiences, so I entered into the remaining interviews more cautiously.

_Transcription Decisions_

In the words of Oakley (1981), “Interviewing is rather like a marriage: everyone knows what it is, an awful lot of people do it, and yet behind closed door there is a world of secrets” (p. 410). Those secrets include many aspects of the interview context that are often not recorded on tape: looks, body postures, long silences, the physical setting, the way one dresses, and other factors affecting the tone of the interview (Fontana & Frey, 2000). I acknowledge that the full flavour of the interviews as lived experiences is not represented in the transcripts. I concur with the perspective shared by other researchers (e.g., Kvale, 1996; Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999; Poland, 1995; Tilley, 2003), that transcription is an act of interpretation, so “the question ‘What is the correct transcription?’ cannot be answered for there is no true, objective transformation from the oral to the written mode” (Kvale, 1996, p. 166). Instead, I decided on a useful transcription convention system for my own research purposes (Tilley & Powick, in press). Reading through methodological literature, there appears to be no standard form or code for transcription of qualitative research interviews, although there are some standard choices to be made.

For the purpose of this research study I was interested in exploring educators' stories and experiences of teaching abroad, so I did not feel the need to apply an elaborate system of syntax coding to the transcripts. In constructing my transcripts I followed McIntyre’s (1997) suggestion of presenting the participants' individual talk with very
little editing. Including silences, pauses, interruptions, demonstrative expressions helped, to some degree, represent how participants struggled to articulate their feelings, beliefs, attitudes, and experiences (with race, racial identity, and whiteness).

After each one-to-one interview I transcribed the resulting audiotape following a set of transcription conventions (see Appendix F: Transcription Conventions). As I transcribed I kept notes in my research journal. The type of comments recorded included initial analytical thoughts, possible questions for the second interview, reflections on my own teaching experiences, and critiques of my interview style. In addition, after completing each transcript I returned to the audiotape, listening and comparing tape to text as a means to reduce errors and maximize transcription quality.

The Data

Data consisted of participants' one-to-one interviews, the corresponding interview transcripts, and notes recorded after each interview to contextualize the interview experience. Additional data included my research journal, and a content analysis (Freeman, 1998) of one English as a Foreign Language-training orientation package. These multiple sources of information aided in deepening my understandings and were included to help establish credibility of research findings.

Analyzing the Data

Interview transcripts. Qualitative data analysis does not begin with the formal reading of the transcripts. Analysis is woven throughout the research study, from its design, through each stage of the process. In my case, the more formal data analysis procedures began after the audiotaped interviews had been transcribed. Analysis in qualitative research is primarily an inductive process of organizing the data into
categories and identifying relationships and themes among those categories. I followed the suggestions provided by Creswell (1994, 2002), Freeman (1998), and Tesch (1990) in completing the process of data analysis.

My first step was to read and reread through each completed interview transcript to get a sense of the whole. During these initial readings I wrote down ideas or questions in my research journal to help give shape to the individual words/phrases and the larger picture of interest. Next I coded each interview transcript.

Miles and Huberman (1994) explain: "Codes are tags or labels for assigning meaning to the descriptive or inferential information during a study. Codes usually are attached to 'chunks' of varying size – words, phrases, sentences, or whole paragraphs" (p. 56). I started by creating a list of 18 a priori codes (Freeman, 1998) based on the revised interview questions. The next step of the process involved coding the first transcript with the pre-established codes, as well as identifying and allowing for grounded codes to emerge (Freeman, 1998, Miles & Huberman, 1994). The second transcript was completed using the original 18 codes plus the codes grounded in the first transcript as a priori codes. I progressed in a similar manner through all additional transcripts.

In a manner similar to my transcription process, I recorded notes in my research journal as I coded each transcript. My research journal aided in not only keeping track of, and documenting my procedures, but also was a space to store my interpretations. These journal notes proved beneficial as the volume of data increased and I worked to find meaning within and among my participants' experiences.
The final phase of the coding process began with collapsing the list of 98 codes generated across all transcripts and, in effect, recoding each transcript (see Appendix G: Collapsed Codes). That is, using the set of collapsed codes, the interview transcripts were reanalyzed to apply codes that were identified later in the process to earlier transcripts.

In completing my detailed coding procedures, aided by multiple readings of the transcripts, I worked with these codes to see if and how specific responses overlapped or related to each other. I clustered together similar thoughts and ideas, creating in effect, several themes. I concluded the formal analysis process by contrasting and comparing the themes, looking for possible relationships between them.

*Research journal.* As noted above, my research journal was a multipurpose research tool. It was a space for me to record any comments following the interviews, note my initial thoughts while transcribing the audiotapes, and organize my ideas as I coded the resulting transcripts. I analyzed the interview transcripts first to allow my participants' words to guide that work. I then used the collapsed list of generated codes to analyze my research journal entries. I worked through the journal page-by-page to identify reoccurring patterns and themes.

*EFL training/orientation package.* I conducted a content analysis (Freeman, 1998) of one English as a Foreign Language training/orientation package. I contacted the organization that I had previously worked for as an English teacher and received their most recent orientation materials. The package contained a detailed application form, a general information handbook, a pre-departure orientation handbook, and language materials of the host country. Content analysis of the orientation materials provided data on the degree to which issues of teacher identity were considered important for the
preparation of language teachers going into international, culturally diverse environments.

*Member-Checking Procedures*

Although the analysis procedures facilitated the organization of data, it did not alleviate my sense of obligation to respectfully construct and re/present my participants’ experiences in a written account. In *Conducting Respectful Research* (1998), Tilley describes the challenges she faced and the choices she made in her efforts to conduct respectful research within a prison school for women. When writing her final research document, Tilley describes the responsibility she felt to the women’s words while acknowledging the authority afforded her, as researcher, to control what would appear in text (p. 325). I was reminded that my participants had signed a consent form (see Appendix D: Informed Consent Form), yet did not know how their words would be read, used, and cut and pasted into my final research findings. I chose to include a two-page summary of my preliminary interpretations with the transcripts I sent for member-checking to provide participants an opportunity to respond to how I was re/presenting their conversations.

*Limitations to the Study*

This study represents the experiences of my participants who comprise a very small percentage of the collective experience at large. I am unable to extrapolate my interpretations to all white teachers in culturally diverse contexts. I acknowledge up front that it is not my intention to generalize my findings to white educators outside of my study. The hope is to initiate a much-needed conversation. In addition, because the focus of this research is on white teachers, race is highlighted in these pages. Yet, I fully
acknowledge that how one's identity is experienced will be mediated by other dimensions of oneself: gender, class, age, religion, sexuality, physical ability, and historical circumstance (Scheurich, 1997; Tatum, 1997).
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

The research questions guiding this study were focused on the experiences of white educators teaching internationally and in particular, how whiteness influenced (or did not) their educational practices. I acknowledge that the data analysis offered here is selective and exploratory. Rather than seeking a comprehensive or definitive account of whiteness in EFL classrooms, an over-ambitious and misguided aim, I wanted to engage my participants in conversation about their experiences with, and understandings of, whiteness. Aided by the literature, I analyzed my participants’ stories alongside my research journal, excerpts from my interview, as well as my personal letters. In the following sections, I describe the four broad themes that emerged from my examination of the data. Under each broad theme, multiple subcategories are used to provide depth and further detail. The four themes are:

Negotiating Racial Identity

More Than Teaching English: Multiple Roles as Teacher

Resisting the Discussion

Moving Toward Reflection

It is important to note that I do not position myself outside of the themes I describe. I agree with Goodall (2000), who suggests that meaningful writing involves reflexivity, which “begins with asking yourself the same questions that guide your analysis and interpretation of others” (p. 141). I struggled on a number of levels with the themes offered. Were the final themes too simplistic and narrow? Did they capture my participants’ experiences fairly? In addition, with each keystroke I was aware of my responsibility to respectfully represent my participants in writing. To this end, I have
included extensive quotes from the participants as a way to provide more than my own words as representations of what was said. There are limitations of cutting, pasting, and arranging quotes to re/present how participants told their stories; however, I believe this work is the beginning of a much-needed conversation.

Negotiating Racial Identity

How would you describe yourself racially?

In seeking participants for this study, my information letter outlined the purpose of the research, and invited white educators with international experience to take part. Neil, Gretchen, Beth, and Fiona responded. In addition, I asked Wendy if she would be willing to take part and she agreed. In the first interviews I asked participants, all who had received the schedule of questions beforehand, to describe themselves racially. As well, all participants completed a demographic form that, among other short-answer questions, contained a space to write in their ethnic and racial backgrounds. Multicultural psychologist Janet Helms (1990) defines racial identity as “a sense of group or collective identity based on one’s perception that he or she shares a common racial heritage with a particular racial group” (p. 3, italics in original). What I found was that, for the most part, white participants had difficulty identifying as members of a racial group. Below, Neil’s response illustrates his struggle to define his own racial identity.

I am part of the dominant group. It’s up to everybody else to define what they are in relation to me. I’m the sun. It’s up to the planets to decide what they are, but you know I am the center. So maybe that’s why it’s kind of hard to define. (Neil, transcript 1, p. 15 of 39)
Beth and Fiona both responded to questions of racial identity by referring to themselves as Canadian. “To me, I’m Canadian.... My parents always said, ‘You’re a Canadian.’ So I just, I don’t, I don’t really think about it” (Fiona, transcript 1, p. 12 of 19).

In interviews with white teacher candidates, both McIntyre (1997) and Lawrence (1997) found that a common answer to questions concerning the meaning of whiteness was “I never thought of it.” Their findings suggest a low level of group self-awareness among white North Americans. As Stanfield (1985) puts it, “Whites do not even notice they are white” (p. 400). This invisibility of whiteness often leads to a general social tendency to assume that whites do not have a race and to focus analyses of race upon people of colour (Denevi, 2001; Maher & Tetreault, 1997).

Both Wendy and Gretchen responded to questions of identity with ease. Wendy self-identifies as a Black Canadian of Jamaican heritage. In our conversations, Wendy spoke of her frustrations of having to explain, or at times, justify herself as being Canadian.

Here [in Canada] people are from all these different places that they want to know where you are from. And if you’re born here and not, and not white then, frankly I was getting a little bit tired of saying, “Oh, well I’m from here but my parents...” you know what I mean.... It’s [asking the question] probably not meant in the way I was starting to feel it was meant, but people do ask, “Oh, oh where are you FROM?” The fact that I was born here as far as I’m concerned that’s enough but people don’t necessarily feel the same. (Wendy, transcript 1, pp. 13-14 of 32)
Gretchen identifies as an ethnic mix. She describes being aware of her background since she was a little girl. During our second conversation, she told a most interesting story that juxtaposes her own understanding with what Gretchen referred to as her mother’s lack of racial awareness. Gretchen’s family was having a discussion on what it meant to be a Canadian, and in conversation Gretchen referred to her mother as a “white person.” Her mother became angry and took offense at being called white. In the course of talking through her mother’s feelings, Gretchen came to realize that her mother had never before labelled herself in terms of being white, or having a race.

It still boggles my mind. How do white people not know they’re white? White people are kind of, I think they’re not on the scale, they’re not on the race [scale], they’re raceless. They’re, like, above it. They are kind of looking down going, “Oh Chinese, oh Japanese, oh Korean.” They’re just kind of on the balcony but they never, not all of them, but some of them don’t see themselves as having a race. (Gretchen, transcript 2, pp. 22-23 of 23)

Scheurich (1997) and Tatum (1997) write that people of colour grow up learning to look at themselves not through their own eyes or the eyes of their own race, but through the eyes of whites. They learn that others see them as members of a group. However, many white people do not experience themselves as defined by skin colour and, as a result, do not view themselves as racialized individuals (Katz & Ivey, 1977; McIntosh, 1988; Scheurich, 1997). For white people, thinking of oneself only as an individual is “a legacy of white privilege” (Tatum, 1997, p. 102). Furthermore, the view
of oneself as an individual is also compatible with the dominant ideology of individualism and the myth of meritocracy.

*Interacting with Privilege*

Participants were invited to share their stories of international teaching and in telling them, they positioned themselves as the main characters in the classroom, the staff room, and the local community. Woven throughout their descriptions was a common thread of individualism. Participants saw themselves as individuals able to make executive classroom decisions, control their workspace, and choose to act independently of the cultural norms of their host country. Despite claims of individuality, all participants were North American-born, and native English-speaking, in addition 4 were white-skinned, characteristics which all carry privilege and power. LeCompte and McCray (2020) state that, for many white individuals, the challenge is to recognize that individuality needs to be considered within one’s contextualized racial and sociocultural life.

Although adaptability is often cited as a characteristic of a successful traveller, my participants spoke of a more tempered flexibility. It was important for them to feel comfortable in their new environments. Participants adapted to a degree that they felt did not compromise their individuality. Fiona commented, “It’s okay to be sensitive to the other country but you need to be comfortable too, as an individual living abroad” (Fiona, transcript 1, p. 5 of 19). For Fiona, this was most evident in the descriptions of her classroom. She spoke of “my classroom” and “nobody else controlling it” (Fiona, transcript 1, p. 11 of 19). In the excerpt that follows I ask Fiona to comment on how she thought her students perceived her.
Kelly: In your classroom, did you feel you were being read a certain way, either as a Canadian? Or as a teacher?

Fiona: Well, teachers are highly valued in Japanese culture so there was some level of respect. But if I were Japanese I think it [the expectations] would be different. It was okay to be myself because I’m not Japanese.

Kelly: your “foreign-ness” gave you permission?

Fiona: yeah, some.... I had fun. I could be myself. (Fiona, transcript 1, p. 8 of 19)

In this exchange Fiona introduces her understanding that the foreign and local teaching staff are held to different standards, yet what was left unarticulated were the reasons why she was granted this different standard. I suggest that because of her valued position as a Western, native English speaker who is also white, Fiona had the privilege to be herself.

In our initial conversation, Fiona did not respond to questions of racial identity by identifying as a member of a racial group. Rather, she focused on people being “unique” and this thread of individualism is carried throughout our conversation. Fiona completed her interview offering this piece of advice to future EFL teachers. “Be open to the culture...but be yourself, too. It’s okay to show who you are” (Fiona, transcript 1, p. 18 of 19).

Gretchen had just returned from her second experience teaching overseas when we had our first conversation. She had left Taiwan on unfriendly terms with her employer and talked at length of the cultural gaps she had faced. In contrast to Fiona, Gretchen’s original intent was to fit into the local culture, to behave like the local Taiwanese teachers
in her new environment. Below Gretchen recounts how she initially saw her role as a foreign employee in a new work setting.

I saw myself as extremely adaptable, EXTREMELY adaptable. So I knew if I was teaching a room full of businessmen I didn’t have to think about how I should behave or how I should hold myself or speak or conduct myself, it just automatically happened. I know for some people they, they don’t know.... They [Other foreign teachers] can’t change to adapt to new circumstances. So I didn’t see myself like that.... I thought it’s my responsibility as a foreigner in this country to respect the culture and to change accordingly. (Gretchen, transcript 1, pp. 3-4 of 35)

Although Gretchen accepted that she would make changes, she also assumed she would be in control of what changes she was expected to make.

I really felt, it’s kind of like, oh I’m invincible. I’m invincible and I don’t, I can’t have any problems because I’m the one in control. I can adapt to the situation well enough to be able to handle everything. (Gretchen, transcript 1, p. 4 of 35).

This belief of being in control was put to the challenge when Gretchen learned that management was failing to make tax contributions on her behalf. This meant she would not be entitled to a return payment upon completion of her contract. Gretchen was shocked by what she perceived as management’s lack of integrity and immediately addressed her concerns with her employer. When multiple conversations led to no resolution, Gretchen described herself as losing “all composure.”
At that point I lost all composure.... I was going to very explicitly let them know that it was unacceptable.... It was so unfair and it was so unjust so I’m not going to sit there like a lot of Taiwanese teachers do. They [Taiwanese teachers] don’t get paid for months and they just continue to teach and they put up with a lot of abuse. (Gretchen, transcript 1, pp. 5-6 of 35)

Gretchen clearly felt that she did not have to put up with this unfair treatment.

Gretchen’s growing understanding of her social location in relation to others, particularly Taiwanese women, is further illustrated in an exchange between Gretchen and one of the school managers. Following one particularly difficult confrontation, a female manager pulled Gretchen aside and attempted to both sympathize with her idealistic notion of honesty, and encourage her to accept things the way they were and move on. Gretchen chose to not respond to the manager verbally, yet described to me what she was thinking at that time.

...you’re a Taiwanese woman and you live in Taiwan. That’s how you have to think because, you know what, if you’re a Taiwanese woman living in Taiwan, you’re right. You can’t change anything. And you have to accept everything. That’s the way the culture is set up. But I’m different. I don’t have to [accept everything]. (Gretchen, transcript 1, p. 10 of 35)

In this excerpt Gretchen highlights the issue of gender. In her comment “if you’re a Taiwanese woman living in Taiwan, you can’t change anything,” she acknowledges the inequalities that women face. However, she seems to frame this inequality within national
borders. That is, Gretchen contends that the local Taiwanese women lack the power to effect change, yet she does not feel the same sense of powerlessness. Perhaps this is in part because Gretchen shares many characteristics of the dominant group. Merryfield (2000) writes that "the more characteristics – being male, middle class, heterosexual, able-bodied, North American born, English-speaking, etc. – a person shares with those who are privileged, the closer one can move from the margins to the mainstream" (p. 440).

For Gretchen then, experiencing this gap in understanding prompted her to consider how her Canadian upbringing helped to determine her beliefs, attitudes, and actions.

Because of our government, our Canadian government, our Canadian culture, we have so much freedom of mind. If I want to think that I can change something, I can. I can at least try.... It makes you wonder why was I born in Canada? How did I get so lucky? (Gretchen, transcript 1, pp. 10-11 of 35)

Beth offered another example of how participants chose to follow (or not follow) what they perceived as local social norms. Beth was describing to me the cultural topics she discussed with her students when the subject of alcohol, as an example of a difference between Canada and her Caribbean host culture, was introduced. This led to a digression in our conversation and Beth offering the following story.

We kind of formed this big group of foreigners, right? So we would all go to the bar. The bar would be just filled with men. Women didn’t go out to drink. Women stayed home with the kids.... So, the men loved it because
there was this pretty huge group of white girls [who] would show up at the bar and, you know, just for dancing and for drinking and whatever, nothing serious. (Beth, transcript 1, p. 14 of 26)

Perhaps in part due to an interest in probing further about Beth’s interactions with community members, and simply the natural flow of conversation, this point was not addressed in any more detail during the interview. However, when I transcribed the audiotape I did make reference to it in my research journal and in the preliminary interpretations that I sent to Beth for a member-check. In that synopsis I had written, “The contradictions of being white in the local community were discussed. The participant describes both the ‘irritating’ hissing she felt subjected to and also the freedom of being able to go to the bars.” It was in our second interview that Beth took up this point and together we attempted to talk through it further.

We were allowed at the bars and the Black [local Caribbean] women weren’t. I’m not sure if that’s because they weren’t or because they just didn’t go. (Beth, transcript 2, p. 6 of 23).

I was struck by Beth’s use of the word “allowed” and wanted to explore that notion of privilege. As a follow-up question I asked whether Beth felt that her whiteness afforded her the freedom to go to the bar and not observe the local custom. Beth replied:

It was very rare to see a Black woman at a bar. Maybe it’s just not the thing to do. It would be a taboo or a faux pas. Yeah, maybe we should have [followed the custom] but how do we know? We seemed to be accepted when we were at the bar. Why would they send us away? (Beth, transcript 2, p. 6 of 23)
Beth asks, “But how do we know?” Howard (1999) writes that dominant groups tend to know very little about those people whom they define as “the other.” Many white individuals are usually unaware of their own power and “can carry on the daily activities without any substantial knowledge about, or meaningful interaction with, those who are not part of the dominant group” (p. 58).

In the above stories notions of individualism are intertwined with whiteness. All 3 participants were white, North American-born, native English speakers, culturally dominant positions which carry privileges and power, yet making these connections with privilege was challenging. For many of my participants, seeing themselves as privileged was a new idea. Scheurich (1997) and Tatum (1992) argue that if one is only trained to think of oneself as an individual, then connections between racial identity and privilege will not be made. For white EFL teachers (positions which both carry privilege), there is a need to examine how racial identity is taken up within their training. One way for white teachers to become more critical about educational practices for diverse learners is to be more self-reflective about their own sense of themselves as racial beings.

Identity as Represented in EFL Training/Orientation Materials

Lawrence and Tatum (1997b, p. 333) ask, “How well prepared are white teachers to understand their own ‘whiteness’ and the meaning it may have when interacting with students of colour?” Considering this question prompted me to examine my participants’ formal EFL training. That is, I was interested in looking at how identity, in particular teacher identity, was represented in training materials.

For the most part, my participants talked of trial by fire. Participants had limited guidance, if any, in dealing with issues of teacher self-awareness and classroom practice.
Neil and Wendy were the only participants who received any type of teacher orientation from their host institutions. Neil regarded his 2-week training period as insufficient, while Wendy commented that her training, as well as her interview for the job, "reinforced rather than broke down cultural stereotypes" (Wendy, transcript 1, p. 13 of 32). I conducted a content analysis (Freeman, 1998) of one EFL training/orientation package to discern how identity and its connection to culture and pedagogy were represented.

This particular organization's orientation package is sent to new teachers prior to their arrival in the host country. The main component of the package is the General Information Handbook, which is divided into four broad sections. Chapters 1 and 2 provide the history of the EFL organization and pre-departure information pertaining to passports, visas, and baggage. Chapter 3 is the largest section of the handbook and outlines teachers' duties, and possible health and safety issues of living in a foreign country, as well, it details logistical information such as driving rules, computer/telephone availability, and issues of money. The next two chapters outline the protocols for either renewing a contract or choosing to leave the organization. The last section of the handbook provides essays written by current EFL teachers highlighting their personal experiences of working in a foreign context.

In the Handbook's 142 pages, the duties of the new EFL teacher are a mere three and a half pages long. The only mention of teacher identity is a reminder for teachers to think back to their adolescent years and their own language learning experiences as a means to encourage empathy for their new students. Prominent in teachers' duties is the importance of student relations. The text points out that teachers may hold preconceived images of Japanese students as being polite, quiet, and shy. These cultural stereotypes
appear to be further reinforced, however, when only a few lines later the text explains that as a teacher you may find students reluctant to answer questions, speak in front of peers, and participate in pair work.

Under issues of health and safety, the notion of culture shock is introduced. Although no direct connections are made to classroom practices, it is explained that living in a new environment will necessitate the examination of one’s values, perceptions, and beliefs.

When we move into a new culture, we bring along all of the values, assumptions and beliefs that our culture and experiences have instilled in us. They determine what we notice, and how we interpret and evaluate our experiences.... During your stay you will experience ways of thinking and acting that differ from, or, may even conflict with your own. This will force you to re-examine the assumptions and social behaviours which you once thought absolute and can cause discomfort, disorientation and emotional conflicts. (JET Programme, 2003, p. 72)

One of the most interesting features of the Handbook is the series of personal accounts by teachers who represent a variety of backgrounds. The essays describe living and working in Japan from particular perspectives. Some of the 12 essay titles include: “The Male Teacher,” “The Rural Teacher,” “The Gay/Lesbian Teacher,” “The African-American Teacher,” “The Vegetarian Teacher,” and “The Non-Native English-Speaking Teacher.” Reading the titles, I had expected the essays to explore what it means to be male, lesbian, African-American etc., in the classroom. Seven of the essays talk primarily of practicalities, for example, the drawbacks of living in a rural community, the
difficulties of enrolling your English-speaking children into local kindergarten, or the 
lack of alternative print and media resources.

“The African-American Teacher,” “The South Asian Teacher,” and “The 
Vegetarian Teacher” were the only three essays in which direct connections between 
identity and teaching were made. The African-American teacher described open talks on 
multiculturalism with staff members and incorporating discussions of discrimination and 
apartheid into lessons to broaden students’ knowledge of people of African descent. The 
teacher of South Asian background highlights conversations held with her school 
administration with respect to her right to wear a nose ring based on her cultural beliefs. 
As well, in her classroom issues of culture and identity were actively included in the 
curriculum. The vegetarian teacher explains how she views her food choice as an 
opportunity to educate students and teachers about different cultures and beliefs.

In reading the essays on being a male teacher or a female teacher, I was reminded 
of my participants who described their identity in terms of individuality. There is no 
mention of the authors’ ethnicity or racial background; however, it is interesting to note 
that both essays talked of identity in terms of “being yourself,” “not letting others define 
you,” and “maintaining a balanced sense of yourself that you are comfortable with.”

As part of the organization’s training, new teachers are required to attend a 3-day 
orientation prior to leaving for their job overseas. These teachers also receive a Pre-
Departure Orientation Handbook, at 78 pages, a smaller version of the general 
information book. The information provided is predominantly the same in both 
handbooks, the main exception being the inclusion of a resource section on Canada, 
including such things as a list of famous Canadians, words to the national anthem, and
Canadian food recipes. Also included are four paragraphs on sensitive topics that an EFL teacher may encounter. One topic deals with race relations and the treatment of minorities. Teachers are told to expect curiosity about their ethnic and racial backgrounds, and asked to consider "How much do you know about, or identify with, the country of your ancestors? How does this fit with your Canadian identity?"

Overall, there is an overwhelming lack of connection between who the teacher is and what she or he does in the classroom. For the most part, the training and orientation materials ignored issues of teacher identity, class diversity, and pedagogy. I acknowledge that one training/orientation package does not represent the whole, yet in conjunction with participants’ stories of limited support and a lack of awareness, such materials shed light on the need to reexamine current training practices. As Neil stated near the end of our second conversation, “You need to be able to have the opportunity to critically reflect and be given resources to investigate the deeper issues” (Neil, transcript 2, p. 26 of 28).

Relation of Teacher Training to Teaching Practices

You have so little training that, unfortunately, you had nothing else to fall back on…this is the way that I was taught and I don’t know any other way and I [’ve] never thought about it. (Neil, transcript 1, p. 35 of 39)

Few teachers would question that teaching is a contextual and situational process, yet as Gay (2000) reminds us, too few teachers have sufficient knowledge of how teaching practices reflect dominant cultural values. Kinsella (1995) says that “… teachers teach the way they were taught” (p. 170). Without adequate preparation for cultural diversity, participants often relied on their own schooling experiences as the basis of their classroom decisions. In detailing their teaching practices and classroom design,
participants either made explicit references to how they remember school or described typical North American classrooms.

Wendy spoke candidly about her initial fear of entering a foreign classroom. “I was definitely thinking, ‘Oh my gosh (laughing). I’m going to be teaching. I don’t know what I’m doing’” (Wendy, transcript 1, p. 13 of 32). In preparation she bought several teaching reference books to reinforce her 4-week training course and offer more ideas in terms of classroom activities. When she arrived in Japan, however, Wendy discovered she used her prior language learning experience as an initial resource in developing her teaching methods.

Because I speak French as well, it [teaching English] made me more aware of how did I learn French. I kept relating what we were doing in my class to, you know, thinking back to when I was learning French. What had we done [then]? (Wendy, transcript 2, p. 10 of 20)

The feeling of not knowing what to do was one shared by many participants.

Gretchen had completed her BEd prior to leaving for Taiwan but was given neither an orientation nor EFL training at her new school. “I had never seen anyone teach English before. I didn’t really know what to do.... I was kind of stuck in my certain structure that I thought might work” (Gretchen, transcript 1, p. 22 of 35). Through trial and error, Gretchen attempted to establish an effective classroom environment. However, with no options offered, Gretchen relied, in part, on cultivating her teaching style on the basis of a familiar model she thought “might work.”

Neil introduced the contradiction between the fact that North Americans are hired, and often favoured, to teach English in Japan in order to provide a more communicative
approach to learning, yet for Neil, his own schooling was not representative of that model.

In relating to education we love to think, “Oh Western education is so inclusive and the students are kind of...” Well it’s very teacher-centered. I mean, I don’t recall doing pair work in any class from kindergarten to university. It’s all teacher-centered. I was trained in trying to make things more communicative to go to Japan but actually I was only prepared to be the center. (Neil, transcript 1, p. 8 of 39)

Neil’s place as center was at risk, however, because of his insecurity about his teaching. To protect his dominant position, one that he also felt the students expected him to maintain, Neil clung to classroom rules such as “No Japanese [spoken] in my class” as a means of control. “You’re in a very insecure position so you try to impose control, which is right in keeping with my educational experiences” (Neil, transcript 1, p. 13 of 39). A second strategy used to secure his position was to encourage the notion of teacher as expert. “The system that I had set up for myself [was] that I was the fountain of knowledge” (Neil, transcript 1, p. 26 of 39). In Neil’s estimation this system initially worked to everyone’s advantage. Neil was happy to be the center of attention and he felt the students were relieved to have the pressure off them.

Wendy, Gretchen, and Neil’s descriptions of their classrooms, although perhaps not articulated as intentionally organized, were patterned after a North American model of schooling that they themselves experienced as students in Canadian schools.

The pervasive influences of the participants’ own cultural backgrounds were illustrated not only in classroom design but also in participants’ teaching practices. As a
qualified ESL teacher with extensive prior experience, Beth had a clearly defined personal teaching style.

I like to have a friendly, you know, talkative, fun classroom. I know that's a little bit of my culture, a little bit me. So if I'm teaching the students and it meshes [with them] then great, and if it's different then I have to explain, “This is my culture. This is how I'm going to do it.” (Beth, transcript 2, p. 13 of 23)

Throughout our interviews Beth gave little indication that “doing it her way” resulted in any cultural clash with her students. In responding to a question on unsuccessful teaching moments, Beth talked of complications arising from large class sizes and an inoperable listening lab. For Beth, “[Teaching] problems didn’t come from my style so much as they came from, you know my VHS tapes [from] here not working there when I was told they would” (Beth, transcript 1, p. 13 of 26). Fiona shared a similar view of teaching from her culture. Believing that her students would benefit from a more authentic classroom experience, Fiona purposefully designed an environment that would prepare students to communicate in an English setting. To both familiarize students with her classroom style and engage them in that style, Fiona provided deliberate explanation.

I really looked at it that many of these students are going to go to North America, so they want to know about my culture.... So in the classroom we weren’t [following Japanese etiquette]. I laid it out, “It’s okay to shout out the answer. It’s okay to raise your hand. It’s okay to be crazy. It’s okay to do these more individual things.” It was clear that in the classroom we’re kind of not in Japan. (Fiona, transcript 1, p. 11 of 19)
Ryan (as cited in Gettings, 1999) summed up his discussion on the attitudes some foreign EFL teachers hold toward student classroom behaviour in Japan; “If students are there to learn English, they should learn to behave like Americans (British, etc.)” (para. 6). Ryan argues that teachers have an image of the ideal student that is constructed from the teacher’s cultural schemata. That is, the culture of the students is not taken into consideration in the teacher’s expectations of classroom behaviour. I followed up by asking Fiona if she felt her classroom was representative of a North American style. She replied quickly, “No. It wasn’t teacher centered.” Duff and Uchida (1997) conducted an ethnographic study of American and Japanese EFL teachers in private language institutes. Questions explored how teachers’ sociocultural identities, understandings, and practices are negotiated and transformed over time. Findings demonstrated that language and culture are, to some extent, inseparable. Duff and Uchida concluded that culture related to not only the cultural content of the courses taught but also the subtle practices that were characteristic of teaching; the way the teachers arranged seating, the questions asked, the stories told, and the exercises set.

Having taught in a Japanese school, I was intrigued with the laissez-faire classroom style Fiona had established. I asked her if it had really been successful. Fiona pointed out that compared to her private conversation school experiences, I had worked in the public school system and in her estimation students enjoyed her classes precisely because they were different from everyday school. That is, there was no need for students to conform to how things were traditionally done in the public schools.

Although Fiona described a scene where students would volunteer to participate or even shout out the answer, other participants found encouraging such familiar
behaviour more challenging. In particular, Gretchen spoke of the difficulties in engaging the stereotypical shy Asian student.

I’m very enthusiastic and energetic and outgoing. I had this idea that the more I was like that, the more they would be like that. However, I found that not to be true with some class dynamics. Some of them, no matter how hard I tried, would just sit in silence. (Gretchen, transcript 1, p. 19 of 35)

In Gretchen’s story I was reminded of my own experience. In my first few months of teaching I diligently worked to create Bingo-like game cards for learning the letters of the alphabet and game show questions to practice vocabulary. I had a pocket full of stickers and prizes brought from Canada and with loud enthusiasm introduced these games to my classes. For the most part they were met with silence. I distinctly recall being annoyed at the lack of raised hands or student appreciation for my extra work. It did not occur to me at that time that my behaviour may have been silencing the students or that unconsciously I expected them to conform to my North American cultural norms. In discussions with my Japanese co-teachers, I began to recognize and appreciate my students’ style of class participation and develop lesson plans that were more effective for them. Gretchen also talked of realizing that if she brought her energy level down, relaxed, and slowed her pace to that of the students, class was more active and vocal.

For Fiona, Neil, and me, who all had stories of working in Japan, the suggestion that the Japanese system needs our more communicative approach is very attractive. However, research in the EFL context highlights the need to avoid imposing a foreign teaching method, without reflection on, and consideration of, the existing cultural
characteristics and constraints within which it must be applied (Dat, 2001; Rajagopalan, 2000).

Understanding whiteness is particularly important for educators, since white cultural norms are often enforced (usually without any recognition that they are white norms) in schools. Teachers who gain an awareness of their racial identity may be far better positioned to see why prevailing pedagogical and curricular patterns are not working for all students. Specifically, for white EFL teachers who are often fully committed to cultural diversity, they may fail to see how their own investments in white culture as the norm get in the way of their good intentions with respect to students of different cultural backgrounds.

Participants’ beginning understandings of their identities were even further complicated by the multiple ways in which they were seen as teachers. In the following section I explore some of the variety of ways participants experienced being teachers in the EFL context.

More Than Teaching English: Multiple Roles as Teacher

In detailing their international teaching experiences, all participants explained why they had decided to teach overseas. Although answers varied, including responses such as a desire to “break free,” financial gains, or an interest in travelling, none were focused on the job of teaching. As a follow-up question to why they were initially interested, I asked participants to describe what they had felt their role as an EFL teacher would be. Fiona commented, “I expected to go and teach people who wanted to learn English, I guess” (Fiona, transcript 1, p. 1 of 19). For others, this question proved more challenging. Two participants paused at length and asked to return to the question later in
the interview. Neil, in particular, struggled to articulate his thoughts on the role of EFL teaching in general. In our second conversation Neil commented:

It's interesting that I had so much trouble with your question, "What's the purpose of EFL?" I don't know if you noticed but you had to bring me back to that at least three times and I avoided it. It was very, very difficult for me to answer that question.... I was unequipped to answer that question because I hadn't really thought about it deeply... (Neil, transcript 2, pp. 2-3 of 28)

Through our conversations, it became clear that what participants' jobs would involve and what "teaching" meant had been left undefined by their respective employers. Fiona spoke of the teaching aspect being "downplayed" in her interview prior to leaving. When I interviewed for my first teaching position in Japan, the only classroom-related question I was asked focused on how to motivate student interest in learning English. In fact, when I attended a recent recruiting seminar for the same Japanese organization in which I had previously worked, classroom teaching as part of your job responsibilities was a mere mention.

With varying degrees of formal training and personal preparation, all participants spoke of the experiential aspect of learning to teach through the act of teaching. Yet, participants admitted that teaching grew complicated as a result of their shifting roles as teacher. Using the language introduced by my participants, I have named these various locations "teacher as salesperson," "teacher as missionary," "teacher as expert/ambassador," and "teacher as celebrity."
Teacher as Salesperson

All participants, with the exception of Beth who worked within a university context, spoke of the sales component of being a teacher in a private language school. EFL teaching was described as a business and white teachers as their marketing tools.

The role of EFL, it's just a moneymaker. The company doesn't really think about what they are doing there. They use people's dreams, really. They say [to students], "You can be an international person. You can have foreign, white, blue-eyed friends." (Neil, transcript 1, p. 4 of 39)

Neil is foreign, white, and blue-eyed and struggled to find his place in what he referred to as "a real ugly business" (Neil, transcript 2, p. 21 of 28). He spoke with resentment of the money changing hands and the lofty promises that management sold potential students. Neil recognized the limitations of his lack of formal training and felt that being positioned as a sales representative further compromised his development as a teacher.

This company was very big on the business aspect. So it was sales and renewal campaigns and things like this. So the business aspect of it was also very strongly emphasized. So they're preparing you to be a salesperson as well. So they're telling you, "Yes, you're a teacher but if you don't, in your capacity as a teacher, if you're not going to contribute to the company's success, it is going to be very difficult for you to succeed." (Neil, transcript 1, p. 3 of 39)

As several participants explained it, contributing to company success meant convincing students who were near the end of their programs to sign on for future classes.
as well as encouraging the purchase of language tapes and accessories. "It was put on us [the teachers] to basically tell them [the students] why they should renew, right? All the teachers hated that but it is part of your job" (Fiona, transcript 1, p. 9 of 19). Participants also described staff meetings where management outlined the money targets of each renewal campaign, or bulletin boards that posted how many products each teacher had sold. As well, in two language schools, mingling with students between classes was encouraged as a means of "being seen" (Wendy, transcript 1, p. 5 of 32). Both Fiona and Wendy disliked the sales aspect of their jobs but recognized its necessity in order to maintain their teaching position. They described participating in the renewal campaigns to a limited degree, agreeing to speak with students about their progress, yet refusing to pressure students into continuing with new classes.

As a certified teacher, Gretchen spoke fiercely on what she perceived as the corruption of privatized education. Gretchen shared Neil's belief that "all language schools care about is the money" (Gretchen, transcript 1, p. 14 of 35). Her growing identity as a teacher and her ability to perform her role as teacher was continually challenged by administrators she deemed corrupt.

I think they're [administrators] definitely corrupt, especially when education is privatized. It's completely corrupt and they don't care about standards.... It's not about educational philosophy or educational ideals, it's about money. The school just wants a white person there to make them look good. It's a marketing thing. So I don't get any personal satisfaction out of it at all. And I really feel like I'm wasting my time, the kids are
wasting their time, and the school is making some money. (Gretchen, transcript 1, p. 23 of 35)

If English language teaching was a business and the foreign teacher a marketing tool, the product was the language itself. English was positioned as capital. It was the currency with which students could open the doors to international travel, advance in society, and increase their work opportunities. For example, the main purpose of English education in Japan has been described as the process of "internationalization." Such a process can be interpreted from different cultural perspectives. Merry White (1987) defines it as "the creation of children who know how to work productively with foreign counterparts" (p. 173) while David McConnell (1999) calls it "the opening up" of Japanese society (p. 55). McConnell assumes that the adoption of distinctly "Western norms and expectations" (p. 49), gained through conversational fluency in English, are necessary for Japan to join the international community as an equal.

Research has shown that at a time when English is widely seen as a key to the economic success of both nations and individuals, the phenomenal spread of English worldwide has not resulted in equal status or equal treatment for all speakers of English (Tollefson, 2000). Although beyond the scope of this thesis, the work of Phillipson (1992) and Pennycook (1994) show that due to structural relations and historical processes, the global spread of the English language benefits dominant, "core" English-speaking countries (the United States, Canada, Great Britain, Australia, and New Zealand) while "peripheral" countries face the additional burden and expense of learning English, training teachers, operating language education programs, buying textbooks and materials and, other aspects of English language education.
Participants spoke of being indoctrinated with the belief that their students needed English. Therefore, as my participants shifted (and were shifted) into different roles, part of their developing teacher identities rested on the notion that as native English speakers they were the ones best able to fulfill students’ needs.

Teacher as Missionary

I was the first foreign teacher there and so I was kind of the hero. (Neil, transcript 1, p. 6 of 39)

Several participants described a teacher’s responsibilities in terms of helping. Neil talked of “helping individuals achieve their [language] goals” (Neil, transcript 1, p. 4 of 39), while Fiona commented, “I was helping out” (Fiona, transcript 2, p. 5 of 17). In discussing a teacher’s role, the term “helping” may be appropriate in its description; however, there did appear to be an undercurrent of the “hero” not only helping the students, but also saving them.

I think the company had kind of built up this thing that you’re, the missionary zeal and you’re going over there and you’re helping. You’re helping, you know, (pause) convert the masses. (Neil, transcript 1, p. 7 of 39)

However, it was clear in my conversations with participants that the missionary positioning was not one with which they felt comfortable identifying. Gretchen is currently enrolled in a TESL seminar. The class comprises of both Canadians and international students all learning how to teach English. She described to me in detail a continuing debate she has been having with her classmates concerning the purpose of native English-speaking teachers in the international context. Gretchen told me that her
classmates argue, "these countries want to learn English, it's their choice and they need you [as a native speaker]." Reflecting on her own experiences teaching abroad, Gretchen raised, both with her classmates and with me, the parallel between Christian missionaries and EFL teachers.

You know what, why shouldn't we feel like we are trying to convert the world and we are really modern-day missionaries? It's kind of an economic colonization that is going on all around the world. English is [the] medium or one of the tools…. Along with the English that I'm bringing these people, I'm bringing them my culture and who's to say that I'm not contaminating them. I really felt almost kind of [a] guilt thing. You know what, I'm no better than the Christian missionaries invading whatever country and taking over. It is kind of a SICK feeling. (Gretchen, transcript 1, pp. 24-25 of 35)

In Teaching and Cultural Competence (2001), Ladson-Billings argues that positioning teachers in the "helping" roles with people different from themselves often serves to cement the impression that others are needy and disadvantaged. Helping the less fortunate can become a lens through which teachers perform, and such an approach in teaching diverse groups renders students' culture irrelevant. Gretchen, Neil, and Fiona credit their current studies with increasing their awareness around the complex issues of helping out, and hinted at how this further complicates their understandings of their identities. As dedicated teachers, several with hopes to continue in international contexts, participants struggled to find a balance between their desire to teach and their acknowledgement that they may not be the ones best suited to provide that service.
Gretchen’s comment can also be understood in terms of the cultural legacies of colonialism. Pennycook (1998) stresses the need for language teachers to consider how not only the English language but also European and North American cultures have been forced upon other, local people.

People do have some goals over there, intrinsic or extrinsic motivation to learn English. The society as a whole also has some goals that they want to be more involved in the international business community. I’m not going to argue that I’m the perfect person or that I’m the person that needs to be the one to deliver the English. I’m not saying that at all. I have an interest in it, though. So that’s where I think I have something to add....

But you ask, “Am I in a dilemma?” And I’d say, “Yeah, yeah, at one level I am.” (Neil, transcript 1, p. 11 of 39)

Neil admits to his dilemma, yet is not paralyzed by it. He has begun critiquing the role of EFL teachers in the international milieu and using his current studies to reflect on his past teaching experiences. He has also taken up the conversation with prospective EFL teachers.

Although participants did use the language of missionary, aside from Neil, they did not suggest that the language schools themselves promoted this image. Rather, the schools were seen as positioning the EFL teacher as the expert and fountain of cultural knowledge.

*Teacher as Expert/Ambassador*

All my participants were cognizant of the fact that the local community and their students would see them as knowing English. The challenge for participants was the
perception that knowing English was equivalent to knowing how to teach English. A tenet created at the 1961 Commonwealth Conference on the Teaching of English as a Second Language in Makarere, Uganda, stated that the ideal teacher of English is a native speaker. Maum (2002), however, argues that the Makarere tenet is flawed: “People do not become qualified to teach English merely because it is their mother tongue” (p. 3).

Several participants had no background in EFL teaching prior to accepting their first position. The private language schools offered limited, if any, training, so new teachers often entered the classroom unprepared. For Wendy, entering a foreign classroom for the first time was overwhelming. “I was sort of like, ‘Oh my god, oh my god’ the whole time (laughing). It’s a little bit of a blur” (Wendy, transcript 1, p. 16 of 32). Gretchen attempted to overcome her initial unease over what exactly to teach by inviting her students to comment on what they wanted to learn. This strategy failed as all students deferred to her replying, “You speak English. You are the expert” (Gretchen, transcript 1, p. 21 of 35).

My own experiences being seen as “the expert” were not with my students, as much as with the local teachers. I was team-teaching in the public school system with Japanese teachers of English. Although the students would ask me pronunciation questions, they preferred to have the grammar explained in Japanese by my co-teacher. It was when the Japanese teachers approached me with sophisticated language questions that I realized simply speaking English did not guarantee my understanding its grammatical structures. In a letter I wrote to my parents in my third month of teaching I explained my predicament.
I need help. Would you be able to clearly explain to someone the difference between words like “anxious” and “eager”? And what about “persuade” and “convince”? I need a good dictionary. Yesterday a teacher told me that she had “tried to call” me the night before. She then corrected herself and said, “No, I tried calling.” I was asked to explain the difference in those two sentences. Help. I don’t even know what the structure is called, let alone if there is a difference in meaning. Christmas is around the corner, send grammar books! (Kelly, personal letter, November, 1994)

There is no doubt that, as native English speakers, my participants and I have a feel for its nuances, are comfortable using its idiomatic expressions, and speak it fluently. However, professional teaching competence often takes years to build, whether one is a native speaker or not. Neil spoke of learning this the hard way. “The unsuccessful teaching moments were when something got derailed... and I thought my blond hair and my charm would get me through the rough times in class” (Neil, transcript 1, p. 26 of 39). Neil described one particular lesson structured around a subtle grammar point which he had assumed his students would have no difficulty understanding. The grammar proved challenging and as students struggled, Neil found himself unprepared to meet their questions and requests for further explanation. He recalls, “I wasn’t prepared and my blue eyes weren’t helping very much at that point” (Neil, transcript 1, p. 26 of 39).

Participants were not only seen as experts on linguistic matters but often as the students’ only link to a Western country. As foreign representatives they were consulted on all manner of cultural queries. Many participants went abroad expecting to share information on food, holidays, and traditions and prepared by collecting cookbooks,
photos, and props. For the most part, the role of ambassador was one that participants felt more comfortable performing.

I have the knowledge of Canadian culture or North American culture... I think in EFL you are the one, one of the few people who have been there or who can really explain it. (Fiona, transcript 1, p. 17 of 19)

Participants' comfort level was further maintained by the fact that in cultural matters, in particular, they had some control over the degree to which they were seen as knower. Beth recognized that "my students were judging Canada based on me" (Beth, transcript 1, p. 14 of 26) and so included disclaimers to her explanations such as "Most people," or "My family does this but other people in Canada might do that..." (Beth, transcript 1, p. 14 of 26). Fiona also tempered her descriptions saying, "This is me. I don't represent all white people in North America" (Fiona, transcript 1, p. 17 of 19).

Students' interest in their foreign teacher and the habits, customs, and beliefs of her or his home country can be expected. However, Fiona also pointed out that teachers do have influence and "some people [foreign teachers] may misuse that easily, or unknowingly perpetuate stereotypes just by their own actions" (Fiona, transcript 1, p. 17 of 19).

Elements of teacher as salesperson, missionary, and ambassador played out in the work environment; however, a fourth dimension connected to teacher identity was evident in the community setting.

Teacher as Celebrity

In contrast to the distaste which participants expressed towards the selling aspect of their job, or the possible pressures of representing 30 million people as an ambassador,
for the most part, participants spoke positively about the attention they garnered as the foreigner.

We go to Asian countries [and] suddenly everyone wants to be your best friend and people approach you on the street and say, “Can you be my friend? Can I have your phone number?” As soon as we go over there we’re like celebrity practically. (Gretchen, transcript 2, p. 7 of 23)

Neil shared a similar story to Gretchen. “You’re a movie star or a rock star or something, right? I had students ask me for my autograph.” Neil laughed as his students compared him to Tom Cruise and joked, “It took two years to get over that (laughing), you know get over hearing that” (Neil, transcript 1, p. 8 of 39). For those 2 years Neil worked as the only foreigner at a private language school he helped open. And although clearly amused by his celebrity status, Neil slowly began to recognize how that heightened position had kept him distanced from the local culture. “I didn’t get deep enough into the culture to really even be affected by it. I was enjoying being the white guy who’s a lot of fun and kind of the center of the school” (Neil, transcript 1, p. 6 of 39).

After those 2 years, Neil moved to a new city and into an established language school. The decision to move was in part due to Neil wanting to pursue his original goal of learning the local language. In his new school Neil was neither the first nor only foreign staff member. Neil spoke of his celebrity status fading and with it a new understanding of his responsibility as a teacher. “I spent [those first] 2 years not really, not studying Japanese and just enjoying, enjoying the sushi and the beer... and when I moved I had to prove myself as a teacher” (Neil, transcript 1, p. 6 of 39).
In speaking with my participants, I hear my experience in their stories. Reflecting back on my time in Japan, being seen as a celebrity is something with which I easily identify. I was the first and only white face in a rural island community and benefited greatly from looking like the stereotypical Westerner. Invitations to represent the school at community events, photos of me showcased in the neighbouring city’s newspaper, and questions ranging from “How many boyfriends did I have?” to “Can I touch your blond hair?” aided in elevating my status (if only in my own head) from teacher to pop star. It was easy to be seduced by the applause and forget that there was a job to do. As Neil asked, “You’re on the high wire getting all the attention, so what’s to change?” (Neil, transcript 2, p. 23 of 28).

When I was living in Japan I did not quickly make the connection between my whiteness and my celebrity. Through reading the literature and in conversations with participants, and in particular Wendy (the one Black participant), I now realize the privileged position I held, and still hold in the Canadian context. When I talk about my time in Japan, I often tell stories of coming home from work and having a cooked meal wrapped and waiting on my doorstep, or bags of fresh rice sitting in the basket of my bicycle. In Wendy’s re-tellings of her experiences in Japan, she offers no such stories. Although Wendy discusses both the sales and missionary aspect of working abroad, the role of “teacher as celebrity” is noticeably absent in her transcripts. Below, Wendy describes how she perceived her community’s responses to her.

Wendy: Because obviously I stand out [physically], so people look at me.

Whereas in the work environment people wouldn’t stare at me, but outside they would. So, I think it was different outside of the work environment.
Kelly: Well, I was stared at outside of the workplace as well. I'm wondering did you take the staring in any certain way?

Wendy: I think, I just assumed it was because I didn't look like they do. I didn't think it was a negative thing. I didn't think it was malevolent at all.

Kelly: curiosity?

Wendy: yeah, curiosity. I was standing at a corner and this guy was going by on his bike and instead of really looking where he was going, he was looking at me and I thought (laughing) “Oh my goodness, you know watch the road you’re going to have an accident”(laughing).... I think people were generally, in the community, people were friendly, not friendly as in “Oh, how are you?” not necessarily gregarious but just polite. Yeah, maybe polite but also, yeah, I had people that offered to help me sometimes. So, polite but also sometimes kind.

Wendy made no indication that she felt she was the recipient of any unfair or unkind treatment from the community, in fact she states above that “people were polite.” Yet, when our stories are told side-by-side, there are stark differences in which I believe race played a significant role.

Following the first set of interviews I completed synopses of my preliminary interpretations and provided a copy to each participant. In each synopsis I highlighted the theme of multiple roles that teachers performed and commented on the challenges that participants faced as a result of these shifting roles. In our second conversations, several participants commented on how this theme resonated with them. Gretchen responded, “It [management’s and students’ expectations] affects the way the teachers perceive
themselves as teachers, and the way that they perceive what their job is” (Gretchen, transcript 2, p. 11 of 23). On his copy of the synopsis Neil had penned in the extra words “and this schizophrenia [of identity] is costly.”

Salesperson. Missionary. Ambassador. Celebrity. It would be simplistic and wrong to suggest that these dimensions of teacher identity were fixed and discrete. Identity categories are fluid social constructs (Khayatt, 1999; McCarthy, 2003) and a person’s identity is continually in flux. Participant locations were subject to change as both time progressed and circumstances changed. As well, understanding their roles as teachers was challenging as participants straddled several teacher identities at one time.

Resisting the Discussion

How did being white play out in participants’ everyday lives and in the educational institutions which they were a part of? How did participants interact with the privilege they carried as North American-born, native English speakers? These were critical questions and despite my efforts and intentions to engage in a discussion about whiteness and privilege, participants and myself included, drew upon strategies that worked to resist the notion and deflect the exploration of racial privilege. These included participants drawing on comparisons with the experiences of others, focusing on their feelings of guilt, creating a polite environment, and separating themselves from the more unaware.

People Are All The Same

Many participants talked of the belief that at some level, we all share a common human experience. Gretchen spoke of the importance of finding a common ground between herself and members of the host country. For Gretchen, making connections
would lead to “real dialogue and comfort” (Gretchen, transcript 2, p. 3 of 23). Making those connections can provide an effective way of beginning to understand the experiences of others. The trouble in this belief, however, is it puts all difference on some sort of equal footing.

When you become aware of the differences between two cultures, it’s kind of like that at the same time you’re becoming aware of the differences, you are also becoming aware of the things that are the same...recognizing what is the same on a deep level, like at a more spiritual level we are the same. (Gretchen, transcript 2, p. 16 of 23)

This type of connection becomes damaging when it serves to shift the focus away from issues of race and privilege.

Other participants talked of “near colour experiences” (Thompson, 2003, p. 9), that is, examples offered to show that they “got” racism in ways other whites do not. This strategy is used as a means of connecting with people of different racial backgrounds. Beth describes the first time she experienced being the only white person in her surroundings.

I was the only white person on the plane and that was my first time realizing, “OH, this is what it feels like to be a minority.” I had no idea. I assumed that if you were a minority it was something you are aware of and deal with and come to just rest with it.... I thought, “WOW, is everybody looking at me? What are they thinking?” I was curious but everybody was nice. And the same thing on the bus when I got there, “WOW, the only white person on the bus.” You’re just aware of it and you
wonder what they think. But if I think about it, if I see somebody on the bus who’s [a visible minority], it doesn’t make a difference. (Beth, transcript 1, p. 19 of 26)

In telling this story I feel that Beth is attempting to place her own experience within a racial framework. Her statement “Oh, this is what it feels like to be a minority,” is not used to trivialize the lived experiences of visible minorities but to illustrate her growing awareness of race issues. Although this story offered an opportunity to explore issues of race and the realities of racial differences further, Beth’s concluding sentence is more representative of a utopian ideal that “it doesn’t make a difference,” people are all the same. Colour-blindness denies the impact race has on people’s lives. Denevi (2001) and others (LeCompte & McCray, 2002; McIntyre, 1997; Valli, 1995) argue that white people have the privilege of not seeing their colour and subsequently denying others their racial identity. A colour-blind attitude was also representative of how Beth approached her students.

In the smaller groups where I got to know them [the students], I think they got to see that I didn’t care about colour. I would become pretty friendly with some of them, you know chitchatting about personal things. It got to be very comfortable. So I think in those cases they got to see that “I didn’t care attitude,” I didn’t care about those things. (Beth, transcript 2, p. 2 of 23)

In a colour-blind approach, there is a great deal that the teacher is not seeing. For example, if you have a student who is of Caribbean descent and you say, “I don’t see a
Black child, I just see a child” you may prevent yourself from knowing something about that student’s culture and community, and an important part of the student.

In interviewing a group of white teachers, Sleeter (1993) quotes one of her interviewees as saying:

What’s the hang up, I really don’t see color until we start talking about it. I see children as having differences...maybe they can’t do this or they can’t do that, I don’t see color until we start talking multicultural. Then oh yes, that’s right, he’s this and she’s that. (p. 161)

Sleeter goes on to say that “white teachers commonly insist that they are ‘color-blind’: that they see children as children and do not see race” (p. 161). She then asks a poignant question of these white teachers, “What does it mean to construct an interpretation of race that denies it?” (p. 161). The danger of colour-blindness is that it uses whiteness as the default, and it mimics the norms of fairness by “whiting” out differences and perpetuating the belief in sameness and equality. The pretense of not seeing colour not only denies the importance of racial differences in the experience of minorities, but also allows white people to deny their unearned privilege and positions of power (Hacker, 1995; Lawrence, 1996; McIntyre, 1997). McIntyre (1997) argues that the “privileged affect” of white people is their ability to choose to ignore issues of race, power, and privilege.

Guilt

Some participants spoke of feelings of guilt as they slowly came to recognize that being white did make a difference and were uncomfortable with the advantages it afforded them. In the excerpt below, Gretchen describes the guilt she felt when imagining how the local community perceived her as a white foreigner in their country.
Sometimes I'd be walking down the street and there'd be an older, an elderly man in traditional clothing riding his bicycle and I would almost feel guilty of something. I can't even describe it. (pause) Guilty for even being there. I [tried] to imagine what I look like through his eyes.... He's seen his country completely ravaged and destroyed by foreigners. Now I'm here teaching his grandchildren.... I really felt, why am I here?

(Gretchen, transcript 1, pp. 26-27 of 35)

Tatum (1999) warns that guilt has the ability to “immobilize... and too often becomes self-indulgent” (p. 61). For individuals exploring their own whiteness, it becomes important that guilt over past injustices neither overwhelms them nor stalls their racial development. Gretchen did not make direct connections between her feelings of guilt and her classroom practice. Yet, she did indicate that recognizing those feelings initiated reflection on the teaching context within which she wanted to work. Gretchen felt that as a native English speaker and with the cultural knowledge she carried, she would be best suited for mature students with definite plans to study and/or work in North America.

Neil provided a complex example of struggle. His acknowledgement of the inequitable treatment of the local teaching staff allowed him to reflect on the invisibility of his own privilege, yet his guilt, at times, kept him silent.

There is definitely guilt involved. I mean the Japanese teachers work really, really hard, [and] longer hours because they have more responsibilities. The white teachers didn’t really have to... Yeah [it’s] really unfair and GOD FORBID if anybody mentions that. I think that was
a source of guilt.... It would have been good to have a dialogue [but] no one wants to talk about that. No one wants to talk about this Japanese teacher who works 10 times harder and gets paid a third or whatever it is and why is that? Why are the school managers, why are they being treated like garbage by head office and have to phone in results crying as they’re doing it because they didn’t get the [student] renewals and we [the white teachers] sail out to go for a beer? (Neil, transcript 2, pp. 16-17 of 28)

The anger and guilt in Neil’s words are difficult to dismiss. He spoke of wishing he had been more active, “someone who would have been a little more vocal and aware” (Neil, transcript 2, p. 22 of 28). I asked Neil why he felt silence, and in some cases avoidance, were responses to feelings of guilt. Neil replied:

I was someone who basically stayed in the same company for a long time.... I was in my comfortable cocoon, wasn’t I? I had a safety net all there and I was getting all the attention....I was a bit intentionally blind both inward and outwards to what was going on. (Neil, transcript 2, p. 23 of 28)

Gretchen and Neil’s stories illustrate the importance of working through their feelings as a necessary developmental step towards changing their actions; however, the focus cannot remain exclusively on self. For my participants one challenge came in trying to talk about these taboo issues of race, power, and privilege within their classroom and work environment.
**Being Polite**

In my conversations with participants it was clear that none of them took up issues of race and identity, and its connection with power and privilege with their students. "No, no, not in so many words, no.... No, we never talked about race" (Beth, transcript 1, p. 8 of 26). Some participants maintained that they were concerned with causing offense and discussions were not held in order to remain polite. Although in North America race is still often seen as a taboo topic (Tatum, 1992), I am left wondering to what degree this was the reason teachers did not openly discuss it with their students. Paley (1979) perhaps speaks for many white teachers when she describes her discomfort in dealing directly with issues of race in the classroom. She initially rationalized this brushing aside of race as a function of politeness but later acknowledged that her avoidance was really masking a deep fear of her own feelings about race.

In efforts to uphold a pleasant work environment, discussions between the local and foreign teaching staff were often limited to lesson planning and the practicalities of living in a new country. Only Neil talked explicitly about conversations he had with one local teacher who questioned "the free ride" foreign teachers received. For the most part, participants did not engage in reflective discussions about privilege with colleagues.

We [the foreign teaching staff] didn’t really have a discussion about the race issue. I think the Korean-American [teacher] was maybe a bit more open about such things than I was and than the white Canadian teachers were.... But we never really sat down, any of us, not one-to-one, not in a group, where we said, "Well how do you feel you are seen? How are you perceived? What’s your role here?" (Wendy, transcript 1, pp. 17-18 of 32)
On occasion, potential discussions were even avoided in an effort to maintain nonconfrontational relationships with colleagues. Wendy explained that when a fellow foreign teacher made a disparaging race-related comment in the staffroom, she chose not to respond.

I never did actually say anything to her about it partly because I felt that it wasn’t my place.... I don’t think it would have necessarily gone over well.

I just sort of wanted things to be, not to really upset anyone. (Wendy, transcript 2, pp. 7-8 of 20)

In our interview Wendy said that her decision to not confront her colleague was based on wanting to preserve a pleasant staffroom atmosphere. However, in rereading the transcript I was struck by Wendy’s comment “I felt it wasn’t my place.” I am left to contemplate how difficult it may have been for Wendy, a Black woman, to address the racial slur. To what degree does who brings up the topic of race and racism affect the ability for it to be considered legitimate and worthy of discussion? In “Why are all the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?” (1997), Tatum discusses the fear, especially for Black individuals, to break the silence about racism. She concludes that in order for there to be meaningful dialogue, “fear, whether of anger or isolation, must eventually give way to risk and trust” (p. 200).

The Good White

There are complex issues arising from the fact that white teachers are bringing their language and culture into foreign classrooms with little preparation, and often little understanding, of the far-reaching influences of culture on their teaching and students’
learning. Recognizing this, participants invoked narratives that attempted to separate themselves from teachers who were less informed.

Some people, they can’t understand why no one can understand them. They act like a Canadian. They speak like a Canadian. They look like a Canadian. All of their nonverbal language is Western and they can’t change or adapt. I didn’t see myself like that... (Gretchen, transcript 1, p. 4 of 35)

Gretchen clearly feels that, unlike some of the other Canadian teachers working in her school, she is able to adapt to, and ultimately succeed in her foreign environment. Fiona cites a similar example. She begins by talking about how her past travel experiences have helped her be open to, and feel comfortable in her new culture. To defend this position Fiona introduced her colleague into the discussion. “He just wanted it to be, he expected it to be like in America still. The guy just wanted to go to Burger King” (Fiona, transcript 1, p. 13 of 19). She was suggesting that in comparison with him, she understood there were cultural differences and she was open to them.

In the article “Tiffany, Friend of People of Color” (2003), Thompson talks of how some antiracist whites identify themselves as “good whites,” as supporters of people of colour, who understand about white racism and are against it (p. 8). She suggests that as white people “we want to feel like a good person and be seen as a good person” (p. 8). In Neil’s description of his experiences hiring teaching staff, he illustrates this desire to be seen as good.

After 5 years in Japan, Neil moved to Taiwan where he acquired a position as a teacher-trainer. According to management, Neil was to hire “someone who was the right
colour and who would show up on time..." (Neil, transcript 1, p. 36 of 39). Neil talked with dissatisfaction of not being able to hire qualified teachers who failed to meet management’s white colour criteria. He concluded by saying, “There were very few visible minorities that we, that I was hiring. I wanted to set my goal to hire somebody who was Black” (Neil, transcript 1, p. 38 of 39). Unfortunately, due to time constraints our interview ended at this point. Immediately following, I did write a note in my research journal that this remark was one that I wanted to pursue in our next conversation. I was interested in knowing Neil’s motivation behind his statement.

At our second meeting Neil came prepared. He had read through the first interview transcript, added extra comments to the text, and had responded to the preliminary interpretations I had included. Neil brought up the earlier hiring comment first.

I mean it was stupid to read this [my transcript] because “I wanted to hire a Black person” – God, it gets back to what we were saying about being the good white, friend of the oppressed, up-lifter of the downtrodden.

(Neil, transcript 2, p. 19 of 28)

Neil and I talked realistically about his role in hiring and how, if at all, it could have played out any differently. We also spoke of how as white educators we can shift from trying to be seen as a good white, to being an ally (Tatum, 1994) with our colleagues and students of colour.

I too fell into the trappings of “the good white.” In one participant interview I was sharing stories and describing some debates I had been having with my male family members regarding race and privilege. I talked about what I perceived as their
unwillingness to acknowledge that they have benefited from being part of the dominant culture, as well as my frustrations in trying to continue to have these conversations with them. Reading the transcript of that interview I highlighted that excerpt and recognized that in that exchange I had positioned myself against my family members, who in my stories were less informed than me, and in turn I looked good.

While both my participants and I used personal stories that illustrated our goodness, in one participant interview I also cited research studies I had read in an attempt to demonstrate my insight into racial issues. Transcribing that portion of the interview tape proved disconcerting. My need to prove my theoretical understandings of whiteness and racial identity development was perhaps also my need to be applauded for exploring such contentious topics. Thompson (2003) refers to this as a new form of privilege where white individuals get credit for admitting their raced position (p. 18). My further concern is that introducing the literature in that way sounded as if I was positioning my participant’s response against academic authority and making judgements. The use of academic rhetoric that equates whiteness with hierarchy and exclusion may have pushed my white participant into resistance and self-protection rather than responsible reflection. I learned that to engage issues of race and whiteness in a compelling way, one must encourage open dialogue and allow for the possibility of change.

As white educators, we have been advised by many to teach ourselves on issues of race, racism, and their role in education (hooks, 1990, 1994) but oftentimes, we remain unable to do so. The four strategies (People Are All The Same, Guilt, Being Polite, and The Good White) outlined above describe some of the ways that my
participants and I subtly resisted the engagement with, and exploration of, racial privilege.

Moving Toward Reflection

Revisiting Privilege: Local Teacher Treatment

Many white people want to believe or are socialized to think that society is just and people are rewarded for work well done, or at the very least, treated fairly. For some participants however, management’s poor treatment of the non-native teaching staff was a direct contradiction and became the push needed to compel participants to reflect on their own privileged status.

In my company in Japan they would give Christmas presents to the white teachers, the foreign teachers: Japanese teachers never got one. They’re paid, the Japanese teachers’ pay is SO low and they work SO hard. They are expected, part of their job is to take care of the foreign teachers. We are babied.... I think it’s the market and you’re the white person speaking English so you’re valued. (Neil, transcript 2, p. 16 of 28)

Tales of lower wages for local staff were also in Fiona and Gretchen’s descriptions of their host institutions. Local teachers hired for the same position, yet responsible for more duties, were paid less.

When I was hired to work in a Japanese junior high school I was not a trained teacher and as a result was not able, nor expected, to teach students on my own. My job, as reflected in my title as an Assistant Language Teacher, was to help qualified local teachers conduct English classes. Despite my lack of credentials and teaching experience I was paid equivalent to a Japanese teacher in the 3rd year of the profession. In addition,
expectations with respect to my working the 6-day school week and performing extra
duties such as coming in to clean the school during summer holidays differed greatly. I
was granted, as my closest Japanese friends joked, the “gaijin discount.” As a foreigner
(gaijin) I was treated as a respected guest, and as a guest was not required to comply with
the rules and regulations of my teaching counterparts.

When Neil accepted a position in Taiwan one of his job responsibilities was to hire new teaching staff.

I was doing hiring. It was very sticky there because I was still in an
organization that assumed, how can I say, it fed on customers’ [students’]
perceptions that white means English.... So you would have customers
who say, “We need white, blond, can’t teach, that’s okay.” (Neil,
transcript 1, pp. 17-18 of 39)

Neil provided two examples of the “sticky” situations he faced when attempting to hire non-white, non-blond teachers. The first involved individuals born in Taiwan who, as children, moved to The United States where they were raised and educated in an English environment. Neil explained that these teachers had proficient English language abilities but any hint of an accent would exempt them from being hired. Lippi-Green (1997) found that teachers with non-native accents were perceived as less qualified and less effective, and were compared unfavorably with their native English-speaking colleagues. Other researchers (Amin, 1997, 1999; Canagarajah, 1999; Thomas, 1999) also found that native speakers of various international varieties of English, such as Indian or Singapore English, were considered less credible and less competent teachers than those who come from the United States, Canada, Great Britain, Australia, and New Zealand. Lippi-Green
refers to this questioning of teachers’ ability and credibility based on their accent as a form of linguistic discrimination. There is a need to question the notion of a single variety of English language that is “the standard,” as well as challenge the powerful assumptions that everyone has equal access to this standard and equal opportunity to learn and use it, and that this standard is more appropriate than other varieties of English. Although a body of literature exists that questions these beliefs, standard language ideology is so pervasive that these beliefs are widely accepted as “self-evident truths or common sense” (Tollefson, 2000, p. 16) and largely outside of explicit debate.

The second example Neil provided was North American-born individuals of Chinese descent. In these cases, despite being native English speakers, simply “looking” Chinese meant that, if hired they would be paid the lower, local Taiwanese pay. Neil’s duties were to satisfy the institution’s hiring needs, yet he was deeply troubled by his part in what he described as perpetuating white privilege.

It was tough. And you go home shaking your head, “What am I doing?”

Especially when you have the power. I was working within an institution but you always think, “Am I pushing enough?” (Neil, transcript 1, p. 38 of 39)

With Neil, Gretchen, Beth, and Fiona, we discussed power and privilege in terms of whiteness. My conversations with Wendy, however, helped expand the notion of privilege to include, in Wendy’s experience, a sense of foreigner privilege. Wendy self-identifies as a Black woman of Jamaican-Canadian heritage, yet as an EFL teacher in Japan, Wendy was seen as a Westener and a native English speaker; both locations granted her power and privilege within her institution.
I would say that if there were any kind of, I wouldn’t say it was a hierarchy, but if you were kind of saying in terms of management [opinion], good-better-best, probably the foreign teachers would be first...

(Wendy, transcript 1, pp. 6-7 of 32)

In explaining what being “best” looked like, Wendy provided the following example of how local teachers in her school were treated.

I know the local teachers didn’t make as much. In terms of not being treated as well, I know the manager would say things to them that they wouldn’t have said to the native speakers. “Wear more make-up,” or “Don’t wear these kinds of clothes.” I think I definitely realized that we [the foreign teachers] did get off easy in a way. I think the expectations that management had of the local Japanese teachers were probably different. (Wendy, transcript 1, p. 8 of 32)

Wendy provided some examples of the different expectations for the foreign teachers. These included optional attendance at staff meetings and no administrative duties. Wendy was held to these lesser expectations because of her privileged position as a Western, native English speaker.

Although Wendy and others hesitated in using the word “hierarchy” to describe the power dynamics among the teaching staff, all participants did acknowledge that their qualified, experienced, (and most often female) local colleagues received less pay and carried more responsibilities than they did. White, Western EFL teachers who fail to recognize the privilege or power that they hold may also fail to see the consequences of their position and choices for others. Hinchey (1998) reminds us that, as white people,
having inherited all kinds of privileges that have more to do with "the color of our skin or the title of our position than with our individual merit, we owe some consciousness of the power we have, how we got it, and how we use it" (p. 33).

Reflection did not only take place in the staffroom. As participants talked about their teaching experiences and reflected on specific classroom incidents, they began to develop further their understandings of students’ culture and its influence in their EFL classrooms.

Reflection in/on the Classroom

When you’re living in your own culture you are, almost like you’re attached by these invisible strings from every angle, from every direction and you are very immersed in your own culture. You’re kind of embedded, directly embedded with your friends, you family, your education, the government, all these environmental settings. When you go into a foreign culture there is a lot of space between you and the surroundings. So it’s important to realize that your reality changes right before your eyes and when your reality changes you really have to examine, “What do I really believe?” “Who – this kind of sounds cliché – but who am I really? How do I think?” (Gretchen, transcript 1, p. 30 of 35)

All of my participants spoke of the shock and stress of entering into a new culture and realizing, as Gretchen says, “your reality changes right before your eyes.” For several participants, their foreign classrooms were both the impetus and the space to engage in observation and self-analysis. As teachers, this reflection led some participants to expand
their understandings of culture and deepen their awareness of how culture affected their classroom practices.

In a discussion that began with Wendy describing herself in relation to the culture she was teaching in, I asked if she recognized any explicit differences between her and her students. Wendy responded:

I think the main thing is that growing up in Canada you kind of have, in your classroom, you have everybody, different cultures and then in Japan, in the Japanese classroom there are only Japanese people. I don’t really know how true it is but I like to think that because you do grow up in a multicultural society you sort of have more of an awareness of the world in general. Whereas I kind of felt that maybe it [the Japanese classroom] was a little bit insular. (Wendy, transcript 1, p. 19 of 32)

As we continued to talk, Wendy began to make connections between how her background, beliefs, and attitudes affected what she expected from, and assumed about, her students.

I think in terms of assuming what they knew. I guess I learned kind of quickly not to assume…. [For example] the text was referring to paintings by Van Gogh and things like that. I’d be like, “You know, Van Gogh,” and it’s like, they didn’t really [know]. Some things where I kind of thought well it’s a cultural knowledge where I was assuming, which is sort of a Western cultural knowledge, and obviously they didn’t have that. I guess when I had that experience I thought I can’t just assume. You know, coming from a Western culture where you do sort of just absorb things so
you don’t know how it’s making you see the world. (Wendy, transcript 1, pp. 19-20 of 32)

In this exchange Wendy first recognizes that her students’ cultural knowledge differs from her own. She talks of learning “not to assume” what her students know and do not know. I think it is here that Wendy begins to hint at the influence teachers’ cultural backgrounds have on their perceptions and beliefs about culturally different students. Wendy’s realization prompted her to reconsider specific classroom teaching practices and to adopt a more reflective approach to some of the textbook material. What remains unarticulated, however, is whether Wendy acknowledged that students brought their own cultural knowledge into the classroom and whether that knowledge was perceived as valuable.

Gretchen’s realization of the impact of culture on one’s values and behaviour became clear in our second conversation. Gretchen, as noted earlier, had a trying relationship with the school management and our first interview was charged with frustration and anger as she described that constant struggle. Gretchen read her first interview transcript and in our second meeting I asked her where she thought her frustration came from, and whether with time and distance it had dissipated.

I guess I had this kind of egocentric notion that people are like me. I don’t know how I possibly could have thought that but I guess I did. Now I’m realizing that, no, people don’t think like me. Of course they don’t think like me. They have other experiences, other histories, other values and mine is not, my system isn’t the only one or the predominant one or the one that should be. (Gretchen, transcript 2, p. 3 of 23)
Gretchen talks of the importance of recognizing the histories, experiences, and values that work together to help define an individual. This idea begins to hint at the underpinnings of culturally responsive education (Gay, 2000; Sleeter, 1996; Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995a, b), that is, teachers who not only acknowledge, but also value the cultural background of their students. Gay (2000) defines culturally responsive teaching as using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and performance styles of diverse students to make learning more appropriate and effective for them (p. 29). Style (as cited in Crocco, 1998) writes of the need for curriculum, which represents both “window and mirror” (p. 128), that all students can find their experiences reflected in the curriculum.

Neil had not heard of the exact term culturally responsive teaching before, but attempted an explanation. He defined it as viewing students’ culture as a resource. This led to the following exchange.

When I went over there [Japan] I viewed their culture as somehow, I would never have said it, of course, but their culture is somehow inferior or wanting, a deficit that had to be overcome and I was the guy to help them overcome [it]. It took me a long time to realize that they had resources beyond what I was seeing in the classroom, that I could ever see in the classroom. And just appreciating them for who they were and not trying to change them overnight, and make them fluent, and make them perfect, and make them want to be me. (Neil, transcript 1, p. 31 of 39)

Neil’s experience illustrates Minnich’s (as cited in McIntosh, 1988) assertion that “whites are taught to think of their lives as morally neutral, normative, and average, and also
ideal, so that when we work to benefit others, this is seen as work which will allow ‘them’ to be more like ‘us’” (p. 293). For Neil, change began when he started to learn the students’ first language. “If you speak their language, their first language you see more of the whole person, I think. You appreciate them more for that” (Neil, transcript 1, p. 23 of 39). Gay (2000) reminds us that “cracks in the sense of certainty about [one’s] own cultural claims of reality are windows of opportunity for acknowledging the presence of and legitimacy of cultural frames of reference other than [one’s own]” (p. 72).

Fiona also cited the importance of genuinely exploring the students’ culture as a means of increasing her cultural awareness and the ability to adapt to a new environment.

It’s important to learn as much as you can about the country so that you are prepared to know more about the culture.... So understanding language, culture, students’ needs, what to expect, food, all those things will help the teacher adjust. (Fiona, transcript 1, p. 4 of 19)

However, Fiona made the very relevant point that cross-cultural exposure is not (necessarily) cross-cultural knowledge. That is, having an experience does not always mean understanding it. Fiona advocated the need to make sense of one’s contact with the host culture and to draw meaningful connections between the students’ culture and what is happening in the classroom.

To say or just do doesn’t necessarily mean that you will appreciate the culture, or understand it, or care about it. But if you’re open to the new culture maybe there is a chance. By learning about it and being aware of all the cultural differences you can be more sensitive to why is she saying
that? Or why is she quiet in the class? It’s not because she’s shy but maybe I’m talking too fast. (Fiona, transcript 2, p. 11 of 17)

Gretchen’s approach to reflection is related more generally to teachers’ professional development. She describes a process where educators engage in a continuous self-observation and self-evaluation in order to understand their own actions and reactions in the classroom.

If you’re teaching professionally.... If you take your profession seriously and if you feel your purpose [as a teacher] is important and you value what you’re doing, then I think it’s very important to look at what your ideas are behind your teaching. (Gretchen, transcript 1, p. 34 of 35)

_Becoming a Culturally Responsive Teacher_

Teaching students who are culturally different from you is not an easy task. It requires that teachers themselves be aware of their own culture and its role in their lives and in their classrooms. Recent studies suggest that typically, white teachers have limited understanding of their own culture, as notions of whiteness are often taken for granted and rarely interrogated (Lawrence, 1997; LeCompte & McCray, 2002; Sleeter, 2001). As Neil stated, “I wish I had been equipped to be a bit more critical about what I was doing there, about my teaching practices, about my role” (Neil, transcript 1, p. 7 of 39).

Beth did make connections between language teaching and culture and advocated the need for teachers to be critically reflective of their own cultural backgrounds. “We have to remember that we have a culture. We think we don’t but we do....You can’t teach the language without teaching the culture because you yourself are the culture” (Beth, transcript 1, p. 17 of 26). Beth’s point is in keeping with findings from Duff and Uchida
(1997) that concluded that EFL teachers’ classroom practices did involve the expression (either explicitly or implicitly) of the dominant culture.

In The Courage to Teach (1998), Parker Palmer states that you teach who you are. So I asked my participants, speaking from their own experiences, what is important for new teachers to understand about themselves before they go overseas.

I think that it’s important that they [EFL teachers] should realize how their own background had shaped them. I think the best thing you can do for teachers is to get them to question first what their own preconceived notions are and how are they going to set up criteria, yeah, how to process and how to evaluate their own observations when they get there and put them in some sort of context. (Neil, transcript 1, p. 20 of 39)

Neil spoke of the need to critique one’s preconceived notions. We discussed cultural stereotypes and the possibility of new teachers stereotyping culturally different learners as a means of reducing an ambiguous reality to a manageable label. So if our students fail to interact in class the way we expect them to, we readily explain their behaviour in terms of cultural stereotypes. Neil suggested that teachers be very careful in the generalizations they make and be prepared to revise or change them as understandings of their own and the host culture develop. Another factor that EFL teachers need to take into consideration is that the generally accepted way to teach English is conditioned by the predominance of Western perspectives in teaching (Kumaravadivelu, 2002). In a similar tone, Hinchey’s (1998) writing on critical theory warns that since “many of our unquestioned habits come from choices far-removed from us in time and place, there is a frightening implication of unquestioned endorsement of the status quo” (p. 8).
In our last interviews I asked participants to list possible traits of successful international teachers. They offered the following: someone who has a fairly strong identity, the willingness to learn about another culture, sense of adventure, respect for culture, interest in languages, confidence, and someone not afraid to be culturally isolated. In defining her interpretation of being culturally responsive, Fiona very succinctly stated, “It’s not, I am the white person going in to teach you my culture… there needs to be exchange” (Fiona, transcript 1, p. 18 of 19). Gretchen shared a similar perspective on the importance of recognizing the validity of the students’ backgrounds.

I would have to understand, “Oh, this is how these people do things. This is their culture, their way of life. They do these things for very understandable reasons.” I never had this attitude, hey, I’m a Canadian and you guys are doing things wrong. (Gretchen, transcript 1, p. 4 of 35)

Throughout Neil’s interviews he advocated the need for critical reflection. He spoke honestly about his lack of formal training and past teaching challenges. Time, distance, and his present studies have aided in developing his current understandings of his role as an EFL teacher. In our last interview Neil talked of his preparation to go overseas again.

I need to place myself in the broader context, you know...I’m not going in thinking that, as we talked about before, with how I was going to enlighten them with my English. You define the purpose within your classroom. [However,] you can’t ignore what’s going on inside and outside of your institution. (Neil, transcript 2, pp. 3-4 of 28)
In this excerpt, Neil directs attention to what is often missing in discussions on teaching English that typically focus on the latest teaching methods, effective materials, and classroom management. Conversations on the larger, cultural and social issues of teaching, and the role of the teacher in reinforcing such policies and practices are less often held. These issues may seem less immediate to one's role as teacher than the more practical matters of techniques, however, Hall and Eggington (2000) argue that rather than being peripheral “the political, social, and cultural dimensions of teaching English are embedded in each and every decision we [teachers] make” (p. 1). Tollefson (2000) urges English language teachers to understand the direct impact social, political, and economic forces have on the classroom and how these forces affect students' lives.

In reflecting on their classrooms, participants spoke of gaining a greater appreciation and growing understanding of their students' culture. Wendy spoke of realizing that her cultural knowledge was informed by a Western perspective, while Neil learned to see his students' culture as a resource. Both Wendy and Neil used this awareness as a mirror to question and reexamine their own assumptions and prior beliefs. Finally, participants discussed what EFL teachers need to know about themselves and offered characteristics of successful international teachers.
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

*We do not really see through our eyes or hear through our ears, but through our beliefs.* (Delpit, 1988, p. 297)

Toni Morrison has used the following metaphor to describe the invisibility of whiteness: It is like the fishbowl that contains both fish and water. Whiteness, in other words, provides the very context for meaning-making. It supplies the norms and categories against which all groups are measured. But the categories of whiteness remain invisible because we keep focusing on what is inside – the water and the fish, rather than the fishbowl itself.

This research attempted to examine that fishbowl by exploring EFL teachers’ perspectives regarding their understandings of being white educators in culturally diverse contexts. I believe that this study provided opportunities for both participants and myself to reflect on our experiences teaching internationally. Yet, the conversations were not always easy. Stories occasionally contained moments of hesitation, judgement, realization, guilt, and critique. For many participants, whiteness was not an idea previously explored and their beginning awareness of issues of privilege and power was uncomfortable.

As outlined in chapter 2, a review of the literature on whiteness and studies highlighting the experiences of white teachers negotiating their racial identities, provided a number of observations with respect to white racial identity development, and its relation to teaching practices. Among these observations was the lack of awareness of whiteness (Katz & Ivey, 1977; Scheurich, 1997), colour-blindness (Frankenberg, 1993; Helms, 1990; Lawrence, 1997), lack of understanding of systemic or institutional racism
(Sleeter, 1996), and the acceptance of unexamined white privilege (McIntosh, 1988; McIntyre, 1997). Helms (1990, 1994), from her observations in a sample of white pre-service educators, developed a six-stage model of white identity development to articulate a progression of resolutions of these issues from lack of awareness toward the development of a positive white identity.

From the perspective of Helms's (1990, 1994) identity development model, each individual demonstrates differing degrees, styles, or stages of identification with her or his racial group. For my study, the starting place was how my participants self-identified racially. The experience of several of the participants seeing themselves as individuals (as opposed to members of a collective group) is representative of this initial stage (Contact) of development where whiteness is either invisible or not named as a significant element of one's identity. That is, many people do not view themselves as raced and as a result, are unaware of the privileges and unearned benefits accrued because of their racial status (Katz & Ivey, 1977; Lawrence, 1996; McIntosh, 1988; McIntyre, 1997; Stanfield, 1985).

As participants in this stage of development came in contact with their diverse student populations, several espoused to be colour-blind, as represented in Beth's earlier comment that she "doesn't care about colour." Hollins (1999) argues that teachers who believe "we are all the same beneath the skin" often fail to recognize the significance culture has in their classroom instruction and organization. This was evident in both Beth's and Fiona's description of their classroom design. It would be wrong, however, to imply that participants were not interested in culture as all talked of the importance of cultural exchange in their classes, but a concern emerges when participants viewed culture as artifacts only (e.g., food, holiday traditions, etc.) and included in curriculum as
objective content. For some teachers there is the assumption that by simply learning and talking about culture they are being sensitive to culturally different students. Blackmore, Kenway, Willis, and Rennie (1996) argue that within dominant multicultural discourse, differences are approached from the standpoint that raising awareness reduces prejudice. This type of thinking is also evident in some teacher preparation programs where multicultural teaching is viewed as a technical issue and multicultural curriculum as mainly additions to the existing curriculum (Ghosh, 1996; Sleeter, 2001).

Participants' accounts of the lack of conversation among their foreign colleagues, where race, identity, and in particular, privilege remains unexamined, may serve to reinforce racial and/or cultural prejudice instead of working against it. Fiona's earlier comment addresses the influence that teachers' actions have to perpetuate stereotypes and the need to caution against this.

There is evidence of movement from the initial stage to another stage (Disintegration) of Helms's (1990) development model as the white participants reflected on and acknowledged being white, and began to think about their beliefs about race. Participants' values regarding fair treatment of people as individuals collided with their growing awareness that the local teachers in their respective schools were often not treated the same as they were. Gretchen and Neil spoke explicitly about feelings of guilt as they came to realize that they have unintentionally (or intentionally) benefited from being members of the dominant group. Recognizing the dynamics of privilege and power is a necessary, if not a challenging step in white identity development. For Gretchen, her feelings of guilt pushed her to contemplate the teaching context in which she might best serve her students. Neil spoke candidly about the guilt he felt over both receiving
preferential treatment and his remaining silent on the subject. Neil’s comment about his goal of hiring visible minority staff may have stemmed, in part, from his feelings of guilt and is in line with Helms’s categorization of this stage as the desire to help people from other racial groups. For Neil, working through his guilt seemed to indicate a shift towards the next stages of development.

For participants who had an awareness of race and identity, culture tended to play a larger role in their perceptions of teaching and learning. Neil talked of learning to appreciate the differences in his students’ background. He explained how learning the local language pushed him to revisit initial perceptions that his students’ culture was wanting and in effect something to be overcome. Neil learned to view his students’ culture as a resource and actively sought knowledge about it.

As described above, participants’ movements through Helms’s (1984, 1990) development model may appear to be linear, however, it is important to understand that racial identity development as a process is not static nor step-by-step. In moving through different stages, there may be back-and-forth movement, revisiting earlier stages and then moving forward again, or possibly “skipped” stages. Because of the invisibility of whiteness and pressures to accept existing stereotypes, individuals run the risk of getting “stuck” in the early stages. I have come to believe that committed and ongoing dialogue about race-related issues is one way to promote continued identity development.

One final cautionary note, Helms’s (1984, 1990) description of stages in the development of white racial identity is an approximation, focused primarily on the generalized experiences and characteristics of white people. As such, it may fail to consider specific issues in individual experiences of racial development. Individuals who
look to the literature to find a starting point for their own process of self-examination, but who are unable to understand their experiences in terms of the models and characteristics described there, may become alienated or discouraged from engaging in a process of self-reflection with respect to whiteness. However, the value of a positive developmental approach to white racial identity lies in its emphasis on growth and the possibility for change.

Wendy

I asked Wendy to participate in this study as a way to provide a different perspective for me to explore with my participants' (and my own) accounts. I knew Wendy when she accepted the position in Japan and remember learning about some of the differences between our experiences teaching there. When the initial idea of Wendy's possible participation was introduced, however, I was slightly hesitant to approach her. These issues of racial identity, whiteness, and privilege were new to me and I was unsure how to address them with her, a Black woman. Ultimately, my conversations with Wendy expanded (and complicated) the notions of privilege.

My white privileges (for example, teacher as celebrity) were made more glaring when held up against Wendy's lack of comparable experiences. And although in our conversations we were often joking about the star treatment I received, I felt embarrassed. Perhaps, this is the guilt Helms refers to. For me, what was new and very interesting was how Wendy experienced privilege differently.

As a woman of colour, Wendy suggested that within her Canadian context, she is constantly made aware of her racial identity. In our first interview Wendy explained that in Japan she was able to self-identify as Canadian, without any justification.
Yeah, if I said, "I'm from Canada" I didn't feel that they [the students] were surprised. But in terms of (pause), I guess in terms of the typical Canadian, yeah, I would say that I probably didn't fit their image of a typical Canadian, or the stereotypical Canadian if you will, yeah. But at the same time... I think they saw me as NOT being Japanese (Wendy, transcript 1, p. 15 of 32)

My understanding of this exchange, both drawn from having lived in Japan and in my conversation with Wendy, is that "not being Japanese" meant for Wendy that she was seen as a foreigner or Westerner, a North American-born, native English-speaking teacher, all positions of privilege and influence. For Wendy, this realization is made explicit in her reflection on the treatment of the local teaching staff.

As with all my participants, Wendy did not discuss issues of race and identity in the classroom. However, Wendy was the only participant who spoke of cultural knowledge. Wendy described realizing that the experiential backgrounds that students brought to the class differed from her own. Her experience of using Van Gogh as a classroom example illustrates this point. The students' confusion led Wendy to think, and realize she was teaching from a Western cultural knowledge, which she did not share with her students. Wendy suggested that if she were to continue teaching EFL, this idea of cultural knowledge and where an individual's knowledge comes from, would be worth taking up more deliberately.

Implications

The most repeated recommendation throughout the literature was for white educators and pre-service teachers (Carter & Goodwin, 1994; LeCompte & McCray,
2002; McIntyre, 1997; Sleeter, 1996, 2001), as well as white people in general (Helms, 1990; McIntosh, 1988; Scheurich, 1997), to engage in a process of introspection and self-examination toward understanding the individual and systemic meaning of whiteness.

One way for white educators to teach more effectively in culturally diverse environments is to reflect on their attitudes, beliefs, and life experiences, and examine how these forces work to shape their understandings of culture, identity, and teaching and learning. For the participants in this study, by examining their racial identities and the social locations afforded them, they may begin to recognize the importance of their racial identities as determinants in how and what, and even why, they teach. For teacher education programs, there is a need to provide a space and resources to engage prospective teachers in this discussion.

For My Participants

During my second set of interviews, 4 of my participants commented on the learning they had experienced from being involved in this study. Early in the interviews, Fiona admitted that she had never been asked these types of questions before. She suggested that being encouraged to talk through her international teaching experiences allowed her to view them in a new light. "Although I know how I feel, by you probing it made me try to explain it in a clear way. I hadn't thought of it exactly that way. I hadn't articulated it like that before" (Fiona, transcript 2, p. 3 of 17). Fiona concluded our meetings saying, "It's been very interesting and enlightening and you've helped increase my awareness" (Fiona, transcript 2, p. 16 of 17).

Neil had begun to take up some of these issues on the role of culture in the EFL classroom in his own studies when he agreed to participate. Our first interview was
detailed and involved as evidenced in the nearly 40 pages of transcript. In our second conversation, Neil reflected back to that first interview. "I think from the beginning of the interview to the end of the interview, I remember being very drained actually, tired but also full of ideas and I couldn’t really stop thinking about it for days (Neil, transcript 2, p. 1 of 28). Before our second conversation I had given Neil his first transcript to read and comment on. He came to that second meeting with not only notes written in the margins of his transcript, but also a concept map he had constructed, pulling together the different threads of our conversation. Neil put forth much effort and in our interviews and commented that his participation was making him more aware (Neil, transcript 2, p. 14 of 28). As Neil prepared to leave for a new teaching position, he wanted to position himself more as a culturally responsive teacher. His missionary zeal to enlighten his students with his English had faded and now he saw the need to place himself within a broader context, to make learning more relevant to, and effective for, his students.

As planned in my research design, I provided each participant with their interview transcript along with a summary of my preliminary interpretations. After Gretchen received hers in the mail, she called me to comment on the amount of work I had put into constructing her transcript and summary. She was pleased, felt that it had captured her overall meanings, and was looking forward to our second conversation. In addition to her kind words, she spoke of her desire to read the entire document and requested a final copy of my thesis. In informal conversations that I have since had with Gretchen, I know she has continued to talk about these issues of race and identity in her graduate classes and with her family.
At the conclusion of our second conversation Wendy commented on participating in the study and talking through her experiences out loud. “It’s been interesting because it’s made me think about it a lot more. I think sort of talking about it and hearing others’ experiences made me think about things a little bit differently” (Wendy, transcript 2, p. 19 of 20).

*For Teacher Education Programs*

One current concern plaguing teaching in general, which also holds true for the field of EFL teaching, is how to find educators who are capable of teaching successfully in diverse classrooms. Several factors may interfere with the ability of current teacher education programs to prepare future teachers. One factor that is rarely discussed in the literature is that most members of the teacher education faculty are white. As the title of Howard’s (1999) book implies, *You Can’t Teach What You Don’t Know*, Neito (1996) agrees that the need for teacher preparation is obvious given the fact that most practicing and prospective white teachers are themselves the products of predominantly white neighbourhoods and predominantly white colleges of teacher education.

Particularly in the field of EFL, white teachers need to be encouraged to understand whiteness as essential to understanding themselves and their diverse students. Preparation/Training programs that incorporate a racial identity component can support prospective teachers to reflect critically on their beliefs, attitudes, perceptions, and understandings and how these get represented in the classroom.

In addition to exploring their own racial identity, all teachers need to participate in, and ultimately contribute to, long-term professional development that fosters effective teaching in culturally diverse classrooms.
For Self

This research study is nearing the end, but the conversations with my family continue. Despite initial frustrations, I have learned that embracing dialogue instead of avoiding the complications of such conversations invites others (in this case, my male family members) to do the same. It is not always easy and there have been tears. A particular poignant moment, however, came when my father told me that he thinks about what we talk about, and what I have said after I have left. It reminded me that people learn through engaging with ideas, not by being told what to learn.

I have plans to continue on my path as an educator, and as part of my continuing reflective process, I must engage in future work toward developing an understanding of my points of identification beyond race. Because my interactions with students (and others) are shaped not only by my whiteness, but also by my gender, and identification as middle class, heterosexual, and able-bodied, I have a responsibility to work toward understanding how these intersecting and multi-layered aspects mediate my relationships with students and teaching practices.

Future Directions

A variety of questions to guide and focus future research arise from this study. Several participants noted the importance of critical reflection, yet as Fiona pointed out in our second interview, “people [teachers] would reflect if they knew about it and knew how” (Fiona, transcript 2, p. 12 of 17). This suggests there may be a need to examine how white teachers learn to be self-reflective around identity issues and what types of approaches can facilitate self-awareness and development. Another area may question
what types of pedagogies can white educators work to develop for introducing and engaging prospective teachers with whiteness and its relationship to teaching.

As I acknowledged in the introduction, this study centered around racial identity. However, how an individual experiences her or his identity is much more complex. It would be very exciting to explore the ways in which individuals’ various points of identification intersect, and how this affects their educational practices.

In current and future explorations of race, identity, and privilege in education, the experiences of white teachers and the experiences of visible minority groups both need to be brought to the fore of multicultural education and inquiry. I believe this will help teachers to develop better understandings while making the dialogue inviting for all teachers to enter the conversation and self-development process.

In conclusion

Early on in my research journey I stumbled on these words from Paulo Freire (1973): “Time spent on dialogue should not be considered wasted time” (p. 122). Through initiating conversations about whiteness and privilege as it related to my participants’ experiences, I believe we used our time well.
References


Goodall, H. L., Jr. (2000). *Writing the new ethnography*. Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira Press.


Lapadat, J. C., & Lindsay, A. C. (1999). Transcription in research and practice: From standardization of technique to interpretive positioning. *Qualitative Inquiry, 5*(1), 64-86.


DATE: February 26, 2003

FROM: Joe Engemann, Chair
Senate Research Ethics Board (REB)

TO: Susan Tilley, Education
Kelly Powick

FILE: 02-203, Powick

TITLE: Exploring identity(s): Teachers' experiences of teaching in culturally diverse contexts

The Brock University Research Ethics Board has reviewed the above research proposal.

DECISION: Accepted as is.

In the chart in Section G of the application, you indicate the "research requires the study of existing data, documents, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens (Use of Secondary Data)." The use of secondary data requires additional permission to access raw data collected by another researcher. For your information, the data sources you cited on Page 2 of the attachment do not apply to the "secondary data" scenario.

This project has been approved for the period of February 24, 2003 to December 01, 2003 subject to full REB ratification at the Research Ethics Board's next scheduled meeting. The approval may be extended upon request. The study may now proceed.

Please note that the Research Ethics Board (REB) requires that you adhere to the protocol as last reviewed and approved by the REB. The Board must approve any modifications before they can be implemented. If you wish to modify your research project, please refer to www.BrockU.CA/researchservices/forms.html to complete the appropriate form REB-03 (2001) Request for Clearance of a Revision or Modification to an Ongoing Application.

Adverse or unexpected events must be reported to the REB as soon as possible with an indication of how these events affect, in the view of the Principal Investigator, the safety of the participants and the continuation of the protocol.
If research participants are in the care of a health facility, at a school, or other institution or community organization, it is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to ensure that the ethical guidelines and approvals of those facilities or institutions are obtained and filed with the REB prior to the initiation of any research protocols.

The Tri-Council Policy Statement requires that ongoing research be monitored. A Final Report is required for all projects, with the exception of undergraduate projects, upon completion of the project. Researchers with projects lasting more than one year are required to submit a Continuing Review Report annually. The Office of Research Services will contact you when this form REB-02 (2001) Continuing Review/Final Report is required.

Please quote your REB file number on all future correspondence.
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**Participating Data Chart**

**Appendix B**
Appendix C
Information Letter

Study Title: Conversations with EFL teachers: Toward an understanding of whiteness in the classroom
Researcher: Kelly Powick, graduate student, Faculty of Education, Brock University
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Susan Tilley, Faculty of Education, Brock University

Dear Participant,

For the past several years I have been teaching overseas and have become increasingly interested in what it means to be a white teacher in a culturally diverse classroom. In partial fulfillment of my Master of Education degree, I am seeking 4 white, Western educators to participate in this research project. The purpose of this study is to explore, firstly, white educators’ lived experiences of teaching in culturally different contexts. Secondly, it explores educators’ perceptions of how their identity(s) shape classroom practices. I am interested in unearthing answers to questions such as the following: What are the experiences of white educators teaching in international, culturally different settings? How does being white influence teachers’ educational practices?

In sum, I hope to investigate how teachers can successfully negotiate cross-cultural teaching and what conditions make that possible. Your participation in this study would be greatly appreciated.

Participation in the study requires your attendance at two audiotaped interviews, which will take approximately 60-90 minutes each. The times and location will be at your convenience. The first interview will consist of several open-ended questions such as the following:

- Why did you decide to teach overseas?
- Describe what you think is important for ESL teachers to understand about the countries they teach in.
- Describe any differences you were aware of between you and your students? Do you think these differences affected your pedagogy?
- In the literature I’ve been reading, I keep stumbling on the expression “culturally responsive pedagogy”; what do you think this phrase might mean?

Following the first interview, you will receive a copy of your transcript and a two-page synopsis of my preliminary interpretations of the data. In the second, follow-up interview, we will focus on any questions or comments you may have about the transcript and my interpretations. The second interview will also provide me with the opportunity to address any issues that emerged from the first interview. The second interview will also be transcribed and a copy of that transcript will be sent to you. Each transcript will be mailed to you along with a stamped return envelope. You will be encouraged to comment, correct, or clarify any information on the transcript itself, sign it and then
return it to me at your earliest convenience. If you would like a copy of your transcript for your records, a clean copy will be provided.

This research provides an opportunity for teachers who participate to reflect upon and discuss their experiences teaching in a culturally diverse context, something we often have little time to do.

Participation in this study is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time and for any reason without penalty. There is no obligation to answer any questions that you may consider invasive, offensive, or inappropriate. All personal data will be kept strictly confidential. Pseudonyms will be assigned to all participants. Only my faculty supervisor and I will have access to the raw data. The data (in paper, audiotape, as well as electronic format) will be kept in a filing cabinet in my home and then shredded, destroyed, or electronically deleted after 3 years.

If you have any questions or concerns about your participation in this study, you can contact me at (905) 682-4693 and/or Dr. Susan Tilley, Faculty of Education, Brock University, at (905) 688-5550, ext. 3144 and/or the Research Ethics Officer of the Office of Research Services at (905) 688-5550 ext. 3035.

The Research Ethics Board of Brock University has officially approved this study (File #02-203 Powick).

If participants should be interested I will make available to them a final summary report, upon request.

Once again, I sincerely thank you for your participation in this study.

Yours,

Kelly Powick
Graduate Student
Faculty of Education
Brock University
(905) 682-4693
kpowick@yahoo.com
Appendix D
Informed Consent Form

Study Title: Conversations with EFL teachers: Toward an understanding of whiteness in the classroom

Researcher: Kelly Powick, graduate student, Faculty of Education, Brock University
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Susan Tilley, Faculty of Education, Brock University

Name of Participant: ____________________________
Date: ________________

Purpose: I understand that the purpose of this study in which I have agreed to participate is to explore firstly, white Western educators’ lived experiences of teaching in culturally different contexts; and secondly, explore these educators’ perceptions of how their identity(s) shape classroom practices. I understand that Kelly will be using the data from this research to write her thesis in partial fulfillment of her Master of Education degree and that she may use these data to write other papers related to her research.

Study Procedures: Kelly has informed me about the study. I understand that this study in which I have agreed to participate will involve two audiotaped, individual interviews of approximately 60-90 minutes (location and time decided by me). I will be invited to review my first interview transcript to prepare for a discussion of any feedback I want to provide and questions I may want to ask that address my concerns around interpretations and/or clarifications. A copy of my second interview transcript will also be mailed to me. Each interview transcript will be mailed to me along with a stamped return envelope. I will have the opportunity to comment, correct or clarify any information on each transcript.

Confidentiality/Anonymity: Pseudonyms will be assigned to all participants in the study. All identifying details will be excluded or distorted in ways that prevent identification of participants. I understand that all personal data will be kept strictly confidential. Only Kelly and her faculty advisor will have access to the raw data collected. Data used or quoted in related documents will not contain identifying information. I understand that Kelly will keep the audiotapes, the accompanying transcripts, and any other written documents relating to my participation in this study in a filing cabinet in her home. I have been informed that 3 years after Kelly has defended and submitted the final version of her thesis to the university, she will destroy the audiotapes, shred the interview transcripts, and delete all electronic files.

Contact: If I have any questions or concerns about my participation in this study, I may contact Kelly Powick at (905) 682-4693 and/or Dr. Susan Tilley, Faculty of Education, Brock University, at (905) 688-5550, ext. 3144 and/or the Research Ethics Officer of the Office of Research Services at (905) 688-5550 ext. 3035.
Consent: I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I may withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason without penalty. There will be no payment for my participation. I understand that there is no obligation to answer any question/participate in any aspect of this project that I consider invasive, offensive, or inappropriate.

I have read and understood the above information. I reserve the right to ask questions about the project at any time. By signing this Informed Consent Form, I am indicating free consent to research participation.

Participant Signature ___________________________ Date ___________________________

Should any participants be interested, copies of a final summary report will be made available upon request.

Thank you for your interest in this study!

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Brock Research Ethics Board. (File # 02-203 Powick)

Please take one copy of this form with you for further reference.

* * *

I have fully explained the procedures of this study to the above participant.

Researcher ___________________________ Date ___________________________
Appendix E
Interview Schedule

Study Title: Conversations with EFL teachers: Toward an understanding of whiteness in the classroom
Researcher: Kelly Powick, graduate student, Faculty of Education, Brock University
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Susan Tilley, Faculty of Education, Brock University

1. Why did you decide to teach overseas?

2. What do you feel the role of overseas EFL teaching is?

3. Describe what you think is important for EFL teachers to understand about the countries they teach in.

4. How would you describe your racial background? Your ethnic background?

5. How did you see yourself in relation to the cultures that you were teaching in?

6. Describe any differences you were aware of between you and your students? Do you think these differences affected your pedagogy? Discuss.

7. Do you feel your cultural background affected your pedagogical practices in your overseas positions? Describe.

8. Describe a successful teaching moment. An unsuccessful one.

9. In what ways do you feel that you were prepared (or not prepared) to teach overseas?

10. Describe any emphasis given to culture or identity in your teacher preparation program in terms of an overseas placement. And in relation to EFL teachers themselves.

11. In the literature I’ve been reading, I keep stumbling on the expression “culturally responsive pedagogy.” What do you think this phrase might mean?

12. What did it mean for you to be a white teacher teaching in a different culture?

13. Have your experiences teaching abroad affected your current teaching practices? Describe in what ways.

14. Will you continue to teach overseas? Why or why not?

15. What advice would you give to other people going to teach overseas?
16. Is there anything else I could have asked you to help me better understand your experiences? Is there anything else you would like to add to the discussion?
### Appendix F

**Transcription Conventions**

#### Sounds:
- Thinking before someone speaks
- I’ve never thought of that before
- Affirmative sounds
- Listening + encouragement
- Environmental sounds

#### Tone of speaker
- Louder

#### Demonstrative expressions
- Words spoken while laughing
- Laughter when both parties are laughing at something

#### Pauses + 5 seconds

#### Interruptions

#### Self-talk or repeating what someone else said

#### Repetition

#### Punctuation
- End of thought
- End of phrase / clause
- Thought not completed

#### Cross-talk- two or more speakers speaking at the same time / over each other

#### Tape is unclear/ muffled and can’t make out word or phrase of one speaker

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Appendix G
Collaps...
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Culturally responsive pedagogy</strong></th>
<th>new culture</th>
<th>Culture as resource, culturally responsive teacher, international teacher traits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- reference to teaching in a culturally sensitive way</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- working with the students’ culture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- descriptions of what a culturally sensitive framework would look like</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- traits of a successful EFL teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language-culture connection</strong></td>
<td>ties made between teaching a language and teaching the culture (of the language)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Culture as deficit</strong></td>
<td>viewing students’ culture as something to overcome</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Culture as artifact</strong></td>
<td>culture described as artifact/behaviour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching practices</strong></td>
<td>what you did in the classroom, practices that reproduce a North American classroom</td>
<td>Teaching practices, teaching-as-telling, the NA classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cultural learning styles</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cultural stereotypes</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student motivation</strong></td>
<td>why students were learning English, examples of students resisting being “forced” to learn English</td>
<td>Motivation, resistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Students’ needs</strong></td>
<td>designing lesson plans for your students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theory-practice connection</strong></td>
<td>learning about multiculturalism won’t make you multicultural, references to learning to how by doing</td>
<td>Theory-practice, learning by doing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher as salesman</strong></td>
<td>teacher contributing to company’s success by “selling” English</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher as missionary</strong></td>
<td>“saving the masses by teaching them English, feelings of guilt linked to missionary zeal”</td>
<td>Missionary, guilt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher as movie star</strong></td>
<td>being “special,” a novelty and the benefits of that location</td>
<td>“movie star” effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher as ambassador</strong></td>
<td>seen as a representative of your culture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Being read by students/locals</strong></td>
<td>how the participant thought they were being seen/read by your students</td>
<td>Being read by students, being read by locals, community impressions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>White racial identity</strong></td>
<td>the participants’ development of a</td>
<td>White racial identity, critical race memory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>White as norm</strong></td>
<td>• whiteness as invisible, not talked about and the norm</td>
<td><strong>White as norm, “fish in water”</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Native fallacy** | white Western (especially from the US) teachers are needed to teach and are more desirable than local teachers of English or non-white teachers of English  
• accent as a form of discrimination | **Native fallacy, accent, “West is best”** |
| **White privilege** | • references to the unearned benefits of being white | **White privilege, coasting on whiteness** |
| **Foreigner privilege** | • (different from white privilege) this notion played out particularly in Japan when the foreign teachers received benefits because they were “guests”  
• foreign teachers are seen as not Japanese | |
| **Underbelly of privilege** | • what does one pay (or lose) for receiving those unearned benefits | |
| **Perpetuating prejudice** | • participants making connections between their practices and the possibility of perpetuating prejudice | |
| **“other” self image** | • how a minority group may come to define themselves through they eyes of the dominant | |
| **Immigrant problem** | • talk of White Canada being overrun with illegal immigrants | |
| **Creating distance/Involvement** | • strategies to remove yourself from the host culture  
• getting involved in the host culture through language learning, cultural study | **Creating distance, involvement, “enrich me” discourse** |
| **“birds of a feather”** | • surrounding yourself with people of a similar background  
• relating to people of the same culture | |
| **White talk** | • talk that insulates from examining one’s role in perpetuating racism | |
| **Silence** | • avoiding issues relating to power/race in the classroom  
• remaining silent relating to school policies or the local teacher treatment | **Avoidance, silence, political correctness** |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colour-blindness</th>
<th>“we are all the same under the skin”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Communication, challenges to cross-cultural communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical reflection</td>
<td>thinking on your practices critically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>barriers to reflecting on your teaching practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes to teaching practices</td>
<td>participant making changes to practice based on reflection, students, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White ally</td>
<td>being a partner with non-white people to combat racism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language as capital</td>
<td>English language as “cultural capital”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>includes the notion of English as a business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual identity</td>
<td>being an individual with the power to make own choices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptability</td>
<td>being flexible - going native</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>seeing yourself as an observer to the host culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>blending in (or not) often based on physical appearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian identity</td>
<td>how Canadians are or behave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>assumptions made based on their Canadian identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value judgement</td>
<td>making judgements on the values of the host culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>participant’s values were at odds with the host culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridging cultural gaps</td>
<td>strategies/efforts to find common ground in the host culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support network / Isolation</td>
<td>support system among the teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>feeling you had no one to share your experience with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimensions of identity</td>
<td>recognition that identity is an intersection of race/gender/class/sexuality, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realities of identity</td>
<td>talking to the fact that aspects of identity, whether socially constructed or not impact the realities of one’s life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence of EFL</td>
<td>impact of EFL experience on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teaching</td>
<td>current teaching practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future teaching</td>
<td>• participants’ plans for future teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice</td>
<td>• advice participants would give new EFL teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvements to training</td>
<td>• suggestions on what would need to be included in training to address key issues (of identity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning through the interview</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reaction to transcript</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Value of synopsis</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>