MOTIVATION AND RESILIENCE IN ART EDUCATION: INSIGHT AND INSPIRATION FROM THE LIVES AND CAREERS OF TWO TAIWANESE COLLEGE ART TEACHERS

Ya-Ping Chang, B. A., M. F. A.

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APPROVED:

Christina Bain, Co-Major Professor
Terry Barrett, Co-Major Professor
Laura Evans, Committee Member
Denise Baxter, Chair of the Department of Art Education
Robert Milnes, Dean of the College of Visual Arts and Design
Mark Wardell, Dean of the Toulouse Graduate School
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This narrative study explores how two Taiwanese college art teachers’ lives and teaching experiences illustrate the ways they cultivate resilience and motivation to sustain professional commitments amidst challenges in their teaching careers. I use the life story interview as my methodology and a three-dimensional space approach to code and analyze my data to retell their stories about how resilience and motivation have guided them as they negotiated dilemmas in teaching. The participants’ stories demonstrate that in order to be motivated, teachers must satisfy their basic needs, which, in the language of Maslow’s need theory, include secure income, safety, love and belonging, respect, and personal accomplishment. To be resilient, art teachers need to facilitate self-efficacy as an essential belief to face challenges, and they also must gain support from family members, students, school administrators, and fellow members of professional organizations as external support resources. This study also illuminates the significance of international educational exchanges, the teaching knowledge constructed through layers of life and professional experience, and the importance of creating dialogue to address teachers’ challenges. Recommendations for future study include exploring further the relationship between motivation and resilience, specifying how gender difference affects the ways participants tell their stories, investigating how teachers in diverse cultural and geographical settings develop motivation and resilience, considering how teachers construct career-affirming memories from both positive and negative life experiences, and exploring uses of social media to engage a broader audience, sharing participants’ stories without the limitations of time and space.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Introduction

This study explores how two Taiwanese college art teachers’ life experiences have influenced their efforts to remain motivated and resilient during their teaching careers, which is illustrated by a retelling of their stories. This study addresses such themes in light of fundamental recent changes in working conditions for teachers in Taiwan. Teaching was formerly a popular career choice in Taiwan because of its respected social status and perks such as summer and winter vacations, untaxed income for primary and secondary schoolteachers, regular salary increases supported by government policy, and attractive pensions (Hung, 2011). Traditionally, most teachers have remained in their positions until retirement (Fwu & Wang, 2002; Kyriacou & Chien, 2004), but recently a significant proportion of college and university teachers, including numerous art educators, have elected to leave the teaching profession due to new pressures in higher education stemming from government educational reforms and a shortage of students. In my own home college in Taiwan, for example, numerous colleagues in the art department have left their positions in the last four years. While some departed due to deficiencies in their expertise, most quit because they were overwhelmed by the difficulty of adjusting to the contemporary Taiwanese educational environment.

The principal factor driving changes in Taiwan’s teaching environment change is the nation’s low birthrate. Taiwan implemented the “family plan” from the 1960s to 1990 (Lin & Yang, 2009), and the national birthrate dropped from 5.585 total birth rate in 1961 to 0.9 in 2011 (Lin & Yang, 2009; “Population Reference Bureau,” 2011). Due to the extraordinary success of the population control plan, Taiwan has one of the lowest birthrates in the world.
Taiwan’s low birthrate translates, however, into a decreasing number of college-age students, which has created significant drops in rates of enrollment in higher education.

As this study demonstrates through the stories of my research participants and my own reflections on teaching experience in Taiwan, this ongoing enrollment crisis inflicts immense pressures on contemporary colleges and universities in Taiwan, creating particular challenges for college art teachers. Because of the shortage of students, many classes have been cut to address financial difficulties (Hung, 2011). In this situation, teachers may need to teach subjects they are not familiar with in order to secure their teaching positions, which can create great pressures on teachers. In turn, when teaching subjects outside their areas of expertise, the teachers spend more time preparing classes, and students may not give them positive feedback. Without support from students, it is difficult for teachers to feel motivated in their teaching careers (Kalker, 1984). At the same time, in order to maintain enrollment, colleges may take students who have little interest in learning, and teaching unmotivated students can lead to conflicts with them, a dangerous source of stress for teachers.

In addition, school administrators also require teachers to recruit and retain students to address enrollment problems. Besides regular teaching, teachers must use their weekends or other free time to recruit students from high schools, which increases their already-heavy workloads. Moreover, in order to retain students, art teachers are expected to be very humble toward them, which makes it difficult to deal with students’ academic or behavioral problems. If, for example, an art teacher fails a student for not turning in assignments, the school administrators typically ask the art teacher to examine his or her own classroom instruction and query whether the teacher has assigned too much homework or failed to sufficiently instruct
students on how to complete assignments. Such a lack of support from administrators makes it difficult for teachers to sustain career commitments (Kalker, 1984).

In addition, because of the low birthrate, each family often has few children at home, which means that parents treat their children like treasures. Parents often take the side of students in disputes with faculty, even when students have clearly behaved improperly in the classroom. In this situation, parents will often blame the teacher first for not teaching good manners to the students, ignoring adult students’ responsibility for their own behavior. Without support from students’ parents, it is hard for teachers to renew the energy required to support a teaching career.

College art teachers confront many challenges layered on top of the work of daily teaching. In order to explore effective strategies for meeting and overcoming such difficulties, this study retells the life and work experiences of two successful Taiwanese college art teachers, paired with my own reflections. By sharing how they have remained both passionate about teaching and resolute in the face of challenges in their teaching careers, my research illuminates models of career commitment that art educators may emulate to sustain their teaching careers, even in the face of daunting difficulties.

Why Tell Stories?

Narrative inquiry forms the methodological basis of this study. Scholarship on narrative provides many perspectives on the significance of telling stories, and in particular, Atkinson (2007) notes that stories provide direction and teach us to value life experiences. People use stories to understand themselves as well as to comprehend how they are recognized by others (Baddeley & Singer, 2007). Telling, hearing, reading and retelling stories are essential ways that humans learn about themselves, others, and the world (Yussen, & Ozcan, 1997). Educational research also has demonstrated ways teachers can use narrative to solve teaching difficulties.
Indeed, Behar-Horenstein and Morgan (1995) argue that stories represent “an enormous database from which to develop new understanding about the relationships among phenomena in an educational context” (p. 139). Teachers can learn lessons from others’ experiences because human beings share similar life patterns (Atkinson, 2007; Campbell, 1968).

Storytelling is the fundamental way that humans communicate experiences with each other (Atkinson, 1998; Elliot, 2005), and in addition, telling stories has held special meaning for me since childhood. I grew up in a large family with my parents, three sisters, grandmother and grandfather. My parents needed to work hard and were very busy. Besides working full time in a bank during the day, my father also had a part-time job at night, and when he would come home, the children would already be asleep. My mother was a full-time career woman in business, but after coming home from the office, she would cook dinner, do the housework and help my sisters and me with homework. She was too exhausted to have energy to play with us. The only fun time the family had together was on Sunday mornings. My sisters and I always loved to lie on our parents’ bed and listen to my father tell stories. He liked to make up stories that made us laugh and also to tell us interesting experiences he had during the week, and my sisters and I would create our own stories, telling our parents about the exciting things that happened to us. We had great fun creating different characters to represent our experiences. Sometimes, if we wanted to propose something to our parents, such as giving us more allowance or more television time but found it difficult to make the request directly, we would use stories to present our ideas. In this way, my sisters and I felt free to express our thoughts, and we would not feel hurt if our requests were denied. Also, our parents would not find this way of asking for things impertinent. My own family experience with hearing, telling and retelling stories, in which I intuitively learned storytelling’s power to enhance understanding and communication, led me to pursue my
dissertation research through listening to and retelling others’ narratives. By listening to and retelling stories, I explore art teachers’ life experiences so that other art educators can learn strategies for motivation, resilience and career longevity.

Personal Experience and Research Interests

After I received my master’s degree in fine arts in the United States, I returned to Taiwan to teach art at Jun-Sin College,¹ my first teaching position. The twelve years spent teaching there was a good time in my life in which I learned a great deal from students and administrators, although sometimes the learning process was painful. For example, my first class was teaching a night section of a computer art course, attended mostly by adult learners who worked during the day. The first lesson I learned teaching this course was that my instruction had to be based not only on my art education training, but also on the requirements of administrators and the needs of students. After the first class, the students asked the administration to fire me or exchange teachers because they felt frustrated that I required them to turn in assignments every week, which they felt they did not have time to complete. I remembered, however, that when I was an art student, teachers always gave us many assignments to afford plenty of practice, which would allow us to develop practical skills for the job market. I had been used to turning in assignments on time every week, and I had no idea why these students were angry; I naturally thought that this approach was appropriate for my students. But when the administration took the side of the students, I was forced to reconsider. School administrators wanted me to change my assignments, and they reminded me that part of being a good teacher was learning to understand students’ needs. At the same time, the school promised the students that I would cut back on their assignments, so finally the students dropped their opposition to my leadership of the class.

¹ Pseudonym.
The struggles I faced in my first teaching position made me realize that a teacher cannot rely solely on her own beliefs and experiences but must be open to reshaping her identity in response to external forces, such as the needs of students or the demands of the school administration. By the second class meeting, I had realized that my students consisted of a diverse group with varied working experiences. Because I had never studied in adult night classes, I had no idea it would be a completely new teaching and learning environment compared to my previous studies. Some students were already highly-placed business managers, and because it was their employees who actually worked at computers, they were only interested in learning the basic capabilities of software, not in toiling with laborious assignments themselves or developing their own techniques. On the other hand, some of the students came from poor backgrounds and were their families’ sole economic support. Chen-Min\(^2\) was a student whose father had died in a car accident, and his mother was handicapped and could not work. He had three younger brothers, ages 5, 8, and 12. He had a regular day job, but after class, he would go to his second job. Each day, he slept no more than three hours. His life was already so difficult that he did not have time to do extra assignments. Some students were more than 50 years old, and most of them had no computer experience. They worked hard just to remember how to turn on a computer and use a mouse to navigate the screen. They came to this class just to learn how to use computers so they could play games with their grandchildren. Needless to say, they had little interest in computer art techniques for professional graphic artists. I wondered how I could expect them to turn in demanding assignments every week.

None of the students needed computer art techniques to pursue their professional or personal goals. My experience with them completely subverted my belief that my role was to

\(^2\) Pseudonym.
cultivate students’ professional skills for the job market. According to adult learning theory, adult students learn best when the topic at hand has immediate value for them, and they have the opportunity to solve their own problems (Gorm, 2009). Accordingly, in my class, it soon became clear that students were interested solely in specific content they wanted to learn, and I could not simply teach them what I believed was best, especially because there was such a wide range of backgrounds among the learners in my class. If I tried to reproduce my own learning experiences for my students, they would almost certainly reject my class because I did not understand their personal needs. I realized that I had to modify my instructional methods, which entailed reshaping my own beliefs and commitments as a teacher.

In the end, however, although I had a new appreciation for my students’ needs, I rejected the school’s reasons for taking the students’ side. Due to the enrollment crisis driven by Taiwan’s low birthrate, there is exceptionally small demand for specialized education in the arts. I realized that the school administrators simply needed to retain students, regardless of pedagogical concerns. I felt disappointed about being an art teacher in an institution that did not truly care about what students needed to learn, and I found that I was not the only instructor who struggled with students and school administrators. For example, one of my colleagues failed a student because he neither turned in assignments nor took required tests in class. Without considering why the teacher may have decided to fail the student, his parents contacted a legislator and asked him to pressure the college president to have my colleague change the grade. In this case, even though my colleague refused to change the grade, the experience of struggling with a student, his parents, the college president, and a legislator caused her to consider whether she should give up teaching because she felt that she did not receive the support of school administrators. Because of the pressure on school administrators and teachers to recruit and
retain students, many teachers in Taiwan struggle with remaining committed to their careers in the face of such discouragement.

During the twelve years of teaching that followed my original, bracing experience of having my students demand a new teacher, I continued to struggle with balancing my own teaching beliefs, students’ needs, and school administrators’ demands, even as I became an experienced teacher. An example is a painful experience in 2007 that almost caused me to lose my passion for teaching and even prompted me to think about quitting. This crisis made me question whether I still had the desire to continue in my teaching position, but it also ultimately impelled me to explore art teachers’ motivation and resilience as the subject of this dissertation. I was the advisor and mentor directing five students on their thesis projects to create a short film, and I spent a great deal of time outside regular class hours during an entire summer to help them, as we worked together extensively, developing a very close relationship. To complete their degree requirements, they needed to present this project at the Taipei World Trade Center in Taiwan, which holds an annual art and design graduate exhibition. When they exhibited their artwork at the school as part of a critique and revision process in preparation for outside exhibition, however, I had a serious disagreement with them. I wanted them to correct some misspelled text in the film, but they refused. They felt that I did not appreciate their work and was solely critical of tiny mistakes. As a professionally trained animation art teacher, I knew they needed to make those changes in order to show the film. As their advisor, I had the power to fail them if they declined to make corrections. Yet, they still refused. They even threatened legal action against me if I forced them to revise their work.

I had great regret that a once-close relationship had changed into an adversarial one. I knew how painful it would be for them to fail because of neglecting to make the changes, but
they had hurt me as well by threatening to sue me in court. At the same time, I knew that my department was eager to retain students, and that the school administrators would take the students’ side. As a result, I gave up asking them to change the text. I was tired of arguing with the students continually over this issue, and I also remembered one of my American art teachers who used to tell me that every student should be responsible for his or her own learning. If the students did not want to make changes, they would be responsible for what they created. Nevertheless, this perspective did not help me escape feeling embarrassed as their advisor, because I could not persuade my students to correct basic mistakes in their work. They became extremely hostile and treated me like a stranger, a far cry from our former intimate working relationship. As a result of that experience, I began to wonder if I should change careers, fearing that future students would hurt me in this way again.

In a more recent challenge reflective of contemporary realities in Taiwanese higher education, my college over the last few years has mounted a campaign to upgrade to university status in order to attract more students, and one requirement to become a university is to increase the number of ladder-ranked faculty. The most direct way for the college to attain this goal would have been to lay off the entire current faculty who did not have doctoral degrees or who were otherwise unqualified to attain the rank of assistant professor. After several meetings with the faculty, however, the administration determined that, starting in 2007, in order to retain employment at the college, lecturers would be required either to apply successfully for the position of assistant professor or be accepted to a Ph.D. program before 2011. In addition, between fall 2007 and spring 2011, the college began evaluating each teacher every semester. If a teacher’s evaluation score fell below eighty for two semesters, he or she would be fired without
severance. On the other hand, if teachers chose to leave of their own volition and had not received poor evaluations, the college would provide a generous severance package.

The teacher evaluation contained three parts: student evaluation, professional development, and administrative service. For art teachers, professional development was the easiest area in which to excel, because they could participate in exhibitions as well as publish scholarly works. The remaining two areas were challenging for art teachers, however, because the scores depended on the input of students and school administrators. If art teachers had negative relationships with students, even if they were experts in their teaching subjects, they would not receive satisfactory scores on student evaluations. Similarly, if art teachers had poor relations with administrators, they might not have the chance for administrative service that would increase their evaluation scores. Consequently, the evaluation process became highly stressful as two-thirds of evaluation scores depend on forces beyond teachers’ control. During the transition to these new requirements, when art teachers met, the subject we most often discussed was whether we should work hard to retain our teaching positions at the college or whether we should leave, taking the sizable severance compensation and finding other jobs. It was a hard decision, especially for some art teachers whose jobs provided the sole income for their families. We felt very frustrated about the situation, and even faculty who already had doctoral degrees or who had already become professors still felt a great deal of pressure because school administrators also required them to pass evaluations each semester.

Committed to continuing my career at Jun-Sin College, in 2008, I came to pursue my Ph.D. at the University of North Texas. Upon completing my degree, I will be able to keep my teaching position in Taiwan, and I will receive a secure income and professional status. In contrast, from 2008 to 2010, ten art teachers left their positions at the college, and I felt grieved
to see my colleagues lose their teaching careers, quitting in frustration or being forced out by school policy. While the satisfaction of a good salary is always an important motivator, the loss of my fellow teachers was a poignant reminder that working with colleagues who have expertise in different areas of art is a uniquely attractive attribute of a teaching career, and for me, it is an essential source of enthusiasm for teaching. Reflecting upon this loss, I realized that it is important for teachers to explore the factors that give them motivation and resilience if they are to devote themselves to teaching as a lifetime career.

If I truly want to flourish as an art teacher in the future, I know that more personal and professional transformations are ahead. My previous experiences have shaped my identity as a teacher, but I need to know now how to bridge the gaps between my former teaching life, my present, and my future. I have been haunted by an unease that the struggles I experienced with my students in Taiwan will occur again when I return. At the same time, it is clear that every art teacher experiences challenges in teaching, whether these difficulties revolve around students, parents, administrators, or school culture. Because we all have common experiences, we can learn from each other’s lives (Atkinson, 2007). My own life experience as a teacher is what underpins my interest in how art teachers’ stories reveal their identities, commitments, and motivations as they develop their careers. Through retelling the stories of two Taiwanese college art teachers, I discovered in this study how their lives shaped their abilities to find motivation and resilience. Their experiences can help other art educators find inspiration to make long-term career commitments and find strategies to face teaching challenges.

Whose Stories?

The research participants at the heart of this study are two Taiwanese college art teachers,
Jun Chun\textsuperscript{3} and Len Huang.\textsuperscript{4} I retell their stories in my dissertation to explore how their life experiences foster motivation and resilience in their teaching careers. Both of them are studio artists as well as instructors in the art department of Jun-Sin College. Chun was born in the late 1950s, and he has taught interior design, architectural model construction, and photography throughout 34 years. Huang is a middle-aged woman who has been teaching computer graphics classes for 17 years. Both love to teach, work well with students and school administrators, and have received awards for Teacher of the Year at the college. In addition, besides teaching, Chun and Huang are also highly productive as professional studio artists, and they hold exhibitions regularly to pursue their professional development. Moreover, Chun and Huang have shown great resilience in the face of significant challenges in their work. For example, after Jun-Sin College implemented its policy requiring lecturers to upgrade to professors or be accepted to a Ph.D. program by 2011, Chun succeeded in becoming an assistant professor on the strength of his artwork in 2008, and Huang was accepted into Taiwan’s national Ph.D. program and began to study at Yen-Kai University\textsuperscript{5} in 2009. Because Chun and Huang are both highly motivated and resilient in the face of professional difficulties, they both retained their teaching positions.

I am particularly interested in how the determination to meet professional challenges comes from teachers’ personal histories. Gary and Malins (2004) have argued that, according to constructivist theory, learning occurs in “response to each individual’s experiences and prior knowledge” (p. 2). The present study explores how my participants’ life experiences, shaped by social interactions and cultural influences, allowed them to develop motivation and resilience in their teaching careers. As their stories illustrate the ways their teaching grows out of and is

\textsuperscript{3} Pseudonyms. \\
\textsuperscript{4} Pseudonyms. \\
\textsuperscript{5} Pseudonyms.
shaped by those histories, this research ultimately reveals the motivational factors and support resources Chun and Huang capitalize on to sustain their teaching careers.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this narrative study is to explore how two Taiwanese college art teachers’ lives and teaching experiences illustrate the ways they cultivate resilience and motivate themselves to sustain commitments to their profession amidst challenges in their teaching careers. I use the life story interview as my methodology to relate their stories about how resilience and motivation have guided them as they negotiated dilemmas in their teaching. As my project retells the stories of two experienced art teachers, I explore how their life experiences generated motivational factors and support resources. As such, the study allows other art educators to learn from their experiences, drawing inspiration to navigate their own teaching challenges. Art educators will be able to understand more deeply how to motivate themselves, improve resilience and enhance their personal and professional development. Importantly, this research does not aim to reach final conclusions because art teachers continually recreate their stories through their lives in teaching. In the same way, art education is continually reframed and recreated by the collective work of individual teachers.

Research Questions

1. What life and teaching experiences do these art teachers have that motivated them to make long-term commitments in their teaching?

2. What life and teaching experiences do these art teachers have to cultivate resilience when faced with difficulties in their teaching careers?

Conclusion

The experience of seeing my colleagues struggling to retain their teaching positions in the
face of burdensome school policies and conflicts with students, along with experiencing my own crisis in which I lost my passion for teaching, inspired me to explore the sources of motivation and resilience that support and rejuvenate art teachers’ career commitments. Pillay, Goddard, and Wilss (2005) argue that “teachers are experiencing increasing levels of attrition, stress and burnout (p. 22), which undermines teachers’ mental health, along with limiting their professional accomplishments and diminishing their students’ learning (Evers, Tomic, & Brouwers, 2004). To avoid burnout and maintain professionalism, teachers must actively learn to be inspired and tenacious. Employing this study to enter into their own dialogues with the stories of my research participants, art educators will find the tools to trace how their own past teaching and learning experiences have influenced their present beliefs and goals, making such a process, furthermore, the basis of new teaching knowledge in the future (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002). Listening to such stories, art teachers will find that, as art educators, we can learn from each other’s lives and teaching histories because we share similar life patterns and intersecting professional experiences (Atkinson, 2007). Sharing in the stories of peers, art educators can learn how to gain support and renew their energy, sustaining their commitments to teaching as a lifelong career.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Education plays an important role in both bringing success to individuals and fostering the health of society (Bransford, Darling-Hammond, & LePag, 2005). Accordingly, teaching has always been considered one of the most prestigious professions in Taiwan, and those who choose it normally devote themselves to teaching until retirement (Hwang, Chang, & Kuo, 2007). Recently, however, social changes stemming from Taiwan’s low birthrate, along with recent educational reforms that have given students and parents increasing influence on the work of college teachers, have made teaching in Taiwan a more stressful vocation (Yang, Ge, Hu, Chi, & Wang, 2009). This chapter provides an overview of the conceptual framework this study employs to answer my research questions, which explore how art teachers motivate themselves and remain resilient in their careers amidst changes in the Taiwanese educational system. The review of literature encompasses 1) transformations in the Taiwanese educational system, 2) the longevity of teaching careers, 3) motivation theory, 4) resilience theory, 5) the beliefs of teachers, and 6) dialogic inquiry.

Exploring the factors shaping teachers’ responses to sources of burnout, this review of scholarship investigates transformations in the Taiwanese educational system and the longevity of teaching careers. Building on this foundation, the study examines how motivation theory has charted the significance of material and psychological needs through the lenses of both behaviorism and cognitivism. As such, my research allows me to explore art teachers’ pursuit of extrinsic and intrinsic rewards in their careers. In addition, my extensive use of Maslow’s need theory throughout the study establishes a framework to analyze in detail my participants’
experiences of career motivation in relation to needs for physiological well-being, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization. Also, Mandleco and Craig (2000) have shown that teachers need to have both internal and external resources to construct resilience. Adopting this concept as a foundational interpretive framework, this chapter reviews scholarship on the importance of internal and external support resources to career resilience.

Moreover, Liurda and Lasagabaster (2010) have shown that teachers’ beliefs influence teaching performance and their strategies for coping with career difficulties. Exploring teachers’ construction of beliefs from diverse sources, this chapter examines my participants’ teaching beliefs from teaching experiences as well as from various phases of their life histories, tracing how they have built strategies for motivation and resilience from life experience. I also explore scholarship on the power of dialogue as a unique meaning making process, capturing the ways that my conversations with my participants and my retelling of their stories represent a collaborative, dialogic effort to portray strategies of motivation and resilience that may serve as models for other art teachers, thereby initiating a broader dialogue with readers of the study.

Such themes set the stage to explore the shifting roles of college art teachers in Taiwan, especially alterations in their beliefs in response to novel challenges emerging in the contemporary climate. In turn, other art educators can learn from these exemplary experiences in ways that allow them to explore their own modes of motivation and resilience to sustain their teaching careers in diverse settings.

Transformation of the Taiwanese Educational System

Kyriacou and Chien (2004) demonstrate that “teaching is a popular career choice in Taiwan” (p. 88), a fact shaped both by cultural and historical factors and government policy, which has traditionally encouraged respect for the profession of teaching in Taiwanese society.
In Taiwan, 98% of people are of Chinese descent, compared to the few Taiwanese aborigines who are Austronesian ("Taiwan: The Heart of Asia," 2012), and therefore, the influence of traditional Chinese culture on Taiwanese is very deep. Like the Chinese, Taiwanese believe that education is all-important, and teachers are role models responsible for both enhancing students’ knowledge and guiding them in the right direction in their lives. Moreover, due to the legacy of Japanese colonization of Taiwan in 1895-1945 (Wu, Chen, & Wu, 1989), the strong emphasis in Japanese culture on the prestige of teachers—which was transmitted through Japanese efforts to train skilled Taiwanese workers in order to support colonial expansion—remains an enduring feature of Taiwanese society (Fwu & Wang, 2002). At the same time, the Taiwanese government supports teachers through policies that ensure attractive salaries and benefits (Fwu & Wang, 2002). In light of all these factors, once people pass the intense entrance exam to become teachers, Taiwanese educators normally remain committed to the profession.

Recently, however, even though teachers in Taiwan still earn good incomes and other remuneration, many experienced college teachers have decided to retire early or quit teaching altogether because of high stress and burnout (Kyriacou & Chien, 2004). This trend is the result of changes in the Taiwanese educational system that has created an atmosphere in higher education conducive to intense emotional labor and a high degree of burnout. The factors contributing most to this development are Taiwan’s declining birth rate and the effects of recent educational reforms, including a zero-punishment policy mandated in colleges and universities.

According to the Population Reference Bureau's 2011 World Population Data Sheet, Taiwan, along with Monaco, has one of the lowest infant birthrates in the world, with only 7 births per 1000 people ("Population Reference Bureau," 2011). This low birthrate has brought low enrollment to colleges and universities, resulting in financial pressures (Hung, 2011). In
2009, 76,434 students enrolled in Taiwanese universities, and schools had a total of 6,802 vacancies ("Universities to See Lowest Enrollment," 2009). In 2009, education officials estimated that more than one-third of colleges in Taiwan would be closed in just 12 years if the birthrate failed to rise ("Taiwan's Falling Birth Rate," 2009). Therefore, in order to keep schools open, colleges and universities place a great emphasis on recruiting students, and under such conditions, besides regular teaching, faculty are also often responsible for attracting new students to meet administration enrollment demands. Such extra duties increase workloads, which hold the potential for diminishing teachers’ passion for their work (Brix & Cruise, 1994).

In 1995, the Taiwanese Ministry of Education (MOE) published the Republic of China Educational Report. Responding to the dramatic shifts in higher education of the previous decade, the report defined the main goals of educational reform as establishing a greater number of higher education institutions and creating a multi-channel administration system easing the entrance of students into higher education ("Educational Reform," 2010). Taiwan had only 28 colleges and universities in 1986, ("Universities to See Lowest Enrollment," 2009), while entrance exams were very competitive, and only 3% of students were admitted into colleges and universities. In that era, students admitted to college were elite scholars and generally worked hard once they were admitted. In 2010, in response to government policies encouraging higher education opportunities for more young citizens, the number of colleges and universities increased to 162 (Su & Chang, 2010), while the college admission rate showed a dramatic increase, to 94.87% ("University Acceptance Rate," 2010). The high admission rate means that schools are under pressure to accept students with weak academic backgrounds (Chen, 2005), and such students may not be motivated to learn, knowing that they will be allowed to graduate even with poor academic performance, because there are always plenty of other colleges eager to
admit them. Learning and teaching, however requires serious communication and effort on both sides and to teach unmotivated students is a severe challenge and source of considerable stress for teachers. In addition, in order to retain students, school administrators often have strong incentives to side with students in disputes with teachers, and in this setting, teachers can experience a greater level of burnout.

Additionally, in 2006, the MOE instituted a “zero punishment policy,” which not only prevents classroom teachers from using corporal punishment but also forbids words or behaviors that make students feel harassed. Teachers who violate the policy face losing their jobs or even going to jail. In a particularly striking example, a graduate student brought his professor to court because the professor told him to drop her course if he continued to sleep during class. This student felt uncomfortable with this admonition and sued the professor (Lee, 2010). In the end, the professor was not charged by a court, but the many similar cases that have occurred since 2006 reflect deep changes in the teaching profession. Teachers are afraid that they will be taken to court if they intervene too much to manage students’ academic work or personal behavior. Moreover, if a teacher pushes students to work hard, students may write poor evaluations, which can result in laying off the teacher.

Such developments affect every area of the Taiwanese educational system, including the field of college and university art education. In such an atmosphere, art teachers, who are forced to create pleasant student-teacher relationships, attain high scores on student evaluations and reassure school administrators. Art teachers may struggle with conflicts between their goals as educators and the demands of school culture. How college art teachers respond to such challenges, moreover, determines the success and longevity of their teaching careers. My research documents how two Taiwanese college art teachers adapted to changes and motivated
themselves amid the transformation of the Taiwanese educational system. By understanding how they have dealt with instructive experiences in their own working lives, other art educators can learn their own strategies to combat stress and burnout in order to sustain long-term career commitments.

The Longevity of a Teaching Career

Teaching is a high-stress career (Grayson & Alvarez, 2007; Hastings & Bham, 2003; Yang, Ge, Hu, Chi, & Wang, 2009) because teachers need to conduct diverse duties, including preparing classes, providing personal guidance and counseling to students, helping resolve conflicts between students and their parents, and meeting the educational goals of students, parents, and school administrators—all while enhancing their own professional knowledge in order to foster better learning environments for students (Pillay et al., 2005). Teaching is, indeed, a profession of many responsibilities (Evers et al., 2002), and the pressure of numerous duties can produce immense stress (Pillay et al., 2005), leading to a burnout rate greater than those of other professions (Näring, Briët, & Brouwers, 2006; Travers & Cooper, 1993). While there are few studies specifically related to teachers’ stress and burnout in Taiwan (Kyriacou & Chien, 2004), much recent research shows that teacher burnout is a crucial problem globally, having been addressed in numerous countries and regions (Betoret, 2009; Chan, 1998; Watts & Robertson, 2011), including the United States (Schonfeld, 2001; Watts & Robertson, 2011), Australia (Dorman, 2003), Hong Kong (Chan, 1998), the United Kingdom (Travers & Cooper, 1993), the Netherlands (Evers et al., 2002; Näring et al., 2006), Israel (Friedman, 1991), and Spain (Betoret, 2009).

Teaching burnout has negative consequences for teachers, students, and school systems (Hung, 2001), affecting teachers’ mental health as they struggle with emotional exhaustion and
fatigue (Schwab, 2001), and students experience poor learning environments with burned-out teachers. Teachers suffering burnout have, “less sympathy towards students, reduced tolerance of students, failure to prepare lessons adequately and a lack of commitment to the teaching profession” (Dorman, 2003, p. 36). In addition, the instability of faculty caused by burnout has important consequences for overall school efficiency (Bridge, Cunningham, & Forsbach, 1978). In all cases, in order to facilitate good learning environments for students, enhance school efficiency, and help teachers bring passion to their teaching careers, it is important for teachers to become knowledgeable about the sources and effects of burnout (Dorman, 2003). Blasé (1982) sees, “job-related stress as the major factor in the etiology of the burnout syndrome” (p. 94), and there are five primary factors that generate such stress: lack of support from the public, conflicts between teachers’ visions of their roles and the cultures of their schools, the lack of attractive intrinsic and extrinsic motivations compared to other professions, and the feeling of emotional exhaustion.

In Taiwan, teaching is a career that continues to command a unique respect, but its status has begun to erode, resembling the well-documented decline in prestige suffered by teaching in Western countries. Wangberg (1984) argues that teachers often feel that the work they do lacks full public support and that teaching is not a highly-esteemed profession. The mass media regularly publicizes biased stories about teachers and schools, and the popularity of such stories causes public misperceptions of teachers (Kalker, 1984). Iwanicki (1983) demonstrates that “the poor public image of education is a major source of teacher distress” (p. 28). Members of the public do not respect and support teachers as they did in the past, which affects teachers’ perceptions of themselves as professionals in ways that can lead to burnout (Wangberg, 1984). For example, the public often criticizes teachers’ summer and winter vacation salaries, ignoring
the fact that teachers’ working hours are different from those of other jobs, necessitating labor after the end of the school day. For instance, teachers might contact parents to address students’ problems after school hours or spend time at night preparing their next day’s lessons (Hung, 2011).

As the intermediaries between the administration and students in school, most teachers who are burned out experience large gaps between their expectations for teaching and the realities of the school cultures they confront (Yong & Yue, 2007). In Taiwan, as low enrollment reduces numbers of teachers and forces some to teach unfamiliar subjects, such demands become particularly stressful for educators (Kalker, 1984). Moreover, in order to meet requirements to retain students, teachers in Taiwan may find it difficult to hold students to rigorous academic standards as well as to enforce good behavior. In this setting, teachers may feel as though they are like businesspeople responsible for keeping customers satisfied instead of fulfilling the traditional role of teachers, imparting knowledge and providing advice and guidance to students. In such a frustrating position, teachers may have low self-esteem, and the resulting inner dissatisfaction can cause burnout, undermining long-term career commitment and teaching effectiveness.

In addition, compared to other enterprises, schools often feature less-attractive extrinsic motivations in areas such as promotion or increased salaries because schools often lack the resources of, for example, the business world (Kaiser, 1982). According to Theory X, without rewards or promotions related to work performance, it is hard to motivate workers. This especially affects teachers because, unless they move into administration, they normally retain the same position and title throughout their careers “teacher.” In addition, even though Taiwanese teachers have higher salaries compared to other professional work when they start
their careers, their salaries soon stabilize, and like their US counterparts, they often remain at rates of pay that barely match the inflation rate. At the same time, their workloads and job difficulties are often not commensurate with their salaries, which means that teachers often feel a lack of respect for their efforts for their schools and students, all of which can cause burnout (Wangberg, 1984).

Another factor that can fuel teacher burnout is the feeling of emotional exhaustion. Teaching has traditionally been viewed as a profession based on caring for students’ success and well-being, but Chang (2009) notes that “teaching involves complex student–teacher relationships, as well as emotions; it is not just about caring. However, the more teachers care about students, the more likely they are to get angry or frustrated by students” (p. 212). In addition, teachers, unlike counselors or clinical psychologists, are not trained to remain emotionally detached from their students (Chang, 2009). In Taiwan, it is especially difficult for teachers to attain detachment from students because Taiwanese culture fosters the belief that teachers need to devote themselves completely and faithfully to students. Consequently, a teacher who “gives up” on a student can both gain a bad reputation and feel great personal guilt, caught between teaching beliefs and conflicts with students. On the other hand, even when teachers devote themselves completely to teaching, students may still fail to prosper under their instruction, which can cause teachers to experience depression as they fail to meet their personal commitments to helping students. Schwab (2001) argues that for such reasons, “feelings of emotional exhaustion are a key aspect of the burnout syndrome” (p. 21). These negative emotions underlie the power of burnout to disrupt long-term career commitments.

Nevertheless, if teachers want to sustain their careers, they have to remain physically and mentally healthy to meet standards of professionalism in their work (Cenkseven-Onde & Sari,
The stories of my research participants provide insights for art teachers who are committed to remaining in the field, whether to satisfy personal needs, find meaningful interpersonal engagement, or continue their dedication to art education. Pondering such experiences allows other educators to trace their own life and learning experiences, examine their own burnout factors, and seek the inner resources and outside support to fulfill their career goals. Navigating the sometimes conflicting demands among school missions, student needs, and their own personal teaching aspirations, they can learn to maintain positive attitudes toward teaching, ensuring good learning environments for their students and their own professional success and satisfaction.

Motivation

Anderson and Iwanicki (1984) argue that “teacher motivation is a crucial concern in education” (p. 109). Stressful, demanding work environments can become a nightmare for art educators, but in spite of challenges, teachers must know how to gain motivation, which is essential to enhance professional practice. A review of the literature of motivation theory pertinent to the career longevity concerns of art educators will demonstrate the diverse range of motivation factors that support strong career commitments for art education teachers.

Motivation Theory

Motivation theories originated with the ancient Greeks, and Aristotle’s Rhetoric states that "every action must be due to one or other of seven causes: chance, nature, compulsion, habit, reasoning, anger, or appetite" (Honeycutt, 2004). Modern studies continue to explore the different sources of motivation as motivation theory has taken new shapes in different eras, reflecting prevailing world views. For example, behaviorism sees the world in a mechanistic way, so the behaviorist perspective on motivation emphasizes the importance of the stimulus-response
pattern (Woolf, 1998). In the late 1930s–40s, the behaviorist psychologist Clark Hull argued in his drive-reduction theory that people can be motivated if they reduce or at least temporarily decrease their physical or organic needs such as hunger, thirst, or pain (“Theories,” 2011). B. F. Skinner’s operant conditioning theory focused on how rewards or punishments can serve as reinforcements that motivate people to behave in certain ways (“Operant Conditioning,” 2012). From behaviorism’s point of view, humans can be motivated only if their basic human needs are satisfied, and behaviorism also entails the idea that motivation is most powerfully stimulated by reward or punishment.

On the other hand, cognitivists tend to see the world from a more humanistic perspective, which gives greater emphasis to inner needs. Inner purposes, ideas, insights, values, goals, and knowledge can be important motivational factors. For example, according to Maslow’s need theory (1943), besides physiological and safety requirements, humans also need to satisfy intrinsic needs for esteem and personal achievement in order to be motivated. Similarly, Frederick Herzberg’s two-factor theory also emphasizes the importance of inner motivational needs, which encompass respect, inner growth and recognition (Akrani, 2010). Ryan and Deci’s self-determination theory (2000) stresses that people are motivated only when their innate needs “competence, autonomy, and relatedness” are fulfilled (p.68). From the cognitivist point of view, to gain motivation, one must satisfy inner desires and needs in order to achieve goals.

**Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation**

Theories of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation illuminate the diverse, complex motivations of educators, and each theory may apply to individual teachers in unique ways. Intrinsic motivation refers to innate needs for individual satisfaction, self-determination, and achievement, while extrinsic motivation refers to motivation by reward or punishment, the need for outside
validation of personal worth, or the drive to achieve goals set by outside individuals or organizations (Frank, 2010). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation concepts are central to many contemporary motivation theories, such as Maslow’s need theory (1943), Deci and Ryan’s self-determination theory (2000), Locke’s goal-setting theory (Locke & Latham, 1994), and Frederick Herzberg’s two-factor theory (Akrani, 2010).

In light of the importance of intrinsic motivations, we must recognize the centrality of teachers’ inner needs, such as the need to be recognized and respected (Maslow, 1943). Therefore, art teachers should always keep learning in order to attain personal and professional success, so they can gain recognition and respect both in their daily teaching and among their professional peers (Anderson & Iwanicki, 1984). Esteem from students and peers will reinforce teachers’ motivations and commitments to their teaching careers (Blasé, 1982).

In addition, art teachers need to clarify for themselves the intrinsic goals guiding their career paths, which will motivate them and strengthen their commitments. While students and school administrators may come and go, maintaining a clear inner desire guides a teacher across boundaries of time and space, supporting continued enthusiasm and commitment. Moreover, the process of goal-setting by art teachers is related in important ways to self-actualization. According to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory, self-actualization represents the fulfillment of inner needs, the highest form of human need, and it is an important intrinsic factor for teachers’ career motivations (Cherry, 2012). Such a view also adheres to McGregor’s Theory Y (Kopelman, Prottas, & Davis, 2008), which stresses that individuals will experience self-motivation if given opportunities to pursue personal and internal goals in their work.

On the other hand, extrinsic factors also remain essential to motivation. An excellent example of a highly-motivational extrinsic factor is salary, which plays an important role in
teachers’ motivation (Lorite, 1975). Stressing that teachers work to make money may seem materialistic, but according to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory, physiological well-being and security are the most basic human needs (1943). In addition, Frederick Herzberg’s two-factor theory also recognize that people will not be well-motivated if they cannot satisfy their pay needs (T. Whitaker, B. Whitaker, & Lumpa, 2000).

Maintaining good relationships with colleagues, students, parents and school administrators can be important extrinsic motivation factors for teachers. Hersey et al. (2008) argue that “activities, interactions, and sentiments are essential” for people to motivate themselves to remain in their fields (p. 51). Maslow (1943) argues that people need to experience belonging and social support, and Herzberg’s two-factor theory, as well as self-determination theory, make clear that interpersonal relationships play important roles in motivation at work because people need meaningful interactions with others (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Having good social relationships in their working environments also becomes, then, an important extrinsic motivation factor for teachers.

In scholarship on motivation in education, there are differing perspectives on how intrinsic and extrinsic motivations influence teachers’ commitments. For example, Faranda (2009) notes that intrinsic motivation factors are especially important to help teachers build long-term commitments to teaching. Anderson and Iwanicki (1984) argue that teachers guided by extrinsic motivation factors will not readily fall prey to burnout because their goals are often easier to achieve in the everyday world of teaching. Ryan and Deci (2000) aver that because extrinsic motivations may be internalized, becoming intrinsic motivation factors, the boundary between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations can be hard to define. Lee, McInerney, Liem, and Ortiga (2010) maintain that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation can “be experienced
simultaneously, and adopted at a similar level” (p. 265). Reiss (2005) argues that intrinsic and extrinsic motivations can be seen as a “modern version of mind-body dualism” (p. 2). For teachers, the challenge is to find the balance of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards that works best to support long-term commitments to teaching (Frank, 2010). This research explores the integration of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations that have informed the careers of two college art teachers, exploring how the lessons of their working lives can become models for other art educators striving for career motivation and commitment. The study encourages art teachers to explore their own intrinsic and extrinsic motivation factors so they can more deliberately pursue them in ways that sustain their commitments to teaching, help them face professional challenges, and foster personal and professional development.

*Maslow’s Need Theory*

Motivation is often fueled by multiple needs, and Maslow (1943) emphasizes the importance of both extrinsic and intrinsic needs, arguing that motivation is characterized by a combination of the two. People must satisfy both types of need in order to remain psychologically and physically well. There are five components in Maslow’s need theory: physiological needs, safety needs, love needs, esteem needs and self-actualization needs (Freitas, 2011). Physiological needs include the basic necessities of life such as food, water, and oxygen; physical needs represent job and social security; love needs include belonging to a group and receiving love from individuals. These three are lower-order needs and are classified as extrinsic motivation factors (Evans, 1998). On the other hand, esteem needs signify the necessity of respect, appreciation, and recognition by others as well as by oneself, and self-actualization needs encompass the imperative to achieve one’s own desire or fulfill one’s own needs (Maslow, 1943; Whitaker et al., 2000). Esteem needs and self-actualization needs are also called growth
needs because these needs influence individual growth, and they are higher-order needs, classified as intrinsic motivation factors (Evans, 1998).

Maslow’s hierarchy of needs asserts the necessity to satisfy lower-order needs before moving on to higher ones (Carson, 2005), but this definition does not imply that lower-order needs are less important. Without taking care of these lower needs, higher needs cannot be satisfied (Abell & Hanley, 2002). Moreover, without achieving lower needs, higher needs cannot be sustained for long. On the other hand, Schott (1992) notes that “although Maslow believed that human needs formed a hierarchy, he entered the caveat that it was not necessarily a rigid one” (p. 110), and the hierarchical relationship of needs varies according to individuals. In this context, teachers’ needs are shaped by the requirements of their profession as well as their life conditions. If teachers want to remain motivated in their careers, they need to face their true feelings about what kinds of needs they want to satisfy by teaching (Whiteley, 2002). Some might become teachers because they want to influence others as a form of self-actualization, while others may simply want to satisfy their basic economic needs. Once teachers clarify for themselves the needs that underpin their career choices, it will be easier for them to motivate themselves.

Maslow’s need theory provides a conceptual framework to explore how intrinsic and extrinsic motivation factors in the life experiences of my participants led them to remain committed to their teaching careers. By retelling their exemplary stories, this study allows other art educators to clarify for themselves the extrinsic and intrinsic needs that underpin their career choices, applying such knowledge to their present teaching conditions and also setting the stage for future improvements. It is impossible for people to satisfy all their needs at once because the satisfaction of any need is related to the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of others, and the process
of identifying and satisfying needs becomes an unremitting pursuit (Evans, 1998; Maslow, 1943). Identifying and cultivating the satisfaction of their own diverse needs, art educators can become better teachers in the classroom, praise students more than criticize them, be willing to understand students’ differences, and be more enthusiastic in their teaching.

Resilience Theory

Resilience is an inborn feature of human nature; it is a process, an outcome of learning developed by meeting challenges in life (Gu & Day, 2007; Kaplan, 1999; Kumpfer, 1999; Neill, 2006). Tait (2008) argues that “resilience is nurtured, developed, and mobilized in times of stress” (p. 72). Since the 1970s, psychologists have applied theories of resilience widely, from fostering child development to helping families, communities, and organizations to bounce back from traumatic experiences (VanBreda, 2010). The ability to avoid, diminish, or overcome adversity, resilience is shaped by risk factors in life circumstances (Grotberg, 1997; Mandleco & Craig, 2000). Resilient people not only endure, respond and adjust rapidly to life’s difficulties, but they also accrue valuable experience through such challenges (Bobek, 2002). Their struggles allow them not only to solve problems in the present, but also to enhance their abilities to overcome future impediments (Grotberg, 1997; Neill, 2006; Russo & Boman, 2007).

In order to be resilient, people need to manage their emotions effectively and interact successfully with diverse environments (Tait, 2008). Haglund, Cooper, Southwick, and Charney (2007) identify six strategies that help people enhance their capacities for resilience: cope successfully with feelings of stress in solving problems, exercise regularly, think positively, follow one’s own ethical principles, gain support from others and be flexible. Moreover, Bobek (2002) argues that “significant adult relationships, a sense of personal responsibility, social and problem-solving skills, a sense of competence, expectations and goals, confidence, a sense of
humor and a sense of accomplishment” help teachers develop resilience” (p. 203). Griffith, Steptoe, and Cropley (1999) aver that the “influence of work place social support” plays an important role in enhancing individual’s resilience” (p. 518). Moreover, Austin, Shah, and Muncer (2005) state that “seeking support, positive appraisal, and planful problem solving” are three main factors underpinning teachers’ resilience (p. 65). Employing theories of resilience, this study examines the life experiences participants have confronted in order to build resilience. From their examples, other educators can learn to solve problems and adjust to adverse conditions, developing resilience to sustain their own teaching careers.

Internal and External Support Resources

Two important factors underlie the construction of resilience: internal and external resources (Mandleco & Craig, 2000). Internal factors include personality, self-efficacy, persistence, health, biological and psychological capacities and social and communication skills (Grotberg, 1997; Mandleco & Craig 2000). External resources encompass trust and emotional support from colleagues, friends and family members, as well as the habit of learning successful behaviors and attitudes from role models or community organizations (Grotberg, 1997; Mandleco & Craig 2000). The combination of internal and external factors is important, and if teachers want to be resilient, they need to learn from challenges as well as gain support from both external and internal resources (Mandleco & Craig, 2000).

Internal Resources

Teachers need to have healthy bodies as a form of internal support for constructing resilience (Grotberg, 1997; Mandleco & Craig 2000). They need to exercise regularly and eat healthily to maintain basic physical health (Haglund, Cooper, Southwick, & Charney 2007). If teachers have good physical health, they will find it easier to maintain mental health, and they
will face reduced risks of stress, fatigue, and burnout (Hastings & Bham, 2003). They will have
greater patience and positive mental attitudes to solve problems with students, school
administrators or peers. Healthy bodies support teachers’ resilience and professional
commitments on various fronts.

In addition, teachers need to think positively in order to gain resilience. Everly, Welzant,
and Jacobson (2008) note that “the philosopher Epictetus once wrote that man is disturbed not by
things, but by the views which he takes of them” (p. 3). Resilience is a process developed
through individuals’ interactions with their environments, and those interactions are shaped
deeply by the perspectives individuals apply to them. Thus, positive thinking is important for art
teachers to gain resilience. Also, Bobek (2002) claims that “adverse situations serve as catalysts
for the creation of resilience” (p. 202). Art teachers should not be afraid of facing difficulties
because these are opportunities for developing resilience and, ultimately, finding success. T.
Whitaker et al. (2000) argue that “as teachers we realized that we must meet this challenge if we
are to be effective” (p. xv). Teachers can use such insights to forge the inner strength to enhance
teaching abilities and increase career satisfaction.

Additionally, teachers need to foster self-efficacy, which Evers et al. (2002) define as
what one is “capable of under certain circumstances, regardless of the capabilities or skills that
he or she actually possesses” (p. 229). Self-efficacy is, then, the positive belief that an individual
has the capacity to solve problems (Bandura, 1997), and teachers have their own distinctive
career challenges to which they must apply their resources of self-efficacy.

Furthermore, how teachers construct belief systems is essential to building resilience. A
teacher’s set of beliefs encompasses class teaching, student learning, subject curricula,
professional life and personal knowledge (Kagan, 1992). Teachers’ beliefs inform not only how
they provide instruction in classrooms, but they are also central to developing personal capacities such as motivation and resilience. Therefore, by having clear conceptions of just what their beliefs about teaching are—such as why they want to teach and upon what foundations such commitments rest—teachers can attain resilience and the power to face challenges (Bandura, 1997). This study explores the internal resources two successful art teachers draw upon to face their career challenges, making such wisdom available to other teachers who may learn to develop their own internal resources in order to solve problems and adjust to adverse conditions.

External Resources

Teachers should be equipped with adequate knowledge and skills in their expertise areas and remain knowledgeable about current developments in their teaching subjects to bolster the external resources that support resilience (Bobek, 2002; Marshall, Sears, Allen, Roberts, and Schubert, 2007). When teachers present their own expertise in the classroom, students will respect their teaching and be motivated to learn, recognizing their professionalism and the value of their instruction. Receiving positive feedback from students will, in turn, enhance teachers’ confidence as well as teaching performance. This positive teaching and learning cycle will promote teachers’ resilience, enhancing their commitments to developing expertise and refining teaching abilities. Consequently, teachers will feel more confident in their teaching, and students will experience a better learning environment.

To be resilient, teachers need to set goals from their personal perspectives as well as in light of their schools’ missions, the objectives of school administrators, and the points of view of students and parents (Chandler, 2004). Teachers need to have the wisdom to listen to and to empathize with what schools, students and parents need as well as to be flexible enough to adjust curriculum in order to build good communication among teachers, students and schools. In this
way, teachers will enlarge their abilities to deal with struggles and conflict among various school constituencies and elude some of the main causes of teacher burnout, such as conflicts among teachers’ and students’ beliefs and school administrators’ demands.

Moreover, knowing how to seek social support from sources such as family, friends, peers, and school administrators is important for teachers to build resilience (Grotberg, 1997). People need love and belonging (Abell & Hanley, 2002), and teachers can build support systems with their colleagues to share teaching experiences, knowledge, and skills in order to implement curriculum collaboratively for effective teaching. Interacting with members of their social support systems, teachers can gain suggestions and advice to solve their problems and maintain resilience (Griffith et al., 1999; Zahorik, 1987).

In addition, teachers can enhance resilience by modeling the behavior and outlooks of successful senior teachers or educators in professional organizations. Teachers can become active in professional organizations or other learning communities to emulate successful forms of resilience and learn strategies to solve problems (Zahorik, 1987). When people share similar life patterns, they can learn from others’ experiences (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007), and in this way, teachers can avoid making the mistakes others have already worked through, adding tested problem-solving approaches to their own stores of strategies for resilience. Accordingly, this study’s dissection of the importance of external resources in the life stories of two art teachers provides examples for other art educators not only to sustain their teaching careers but also to improve their teaching while enhancing personal and professional development, setting a course for future success.

Beliefs of Teachers

Teachers develop their teaching beliefs through the process of becoming teachers and
practicing the profession (Goodman, 1998). Teachers’ beliefs influence their behavior as teachers and their perceptions of both their day-to-day work and their long-term teaching careers (Pajares, 1992). Therefore, teachers’ beliefs always encompass class teaching and student learning (Ashton, 1984; Bergman, Lubinski, & Jaberg, 1997; Mansfield & Volet, 2010; Ng, Nicholas, & Williams, 2010). Kagan (1992) argues that “teachers belief functions like any other form of personal knowledge, the implicitly held assumptions about people and events that individuals bring to a particular knowledge domain” (p. 75). Liurda and Lasagabaster (2010) note that teachers’ beliefs influence their teaching performance as well as how they encounter new situations in their careers and their teaching development. How teachers react their stress and burnout is determined by what teachers believe (Friedman 1995). It is crucial for teachers to understand how they construct their teaching beliefs because they determine, to a great extent, the success and effectiveness of their teaching careers (Fives & Buehl, 2008).

Teachers construct their beliefs by drawing on many sources, and memories of life experiences play an especially important role (Naspor, 1987). Memories may include childhood experiences, general education, teacher education, pre-service teaching and, finally, everyday teaching. Scholarship on how teachers construct their teaching beliefs amid such experiences illuminate the important contributions afforded by diverse sources of belief. Goodman (1998) states that early childhood and educational experiences create an essential “intuitive screen” that helps teachers learn how to teach before they receive formal education training (p. 130). Aldemir and Sezer (2009) stress the importance of childhood and later life experiences in teachers’ constructions of teaching beliefs. Correa et al. (2008) demonstrate that teachers learn effective strategies for instruction and learning from diverse interactions in life prior to becoming professional educators. Lorite (1995) argues that teachers begin their “apprenticeship of
observation” in three ways: “(1) formal schooling, (2) mediated entry, and (3) learning- while-doing,” underlining the importance of teacher education, pre-service experience and in-service practice for teachers’ beliefs (p. 57). Pajares (1992) notes that teachers can construct teaching beliefs as they develop their knowledge and philosophy of teaching in pre-service teacher education, especially influenced by institutions of teacher training. Such research makes clear that teachers construct their teaching beliefs from childhood experience, general education, formal teacher education, pre-service training and daily teaching practice.

On the other hand, teachers also construct beliefs through cultural influences (Aldemir & Sezer, 2009). Correa et al. (2008) argue that “teaching is a cultural activity and thinking about teaching and learning is informed by culturally shared ideas about teaching and learning” (p. 151). Correa et al. (2008) state that “teachers’ beliefs about instruction and learning may be shaped largely by culturally shared experiences and values” (p. 140). It is, therefore, important for teachers to understand how culture influences the construction of teaching beliefs in order to evaluate and reconstruct their beliefs in more powerful and positive ways (Liurda & Lasagabaster, 2010). Such a process of critically scrutinizing one’s own beliefs will allow teachers to strengthen teaching performance and enhance professional development.

Moreover, teachers also construct beliefs through facing challenges. Belief formed in this way is intertwined with self-efficacy, the capacity teachers develop by working through difficulties in their teaching (Bandura, 1997; Gibson & Dembo, 1984). E. M. Skaalvik and S. Skaalvik (2010) argue that “teacher self-efficacy may be conceptualized as individual teachers' beliefs in their own ability to plan, organize and carry out activities that are required to attain given educational goals” (p. 1059). Teachers who foster self-efficacy will enhance their own abilities to overcome teaching difficulties as well as remain motivated in their teaching careers.
Indeed, how successfully teachers adjust to teaching difficulties determines the success and longevity of their teaching careers.

On the other hand, Bandura (1994) avers that role models can transmit knowledge by modeling behavior and thinking. Teachers can learn how to explore their beliefs by studying others’ experiences (Bandura, 1994; Zahorik, 1987). Therefore, in my study, I explore how my participants mined their life experiences to construct teaching beliefs that inspire career resilience. By retelling their stories, my study provides models for other art educators to explore their own past life experiences in ways that illuminate the construction of belief and open avenues to developing self-efficacy in order to establish long-term commitments to teaching.

**Dialogic Inquiry**

Bruner (1996) notes that “so much meaning making involves language” (p. 7). People use language to communicate ideas, but communication is never the mere passing of information from one to another or the creation of simple distinctions, like choosing a correct answer on a multiple choice test. In addition to communicating ideas, engaging in dialogue conveys how an individual’s experiences and history of social interaction informs his or her present sensibilities and visions of the future. Nichol (1996) argues that

> dialogue is a multi-faceted process, which explores an unusually wide range of human experience: our closely-held values; the nature and intensity of emotions; the patterns of our thought process; the function of memory; the import of inherited cultural myths; and the manner in which our neurophysiology structures moment-to-moment experience. (p. vii)

Likewise, Fisher (2007) also asserts that “meaning is created through dialogue; it has no fixed or stable identity, but is the product of different voices” (p. 616). It is this capacity of dialogue that distinguishes human communication from that of other living creatures (Tomasello, Carpenter,
Call, Behne, & Moll, 2005; Wells, 1999). As such, dialogue becomes the vehicle through which people most powerfully craft their own understandings and learn to solve problems through a communal meaning-making process.

Moreover, there is a great deal of research exploring how dialogue can play important roles in teaching and learning for educators (Bowne et al., 2010). Exemplary recent illustrations of the application of such principles to educational settings include the work of Sakamoto and Chan, which addresses two student teachers’ stories about teaching and learning in Canadian and Japanese elementary schools, examining the narration of their experiences as a dialogic, meaning-making process (Sakamoto & Chan, 2006). Similarly, Bowne et al. (2010) explore how preservice teachers’ learning and teaching can be enhanced through collaborative dialogic inquiry. Bound (2010) uses the concept of dialogic inquiry as a design element to enhance students’ online learning. Nevertheless, little research has been conducted to explore specifically how college art teachers use dialogic inquiry to explore motivation and resilience in their teaching careers. Sakamoto and Chan (2006) argue that dialogic inquiry can be “a rich, informative, meaning-making process, a study into one’s belief with the aid of another,” through which educators can discern enlightening interactions among themselves, others, and their shared environments (p. 217). Consequently, in this study, I have employed dialogic inquiry, collaborating with my participants to share ideas and beliefs about dealing with challenges in teaching careers. Through dialogue, I explore how they make meaning of life experience in ways that allow them to solve professional difficulties and renew their professional energies. In turn, the dialogic retelling of their stories affords an invitation to other art educators to join in employing dialogic inquiry as the groundwork for meeting future challenges in the classroom.
Summary

My study explores how two Taiwanese college art teachers construct their beliefs on the basis of life experience to motivate themselves and remain resilient in their teaching careers amid the turbulent conditions in Taiwanese higher education. Their intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, along with their internal and external resources, are revealed in ways that illuminate their long-term commitments to art education. In addition, dialogic inquiry plays a crucial role in my study as it makes possible powerful forms of active inquiry, collaboration, meaning making and problem solving (Leavy, 2009). The thoughtful reflections and stories generated by my research collaborations with my participants can guide art educators to empower their voices and solve teaching problems in collaboration with other educators. Engaging with my retelling of two art teachers stories, art educators may gauge how their own past teaching and learning experiences have influenced their present beliefs and goals, making such a process the basis of renewed teaching knowledge (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002). As art educators can contemplate their own work experiences and social interactions, they may find resources to forge their own strategies of motivation and resilience. In this way, art educators may also come to appreciate more deeply their own voices and life experiences as they learn, in turn, how their own stories construct knowledge that can be a source of inspiration to their colleagues.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Research Method

My study of art teachers’ life stories is well suited to a qualitative analysis grounded in narrative inquiry, a form of research methodology that explores human experiences (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). People tell and listen to stories in their everyday lives in diverse ways, encompassing personal chats, diaries, myths, television, film, fairy tales, and many other milieus (Elliott, 2005; Roth, 1988). All of these activities, in a broad sense, use stories to communicate human experiences to others (Atkinson, 1998; Elliott, 2005). Such commonplace storytelling activities are so natural, however, people may not be aware of the ways that daily talk and storytelling shape and, indeed, create the conditions for a shared human life. Chung (2007) argues that storytelling can transport the wisdom of the past into the present and future, establishing a progress of narrative knowledge that transcends boundaries of space and time. Jonassen and Hernandez-Serrano stated that “cultures have maintained their existence through different types of stories” (p.66).

Many fields of study have employed story to conduct research (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), including anthropological studies (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007), organizational studies (Czarniawska, 1997), social studies (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002), and teachers’ personal and professional development (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Pinnegar and Daynes (2007) argue that narrative inquiry is the “most compelling and appropriate way to study human interaction” (p. 6). Yussen and Ozcan (1997) affirm that story can reveal meaning “about psychological causality, about emotions, about intentionality, about goals, and about values” (p. 6). Such work
demonstrates that listening to and telling stories serves as a powerful research tool in many arenas of formal scholarship.

**Why Use Narrative Inquiry?**

Narrative inquiry is increasingly used to empower teachers’ voices, enhance teaching and learning and address topics in educational research (Atkinson, 2007; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin, Pushor, & Orr, 2007; Conle, 2001; Mello, 2007). For example, Doecke, Brown, and Loughran (2000) use narrative inquiry to study how stories and anecdotes play important roles in teacher education. Kitchen (2005) demonstrates how teachers can enhance professional development through narrative inquiry in a study that dissects the teaching and classroom experiences of a college instructor. Educators can use life stories and narratives to construct knowledge in teaching and learning (Atkinson, 2007; Mello, 2007), and teachers can tell their own stories and retell others’ stories to enhance their personal and social growth (Behar-Horenstein & Morgan, 1995; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Connelly and Clandinin (1990) argue that educational research is the “construction and reconstruction of personal and social stories; teachers and learners are storytellers and characters in their own and others’ stories” (p. 2). There is little research, however, specifically about using narrative inquiry to examine college art teachers’ motivation and resilience. Therefore, I am interested to explore how narrative inquiry may be employed to capture a diversity of teachers’ voices in ways that point to strategies for remaining passionate about teaching and making long-term career commitments.

Indeed, narrative inquiry values individual experiences and voices, acknowledging their significance in understanding the world and constructing knowledge (Mello, 2007; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007; J. W. Willis, J. Willis., Jost, & Nilakanta, 1942). Therefore, this study’s exploration of life and teaching stories examines how significant individual life experiences
underpin teachers’ constructions of motivation and resilience.

Undertaking narrative inquiry as my research method, I, as the researcher, also recognize the centrality of my own voice as well as the importance of my interactions with participants. I and my participants create their stories through a collaborative process of reflection. The traditional social science paradigm of an objective and static relationship between researchers and researched has been supplanted in narrative inquiry by collaborative and dynamic relationships (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002). In such a process, narrative data is created, collected, revised, reflected upon and subjected to collaboration among researchers and participants (Conle, 2001). Through collaboration, my participants and I worked together to create meaning from our shared experiences, and we learned and grew together during the research process (Clandinin, 2006; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007).

In addition, the framework of narrative inquiry opens powerful possibilities for art educators to explore their own personal and professional development by engaging with my participants’ stories. Berger (2004) argues that employing narrative allows audience to look inward in order to “reach outward toward understanding” (p. 515), and this process leads to “a personal, spiritual exploration” (p. 507). By listening to these two college art teachers’ stories, art educators can begin to examine how their life experiences can serve to foster their own career motivation and resilience. Baddeley and Signer (2007) argue that this process of self-reflection and self-awareness enables an individual practice of “autobiographical reasoning” through which one can create new meanings in the pursuit of teaching as a vocation and forge change through exploring past experience (p. 178). A deep understanding of this process allows art educators to see themselves, the world and the future in new ways (Berger, 2004; Freeman, 2007), renewing energy and enhance resilience in their teaching careers.
Narrative inquiry as research demonstrates that humans construct knowledge in diverse ways, offering new opportunities to experience and represent the world (Finley, 2005). Research should not be limited to texts or other “language-based ways of knowing;” instead, any form or material, such as visual art, music, image, metaphor, fable, poetry, video, personal narrative, film, or drama can represent knowledge of the world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Finley, 2005, p. 685). Eisner (1998) argues that “human knowledge is a constructed form of experience and therefore a reflection of mind as well as nature: Knowledge is made, not simply discovered” (p. 7).

Consequently, this study illustrates how art teachers can apply narrative inquiry to their teaching practice, learning to solve problems and construct knowledge that enhances teaching and continued personal and professional development.

Participants/Location of Research

The participants in my study, Chun and Huang, are college art teachers in Taiwan. I have known Chun and Huang for 15 years, having worked with them as colleagues at my own college. Both of them love to teach, work well with students and school administrators and have shown themselves to be highly motivated and resilient in the face of challenging conditions at the college. For ethical reasons, in order to protect my participants’ privacy, I have created pseudonyms for them and the college. Josselson (2007) reminds us that ethics “is not a matter of abstractly correct behavior but of responsibility in human relationship” (p. 538). As such, I undoubtedly have the responsibility to protect the identities of human subjects. Rosenblatt (1995) argues that “what is ethical includes what a person and those in the person’s ethical community consider to be good, right, moral, just, proper, virtuous, and lawful” (p.139). By using pseudonyms, I seek to protect the institution, my participants and others involved in this research.
The Researcher

I have been a college lecturer for 12 years and have taught computer graphic design, visual communication design and computer painting classes. Even though teaching has become more challenging over the last decade, many Taiwanese art teachers still want to devote themselves to this career. I, like many other college art teachers in Taiwan, have an increased workload and more pressing demands from students, students’ parents and school administrators. Nevertheless, I still want to continue my teaching career, not only because college teaching brings economic security, but also because I can help students find their potential and influence them in positive ways, which can satisfy my inner needs. Knowing how to motivate ourselves and face challenges becomes important for Taiwanese college art teachers who want to continue to make commitments to teaching. By retelling the life experiences of two colleagues, this study explores how they motivate themselves and find rejuvenation in their teaching careers, providing the basis of an international exchange of instructive teachers’ experiences.

My Relationship with Chun

Chun is an assistant professor, having taught interior design, architectural model construction and photography during his 34 years at Jun-Sin College. Consequently, he is not only our senior teacher, but the best counselor to his peers. When I have conflicts or other difficulties with students or school administrators, I always like to ask for Chun’s opinions or suggestions, and he always gives me advice that helps me meet the university’s professional requirements with a positive attitude. For example, when I felt fatigued from spending time recruiting students during the weekend, he reminded me that I should feel grateful and appreciate this extra work because it shows how important I am to the school. In addition, Chun also advised me to go beyond what school administrators ask for when fulfilling recruiting duties.
When our art teachers go to schools to recruit students, we normally need only take school brochures and give prospective students a brief introduction. In addition to that, however, Chun encouraged me to bring my students’ work to show possible recruits the art skills they would learn and the work they could create if they chose to study at our college. In this way, I could more successfully recruit students and achieve the objectives of the college.

In addition, Chun is an extremely popular professor with students, and he receives the prize for high scores on student evaluations each semester. I will never forget one scenario in which he, a 60 years old teacher wearing a white sweatshirt, led a group of students in dance during a Christmas Eve party. This activity may be common behavior for teachers and students in Western culture, but it is highly unusual in the East because teachers are normally reserved with students. It would be difficult for most of us to relax and dance with students. I am keenly interested in how teachers can be like Chun, keeping their passion for the daily work of education, even into the final phases of their careers.

*My Relationship with Huang*

My other participant is Huang, a lecturer with long hair and a gentle smile who always dresses and presents herself very formally for teaching. She teaches computer graphics and visual design, and besides teaching and consulting with students at Jun-Sin College, she is also working on her Ph.D. at another Taiwanese university. Huang and I are good friends, and we always share teaching experiences and support each other in our teaching careers. Moreover, due to our shared expertise in computer graphics, we substitute for each other if either one of us cannot teach a class. When we see calls for papers or openings for exhibitions, we collaborate.

In addition, Huang and I are both Buddhists, and when we face challenges in our teaching careers, we always comfort and support each other through the teachings of Buddha. Huang is
not only very devoted, but she also applies Buddhist philosophy to her teaching in the classroom, which contributes to the fact that she is personally popular among students, and that they like to take her classes. Huang believes that each student is unique and worthy of being taught, and she wants to do her best to help each one. By interviewing Huang and retelling her stories, I explore in this study how her life experiences and philosophy foster an extraordinary commitment to her teaching career supported by motivation and resilience.

The Criteria for Selecting Participants

Because I have worked with Chun and Huang for a long time, both are very supportive of my project and were quite willing to share their stories for my dissertation research. In addition to my relationships and experiences with Chun and Huang, my criteria for selecting them as participants included their personal experiences with motivation and resilience, our similar educational backgrounds, my friendship with the participants and my ease of access and scheduling with them.

During Chun’s 34 years of teaching, he has always maintained his passion for education. When he talks about his students, he is always very enthusiastic about their progress and highly motivated to devise new methods of instruction to help his students learn. In addition, Chun always encourages his students to participate in competitions, and he is always prominently represented on his department’s website because his students often win prizes in art competitions. Chun believes that “the great pleasure in being an art teacher is to help students find success. Students winning competitions is one way to demonstrate their success.”

Despite his success, as a longtime teacher, however, Chun has faced special challenges in meeting the university’s requirement that all lecturers upgrade to professor or be accepted to a Ph.D. program by 2011 to retain their positions. As a 60 years old art teacher with little computer
experience, Chun worked very hard to learn how to use Microsoft Word to prepare his curriculum vitae for the art department’s upgrade application. At that time, I taught him how to use Word, and it was quite difficult for him to remember computer functions; he even stumbled over how to click the mouse properly. He became a bit discouraged when he repeatedly made errors, especially after I had taught him certain functions numerous times, but still, he asked me to teach him more. Because of his persistence in learning, I was impressed by his effort. I began to see him as an eager learner rather than an older man and a slow computer learner. He demonstrated his resilience and his determination to face the challenges presented by the school. Chun, indeed, succeeded in upgrading to assistant professor on the basis of his artwork in 2008, and he thus secured his teaching position. While interviewing Chun, I was interested in exploring how he keeps his enthusiasm for teaching, while at the same time overcoming anxiety and coping with the pressures of such professional pursuits.

Also an experienced educator, Huang has been teaching at Jun-Sin College for 17 years, and she loves to interact with students. Besides her regular teaching, Huang is also the undergraduate adviser for the art department. If students have problems with classes or their studies, they can make appointments to meet with Huang, and she will give them advice or help to solve problems by becoming a bridge between students and their teachers. As a Buddhist, Huang believes that teachers need to do good and influence students in positive ways. Whenever she helps students, she feels that she attains her goal as an art teacher. It is, therefore, this sense of accomplishment that keeps her motivated to continue teaching. Because Huang is such a warm and helpful art teacher, students always like to take her classes, and they call her the “angel teacher.”

Moreover, besides teaching and advising students, Huang also needs to take care of her two
children and her ill mother. Whenever she needs to stay longer than normal at school to meet with students or to staff school activities, she has to rush home at the end of the day or find someone to pick up her children from school and her mother from a nursing home. Under such pressure from her family obligations, Huang nevertheless remains committed to her teaching career. At the same time, she must also contend with the requirement to upgrade to professor or enroll in a Ph.D. program. After failing a Ph.D. entrance exam three times, she was finally accepted to a doctoral program in Taiwan in 2009, and she maintained her teaching position. In Chun’s and Huang’s efforts to deal with adversity, I saw how much effort they made to strike a balance between addressing their own difficulties and remaining committed to excellent teaching.

Bandura (1994) avers that we can learn knowledge from others by modeling their behavior and thinking. Likewise, by retelling Chun’s and Huang’s stories, this study can instruct teachers about how to maintain their motivation and resilience while facing professional challenges.

Chun, Huang and I have similar educational backgrounds and have faced similar teaching struggles. Ellis (1998) argues that researchers and participants should have similar personal experiences so that they can share their knowledge and investigate issues together. Like myself, both Chun and Huang graduated from junior college in Taiwan, majoring in art-craft, and we finished our master’s degrees in the United States. Therefore, interacting with them allowed me to understand their experiences of coping with conflicts in their teaching careers and understand the differences between Western and Eastern educational settings. In addition, we have all experienced Taiwan’s educational reforms and the effects of the enrollment crisis, so it is significant to hear their stories about how they dealt with these changes, especially as they have affected student-teacher relationships and their efforts to motivate themselves in their careers.

According to Bandura (1994), people learn best when their role models have similar
backgrounds to their own. In this way, Chun’s and Huang’s experiences can provide enlightening perspectives to other teachers who may face similar challenges.

Moreover, my friendship with Chun and Huang facilitated our collaboration during the research process because my participants and I felt comfortable working with colleagues we know well (Beltman, 2009; M. D. Gall, J. P. Gall & Brog, 2007; O'Donoghue & Punch, 2003). Our friendship also contributed to open communication among us, freeing the participants to tell their stories without feeling pressured (Creswell, 2007; O'Donoghue & Punch, 2003; Seidman, 2006). This setting empowered Chun and Huang to use their own voices to describe challenges and motivation strategies, rather than feeling they must adhere to conventional notions of educational professionalism in their responses. Moreover, the trust inherent in our friendship also facilitated the confirmability of the research.

Due to our close working relationships, I am able to assess the contributions of my participants easily (Creswell, 2007; Elliot, 2005). Both live very close to my hometown in Kaohsiung, Taiwan, so I was able to access them easily. Moreover, they were also willing to continue to support my research process after I returned to the United States. They welcomed me to e-mail or Skype them when I had questions, and they were open to making sustained commitments to the interview and research process until I finished my dissertation.

In summary, all of the above criteria made it possible for me to complete three interviews with each participant in a relaxed and friendly process, fostering a collaborative effort to retell their stories in ways that will help other art educators explore professional motivation and resilience.

Method of Data Collection

In this research, I collected data from three sources: interviews, a researcher’s reflective
journal and related documents. I conducted three semi-structured, face-to-face life story interviews with Chun and Huang. Atkinson (2007) argues that the life story interview can capture the essence of personal life experience and reveal how humans make sense of their lives through telling their own stories. In addition, there are important connections between life experience and teaching. Dewey (1938) proclaims that “one learns about education from thinking about life, and one learns about life from thinking about education” (p. 89). Teachers can solve teaching difficulties and enhance their professional development by learning from others’ stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Mello, 2007). Having conducted life story interviews, I traced these two art teachers’ life experiences, charted their development of motivation and resilience in response to professional challenges and then retold their stories to help other educators in the future.

In addition, through semi-structured, face-to-face life story interviews, I avoided lag time in waiting for participants’ responses, and I had the flexibility to adjust the questions and interact with my participants. During the research process, I asked Chun and Huang all of the questions I desired, and I also still had the flexibility to query them for more details and clarifications. On the other hand, I was also able to reshape my questions to reflect or explore new research perspectives that arose after listening to Chun’s and Huang’s initial responses, and I was also able to remove questions if I found my participants unwilling to respond because of personal concerns (Elliot, 2005; O'Donoghue & Punch, 2003; Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004). At the end of each interview, I also had a chance to ask my participants if they had any questions regarding their contributions to the interview, or if I had made them feel uncomfortable or distressed during the process (Josselson, 2007).

I must stress that during the interviews, I was not simply a listener, but rather, I
collaborated with my participants to explore our life experiences in order to generate meanings from their stories (Fontana & Frey, 2005). Because we worked in such a free and open atmosphere, Chun and Huang were encouraged to contribute their points of view without pressure. I also shared with them my own recollections as we learned from one another’s experiences through the interview encounter (Creswell, 2007; Marshall & Rossman, 1989). Such dialogue elicited multiple points of view from my participants, and their contributions, in turn, helped me to reconsider my own ideas about motivation and resilience from new perspectives (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). Through such interviews, I collected data in the form of audio recordings and written notes, which provided the resources and support for later data analysis in the process of retelling the stories.

Besides conducting semi-structured, face-to-face life story interviews, I also used a reflective journal to collect data in the research. Gil-Garcia and Cintron (2002) argue that “a reflective journal is a private artifact that stimulates individual reflection” (p. 5). By using a reflective journal, I was able to look back and think about what I had learned from Chun and Huang in order to retell their stories. Moreover, the reflective journal also served as a written dialogue between participants and me (Slotnick & Janesick, 2011). Through recording Chun’s and Huang’s stories in the reflective journal, I began to explore my own life and teaching experiences, which helped me bolster my own motivation, resilience, and commitment to future teaching (Davies, Hogan, & Dalton, 1993). In addition, I used a reflective journal to monitor the direction of research, ensure progress toward research goals and enhance my abilities to solve research problems (Slotnick & Janesick, 2011).

Moreover, a review of related documents—which included Chun’s and Huang’s blogs, class materials and e-mail messages—provided insight for the study. For example, collecting
data from Chun’s and Huang’s blogs, I was able to better understand how they interact with their students, friends and colleagues, as well as the ways they pursue professional development on their own time. Using e-mail enlarged my dialogue with participants, creating the time for each of us to reflect on questions or concerns that emerged from interviews (Cowie, 1997). Finally, their class materials provided information about their classroom teaching and how they interacted with students through teaching materials.

Bringing together life story interviews, my reflection journal, and related documents as multiple data sources, I conducted data triangulation to enhance the validity and reliability of the study (Creswell, 2007). The structure and process of data collection for the study served to explore the development of two art teachers’ life experiences in ways that illuminate how they have maintained motivation and resilience in response to professional challenges. Ultimately, the data collected in this fashion allowed me to retell their stories in order to help other educators in their own professional pursuits.

The Interviews

Following the guidelines established by Seidman (2006), I conducted three semi-structured, face-to-face life story interviews with each participant to attain an in-depth understanding of how he or she creates meaning from life experiences. I conducted each interview separately to ensure confidentiality (Merriam, 2002). Seidman (2006) suggests that each interview should have a distinct purpose: the first is to gain an understanding of participants’ life experiences; the second is to collect in-depth information about those experiences; and the third is to pursue the participants’ reflections on them. Based on this understanding, my research established a distinct thematic focus for each interview: the first interview explored the art teachers’ past and present educational and teaching experiences; the
second emphasized detailed information about how they motivated themselves and cultivated resilience; and the third explored their future visions for personal and professional development.

Originally, I planned to conduct each interview for 90 minutes, so my participants would have plenty of time to talk about themselves and their experiences. During the research process, both of my participants were very excited to share their stories. Because my interviews were semi-structured, I refined and added questions to explore their life experiences as I learned more about their backgrounds and stories (Elliot, 2005). Consequently, the interview times always exceeded ninety minutes.

Moreover, I planned the interval between each participants’ interview to be one week. Merriam (2006) and Seidman (2006) argue that one-week intervals allow the researcher to maintain connections with participants while still having time to reframe interview questions according to the previous interview. However, during the interview process, I found it necessary to adjust my expectations for the interval in order to accommodate my participants’ convenience. Two factors necessitated this adjustment: the weather and my participants’ needs to balance summer vacation schedules and family obligations. Summer in Taiwan is the rainy typhoon season, which sometimes made meeting difficult. In addition, because summer brought the disruption of normal school schedules, my participants had some difficulties scheduling interview times. For example, both Chun and I were living very near each other in Kaohsiung, which is in Southern Taiwan, but Chun’s daughter was expecting a baby in Taipei, which is in the north. He and his wife had to go to Taipei periodically to take care of their daughter, and because her pregnancy was high risk due to her age, Chun sometimes unexpectedly had to cancel interviews to go to see his daughter. On the other hand, Huang had to take care of her two children, one a first-grader, the other a third-grader, who were out of regular school. Her husband
is a university professor, but because he is a department chairman with administrative duties, he needed to go to school almost every day, even though it was summer vacation. If her husband could not watch her children, Huang had a hard time leaving home. One day, she brought her children to an interview because she felt bad about repeatedly complicating my schedule by cancelling interviews, but we both found that it was hard to concentrate during the interview. The children fought and argued along with playing, and Huang was distracted by the need to take care of them. When one of them would cry, we would have to stop the interview. After that experience, we decided to wait for a convenient time when she could meet without having to also care for her children. Therefore, I arranged the interviews according to my participants’ availability, foregoing my original scheduling plan, which was three interviews, each separated by an interval of one week. After eliminating such difficulties and devising ways to work around my participants’ other commitments, I was able to finish the interviews and collect complete sets of data from each of my participants over the course of the summer.

Despite such hindrances, due to our trusting friendships, my participants and I enjoyed sharing our experiences during the interviews without feeling pressured by schedule constraints. We created a collaborative atmosphere in which we learned from each other’s life experiences in ways that supported our ongoing efforts to become better, more committed teachers (Ellis, 1998). We maintained a commitment to understanding each other’s experiences without judgments about right and wrong (J. W. Willis et al., 1942). This mutual process increased our self-awareness, letting us learn more about who we are, why we want to teach, and how to be better teachers in the future (Nevin & Cardelle-Elawar, 2003). For example, Chun noted that he had never considered why he feels a special duty to be supportive and helpful to students recovering from broken relationships until he realized, by telling his life stories, which his role as a teacher
had been deeply shaped by the rejection he experienced from the father of a girlfriend in his youth. The father forbade his daughter’s relationship with Chun because he lacked a college degree. Because of that experience, Chun is committed to assisting students undergoing similar traumas, helping them transform negative and sad feelings into strengths supporting their success, just as Chun did as a young man by turning rejection into a successful determination to attain his college degree. Understanding how his past experiences fuel his current success as a teacher reinforces Chun’s power to help his students face challenges in positive ways.

On the other hand, as she recounted her life experiences, Huang came to understand in new ways that her religious beliefs played an important role in helping her face challenges in her teaching career. For example, Huang failed her Ph.D. test three times, but she persevered and passed on the fourth attempt. Through our interviews, Huang realized her Buddhist belief that things come to pass only when they are ready supported her commitment to ultimate success on her exam. Today, she continues to employ this belief to face challenges in her teaching career. She will not feel discouraged or sad if she cannot achieve every objective in her teaching, but Huang still works hard to solve problems because she knows that when the time is ready, everything is possible, so she must work hard and prepare well.

Through interacting with Chun and Huang, I realized that they have teaching challenges similar to mine and that I was not alone in feeling discouragement at times in my teaching career. Because of Chun’s and Huang’s persistence and positive outlooks, however, they have developed the confidence and skills to solve their problems. Likewise, if I want to continue in a teaching career, I need to face difficulties bravely and actively cultivate professionalism in both teaching expertise and professional development in order to continue a long-term commitment.
My relationship with my participants did not end after the interviews concluded in the summer. When I went back to the United States to complete transcriptions of the audio recordings, I found that the final section of the third interview with Chun was missing. I called Chun through Skype and recorded a new interview. Throughout the analysis of analyzing the interviews and retelling my participants’ stories in this study, I had some difficulty determining how much to reveal about my participants due to privacy concerns. Both of them, however, gave me permission to write whatever I needed to complete my dissertation, and they even allowed me to use their real names. Even though I decided to use pseudonyms after I went back Taiwan to perform a member check in the fall of 2011, I still greatly appreciated their generosity and kindness. Their support and help has facilitated my motivation to execute this research.

Method of Data Analysis

The process for analyzing data in qualitative research includes preparing data, collecting data, coding data to mark themes, and presenting data as graphs, stories, or reports (Merriam, 2002). Data analysis takes place throughout the research process, starting with data collection and carrying through to reporting research results. In this process, my choices influence how I analyzed data and shaped the ultimate research outcomes (Creswell, 2007). After the interviews, I gathered data by transcribing audio recordings and reviewing my notes from the interviews, as well as working with my reflective journal and related documents. Drawing these sources together, I used a three-dimensional space approach to code and analyze my data.

The Three-Dimensional Space Approach

The three-dimensional space approach originated in Dewey’s (1938) philosophy that life is education, and it emphasizes the importance of the personal and social relationships in life experiences (Creswell, 2007). Sakamoto and Chan (2006) also argue the importance of “the
interconnectedness of the relationship between experience and education” (p. 217). Using this approach to analyze data, I use three elements to describe human life experiences: interaction, continuity, and situation (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The three-dimensional space approach explores participants’ life experiences from broad perspectives that include (a) social interaction with others, (b) the relationships among past, present and future and (c) the influence of differing geographical and cultural settings (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002).

![Figure 1. The three-dimensional space approach.](image)

Interaction comprises the individual’s experience of interacting with others (Creswell, 2007; Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002). By exploring Chun’s and Huang’s social interaction with family, friends, teachers, colleagues, students and school administrators, I was better able to understand their development of motivation and resilience. For instance, when Chun was a student at art college, he had an excellent advertising instructor who was an expert in his subject and prepared his class materials very thoroughly. By interacting with and learning from this professor, Chun developed his belief that good instructors must not only have abundant
knowledge but also prepare classes meticulously. Therefore, Chun works to enhance his knowledge of the subjects he teaches, and he organizes his classes carefully. The positive feedback he receives from his students in response to his efforts motivates Chun to continue his teaching career. An interaction important to Huang’s teaching career has been her experience of taking care of her mother during an extended illness. Through this interaction with her mother, she learned to be flexible, a quality that is essential to Huang’s own practice of professional resilience. Through Chun’s and Huang’s life experiences, I explore how their interactions with the people around them fuel their passion for teaching and their career commitments.

Continuity refers to the timeline of past, present and future (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002). By exploring the participants’ life stories, I trace how the relationships among past, present and future influenced their development of motivation and resilience. For example, when Chun was young, he aspired to become an art teacher because he wanted the time and income security to create his own art. Therefore, Chun’s future desires gave him the determination to work hard to become an art teacher, and the realization of his goal provided the continuing motivation to project further career objectives. Another example of the present’s influence on future possibilities is Huang’s relationship with a very helpful professor in her current Ph.D. program. Influenced by this professor, Huang learned to work more actively to help her students, building strong relationships with them, which has, in turn, motivated Huang to feel confident and positive about her future teaching career. Such examples demonstrate that, in order to understand my participants’ experiences, it is important to grasp how their outlooks developed over time. The three-dimensional space approach provides the tools to understand art teachers’ experiences as they grow and redefine themselves in such a temporal framework (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell, 2007).
The situation in the three-dimensional space approach focuses on how social environments and cultural settings influence participants’ life and teaching experiences, illuminating sources of motivation and resilience (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002). Humans may behave differently according to the social environments and cultural settings in which they interact (Fulcher, 2005). In this study, diverse environmental factors, such as the differing educational cultures of Taiwan and the United States, have influenced the ways that Chun and Huang have pursued motivation and resilience in their teaching careers. For example, influenced by American learning experiences, both Chun and Huang use encouragement instead of blame to help students when they teach art in Taiwan. Students like their instruction, so they give Chun and Huang positive feedback, which, in turn, becomes a central motivation for each to make continued commitments to teaching, as well as a source of resilience rooted in professional confidence. By considering Chun’s and Huang’s stories in an environmental context, other art educators can explore how their environments influence their own situations as they strive to sustain long-term careers.

Collaboration between Researcher and Participants in the Three-Dimensional Space Approach

The three-dimensional space approach emphasizes the importance of collaboration between researchers and participants (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin, 2006; Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002). The negotiation process that emerges from this encounter can generate transformation and learning through dialogue as researchers and participants tell and retell their stories (Clandinin, 2006; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007). As I interacted with my participants, we negotiated the narration of their lives and teaching experiences, and both they and I learned and changed during this process (Creswell, 2007). Such an encounter gives each of us the opportunity to recognize that no one is the center of the universe; we should open our
minds to understand people who have different points of view from our own, even though we may disagree with each other. Especially as art teachers, if we can learn to be flexible and see different points of view, such as those of students or school administrators, we will begin to see our lives and teaching experiences in new ways, which will help plot the steps necessary to maintain our own sources of career motivation and resilience.

**Confirmability**

As a form of qualitative research, narrative inquiry does not aspire to the generalization of human knowledge (Mello, 2007; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007). Instead, it emphasizes the significance of individual experience. Such research is subjective and may be open to diverse interpretations according to researchers’ personal viewpoints. An important consequence is that different researchers may attain divergent research findings, even when working with the same data, according to their individual perspectives (Creswell, 2007). In this study, therefore, rather than employing the validity approach, I undertook the alternative approach of confirmability.

Foremost, my approach to confirmability acknowledges the importance of my own voice in the collaborative generation of research data and asserts that foregrounding the influence of my voice strengthens the value of the data. Creswell (2007) argues that to create a significant narrative, the narrative researcher must apply his or her own reflections. Researchers must understand how their values and beliefs create their stories, sharing those values in ways that invite audiences to reflect, grow, and make changes of their own (McNiff, 2007). Such possibilities are underpinned by the fact that telling, listening to, reading and retelling stories are the essential human ways of learning about one’s self, others and the world (Yussen & Ozcan, 1997). By telling stories, researchers craft messages and share their own values, which, in turn, allow audiences to learn and make their own changes (Creswell, 2007; McNiff, 2007). If art
educators can learn from my participants’ life experiences and interpret their stories in light of their own knowledge and practices, then this understanding itself enhances the confirmability of the study.

In addition, my close friendship with the participants enhances the confirmability of the study. Creswell (2007) has argued that high-quality research requires mutual reliance and sharing between researchers and participants because research involves a reciprocal relationship. The friendship between my participants and I diminished my influence as a researcher, helping create an open and free space for participants in which they provided their insights and experiences without feeling pressured (Creswell, 2007; O'Donoghue & Punch, 2003; Seidman, 2006), and in which, I felt comfortable conducting interviews with individuals I know well. In addition, Creswell (2007) states that a valid study must “give the voice to participants so that their voice is not silenced, disengaged, or marginalized” (p. 212). In my approach to this study, I have worked to ensure that my participants were free to use their own voices to describe how they faced challenges in their work and attained high standards of educational professionalism.

Moreover, I need to acknowledge how my bias or limitations shape my research (Carlson, 2010; Creswell, 2007; Fulcher, 2005). How I tell stories is influenced by my own social, cultural, and political points of view as well as by the collaborative negotiations with my participants that characterize this study’s research methods (Fontana & Frey, 2005; Horvat & Antonio, 1999). I should be aware of my responsibilities to let my readers understand the operation of such forces in my retelling of participants’ stories (Curtin & Fossey, 2007; May & Diket, 1997; J. W. Willis et al., 1942). Furthermore, it is important to note that such powers of interpretation extend even to the readers who bring their own perspectives to the final research findings and who construct their own perspectives on reality (Fulcher, 2005).
This study also relies on member checking to ensure that participants’ perspectives are truly represented (Creswell, 2007; Curtin & Fossey, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Carlson (2010) argues that “miscommunication between participants and researchers can especially arise from the unique and unpredictable nature of human dynamics” (p. 1102). By conducting member checking, participants and I collaborated to explore the authentic meaning of stories (Curtin & Fossey, 2007). Therefore, after I finished writing my participants’ stories, I gave the document to the participants for review. They provided comments and opinions to help me retell their stories, which enhanced the confirmability of the study. Finally, such efforts reflect the extent to which this study is more subjective than objective because I carefully collaborated with my participants to create meaning throughout the research process (May & Diket, 1997).

Limitations of the Study

Willis et al. (1942) describe the interview as “a very subjective and complex act of human interaction (p. 291). The researchers should keep in mind that participants in their research are human beings, not inanimate objects (Josselson, 2007; Seidman, 2006). As such, I have the ethical duty to protect participants who contribute their knowledge to research (Merriam, 2002). In this study, I have considered carefully the best methods both to make my participants comfortable with the ways I write their stories and to remain true to the critical, scholarly objectives of my research. In the process, I have been especially attentive to the fact that they may have recounted stories from their own lives in ways that selectively conveyed what they wanted other people to know and not the whole truth; this partiality in their stories is a possible limitation for this study (Atkinson, 2007; Mashall & Rossman, 1989).

As a human being, my cultural, social and educational backgrounds shape me as a researcher (Fontana & Frey, 2005; Horvat & Antonio, 1999). I have my own beliefs, preferences
and biases, and to hide them would be impossible (Xu & Connelly, 2010). J. W. Willis et al. (1942) argue that researchers’ individual “perspectives and views influence what they do, and their experiences influence their perspectives” (p. 293). Such influences shape the entire research process of this study, from the selection of participants, to the gathering of data in the form of the participants’ life stories, to my retelling of their stories. In addition, it is clear that the stories of my participants are inevitably shaped by my influence in the recording process and by my interpretation in communicating them (Seidman, 2006).

Indeed, the collaborative narrative research process powerfully influences how I retell my participants’ stories in this study. Because we have known each other for a long time, we have been affected by each other’s cultural, social and environmental perspectives. McMillan and Schumacher (2006) note that participants’ stories take shape according to how they have situated themselves in relation to others. In light of such considerations, their stories are influenced by our interconnected experiences and friendships, and this may represent a limitation of this study.

Moreover, this study explores a limited number of college art teachers’ life experiences because it seeks to examine significant individual episodes in depth. Creswell (2007) emphasizes that each person has his or her own stories to tell. In the telling, the retelling and the listening, stories are constructed and reconstructed by participants and researchers, as well as by readers. As part of such an encounter, readers can use these stories as catalysts to gain their own insights, reflected through their understandings of my participants’ lives and teaching experiences. Thus, this study did not intend to find the “right” answer to research questions; instead, these two college art teachers’ stories will facilitate readers’ reflections on their own stores of personal knowledge as art educators, which can help them solve career dilemmas in light of their own personal contexts and modes of understanding.
Significance of the Study

By retelling my participants’ life stories and exploring how they forged motivation and resilience, this study makes their exemplary experiences the occasion for art educators to explore how their past teaching and learning experiences can influence their present beliefs and goals, making such a process the basis of new teaching knowledge in the future (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). In addition, this study emphasizes the importance of dialogue in the human learning process, as well as in educational research (Wells, 1999). By creating dialogues with two art teachers, my research explores how their past experiences inform their continuing motivations, creating the resources to meet future challenges in the classroom. Through dialogue, we not only receive and exchange information, but we also learn to solve problems (Halliday, 1978; Wells, 1999). As such, art teachers should be aware that their everyday talks is laden with meaning for other educators and students, and that they can use dialogue to support each other and to solve problems cooperatively (Sakamoto & Chan, 2006). Indeed, such an understanding also points to the importance of students’ voices and the necessity to recognize their needs and collaborate with them in the classroom to improve teaching and learning.

This study especially explores the intrinsic and extrinsic factors that support teachers’ motivation in their work, as well as the internal and external support resources they call upon to enhance resilience. Frank (2010) avers that teachers need to have both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations to be fully committed to their careers. Mandleco and Craig (2000) note that both internal and external sources of support are necessary. Identifying such avenues of support and motivation, teachers will be able to draw inspiration from Chun’s and Huang’s stories in ways that support long-term commitments to teaching and continued professional development.

Reaching beyond traditional models of text-based research, my study provides insights
into how art teachers construct knowledge, solve problems, and enhance teaching performance through telling, listening to, and retelling stories (Clandinin et al., 2007; Creswell, 2007; Finley, 2005; Fontana & Frey, 2005). Such an approach has important implications for education politics because art teachers need to understand that there are many ways to construct knowledge. They should not limit themselves to any particular mode of teaching and learning. Adopting such an open attitude will make teachers better able to listen to their students’ individual needs, as well as to use diverse methods to help students see the world in new ways. Consequently, teachers can foster better learning environments for students, and students themselves will become more open to learning in diverse ways and more capable of appreciating others’ contributions and points of view. Such a relationship among teachers and students will become a powerful force for creating a better world in the future.
CHAPTER 4
DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

Within an interpretive framework structured by a three-dimensional space approach encompassing interaction, continuity and situation, this chapter retells the participants’ stories to address the study’s research questions. Interaction addresses how Chun and Huang have interacted with people around them in their life experiences, including relations with family, students, school administrators, peers in professional organizations and the people they encountered during higher education experiences in the United States. Continuity regards the two teachers’ experiences with past, present and future in their learning and teaching histories. The situation captures the influence of the various environments the participants experienced in Taiwan and the United States during their education and teaching careers, especially how they capitalized on diverse experiences to find professional motivation and resilience.

The chapter consists of two parts. The first part includes tables representing the teachers’ life experiences, described within a three-dimensional space approach, while the second part retells Chun’s and Huang’s stories, working to analyze common themes in the participants’ life experiences in order to address the study’s research questions. I connect Chun and Huang’s histories, tracing their trajectories through diverse social environments, analyze personal interactions important to professional development, and make sense of the evolution of their teaching values and beliefs through various stages of their lives. Pursuing such themes, the study also explores the teaching beliefs of the participants, which were reshaped by the communal, meaning-making process of this research study (Correa et al., 2008).

In order to protect the privacy of the participants, the study employs pseudonyms for the
participants, their colleagues, and the institutions and organizations with which they are
associated. In some cases, in the process of reflection including the researcher and the
participants, the participants' stories have been slightly abbreviated in order to more fully answer
the research questions. Retelling such stories illuminates knowledge that can inspire other art
teachers to explore their own lives and teaching efforts in ways that can both motivate them in
their current teaching and give them tools to face future challenges.

Chun’s and Huang’s Life Experiences, Explored through Interaction,
Continuity, and Situation in a Three-Dimensional Space Approach

Table 1

*Chun’s Life Experience in a Three-Dimensional Space Approach: Motivation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interaction/Situation (Environment)</th>
<th>Past</th>
<th>Continuity</th>
<th>Future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chun’s parents</td>
<td>Chun’s parents did not go to school, so his parents encouraged him to study and become a teacher.</td>
<td>Chun is an assistant professor in a university.</td>
<td>Chun will continue to be motivated to be an art teacher because he experienced in his youth the hard work his farmer parents needed to do simply to sustain their basic living.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chun’s art teacher at college</td>
<td>Chun’s art teacher was not a good role model. Chun believes that art teachers influence students not only through class materials, but also by the examples of their behavior.</td>
<td>Chun becomes his students’ role model to influence students positively.</td>
<td>Chun will continue to be his students’ role model and help them become better people in the future.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table 1 *(continued).*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interaction/Situation (Environment)</th>
<th>Past</th>
<th>Continuity Present</th>
<th>Future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advertising teacher when Chun studied at his teaching college</td>
<td>Chun’s advertising teacher had abundant knowledge about his subject, and he also prepared class materials very thoroughly.</td>
<td>Chun was influenced by his advertising teacher, so he enhances his expertise in the art field and prepares his class material well, receiving positive feedback from students.</td>
<td>Chun will continue to work hard to enhance his knowledge about the subjects he teaches so he will receive positive feedback from students, which will motivate him to continue to teach in his field.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistics teacher</td>
<td>Chun’s classmates challenged their statistics teacher because he did not have expertise in his teaching subject.</td>
<td>Chun believes that an art teacher should have expertise in his subject in order to gain support from students.</td>
<td>Chun will continue to increase his expertise in the subjects he teaches so he can have the support of his students and increase his motivation in teaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art teacher colleague Lee⁶</td>
<td>Chun learned from his art teacher colleague, Lee, that it is important for art teachers to have secure incomes in order to continue creating their art.</td>
<td>Chun works hard to maintain his teaching position so he can continue to create art to satisfy his needs for expression.</td>
<td>Chun will continue to sustain his teaching career so he will be able to continue creating art.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Through teaching, Chun broadened his knowledge to create art as well as to enhance his teaching performance.</td>
<td>Chun enhances his art expertise and teaching performance though teaching.</td>
<td>Chun will continue to teach so that he will be able to enhance his art skills through interacting with students in the classroom.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

⁶ Pseudonym.
Table 1 (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interaction/Situation (Environment)</th>
<th>Past</th>
<th>Continuity Present</th>
<th>Future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students (cont.) Chun received positive feedback from students after encouraging them to go to art competitions in order to find success.</td>
<td>Chun works hard to help students win art competitions, and their efforts make Chun feel contented and enthusiastic about teaching.</td>
<td>Chun will continue to take students to art competitions to help them find success. By receiving positive feedback from students, Chun will continue to make a long-term commitment to his teaching career.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction (cont.) American teachers were open-minded and encouraged students to experiment with different art techniques.</td>
<td>Chun is open-minded about teaching, both technically and conceptually.</td>
<td>Chun will continue to be flexible in his teaching, so he will have good relationships with students, which motivates him to continue in his teaching career.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Chun was born in a farming family, and as a child, he had to work with his parents under severe labor conditions, including weather extremes.</td>
<td>Chun is motivated to be a teacher because teaching is a stable profession with a secure income, without the threat of unpredictable conditions he experienced as a young farmer, such as destructive weather.</td>
<td>Chun will continue to motivate himself to remain in his teaching career.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching experiences in Taiwan Chun helped one student to become the president of the university. Chun helps students find success to satisfy his need for personal accomplishment.</td>
<td>Chun will continue to motivate himself by helping students find success.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2

*Chun’s Life Experience in a Three-Dimensional Space Approach: Resilience*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interaction/Situation (Environment)</th>
<th>Past</th>
<th>Present</th>
<th>Future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chun’s parents</td>
<td>Chun lost his motorcycle, but his parents did not blame him.</td>
<td>Chun is influenced by his parents, so he is kind and considerate of students’, colleagues’, and school administrators’ needs.</td>
<td>Chun will continue to have excellent interactions with students, colleagues, and school administrators with his kindness and caring, which will help him be resilient in his teaching career.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chun’s parents</td>
<td>Chun’s parents supported his tuition and living expenses to enter the university.</td>
<td>Chun receives a master’s degree and works as a full time assistant professor at the university.</td>
<td>Chun’s parents will continue to support his teaching career.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chun’s girlfriend’s family</td>
<td>Chun was rejected by his girlfriend’s family for not having a college degree.</td>
<td>Chun has a master’s degree and is an assistant professor at the university.</td>
<td>Chun will continue to pursue full professor status at the university.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brothers, sisters, and wife</td>
<td>Chun received advice from his brothers, sisters, and wife.</td>
<td>Chun’s brothers, sisters, and wife support Chun’s teaching career.</td>
<td>Chun’s brothers, sisters, and wife will continue to support him in making a long-term commitment to his career.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members of the Si Jen Hai organization</td>
<td>Chun received help from the tutors of Si Jen Hai organization.</td>
<td>Chun likes to help others and have good interactions with students, colleagues, and school administrators.</td>
<td>Chun will continue to have positive interactions with others to help him be resilient in his teaching career.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table 2 (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interaction/Situation (Environment)</th>
<th>Continuity Past</th>
<th>Continuity Present</th>
<th>Continuity Future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American learning experiences</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chun encourages</td>
<td>Chun will continue to use encouragement to help students learn, so that he will continue to gain support from them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>students instead of blaming them in his teaching, so he has good relationships with students. Having good interactions with students becomes a source of external support when Chun faces challenges.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artist organization members</td>
<td>Chun gained support and enhanced knowledge from artists’ organizations</td>
<td>Chun enhances his knowledge and updates his teaching information through participating in professional organizations.</td>
<td>Chun will continue to participate in professional organizations to gain their support, which will help him make a long-term commitment to his teaching career.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmland</td>
<td>Chun observed that with sun and rain, the plants were nurtured, but the fruit trees also needed to have storms to make their branches strong in order to support the weight of the fruit.</td>
<td>Chun learns how to transform challenges into a positive source of strength to enhance personal growth.</td>
<td>Chun will not fear challenges but accept them as a way to grow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two cattle fighting each other on the farm</td>
<td>Chun learned the importance of persistence in being resilient from watching two cattle fighting.</td>
<td>Chun learns the need for bravery to face challenges and remain persistent to attain goals.</td>
<td>Chun will face challenges with steadfast persistence to solve difficulties.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(table continues)*
Table 2 (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interaction/Situation (Environment)</th>
<th>Continuity</th>
<th>Future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>School environment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chun had positive learning experiences in math, physics, and chemistry.</td>
<td>Chun gained confidence from these learning experiences, so he employs positive thinking to face difficulties.</td>
<td>Chun will use positive thinking when he needs to overcome challenges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>American airport</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chun received help from an American couple and airline counter staff.</td>
<td>(1) Chun dresses professionally. (2) Chun likes to interact with people and help others.</td>
<td>(1) Chun will dress professionally, demonstrating that both outward and inward qualities are important for art teachers. (2) Chun will always be friendly and passionate about helping others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning experiences in America</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chun took a sociology course alone, and he learned that people need to be flexible to find various solutions in order to attain their goals.</td>
<td>Chun is flexible about interacting with students in his classroom. For example, he does not use the same method of instruction with every student or require each student to meet identical standards.</td>
<td>Chun will continue to be flexible in order to have positive interactions with students, which helps him attain resilience in his teaching career.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School environment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chun repaired the stage platform and redecorated the university’s School History Archives.</td>
<td>Chun has good interactions with school administrators, so he gains support from them.</td>
<td>Chun will continue to have positive relationships with school administrators.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(table continues)*
Table 2 (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interaction/Situation (Environment)</th>
<th>Continuity Past</th>
<th>Continuity Present</th>
<th>Continuity Future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School environment</td>
<td>Chun had positive learning experiences in math, physics, and chemistry.</td>
<td>Chun gained confidence from these learning experiences, so he employs positive thinking to face difficulties.</td>
<td>Chun will use positive thinking when he needs to overcome challenges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American study experiences</td>
<td>Chun received a master’s degree from an American university.</td>
<td>Chun believes in the dictum that everything will be fine in the end; people just need to be brave to face challenges.</td>
<td>Chun will continue to use positive thinking, believing that everything will turn out well ultimately.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having participated in organizations in Taiwan</td>
<td>Chun took the lead in recreational activities in the Si Jen Hai organization</td>
<td>Chun is the chairman of both the professional artists association.</td>
<td>Chun will continue to participate in these professional organizations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching environment</td>
<td>Chun encountered challenges from his university. Chun needed to enter the doctoral program or upgrade to professor by 2011, or he would lose his teaching position.</td>
<td>Chun becomes an assistant professor, so he can maintain his teaching position.</td>
<td>Chun will maintain his status as a professor in higher education.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3

Huang’s Life Experience in a Three-Dimensional Space Approach: Motivation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interaction/Situation (Environment)</th>
<th>Continuity Past</th>
<th>Continuity Present</th>
<th>Continuity Future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>Huang was born in a family of modest means.</td>
<td>Huang is motivated to be a teacher because teaching is a secure job.</td>
<td>Huang will continue her commitment to her teaching career.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textit{(table continues)}
Table 3 (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interaction/Situation</th>
<th>Continuity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>American instructor</strong></td>
<td>Past: American teachers always encouraged Huang when she studied in America. Present: Huang uses positive communication to encourage students to learn, so she receives positive feedback from students, which motivates her in her teaching career. Future: Huang will continue to use encouragement to help students learn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current University Professor: Dr. Yen</strong></td>
<td>Past: (1) Huang had a professor who was very kind and caring with his students. (2) Dr. Yen replied to Huang’s e-mail quickly and solved her problems rapidly. (3) Dr. Yen had the passion to teach as well as to be a model for students by publishing in journals to pursue academic professional success. (4) Dr. Yen influenced Huang to become a better teacher and researcher. Present: (1) Huang is kind to her students, understands their needs, and has good interactions with them. (2) Huang replies to students’ e-mail instantly and addresses their problems without delay. (3) Huang is a role model who influences students to seek professional success in the academic world. (4) Huang tries to help students become better people in the world at large. Future: (1) Huang will continue working to influence students in a positive way. (2) Huang will continue to have good interactions with students, which motivates her and makes her resilient in her teaching career.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^7\) Pseudonym.
### Table 3 (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interaction/Situation (Environment)</th>
<th>Continuity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interaction</strong> (cont.)</td>
<td>A professor in her current Ph.D. program did not prepare class materials and never demonstrated how to apply theory to real artwork, so students did not respect this professor, and she faced losing her job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current university professor: Dr. Chen</td>
<td>Huang used art to fulfill her inner needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Situation</strong> (Environ.)</td>
<td>Huang had the experience of a low income and unstable working hours when she worked at the electronics company.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part of a family without wealth in Taiwan when she was a small child</td>
<td>Huang helps students find success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked at an electronics company in Taiwan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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8 Pseudonym.
### Table 4

**Huang’s Life Experience in a Three-Dimensional Space Approach: Resilience**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interaction/Situation (Environment)</th>
<th>Continuity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Huang’s mother and her two children</strong></td>
<td>Huang’s mother was sick, and she needed to take care of her. At the same time, Huang also needed to take care of her two children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Huang’s mother</strong></td>
<td>Huang took care of her mother during her illness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brother, sisters, and husband</strong></td>
<td>Huang received encouragement and support from her brother, sisters, and husband.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>American teachers</strong></td>
<td>American teachers were open-minded and embraced the differences among students’ artworks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School administrators</strong></td>
<td>Huang participated actively in school affairs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(table continues)*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interaction/Situation (Environment)</th>
<th>Continuity (Past)</th>
<th>Continuity (Present)</th>
<th>Continuity (Future)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interaction (cont.)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American teachers</td>
<td>American teachers used encouragement instead of blame to help students.</td>
<td>Huang is kind and gentle to students in the classroom, which helps her make a long-term commitment to her teaching career.</td>
<td>Huang will continue to encourage students in their learning, so she will have good relationships with students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost two children because of miscarriage</td>
<td>Huang tried very hard to become pregnant and now has two children.</td>
<td>Huang persists in trying to pass the graduate exam to enter a doctoral program, so she can maintain her teaching position.</td>
<td>Huang will continue to be persistent in facing challenges, which will help Huang to be resilient and make a long-term commitment to her career.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Situation (Environ.)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two children</td>
<td>Huang had parenting experiences taking care of her two children.</td>
<td>Huang treats students like her children.</td>
<td>Huang will continue to facilitate good relationships with students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American learning experiences</td>
<td>Successful learning experiences taught Huang to use positive thinking to face challenges in her teaching career.</td>
<td>Huang has the confidence that her abilities can solve problems in the end.</td>
<td>Huang will continue to use positive thinking to face challenges in her teaching career.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having Participated in the Fuje 福智 Teacher Organization</td>
<td>Huang gained support and knowledge from organization members.</td>
<td>Huang learns to adjust her thinking and beliefs in order to face challenges in her teaching career.</td>
<td>Huang will continue to participate in organizations to receive support from members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having participated in the Taiwan Art Education Organization</td>
<td>Huang learned experiences from organization members to address her teaching challenges.</td>
<td>Huang attains resources, receives assistance, and gains knowledge to enhance her teaching.</td>
<td>Huang will continue to participate in organizations to gain support in order to be resilient in her teaching career.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(table continues)*
Retelling Chun’s and Huang’s Stories to Answer Research Questions

Question 1: What Life and Teaching Experiences Do These Art Teachers Have that Motivated Them to Make Long-Term Commitments in Their Teaching?

Teaching is a Secure Job that Diminishes the Uncertainty of Earning a Living

Chun was born in a farming family in 1945, the year that Taiwan became independent from Japanese colonial rule. Under Japanese rule, most Taiwanese did not have the opportunity for education. Consequently, like most Taiwanese, Chun’s parents could not read or write.

Becoming farmers was one of the few avenues for such people in Taiwan to gain a family income. Because a farming family requires the labor of every member, the five children in Chun’s family—three boys and two girls—needed to work on the farm with their parents. As the oldest, Chun remembered:

When chive buds were ready, I, not yet five years old, needed to get up at four o’clock in the morning with my family to collect them before they dried out and died in the sun. Otherwise, my father could not sell these chive buds for good prices in the market. You can imagine how hard it would be for a little child to get up in the early morning to work on the farm, especially in the cold winter. In the daytime, I needed to help my parents pull up grass on the farm. I felt I completely baked by the hot weather.

Moreover, because of its geographical location, Taiwan always has heavy rains and typhoons for part of the year. When the typhoons came, Chun and his family needed to collect crops immediately before they were all destroyed by the strong rains and wind. Working in such...
conditions, Chun felt terribly frightened, Chun noted, “I was afraid that I would end up like the tree branches that had been split into pieces by the wind and rain, lying broken next to me on the ground.” However, Chun knew he had to help his family bring in the crops. Because of these experiences, Chun always wished for a career where he would not be like his parents, working so hard day and night under severe conditions just to earn their basic living.

In his farming village, Chun’s life was very simple. Besides home and farm, the only other place he went was school, and teachers were the only professionals Chun had contact with each day. When Chun went to school, he noticed that teachers could work inside, out of the burning sun and driving rain. Unlike the farmers in the village, they would never need to worry about not having money to buy food because of forces beyond their control. Chun began to think he wanted to be a teacher when he grew up.

Nevertheless, in the village, to continue farming was the most common work for members of farming families. Because Chun wanted to escape this destiny, he knew that going to one of the government-supported normal high schools for aspiring teachers was the fastest route for students like him who had the desire to change their lives. In the normal high school, students did not need to pay tuition or living expenses, and the school also provided students an allowance each month. In addition, after the students graduated, the government would assign them to an elementary school to teach. In this way Chun could achieve his dream of being a teacher earning a steady salary without facing the unpredictability of farm life. Chun’s parents completely supported his efforts to become a teacher because they understood how difficult a farmer’s life is, and they did not want Chun to follow their path. To this day, Chun is still very thankful to his parents for supporting his goal of becoming a teacher. Unlike many Taiwanese farm families at that time who wanted their children to continue the family tradition, Chun’s
family supported his determination to travel his own path to becoming a teacher. Today, Chun’s
delight at attaining the security of a teaching career remains an important factor in his devotion
to his profession.

For Huang, being an art teacher has also brought life security. Huang was not born into a
wealthy family, and her parents neither received a formal education nor had a regular income.
The traditional Taiwanese family ideal is to pay for children’s higher education, but Huang’s
parents certainly could not support her to continue to study after she finished Taiwan’s nine
years of compulsory education. She loved to create art from the time she was a little child, and
after she finished ninth grade, she chose to enter the nighttime division of a vocational high
school to study art-craft, rather than going to the regular daytime division, because this allowed
her to work during the day to earn money for tuition. In the morning, Huang saw the students her
age who wore beautiful uniforms to high school, and she also wore a uniform, but it was the garb
of an operations employee at an electronics company. When the company had a production
deadline, she had to stay at work until she completed all the orders the company needed. When
that happened, she could not go to school or even rest on the weekend. On the other hand, when
the electronics company did not have many orders, her salary was decreased. The unstable
income made it hard for her to contribute to her family or support herself and her studies.

From these life experiences, Huang became certain that she wanted to find a job with
stable working hours and a secure income. Influenced by the traditional Chinese cultural respect
for teachers and working from the time she graduated from vocational high school, she
continually worked hard at her studies to reach her goal of qualifying as a teacher. Now, after
having been an art teacher for fifteen years, she thinks she made a wise choice. The high, stable
salary and steady hours, compared to office work, are important motivational factors in Huang’s continuing commitment to her art teaching career.

**Having Time to Create Art to Satisfy Artistic Needs**

Both Chun and Huang describe being art teachers as the most wonderful thing in their lives. Compared to other careers, art teachers have more time to create their own art and satisfy their own creative needs. Chun declares, “To be an art teacher can fulfill my need to combine my artistic interests and my career.” He cites one of his part-time art teachers, Lee, as an example. Lee graduated from the same school as Chun and went on to receive his master’s degree in art at the Art Academy.⁹ He was a very talented artist, and he won many prizes in Taiwan as well as in international art competitions. It is hard, however, for an artist to make a living without having another career in Taiwan, and he had a hard time selling his art because he did not want to adjust his style to fit customers’ tastes or popular trends. Now, after becoming an art teacher, he does not need to worry about his basic living, and he has time to develop his style, creating his art after his teaching duties are done. Recently, he won first prize in Taiwan’s national art competition. Just like Lee, Chun continues his work as a studio artist in his own time outside of teaching. Chun also notes that interacting with students through teaching helps him broaden his knowledge, which is important to creating his own art. Becoming more knowledgeable also makes Chun a better teacher, so he and his students benefit mutually.

For Huang, having time to create art is one of the great satisfactions of life. Having loved to draw since she was in elementary school, she always liked to make drawings while teachers were giving lectures. For her, drawing is a joyful way to make her wishes come to life. As a student, when she envied her classmates who had a weekly allowance to buy snacks, she used

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⁹ Pseudonym.
her pen to create her own imaginary snacks. She understood that her family could not afford to buy extra food for her, but with drawing, she could have as much as she wanted, while also experiencing the joy of art-making. Becoming an art teacher fulfilled her need to continue to paint and draw after her basic physical needs were secured.

*Satisfying the Need for Positive Feedback from Students*

Positive feedback from students is always an important motivational factor for teachers. Chun thinks of students as uncut gems, and the great enjoyment of being an art teacher is to help them see their potential and find success. He remembers that once he asked one of his students to go to an art competition, and the student was not willing to go, but Chun knew that he had the artistic ability to win the competition, so Chun asked the student’s girlfriend to encourage him. Finally, the student went to the competition and won first prize. The student also received thirty thousand Taiwanese dollars from the school for winning the competition. Thirty thousand dollars was a large sum of money because the average college graduate student’s salary was only twenty-one thousand dollars a month. The student was very happy, and he told Chun that it was not only because he received a large grant of money from the school, but because his artistic talent was also recognized by the outside art world. Chun knew that this confidence would then accompany him throughout his artistic career because he was no longer afraid to present his art to others. The student was very appreciative that Chun kept encouraging him to compete, and likewise, Chun was encouraged by receiving positive feedback from his student.

Huang’s past experiences with instructors at an American university are an important influence on her positive relationships with students in her current teaching. Huang notes that the greatest difference between Taiwanese and American class instruction is that American teachers always encourage students. When American art teachers find that something needs improvement,
they tell students first what is good before suggesting how they can do better. They are not like Taiwanese teachers who always go straight to pointing out students’ weaknesses, which could make students lose their interest in learning.

After Huang came back from the United States, influenced by her American art instructors, she used more positive feedback to encourage students in order to develop their interest in art. When she looked at their work, she tried to find the positive aspects in it instead of blaming them and saying their works were entirely poorly done. In this way, Huang found that her students became more confident about the art they created, and she also created strong relationships with them. Students were less afraid to experiment with different media and techniques, so their art skills improved, and they enjoyed creating art. Seeing students happy to learn and attain their goals motivates Huang to continue teaching. Huang comments, “Students appreciate what I have done for them, and that motivates me to continue teaching.”

*Satisfying the Need for Personal Accomplishment/Helping Students Find Success*

In order to make commitments, teachers need to know how to satisfy inner needs through teaching. Chun illustrated how teaching can fulfill inner needs by describing an experience in which he helped a student find success which increased his own dedication to teaching. One of Chun’s former students became a lecturer in the college. Because of his lecturer status, he was assigned extra duties from school administrators. He came to realize that being a lecturer is a junior position in a college, and he was on the verge of quitting his teaching career. The former student went to talk to Chun, and Chun encouraged him to remain in his position if he really liked teaching. At the same time, Chun also introduced him to some literature on the Japanese warrior Ieyasu Tokugawa, which described how Tokugawa worked hard under difficult conditions and finally became the shogun that unified Japan. From Tokugawa’s stories, this
lecturer learned how to be patient, prepare himself to be strong, and wait for the best chance to succeed. Later on, he went to the United States to earn a Ph.D., and now he is president of a university. Chun reflected:

It is a proud moment for a teacher to help his student attain success. When students do well, teachers will feel their inner needs for personal accomplishment satisfied, which is an important element for teachers to continue to make commitments in their teaching careers.

Such experiences helping students achieve success motivates Chun to continue making commitments in his teaching career.

Huang also had the experience of helping her students find success. She remembered one of her students who always had trouble turning in assignments on time, not because he was lazy, but because he expected himself to be perfect. If he was not one-hundred-percent certain that his homework was the best in class, he would rather not turn it in. Because he failed to turn in assignments in almost every class, he was in danger of being dropped from school, and his parents were very upset and wanted him to quit the college. They were not willing to pay his tuition if he had no interest in learning, preferring to see him go to work instead. Huang, however, did not give up on this student because she knew he was talented and interested in learning, but he needed some help. She called his parents many times to persuade them to allow him to stay in school, and at the same time, she took him to get help from the college psychologist. After several consultations, the student learned that turning in homework is a way for students to understand how much they have learned in class, and that he should not judge his value as a person on the result of class assignments. Huang also invited the student’s parents to come for a conference because they put a great deal of pressure on their son to get high grades on class assignments, which caused his anxiety. Finally, this student overcame his anxiety, earned his degree, and is now in graduate school.
Without Huang’s help, this student would not have had the chance to go to graduate school and have a new opportunity for success, and the experience of helping him directly motivated Huang to continue with her teaching career. Huang noted, “Whenever I felt tired of teaching, remembering this experience helped me to recall that the heart of teaching is to help students find success.” When a teacher helps a student become successful, it not only improves the student’s prospects for a better future life, but it also satisfies the teacher’s inner need for meaningful work, which is an important motivational factor for art teachers to continue their teaching careers.

_Gaining Support from Students/Being Professional_

Being viewed positively by students will enhance teaching performance as well as motivate teachers to continue with their profession. Chun argues, “to be art teachers, we need to represent the profession from both the outside and the inside to give students faith that we have abilities to communicate knowledge.” On the outside, Chun thinks it is important that teachers wear the proper clothes to make themselves appear professional:

> Our characters change according to different occasions and environments. When I went to my parents’ home to do farming, I was a farmer. I wore t-shirts and shorts. If I teach in the classroom, I wear a shirt with a tie. I think it is important for art teachers to think about clothes in order to be professional.

On the other hand, on the inside, teachers should have expertise and knowledge about the classes they teach. Chun’s belief in this dictum was shaped especially by his encounter with a great advertising teacher in college. This teacher not only had abundant knowledge about his subject, but he also prepared class materials very thoroughly. For example, he would furnish newspaper advertisements, television commercials, radio advertisements, or outdoor advertising as aids to help students understand advertising theory. Even though Chun did not have much interest in advertising in the beginning, this teacher’s knowledge and class materials helped him
to open his mind and see advertising as an interesting subject. In contrast, Chun had a statistics teacher who was, unfortunately, not good at statistics. Sweat was always dripping off the teacher’s forehead when he did problems in class, but he still could not solve the statistics questions. Even though this teacher was very kind and friendly to students, most of Chun’s classmates did not respect him, and they continually challenged his instruction methods in front of the class. Finally, he was fired because all of the students signed a petition to ask school administrators to give them another statistics teacher. Now, learning from his past learning experiences, Chun believes that art teachers should be professional from the outside to the inside. They need to dress properly to represent their profession as well as organize class materials well and have expertise in their subject, thereby eliciting the support of students, an important motivational factor for career commitment.

Similarly, Huang also attests that receiving positive feedback from students is an important motivational factor for art teachers. In her Ph.D. program, she has had the worst learning experiences in her life, having studied with one irresponsible professor, Dr. Chen, who always wanted students to prepare PowerPoints for each class, but did not prepare any class materials herself. Also, Chen only taught theory, and she never demonstrated how to apply the theory to real artwork. Therefore, Huang and her classmates did not respect this professor, and few students wanted to take her class, which put her in danger of losing her job. Learning from this experience, Huang understands the importance of being professional as an instructor and gaining support from students in order to maintain her own personal motivation. Therefore, in Huang’s classes, besides preparing class materials thoroughly, she is also careful to demonstrate practical applications to students along with theory. For example, when Huang teaches students

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10 Pseudonym.
how to create a square in CorelDraw, she will also teach how to create flags or houses using squares as well as how to make the frame to design a birthday card. Because she demonstrates to students what they can accomplish after they use the techniques she teaches them, students feel more interested in learning, and their enthusiasm encourages Huang to continue teaching, which creates a positive rapport between students and teacher. Teachers should do their best to bring knowledge to students, and then they will receive positive feedback, which is important for art teachers to maintain motivation in their teaching careers.

Satisfying the Need for Personal Accomplishment/Being a Good Role Model for Students

Having expertise and knowledge is important, but an art teacher should also be a positive role model for students. Chun recalled that when he was in college, one of his art teachers liked to smoke, always lighting up from the beginning to the end of class. Sometimes, when he did not have cigarettes, he would ask Chun to go off campus to buy cigarettes for him. He did not allow students to smoke, however, and would punish them if he saw them doing so. Chun recalled that when students saw that this teacher enjoyed smoking during class, it was very hard for them to believe smoking was unacceptable. Consequently, he and four other friends wanted to try smoking, and his three friends all became addicted. Because of this past learning experience, Chun believes that art teachers influence students not just through the class materials they teach, but by the example of behavior. Now that he is an art teacher, Chun feels a responsibility to influence students positively. If Chun wants his students to behave in certain ways, he will lead by example. For instance, Chun wants his students to refrain from using cell phones during class, so he does not use his cell phone. In addition, because he asks students to come to class on time, he is punctual as well. Chun feels proud to become his students’ role model, and this keeps him dedicated to teaching because he gains the opportunity to help his students become better people.
Similarly, Huang explains that the most rewarding part about being an art teacher is to influence students. In her Ph.D. program, Huang had a professor, Dr. Yen,\textsuperscript{11} who was very kind and caring with his students. When Huang had questions, Yen would never tire of explaining material to her. When Huang sent emails to Yen, he always replied quickly, which allowed Huang to address her difficulties right away. After experiencing the patience and caring of this professor, Huang became more patient about answering her students’ questions, and she made greater efforts to reply to students’ email immediately. Moreover, Yen encouraged his doctoral students to publish articles in journals, and, at the same time, Yen published in journals himself to show his dedication to the research world. Huang notes:

We can learn how to be researchers by following his example. Some of the professors do not publish in journals, but they will ask their students to do it. However, the teacher should be the students’ role model. We should not say one thing and do another. Students will feel that if you cannot do it, how can you ask them to do it?

Indeed, after seeing how Yen acted as a role model, influencing Huang’s teaching and research, Huang realized that students also see her as a role model. Students learn from her, possibly even in ways of which she is unaware. If Yen could influence Huang to become a better teacher and researcher, then Huang could influence her students to become better people, not only in the classroom but in the world at large. This understanding brought Huang a new sense of personal accomplishment because teaching art is not only a career that satisfies Huang’s basic physical needs, but it also carries the social responsibility to help students flourish in the future by providing a positive role model.

\textsuperscript{11} Pseudonym.
Question 2: What Life and Teaching Experiences Do These Art Teachers Have to Cultivate Resilience when Faced with Difficulties in Their Teaching Careers?

Challenges are a Way to Grow

Working on a farm, observing plants grow, Chun realized that the sun and rain nurtured the plants, but that fruit trees also needed to endure storms to make their branches strong and support the weight of the fruit. Likewise, art teachers must know how to transform challenges into a positive source of strength to enhance personal growth. Chun described an important episode in which he employed this belief to overcome important challenges, with results that contributed to his later teaching career. After Chun graduated from a normal high school at the age of eighteen, he became an elementary school teacher. He had a girlfriend he had known for a long time, but his girlfriend’s family did not like him being in love with their daughter. Chun did not have a college degree, and at that time, a teachers’ salary could not compete with other professionals who had graduated from a university. Determined to maintain the relationship with his girlfriend, Chun was not discouraged that her parents did not like him. Instead, he resolved to work hard to enter a college in order to gain the blessing of his girlfriend’s parents. Consequently, when he served in the army as a draftee after a year of teaching, Chun used his spare time to prepare for the college entrance test. When fellow soldiers watched television or slept after the hard days of training, he studied. After two years of military service, Chun passed the national college exam to enter a university, and he earned his bachelor’s degree. Having the degree meant that he could gain the acceptance of his girlfriend’s parents, and it also became Chun’s foundation for becoming a university professor later. Chun commented, “when people meet challenges, these challenges can become opportunities for them to grow if they can see these challenges positively.”

Similarly, Huang also acted on the belief that teachers should not be afraid to face
challenges because the challenges can make teachers stronger and help them grow. Five years ago, Huang’s mother became ill. She had to nurse her back to health, but Huang had two children to look after as well. Embracing her responsibilities, she did her best to take care of both sides of her family. Through this process, Huang learned how to use time efficiently, so she could do many things at once. Huang remarked:

I do not wait for one thing to be finished before starting other things. I know some people will like to do things in order, even though they would have extra time to finish a task earlier if they did not insist on the order.

Therefore, when Huang’s mother would take a nap, she would help her children do their homework. Huang would ask her children to watch her mother so that she could prepare meals when she was awake. This learning experience helped Huang gain abilities to perform various jobs and duties in her teaching career. For example, this year, when the college held a design conference, besides regular teaching, Huang was also responsible for helping an American professor do translation as well as leading a student workshop. After classes, she also needed to decorate the university’s community service center as a school project. Having learned resilience from taking care of her mother and children, she developed this strength to use in her teaching career. Therefore, Huang met her deadlines, and she received positive feedback from school administrators for accomplishing her school duties. Like Huang, art teachers should be brave when they face challenges in their teaching careers because they will gain knowledge from such experiences. This understanding will enhance art teachers’ resilience when they face challenges and will help them to maintain their teaching positions in the future.

Art Teachers Need to Be Flexible

Flexibility is an important element of art teachers’ resilience. When art teachers face challenges, if they cannot change a situation, the best course is to think of alternative ways to
solve problems. Chun notes, “I think a good way to face challenges is to have a flexible mind to solve problems.” Chun recalled that when he studied in America, he needed to take a sociology course as a degree requirement. This class was very difficult for an international student because there was a large amount of reading. Making the course harder for Chun, a friend who had helped him translate English had recently gone back to Taiwan, so Chun had to take the class with no help. Because the course was so difficult, Chun finally dropped it and took two other classes in a different department for the credit, and he fulfilled the class requirement and graduated successfully. This learning experience instilled in Chun the belief that when people encounter challenges, it is best to face them straight on, but if that is exceptionally difficult, they should be flexible enough to think about other ways to achieve the same result. This belief also influenced Chun’s teaching. Chun is very flexible about interacting with students in his classroom, and he does not use the same method of instruction with every student or require each student to meet identical standards.

The following example illustrates the way Chun’s teaching experiences contributed to the belief that art teachers need to be flexible. Chun remembered that one of his students was not interested in painting, and he was always making noise or chatting with others during class. Chun knows that there are many ways to learn how to paint, and he felt that as long as the student was willing to stay in the classroom, even though he did not pick up his brush, he could still learn by watching other students work. Therefore, Chun told him that he could do whatever he wanted as long as he kept quiet, stayed in the classroom, and did not disturb his classmates’ learning. The student decided to read books in class without disturbing Chun’s teaching. Several years later, Chun saw this student on the television news and learned that he had become a famous painter. Chun was glad that he did not push this student too hard to learn earlier;
otherwise, he might not have wanted to come to the classroom again, and then he might truly have lost the chance to learn. Art teachers need to be flexible and respect students’ diverse needs. If teachers want to push them to learn and force them to achieve standardized learning outcomes, students will be unhappy. Moreover, this kind of instruction may also increase conflict between teachers and students.

Huang also thinks that flexibility is important for teachers to be resilient. Huang gained an understanding of the importance of resilience from her mother’s illness. Before becoming sick, her mother had very strong capacities to take care of her family. Even though Huang’s mother did not receive a formal education, she worked hard to take responsibility for raising all of her children and helping them receive higher education. Because of that, the Ministry of Education in Taiwan gave her the Best Education Role Model award, glorifying her successful efforts to produce three Ph.D. children. Nevertheless, her mother was not flexible about her goals for her family, and when she found that Huang’s younger brother wanted to teach at an urban university after he completed his degree instead of teaching in their hometown, she could not bear his decision, and her anxiety about it caused her to become ill.

Because Huang was the one who mainly took care of her mother during her illness, she realized that being flexible and adjusting one’s mind are important to facing challenges in life. If Huang’s mother could have thought about the good aspects of her son’s desire to teach in the city, such as the ability to garner more resources for research or go to conferences easily, instead of thinking about him leaving their hometown, she may not have fallen ill.

Learning from her mother’s illness that people need to be flexible, Huang applied this understanding to her classroom management. For example, Huang recalled an experience in which a number of students in a class were having trouble turning in assignments on time. Huang
recalled that “this was unusual because usually there were only few students who did not turn in assignment in my previous classes.” Certainly, she could have simply failed students who did not turn in assignments, so the class would understand that students who neglected deadlines would ultimately fail the course. Nevertheless, this approach might have caused conflict between Huang and her students. Worse, these students might lose interest in learning the subject, having failed a course in it. Therefore, Huang decided to change the way she assigned work. Instead of requiring every student to turn in the same style of assignment, Huang adopted a more flexible method, allowing students to fulfill assignments in various ways, as long as they demonstrated how their work fulfilled the objectives of Huang’s assignments. For example, if the objective of a class were to use the layers composition function in Photoshop, the students would be permitted to turn in various types of approaches to the assignment, including a poster or book cover design, as long as they employed the layering function. Huang noted that “the importance of turning in assignments is to help students enhance their learning and develop their interest in art. Therefore, any productive approaches to turning in assignments should be valued.”

Because Huang is willing to adopt flexibility in her teaching, she has positive interactions with students, and her students benefit by learning different ways to approach their work. For art teachers, being flexible does not mean being weak because they cannot directly solve their problems. Rather, it is the knowledge to use different approaches to solve problems and to maintain good relationships with students, which is essential for art teachers to practice resilience in their teaching careers.

*Facing Challenges Requires Fighting Until the End*

Chun remembered that watching cattle fighting during his childhood inspired him to face challenges in his life. Besides regular farming work, Chun needed to pasture the cattle every day.
As a child, it was fun for him to watch how cattle fought each other, and he always took his cattle to fight with a neighbor’s. Chun learned that the winning bull was always the one who refused to give up and continued to fight until the end. A previous winner would still become a loser if it did not fight until the end every time. Chun notes, “When I meet challenges, I always imagine being like the cattle that fight bravely and keep fighting until the final minutes without giving up. I know the winner is always the one who persists until the end when faced with challenges.” Chun applies this belief to challenges in his teaching career, exemplified by his efforts to learn to use computers in order to complete his application to upgrade to faculty status. Unlike young students, Chun needed to practice many times, or even spend days learning how to use computer functions. Even though he could have simply asked his students to help him type documents, Chun still insisted on learning himself, and finally, with great effort, he became proficient with word processing. After that, Chun also learned to use the Internet, send e-mail, and even chat in Facebook. Chun notes:

I am glad that I did not give up learning computers at the beginning when I had difficulties. Now, I not only know how to use Word to type documents, but I also know how to interact with my students and friends through the Internet and Facebook, which helps me open my eyes as well as extend my connections with people around me.

This successful learning experience reinforced Chun’s long-held belief that people should persist to the end if they want to achieve their goals.

Huang, like Chun, also stressed the importance of persistence in being resilient. This understanding came from her experience of having two miscarriages. Huang commented:

I was very sad for a long time after my two babies lost their heartbeats during the pregnancies. At that time, I could not look at babies or children, even in pictures or on TV programs. These children reminded me of the loss of my own two babies. I experienced an extremely emotionally difficult time. Now, however, I have two children, and they brought me a new life. I marvel that if I had not insisted on trying to get pregnant again after I lost two babies, I would never have had the chance to have these two lovely children now. The hurt of missing two children would never have been healed.
When Huang meets challenges, she applies this life experience to solving problems. For example, Huang tried very hard to prepare for the graduate school entrance exam. Even after she had been rejected twice, she still insisted on taking the test again until she succeeded and entered a Ph.D. program. She is now a Ph.D. student, and her teaching position is secure.

*Positive Thinking/Believing in the Possibility of Success*

Successful learning experiences taught Chun and Huang to use positive thinking to face challenges in their teaching careers. Chun has always believed that things will turn out well in the end, and that people should not worry too much. Twenty-three years ago, when Chun decided to study in America, he had very poor English. He had given up studying English years before, ever since his high school teacher had given him a score of fifty-nine on an exam. At that time, however, his junior college required him to have a master’s degree in order to retain his teaching position. Nevertheless, despite his weak English, he got the chance to study in the United States without passing the TOEFL test, which is used to measure international students’ English ability, because the college he attended is the companion school to his alma mater. During this learning experience, Chun received many people’s help, from an anonymous gentleman at the airport taking him to the airplane counter when he arrived in the United States, to a group of good friends who helped him translate English and took notes for him in the classroom. When he felt stressed, he also had a friend who took him fishing to relax. American professors and classmates were also very kind and friendly, and they did not slight Chun because he had a hard time communicating with them and participating in class discussions. They were willing to help him when he had problems, and after two years of study, Chun received his master’s degree and retained his teaching position. Throughout these American study experiences, Chun believed that things would turn out well in the end. He believed in the dictum: be brave when facing
difficulties, do not lose faith in one’s goals, and everything will be fine.

Similarly, Huang also argued that positive thinking is important for teachers to be resilient. In Huang’s American learning experiences, she was one of only a few Taiwanese in her university, so most of the time she had to be independent and solve her problems alone, such as learning how to pass a driving test, going to see a doctor, taking classes, etc. Through these experiences of successfully solving problems, however, she gained the confidence to face challenges. Moreover, Huang received her master’s degree in only half a year. She took fifteen credit hours of classes in one semester, so she could finish her coursework quickly. These positive learning experiences in America brought Huang the confidence that she could overcome challenges in her teaching career. Huang commented that “to remember the successful experiences and to apply them to challenges with positive thinking is very important for teachers to be resilient in their teaching careers.”

When teachers meet challenges in their teaching careers, they need to use positive thinking, trust their abilities, and have faith that problems will be resolved productively. When teachers have this confidence, they will have the courage to continue to work to solve their problems instead of giving in to pressure or being afraid to fail. If teachers do not believe they can succeed, it will be very hard for them to attain their goals in their teaching careers.

Gaining Support from Family Members

In practicing resilience, family has always been the best support for Chun and Huang when they faced challenges in their teaching careers. Chun recalled that his family always supported him unconditionally. When Chun was growing up in his village, few people had the chance to go to school. Most people were satisfied as long as they were not hungry, and they were not concerned with education. After Chun graduated from a normal high school, however,
his family still supported him to continue on to college, paying tuition and living expenses until
he finished his education. Chun appreciated very much that his parents were willing to support
him in his studies, so later he could have better career choices as a college teacher.

In addition, Chun’s younger brothers and sisters were also great supporters when he had
challenges in his teaching career. All of them pursued higher education and now work in
education-related fields. One brother is the principal of an elementary school, and another is a
professor at a university. As for his two younger sisters, one works in a high school in
administrative staff, and the other works for a government education organization. Chun’s wife
is also a middle school teacher. Because they work in education fields, they always support and
help each other. When Chun has problems and challenges in his career, he always likes to get
together with his family and seek their advice.

Huang’s family members also played important roles in supporting her teaching career.
Her two younger sisters, her brother, and her husband are university professors in Taiwan.
Huang noted,

At the beginning, as a studio art teacher, I did not know how to write academic papers, so
they taught me how to write correctly and edited my papers for me. When their
universities have conferences or calls for papers, they will inform me. With their help, I
have more chances to publish articles in order to attain the required scores on the school’s
teacher evaluations.

In addition, Huang’s husband gives her emotional support when she confronts challenges
with students at school. Huang described an experience of asking students to do daily cleaning
work, which is assigned to each class by school administrators. One student did not want to, and
he yelled at her, “Why do I need to clean that area if I did not throw any trash in it?” Huang felt
completely overwhelmed with humiliation because this student did not listen to her and yelled at
her in front of other students. However, Huang knew that she could not ignore his attitude and
behavior because others students were gathering around them and watching how she would deal with this situation; the other students did not want to clean, either. Huang explained to the student that the school assigns an area for each class to clean to cultivate the concept of public service, so they had to clean a certain area regardless of whether they made a mess themselves. Finally, this student cleaned the area, but Huang knew he was unwilling to do it, and he looked at her with hate. When Huang called his parents in the evening, they took his side, and they insisted that their son would never do such an impolite thing to a teacher. Even though that was only one small incident with a single student, Huang felt very depressed about her work. When Huang told her husband, he assured her that she could quit her teaching any time and that he only wanted her to be happy. Huang knew that she loved to teach, and she would not quit her job, but the words from her husband gave her support. Knowing he was on her side gave Huang strength to continue in her teaching career. For Chun and Huang, the support of family members has been crucial, both in their quests to become teachers and their determination to sustain their careers.

**Gaining Support from Students/Maintaining Positive Communication with Students**

Having good interactions with students is important for teachers to be resilient. As an example, Chun recalled an incident in which a student gave him an art work that looked very professional, but it did not look like his other paintings. In order not to let this student feel embarrassed, Chun decided not to ask who helped him create the work or charge directly that the art was not his own. Instead, Chun told the student how wonderful it was, and that in the future, all of his art works should have this excellent quality. The student replied that he did not have time to paint every work like this. Chun continued to tell him, “you have excellent art talent; you should not waste your gift. The student looked at me, and I smiled at him.” The next day, this student brought Chun another art work and apologized. He told Chun that the one he had showed
to him earlier was created by a friend and that he felt bad being dishonest because Chun trusted him. The student created a new work for Chun, and he promised that he would do his best to learn. Chun told him that if he had any questions, he would be willing to help him. Later, this student worked hard, his artistic skills improved, and now he is an art major in graduate school. Because of Chun’s good communication with this student, he not only solved his own difficulty, but he also helped the student gain more interest in learning. If Chun had accused this student of cheating and using another’s work, he might not have had the desire to continue to pursue his art career.

Huang learned important lessons about how to interact with her students from her American art teachers. Her teachers were open-minded, could embrace the differences among students, and had good communication skills to guide students to experiment with different media and techniques. They often used positive feedback to encourage the good work students had done before continuing to instruct them. Influenced by her American learning experiences, Huang always encourages students first, before explaining how to make improvements, being careful to avoid creating frustration and anxiety for herself and her students. For example, Huang commented that in a class demonstrating how to use curved shapes to make a house in Photoshop, if she found that students had used geometric shapes instead of curved ones, she would first praise the students saying, “the house you created with geometric shapes looks great, but a curve could create a more detailed look for the house. Would you like to try the Bezier curve? You will like it.” When students feel their work is approved by the teacher, they will be less likely to resist the next step in the teacher’s lesson, and they will be motivated to learn more. By using this approach, Huang always maintains smooth and friendly relations with students. Chun’s and Huang’s stories show that good communication between teachers and students is important, and
that art teachers should use dialogue to bring positive influences to their students because it is possible to kill a student’s passion for learning art with just one or two sentences. Moreover, a teacher’s commitment to forging positive relationships surely generates support from students that is essential for teachers to remain resilient in their teaching careers.

**Gaining Support from School Administrators/Being Willing to Participate Actively in School Affairs**

In order to be resilient, art teachers need to build good relationships with school administrators as well as participate actively in school affairs. The following story illustrates how Chun is always helpful in school initiatives, which has won him support from school administrators, underwriting his efforts to face career challenges. Chun remembered an occasion when his school had a ceremony during its fiftieth anniversary celebration. The president thought the stage platform was old and small, and he was worried that it would not look good when guests came to visit the school for the ceremony. Because Chun had experience building model houses, he told the president that he was willing to volunteer to help the school reconstruct the stage platform. In addition, the School History Archives was behind the stage platform, and Chun knew that the building needed interior decoration as well, so he told the president that he was also willing to remodel its interior. After one month of hard work, Chun finished repairing the stage platform and decorating the interior of the School History Archives. During the celebration, the president came to him and introduced him to the guests, thanking him for what he had done for the school. Chun was very happy that the president recognized his effort and that he received praise from a former president who was an honored guest. This positive feedback gave him a strong positive feeling about his continued work for the school.

At that time, Chun also needed to prepare his application form and related documents for upgrading his teaching position. Some colleagues thought Chun was foolish because he spent so
much time on school affairs, since he might not have enough time to prepare his own materials for the career promotion. When Chun finally sent his materials to the school administration office, however, the president and every division administrator in the school approved his application at once. Chun did not expect that he could upgrade his teaching status and retain his teaching position so smoothly. He knew many of his colleagues sent their applications earlier than he, but theirs were not approved. Chun thinks this smooth process was because he always helped the school, so the school also supported him when he needed it. Learning from such experiences, Chun believes that “in order to gain support from school administrators, it is very important for art teachers to create positive relationships with them as well as to actively help in school affairs as part of their daily work.”

Huang also argues for the importance of being active in school affairs. She believes most teachers are not willing to do administrative jobs besides their regular daily teaching if schools do not provide extra compensation for the increased workload. Gaining experience in administrative affairs, however, is valuable for Huang because such work allows her to better understand the goals and visions of the school, compared to teachers who only teach in their classrooms. When the school has a new policy for teachers or students, it will be easier for her to navigate between the school’s mission and her personal goals as a teacher. For example, when Jun-Sin College created the policy requiring lecturers to enter a doctoral program within five years, Huang understood that the school was making an effort to upgrade the college to a university in order to retain students, which would ultimately protect the livelihood of teachers and staff. Otherwise, if students chose go to another university, the school would close, and all the teachers would lose their jobs. Huang declared, “I do not think that the school closing down is a result any of us want.” Therefore, Huang worked hard to enter a Ph.D. program instead of
being like some of her colleagues who complained against the school policy. In the end, Huang maintained her teaching position, and those who merely complained were laid off and left their teaching careers. Her experience validates her belief that besides daily teaching, art teachers should actively assist in school initiatives. In this way, they will have better positions at their schools, as well as gain support from school administrators, which will enhance teachers’ resilience and abilities to face challenges in their teaching careers.

_Gaining Support from Organization Members_

In addition to gaining support from family, receiving help from others in their professional lives is essential for art teachers to build resilience. By participating in professional organizations and interacting with members, art teachers can attain personal support as well as draw on the strengths and resources of professional groups. Both Chun and Huang have experienced how participating in professional and civic organizations enhanced their resilience in their teaching careers.

Chun has had an interest in participating in civic organizations since he was a child. After school, when Chun finished farm work, he and his friends always liked to go to the Si Jen Hai organization, which was sponsored by their village community. This organization provided tutors to help them do school work, and the tutors also led them in some recreational activities, such as playing games, watching cartoons, or telling stories. These tutors played an important role, filling the space when Chun’s parents did not have time to be with him during his childhood. Receiving help from these tutors and learning from them, Chun wanted to help others as they did. When Chun became older, he began to assist other children in the organization. Helping children complete school assignments, he saw their happiness and found that helping others is a joy, even though to help does not mean to receive, but rather to give. Having the experience of joining the
Si Jen Hai organization made him more open to interacting with students, colleagues, and school administrators in his teaching career. Sometimes, when Chun felt discouraged because of his students’ attitude problems, he would remind himself of how he had received help from tutors in the Si Jen Hai organization, as well as the happiness he found when he became a volunteer in the organization and helped children himself. Therefore, he felt that he should not give up helping even students with behavior problems. Chun commented:

When I teach, I feel I am helping students. According to an old Chinese saying, it is more blessed to give than to receive. I understood that helping others meant I had more, and I should be happy to help them.

Moreover, having positive experiences in an organization in the past also influenced Chun to be an active participant in artists’ organizations. Currently, Chun is a chairman in two leading professional organizations relating to the arts that regularly hold art exhibitions and seminars. Members, including art teachers and artists, can share insights and experiences, and they also keep their knowledge up-to-date by interacting with other professional artists. In this way, art teachers can bring the expertise they gain to students, who will be glad to gain practical knowledge they can apply to the real-world market. In turn, with positive feedback from students, art teachers will motivate themselves and gain resilience in their teaching careers.

Similarly, Huang participates in the Fuje 福智 teacher organization, which is sponsored by a Buddhist community. It holds seminars and activities to help teachers by inviting scholars to share their experiences and by showing teachers how to adjust their thinking and beliefs in order to face challenges in their teaching careers. For example, Huang mentions that one of the concepts that influenced her most is Guan Gun Len En, “觀功念恩.” 視 is to see, 功 represents good things, 念 is to remember, and 恩 is kindness. 觀功念恩, then, means people should always
see others’ merits instead of their drawbacks and should appreciate what they have done for them.

Huang notes:

To learn Guan Gun Len En is to learn how to see people and things positively. There is one old saying: “if we cannot adjust the mountain, we adjust the road; if we cannot adjust the road, we adjust our body; if we cannot adjust our body, we adjust our belief.” Everything is influenced by our beliefs, and how we see things will influence how we solve our problems. Sometimes, we do not know if someone really made a mistake or whether we see things differently from them. Therefore, even though people may not treat us unkindly, we always need to try to find their goodness. If we always see things and people from negative perspectives, we will not be happy.

This understanding also helps Huang to face challenges in her teaching career. For example, when she sends her documents to the administrative offices, sometimes the administrative staff uses bureaucratic procedures to put off her requests or deal with documents irresponsibly. In the beginning, Huang felt discouraged and frustrated. She could only passively wait for documents to be processed or send them again. After having learned the concept of Guan Gun Len En, however, she accepts the way administrative officials operate. Huang has faith that they do their best to finish her documents as soon as possible. If they make some mistakes on her documents, Huang will resend them. She will not feel angry because she knows they do not make mistakes on purpose, and they are very busy helping everyone. After Huang applied this mode of thinking to her work, everyone became Huang’s angel. She found the goodness in people, and she had positive interactions with them, so when Huang needs help to face challenges, such people are more likely to support her.

In addition, Huang is also a member of the Taiwan art education organization. By sharing experiences with other members, Huang has the chance to listen to other art teachers’ stories, and the members learn how to support each other. The organization invites professionals to give speeches or hold seminars, so Huang can learn how other art educators achieve success in teaching and contribute to the art education field. Huang’s experiences demonstrate that it is
important for art teachers to join professional organizations in order to attain resources, receive assistance, and gain knowledge to enhance their teaching.

Summary of Research Findings and Discussion

In light of my participants’ stories, this study demonstrates that in order to be motivated, teachers must satisfy their basic needs, which, in the language of Maslow’s need theory, include secure income, safety, love and belonging, respect and personal accomplishment. To be resilient—renewing and maintaining motivation and career commitment—teachers need both internal and external support resources. To maintain internal support, art teachers must facilitate self-efficacy, the essential belief in the power to face challenges. To foster resilience, art teachers can gain support from family members, students, school administrators, and fellow members of professional organizations. By describing the experiences of its research participants, this study especially illuminates the significance of teaching knowledge generated by international educational exchanges and the importance of dialogue among educators.

Motivational Factors

Secure Income: Satisfying Physical Needs

Maintaining a secure income has been an important motivating factor for both Chun and Huang in supporting their commitments to their teaching careers. Influenced by their childhoods of limited means, both were attracted to work with a stable income, and such material motivations remain important to their continuing career commitments. Maslow’s need theory (1943) notes the fundamental importance of satisfying human physiological needs, and even though it may sound materialistic to emphasize teachers’ practical economic motivations, satisfying their needs to make a living through salary and other forms of remuneration is an essential motivational factor that keeps teachers working in their fields. Hess (2004) notes that
“while money may not be the only way to attract teachers we need, it is a useful tool and one we can readily wield” (p. 19). Therefore, in order to motivate art teachers in their teaching careers, it is important for institutions to provide secure incomes to satisfy art teachers’ basic material needs.

In addition, according to Chun and Huang’s stories, the pursuit of economic security can be combined effectively with a commitment to high-quality teaching. In order to maintain their livelihoods, Chun and Huang have worked hard to enhance their expertise and teaching to create better learning environments for students. As a result, Chun and Huang receive positive feedback from students, which further strengthens the student-teacher relationship, enhancing their career motivation. After many years of experience as senior art teachers in higher education, both remain firmly committed to professional development, and it remains a primary motivator that sustains their work as educators. Therefore, secure income to satisfy teachers’ material needs is an important motivational factor that fuels teachers’ passion and performance in many ways.

Receiving Positive Feedback from Students and School Administrators: The Need for Love and Belonging

Positive feedback from students and school administrators is an important factor for Chun and Huang to maintain career motivation. According to Maslow (1943), people have the need for belonging and social support, and Herzberg’s two-factor theory makes it clear that interpersonal relationships play important roles in motivation at work (Akrani, 2010). Raised in a kind family atmosphere, Chun is very considerate to his students, which enhances his teaching and elicits students’ enthusiasm for his classes. Similarly, influenced by her parenting experiences, Huang treats students like her own children, with love and patience, fostering good communication and rich interpersonal relationships.
In addition, both Chun and Huang, influenced by their American learning experiences, are very open-minded and flexible in their interactions with students and school administrators. By actively helping students and administrators solve problems, Chun and Huang satisfy their needs for love, appreciation and belonging, turning positive feedback into an affirmative cycle of motivation. Moreover, by experiencing the approbation of students, colleagues and administrators, Chun and Huang satisfy their needs for esteem and social approval (Schott, 1992). Both, in turn, work more happily and productively in such teaching environments, creating the basis of continued career motivation.

*Being Professional: The Need to Be Respected*

According to Chun’s and Huang’s stories, a commitment to professionalism is an essential factor for art teachers to find motivation in their teaching careers. Social approval is a basic human need (Maslow, 1943) that Chun and Huang attain by behaving professionally in their teaching. Influenced by their experiences as students in Taiwan and the United States, Chun and Huang believe that teachers need to have expertise in the subjects they teach, but they must also present an outward image of professional dress and comportment in order to demonstrate their respect for students and the educational process. Moreover, they understand that in addition to being a good classroom instructor, an art teacher needs to pursue success in the academic world beyond one’s own institution in order to sustain a satisfying career. Huang commented:

> My students are interested to know how I have devoted myself to the profession and the classes I have taught. I like to see the admiration in my students’ eyes when they see I published an article or had an exhibition. Their respect makes me want to continue to teach, and I think professional accomplishments are important for art teachers to be motivated.

Blasé (1982) shows that students’ positive esteem reinforces teachers’ motivation and commitment to teaching. Chun’s and Huang’s experiences demonstrate that in order to feel
motivated, art teachers need to be highly professional in order to gain the respect and admiration from students that fuels career satisfaction.

Personal Accomplishment: Satisfying the Need for Self-Actualization

Self-actualization is an important motivational factor for both Chun and Huang. Schott (1992) describes self-actualization as, “the desire for growth and self-fulfillment, the drive to achieve one’s full human potential” (p.109). In order to make commitments, teachers need to know how to satisfy inner needs through teaching. For Chun and Huang, such inner needs include creating art, helping students find success, and being role models for students.

Chun and Huang both love art, and becoming art teachers has allowed them to continue their own work as artists, fulfilling their self-actualization needs. Both Chun and Huang believe firmly that art teachers should continue to create art and regularly participate in exhibitions because such work will enhance their creative faculties, not only in their own work but also in their teaching. Therefore, Chun and Huang are better able to impart practical knowledge that reaches beyond textbooks and deepens students’ artistic development, allowing them to gain positive feedback from students.

Moreover, both Chun’s and Huang’s stories show that helping students find success also satisfies teachers’ self-actualization needs. If Chun, for example, had not introduced his student to the story of Ieyasu Tokugawa, encouraging him to learn how to be patient and persistent, the student may never have become the president of a university. Instead, he could have remained a gloomy college lecturer or, possibly, quit teaching altogether. Similarly, Huang refused to give up on her student who had fallen into the category of “bad student” by not turning in assignments. By taking him to the school psychologist and persuading his parents to allow him to continue learning, Huang helped him overcome his anxiety, graduate from college, and go on to graduate
school. Such experiences of helping students find success satisfy Chun’s and Huang’s inner needs, providing career motivation.

Moreover, drawing on their past learning experiences, Chun and Huang believe strongly in their power to influence students, affirming that art teachers need to have expertise in art, but that they also must function as personal role models who affect their students personally. Having the influence to help students succeed both as art students and as citizens motivates Chun and Huang to continue their teaching careers. Self-actualization is, indeed, the highest need in Maslow’s schema, and satisfying this inner need for personal accomplishment brings Chun and Huang joy in teaching. This study demonstrates convincingly that Chun and Huang are passionate in their work because they have been able to satisfy their inner needs, positively influencing the work and lives of students. Chun’s and Huang’s stories indicate that in order to remain motivated and become better teachers, art educators need to explore their inner needs, making their satisfaction the basis of long-term career commitments.

Resilience Factors

Belief as an Internal Support Resource

To remain resilient in their teaching careers, art teachers need to construct beliefs in ways that function as internal support resources. The importance of self-efficacy is a signature belief that Chun and Huang have constructed through the life experiences that underpin resilience in their teaching careers. Working on a farm, Chun observed that the fruit trees were nurtured with sun and rain, but they also needed to have storms to make their branches strong in order to support the weight of the fruit. Chun learned that challenges were necessary to help him build the strength to face difficulties. By trying very hard to become pregnant after two miscarriages and finally having two children, Huang learned the importance of persistence in order to achieve
one’s goals. Moreover, during their educational experiences in the United States, both Chun and Huang learned how to be resilient while meeting the challenges of living and studying in a foreign country. Successful American study experiences gave Chun and Huang the confidence to solve the problems they later encountered in their teaching careers. As mature professionals, a focus on maintaining self-efficacy helps Chun and Huang fulfill their goals for everyday teaching and professional success: imparting knowledge to students; building good communication with students, colleagues and school administrators; satisfying students’ individual needs; managing the classroom efficiently; and fulfilling school administrators’ requirements. Self-efficacy is an essential belief constructed from art teachers’ life experiences, so it is crucial for art teachers to explore their lives in order to define their own teaching beliefs in ways that sustain their careers and give them capabilities to face new difficulties.

*Gaining Social Support as an External Resource*

This study shows that gaining support has been an important factor for both Chun and Huang to maintain resilience in their teaching careers. Cohen (2004) argues that social support can help individuals reduce mental stress, and Chun and Huang have received such support from family, students, school administrators and members of organizations to which they belong. In Chun’s and Huang’s stories, family members not only functioned as “emotional support” to help them cope with work-related stress, but they also provided advice as “informational support” to help them solve their teaching challenges (Cohen, 2004, p. 676).

Receiving support from students also has played an important role in helping Chun and Huang sustain their teaching careers. In order to receive positive feedback from students, Chun and Huang work hard to enhance their expertise to provide up-to-date knowledge for their students. In addition, influenced by their American learning experiences, Chun and Huang work
to maintain good communication with their students, which helps them enhance their teaching performance, making students a source of positive support rather than conflict. Spilt, Koomen and Thijs (2011) note that conflict with students is a common source of burnout for art teachers and that good relationships with students are necessary to avoid negative feelings that harm teaching performance and mental health. Receiving positive feedback from students can satisfy teachers’ basic needs for love and caring, enhancing career resilience (Spilt et al, 2011).

In addition, receiving support from those in the surrounding work environment, such as school administrators, students, or peers, is important for art teachers. Hersey et al. (2008) argue that “activities, interactions, and sentiments are essential” for people to motivate themselves to remain in their fields (p. 51). At the same time, self-determination theory asserts that people have the need for interaction with others (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Consequently, art teachers need positive interactions with others in their work environment in order to gain support for successful teaching. Recognizing the importance of support for themselves, Chun and Huang are always keen to help colleagues and school administrators who face challenges in their teaching careers, which makes those parties willing to help them in turn. By gaining support from various sources in their work environments, art teachers will be motivated by satisfying their need for love and belonging as well as attaining professional support in their career efforts.

Support from fellow members of professional organizations is also important for art teachers. By participating in such organizations, art teachers can improve their knowledge and enhance their classroom teaching performance, which leads to positive feedback from students who appreciate knowledgeable instruction. In addition, peer organizations provide role models for scholarship and other professional accomplishments. Bandura (1994) argues that individuals can learn from the experiences of others by modeling their behaviors and attitudes, and Chun and
Huang have most certainly gained support and inspiration from their association with peers in professional organizations. For example, Chun gained up-to-date knowledge of his field through his participation in art organizations, enhancing his teaching, and Huang has learned how to use a positive attitude to face teaching challenges in the Fuje teacher’s organization. Their experiences demonstrate that teachers need to participate in teacher development programs or professional art education organizations to learn from peers and find role models as they face challenges, maintain their passion about their work, and contribute their own knowledge to the art education field.

**Cultural Exchange**

Correa et al. (2008) argue that “teachers are a product of their culture and experiences” (p. 152). In this context, studying in the United States not only allowed Chun and Huang to attain master’s degrees, thereby making it possible for them to become college teachers in Taiwan, but these opportunities to interact with a different culture also had long-term effects on their approaches to teaching. Chun notes:

Learning from American instructors who always used encouragement to support my learning, I also used positive words to encourage my students to learn. I have good interactions with students, and receiving positive feedback from them is important for me to continue my teaching career. I am very glad that I had these learning experiences in America.

Studying in the United States contributed to Chun’s development of a positive method of instruction, and the rewarding response of his students motivates him to continue his teaching career. Chun’s experience illustrates the cycle of positive feedback in which the teacher’s successful construction of an encouraging relationship with students becomes an important motivator for the teacher and a source of resilience, since good relations with students give the teacher more power to help students learn effectively.
With a more personal focus, Huang found that her American study experiences have been especially significant for her career because, as she notes:

Whenever I meet challenges in teaching, I just remember how hard I worked to earn my master’s degree in America. That successful learning experience gives me confidence and courage to continue to solve problems and attain my goals in teaching. I also like to share my stories of studying in America to encourage my students to be brave and face their difficulties.

American study experiences brought Huang immense inner power to face difficulties in her teaching career. When she confronts challenges in her work, thinking back over her successful past as a student in the United States gives her the ability to overcome hardships. Additionally, her stories of academic success under difficult conditions become a source of inspiration for her own students.

Long after returning to Taiwan, Chun’s and Huang’s American study experiences continue to shape their teaching, and even though their students may never have the opportunity to learn from an American instructor, they have still derived their own benefits from Chun’s and Huang’s intercultural education. Indeed, when some of Chun and Huang’s students go on to become art educators, they will be able to apply the American teaching methods they have learned from Chun and Huang, creating a legacy in Taiwan of intercultural education. Correa et al. (2008) argue that “teachers’ beliefs about instruction and learning may be shaped largely by culturally shared experiences and values” (p. 140). Likewise, by encountering the stories of Chun and Huang, American readers have the opportunity to understand how Taiwanese college art teachers motivate themselves and face challenges. In this regard, this study explores cultural exchange in an international context, allowing the community of both American and Taiwanese art educators to draw upon collective past experience, overcoming limits of time and space to create an international and intergenerational exchange of teaching knowledge.
Knowledge is Constructed through Layers of Experience

Gary and Malins (2004) argue that we construct knowledge through life experiences. From Chun’s and Huang’s stories, we certainly learn that they have constructed motivation and resilience in this way. For example, Chun believes that in order to be motivated and resilient in their careers, art teachers need to be willing to help students, colleagues and school administrators, which will elicit their support in the teachers’ times of need. This insight came to Chun through a long accretion of life experience. As a young child, he received the assistance of tutors from the Si Jen Hai Organization, which allowed him to enter a normal junior college and become a teacher. When Chun began teaching college, a friend invited him to live with his family until Chun found a house to rent. In addition, when Chun came to study in the United States, he found the way to his dormitory only with the help of an American couple. As an international student, Chun’s instructors, classmates and friends were very helpful, which ultimately allowed him to earn his master’s degree. As a beneficiary of so much kindness and assistance, Chun learned to love helping others, an attitude expressed in his readiness to assist students with their problems and take a leadership role in the university’s administrative affairs. An important source of support to the others around him, Chun receives copious positive feedback from students and school administrators, which becomes a fund of reciprocal assistance when Chun needs help to meet challenges.

Similarly, a great strength of Huang’s career has been her warm relationships with students and colleagues, a capacity built on her approach to personal life challenges. For example, before she had children, Huang had two miscarriages, and her doctor told her she might never become a mother, but fueled by the determination she learned as an international student, Huang refused to give up, and after immense time, money, and effort, she finally had two children. This
experience reinforced her belief that everything is possible with indomitable persistence, which has carried through to her successful determination to pass the graduate entrance exam to get into her doctoral program, underwriting her future realization of long-term teaching goals.

Lyons and LaBoskey (2002) argue that “teaching is about the construction of knowledge and meaning by individuals” (p. 3), and this study undoubtedly emphasizes the importance for art teachers of valuing previous knowledge and life experience as the foundation of teaching beliefs, the source of passion for teaching, and the guarantor of career resilience and commitment. 

*The Development of Consciousness through Dialogue*

Throughout the study, I collaborated with my participants in a shared, dialogic examination of beliefs about dealing with challenges in teaching careers. Their experiences not only provided me with valuable research materials enabling me to retell their stories to inspire motivation and resilience in other art teachers, but our dialogues also afforded my participants greater understandings of themselves, supporting their future professional development. Chun declared:

> By telling my own stories, I can understand myself better and make connections between my past and present, which benefits my efforts to be motivated and resilient in my teaching career.

Likewise, Huang noted:

> My past experiences are segments of memories. Through sharing my life experiences, I have the chance to connect past, present, and future together. It is a great experience to share, which helps me have a broader view of my teaching career, which will help me to make a commitment in my teaching, as well as to face challenges in my future teaching career.

Fischer (2007) notes that dialogue can “develop consciousness,” which is revealed through people telling their own stories (p. 616). Before the articulation of stories, memories are incomplete or only partially realized, often connected only with a single event or incident
(Naspor, 1987). In the telling of stories, however, portions of memory cohere and become connected (Naspor, 1987). When Chun and Huang began to verbalize their experiences, they initiated the process of connecting and completing memories in ways that contributed to deeper self-understandings and clearer visions of past, present, and future in their teaching careers (Schaafsma & Vinz, 2007).

Retelling Chun’s and Huang’s stories in this study makes it possible for other art educators to learn from their experiences as they begin to explore their own. Connecting past, present and future amid reflections on personal interactions in various environments, art educators may envision new modes of motivation and resilience in their careers. Such a greater self-understanding can, in turn, become the platform for the discovery of future possibilities that underwrite deep and lasting commitments to teaching careers.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

Analyzing Chun’s and Huang’s life experiences, this study explores how they found motivation and attained the support and resources necessary to be resilient in their teaching careers. By retelling their stories, I have functioned as a collaborator, creating a dialogue with the participants and then extending the conversation to other art educators who may read this work to reflect upon how their own teaching and other life experiences can guide them to face challenges and maintain motivation in their teaching careers. My reflections recorded in this chapter address the lessons I have learned from the participants’ stories, helping me remain motivated and resilient as I look forward to returning to my teaching position in Taiwan after completing my doctoral degree. Finally, this chapter weighs the shortcomings of the study, charts possible impacts of its research findings, and forecasts its utility to future research.

Researcher’s Reflection

In this study, my point of view influences how I retell these two art teachers’ stories (Horvat & Antonio, 1999; Fontana & Frey, 2005). On the other hand, the process of conducting the research has also shaped how I have motivated myself and established resilience as I have worked to complete the project and prepare myself to sustain my own teaching career in the future. At the beginning of the project, I felt excited to explore the motivation and resilience factors that shaped Chun’s and Huang’s teaching careers. I also had a feeling of personal guilt because of an episode during my previous teaching career in Taiwan. For a time, I lost my passion as an art teacher because of a conflict I experienced with a group of students under my supervision, which resulted from my failure to build good communications with them.
During the process of writing this dissertation, especially studying scholarly literature, my guilt about losing interest in teaching lessened as I gained more understanding of how stress and burnout can undermine teachers’ careers by diminishing their teaching performance. Stress stemming from conflict with students is a leading cause of teacher burnout, and I learned that if I want to continue to devote myself to my teaching career, I need to know how to maintain good communication with my students, especially when I have disagreements with them, while being careful to avoid becoming angry or censorious. Teaching and learning are modes of two-way communication, and learning to create equitable dialogues between students and teachers is essential to facilitating productive learning environments for students as well as for making teaching enjoyable for me.

Moreover, listening to Chun’s and Huang’s stories and retelling them in this study, I had the opportunity to examine my own sources of motivation and resilience as well as my commitment to my future college teaching career in Taiwan. By creating dialogues with Chun and Huang, I realized that there are always challenges in teaching, and they cannot be avoided. Huang affirmed that “we should accept the truth that our current teaching environment is difficult, and the future will hold more challenges.” Likewise, Chun noted that “the current teachers’ situation is more challenging than before because of the changing educational environment.” Having considered Chun’s and Huang’s stories, I know that I am not alone in facing challenges in my teaching career and that I should not feel guilty for experiencing periods of anxiety or discouragement about teaching.

Indeed, knowing how to accept oneself is an important part of examining one’s life and career with a positive attitude, and this research project allowed me, like Chun and Huang, to revisit past life experiences to find my original sources of passion for teaching. I recalled that I
became an art teacher originally because I was influenced by my college teachers who used love and encouragement to help me build confidence and discover my artistic potential. For me, teaching art is the only career that makes possible my primary personal goal, influencing students in positive ways. It is this aspect of teaching that makes me proud to pursue my career, satisfying my inner needs.

In addition, through Chun’s and Huang’s stories, I also realized how significantly my own early childhood experiences have shaped my pursuit of a teaching career. Like Chun and Huang, one of the important motivational factors to continue teaching is the secure income. Unlike theirs, however, my parents are educated and held secure jobs with stable incomes as I grew up, and financial resources were never a concern for my family. Rather than striving to attain a better life than the previous generation, I have a strong drive to maintain the financial security I experienced as a child. Even though the three of us had different early childhood experiences, we nevertheless have the same commitment to teaching as a secure and financially rewarding profession.

Through Chun and Huang’s stories, I also realized how deeply Taiwanese culture has influenced my construction of teaching beliefs and my approaches to teaching when I taught in Taiwan. After contemplating how Chun and Huang learned from their American teachers to create positive communications with students, bolstering their own motivation and resilience, I wondered why I had not been as successful at creating good relationships with my students, even though I have eleven years’ experience in American educational settings, much more than either Chun or Huang. Having completed this study, I believe the difference lies in a conflict between Western and Eastern educational culture. In Western schools, teachers have much greater latitude to act as a student’s friend, assisting and facilitating learning. The cultural expectations in
Western institutions make open communication possible between teacher and student, even as students are responsible for their own learning. In contrast, in Eastern tradition, teachers are like parents to students. There is even an old saying that a teacher becomes like your father or mother. From this point of view, the teacher has a far greater responsibility for the student’s learning, and the student has a heavy obligation to accept the authority and wisdom of the teacher, making friendly relations difficult. After listening to Chun’s and Huang’s stories, I came to understand that I continued to practice Eastern methods as a teacher, even as I so deeply prized my own American education.

I have found, moreover, that the unresolved tension between Eastern and Western traditions in my own teaching has sometimes disrupted my ability to maintain positive relations with students, thereby diminishing my passion for teaching at times. As a teacher who employs a hybrid of Eastern and Western approaches, I have sometimes found students perplexed about how to relate to me. For example, I normally maintain a very friendly personal attitude, like a typical Western teacher, and students find it very easy to communicate with me. Nevertheless, when students are not able to meet my expectations in their work, or they challenge my opinions, I often behave like an Eastern teacher and push students to adhere to my point of view. For students, this split between teaching cultures in one instructor can be confusing, and they sometimes find it difficult to accept being pressured to improve their work. Upon the reflection entailed in my dissertation research, I realized that in order to ensure my continued commitment to teaching, I needed to decide whether to employ Western or Eastern teaching methods, and, furthermore, to use one or the other consistently if I want to reduce conflicts with students.

Maintaining one’s commitment to teaching is essential, but in today’s challenging educational environment in Taiwan, having a passion for teaching art is not enough. Students,
students’ parents, school administrators and society at large have greater expectations than ever for art teachers. My dissertation research has shown me that in order to sustain my own long-term commitment to my teaching career, I need to enhance my professional knowledge and expertise, be patient in understanding students’ and parents’ needs, work effectively to support students’ efforts and be active in school affairs. There is no doubt that achieving all of those goals entails great stress and numerous challenges. Indeed, Iwanicki (1983) has stated that “stress is a reality of teaching, which can be beneficial or harmful, depending on how a teacher responds” (p. 27). I know that if I am truly committed to a teaching career, I must be brave enough to change my personality as a teacher in the face of stress and difficulties, trusting that the lessons of arduous experience will enhance my future career resilience.

In the end, I am gratified to have chosen art teachers’ motivation and resilience as my dissertation subject and to have completed a study that holds valuable insights for art educators. Even though my original motivation was to find sources of inspiration in my own teaching career, by retelling Chun’s and Huang’s stories, I have addressed my personal determination to pursue art education as a lifelong career. In addition, I have come to understand how early childhood experiences, education and cultural influences shape teachers’ construction of beliefs, making essential impacts on their motivation and resilience. If teachers want to create renewed passion and energy, they need to explore their past life experiences in ways that address career difficulties, allowing them to create better learning and teaching environments in the future.

Shortcomings and Recommendations

I conducted this research through life story interviews with two of my colleagues, both of whom are Taiwanese art college teachers. In order to protect the privacy of my participants, the institution, and myself, besides using pseudonyms, the participants’ stories have sometimes
been slightly abbreviated in accordance with a member check process with my participants and my own reflections. For example, upon the request of the participants, details have been omitted from some stories in order to protect the privacy of students, school administrators, or family members. In addition, by using the three-dimensional space approach to analyzing research data, the study produced many possibilities for retelling Chun’s and Huang’s life experiences in ways that illuminate the factors contributing to their career motivation and resilience. Because my requirement to return to my university position by a certain date limits my time for this project, I chose to focus on only the most essential factors relevant to the study of motivation and resilience.

In light of such possible shortcomings of this research, I have enumerated some of the areas that I, as a researcher, have questions about after writing this dissertation, as well as recommendations for future research. The first area for future research is the relationship between motivation and resilience. Throughout this study, I found that both motivation and resilience are important for art teachers to make commitments in their teaching careers, but the factors shaping motivation and resilience overlap in some areas. The motivational factors of secure income and love and belonging, for example, can also be experienced as external support resources supporting resilience. To be resilient, art teachers must satisfy their inner needs for respect, pursue personal accomplishment and find artistic expression, all of which can also function as internal resources that let teachers face challenges in their careers. In light of such interconnections, future research is needed to understand more carefully the relationship between motivation and resilience in art teachers’ renewal of professional energy and determination. In addition, because this research is a qualitative study, I chose not to generalize the factors of
motivation and resilience for all art teachers. Nevertheless, it would be interesting to explore how the results of future studies compare with those of this inquiry.

Interviews with men and women produce significantly different results because gender affects how men and women structure stories and construct meanings from their experiences (Genereux & McKeough, 2007; Seidman, 2006). Therefore, another important area for future research is how gender differences can affect the ways participants’ stories reconstruct life experiences, especially in relation to family and career. For example, both Chun and Huang mentioned children in their stories. When Chun talked about his children, he did not connect parenthood to his teaching career in any fundamental way, mentioning only that his children received help finding a job from one of his college alumni. In contrast, Huang believes that her two children have played a crucial role in helping her maintain motivation and resilience in her career. Through parenting experiences, Huang learned how to treat her students like her children, with love and care. Maintaining relationships of positive communication with her students helps Huang preserve her passion for teaching and make a long-term career commitment. Therefore, from Huang’s point of view as a woman, family life is a primary factor in career development. As a man, meanwhile, Chun seems to note little connection between work and family. I want to examine how gender shapes men’s and women’s approaches to telling their stories, especially in the relation between family and career. Such gender analyses can speak in important ways to readers, illustrating diverse possibilities of constructing stories and knowledge in their own life experiences.

This study’s research shows that Chun and Huang address quite directly how their life experiences have helped them to remain motivated and resilient in their teaching careers. Benamer (2007) argues that “experience is memory” (p. 249), and Chun’s and Huang’s stories
demonstrate how they have capitalized on their experiences—both fortunate and adverse—to create motivation and resilience. For example, Chun values particularly gratifying experiences in which he helped students become university professors, and these accomplishments motivate Chun to continue teaching. On the other hand, Chun also remembers vividly the negative influence of his teacher who liked to smoke but did not allow students to smoke. Failing to model with his own behavior the standards he required for his students, this teacher was a poor educator. Having learned from this experience, Chun knows the importance of being a good role model to students, and this understanding is a strong part of Chun’s continuing commitment to teaching.

Similarly, drawing on a positive experience of teaching role models, Huang’s American professors who used positive feedback to help students learn inspired her teaching methods. Influenced by her experience as a student in the United States, Huang is careful to always encourage her students, and by creating positive communication with students, moreover, Huang enhances her motivation for teaching. Like Chun, Huang also has had negative learning experiences. One of her university professors, for example, failed to prepare class materials responsibly, and her negligence elicited such disrespect from her students that their negative evaluations put her in danger of losing her teaching position. As a consequence of this learning experience, Huang understands the importance of preparing class materials thoroughly in order to facilitate good instruction, which, resulting in positive feedback from students, becomes an important factor in her ability to maintain motivation and resilience. Such examples suggest that teachers’ memories and experiences play important roles in career motivation and resilience. As a researcher, I want to build on this study in future explorations of the ways art teachers draw on
select memories and experiences—both positive and negative—to foster successful teaching and nurture passion for their careers.

This study dramatizes the enormous effect that study abroad had on both Chun’s and Huang’s abilities to remain motivated and resilient in their later teaching careers, providing a dynamic synthesis of Taiwanese and American methods. In the Taiwanese educational tradition, students are expected respect teachers, and the distance between students and teachers is a divide very difficult to cross. In addition, communication in this setting always flows in one direction, from teacher to students. Having American learning experiences, however, Chun and Huang learned how to develop friendly relations and open communications with students, facilitating interactions that enhance students’ learning. Considering the important differences between Eastern and Western educational cultures, I want to explore more carefully how educators like Chun and Huang impact their students and transform them by blending the two traditions.

Finally, because this study has focused heavily on Chun’s and Huang’s particular experience of intercultural educational influences, I would also like to explore how other Taiwanese art educators who do not have experiences studying abroad find sources of motivation and resilience solely from within the Taiwanese tradition.

Furthermore, I want to explore possible uses of social media to share my participants’ stories, enlarging the arena in which their experiences can inspire other educators. Kaplan and Haenlein (2009) note that social media such as Facebook, Twitter and blogs, “are all about sharing and interaction,” (p.66), and because the issue of teacher burnout has become a crucial problem internationally (Betoret, 2009; Chan, 1998; Watts & Robertson, 2011), it is a great advantage for art teachers to draw on digital media to renew energy and commitment. In this way, social media can become a platform for support through encountering other art teachers’
experiences, without the limits of time and space. Therefore, I am interested in exploring the special role of social media in constructing and sharing teachers’ knowledge about motivation, resilience and career commitment.

Conclusion and Implications

In light of this exploration of the ways Chun and Huang face career challenges by drawing on both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, their stories make clear that focusing especially on maintaining motivation is essential to healthy and satisfying careers for art teachers. The intrinsic motivational factors that are most important in this regard include the satisfaction of inner needs to help students find success and satisfaction in learning, the power to be positive role models for students, the satisfaction of artistic needs and the attainment of personal accomplishments through the development of professional expertise. Extrinsic motivational factors include secure income, stable working hours, the development of teachers’ own work as artists and the support and positive feedback of students and school administrators. Crucial inner support resources include the accumulation of strategies for facing teaching challenges gained through experience, the ability to be flexible, the employment of positive thinking and the determination to remain persistent and have the confidence to solve problems. External support sources flow from support of family members, positive feedback from and communication with students and school administrators and support from fellow organization members.

This study has demonstrated that both motivation and resilience are important for art teachers to make long-term commitments in their teaching careers. Without motivation, teachers will feel uninspired by their work, and the resulting emotional drain will affect students negatively, impairing learning. On the other hand, art teachers may feel highly motivated, but if they lack resilience in the face of teaching challenges, their enthusiasm and devotion will
diminish over time. Art teachers should consider motivation and resilience as closely interrelated and realize that both factors must work together to ensure enjoyment and satisfaction in teaching. The true keys to dispelling mental stress, enhancing classroom teaching and sustaining teaching careers come from motivation and resilience.

The results of this research also highlight the important influence of early childhood and educational experiences on teachers’ approaches to fostering motivation and resilience in their teaching careers (Goodman, 1998). As such, the study demonstrates the utility of addressing motivation and resilience as part of curricula preparing art educators to teach and encouraging them to develop from the beginning of their careers resources and strategies to face teaching challenges and establish the foundations of career commitment. Such classes might include material on stress management, mental health, communication skills and psychological resilience. Introducing career commitment curricula into art education training—teaching prospective art educators how to prepare for and defuse the dangers of stress and burnout—will allow teachers to sustain their careers and also to become better classroom instructors.

An important and distinctive aspect of this study is its exploration of how Chun’s and Huang’s education in both American and Taiwanese cultural traditions shape their approaches to motivation, resilience and career commitment. Chun and Huang believe that a primary function of art education is to help students gain expertise in artistic development, but they are also committed to the idea that teachers should serve as role models, influencing students in positive, personal ways. Moreover, shaped by their American learning experiences, Chun and Huang value giving positive feedback to students to help them learn, which enhances students’ classroom performance and creates amicable relationships between teachers and learners. This dynamic interaction of Eastern and Western cultures of schooling, which bridges diverse
educational and social environments, demonstrates the importance for art teachers of drawing on and synthesizing diverse aspects of life experience and cultural knowledge to forge successful teaching strategies. As the success of such teaching strategies becomes a source of motivation and resilience for teachers, this study illuminates the crucial importance of understanding the influence of cultural factors on the development of successful and durable teaching careers.

This study also illustrates how narrative inquiry can be used in educational research to address common teaching difficulties as well as to enhance art educators’ teaching performance. Through sharing stories, art educators can learn from one another’s experiences and pondering such insights, they can examine their own life experiences to find the best ways to motivate themselves and to overcome challenges in their own teaching careers. In this context, teacher-researchers must see themselves as important resources in the creation and study of teaching theory and knowledge (Richardson, 1994). To succeed as educators, teachers need to understand how they perceive themselves and be able to explore how their experiences affect their beliefs and thought processes. A deep understanding of this process will make them better equipped and more productive as both teachers and researchers.

By creating dialogues with two Taiwanese college art teachers, this study marks the value and unique significance of individual voices as well as the power of international exchanges of knowledge. Creswell (2007) notes that everyone has a story to tell, and everyone’s experience is significant. In relation to classroom teaching, this study also suggests that art educators must be willing to listen to and embrace diverse students’ voices in order to create student-teacher collaborations that enrich both teaching and learning. In this way, art educators build better communication with students, gain positive feedback and support and enhance their own sources of motivation, resilience and career support.
To deepen such understanding, this study opens a dialogue that allows researchers and art teachers to communicate their ideas in diverse ways, offering new opportunities to represent and share life experiences. As such, it holds important implications for educational politics because such an approach suggests that art teachers must realize that there are many ways to construct knowledge (Eisner, 1998). Accordingly, they must be open to multiple possibilities for instruction that meet students’ individual needs and help them attain their goals.

In order to understand the practices underpinning successful and long-lived careers in art education, we must synthesize analyses of the numerous, divergent factors constituting teachers’ construction of motivation and resilience, charting the power of culture, educational background, and life experience. Teachers may have different approaches according to who they are, where they are from, and what they have learned and experienced. Tracing the significance of such differences, this study of Chun’s and Huang’s personal and professional experiences illuminates strategies for motivation and resilience that stand as both the signature practices of individual careers in art education and as models worthy of study and emulation.
APPENDIX

INTERVIEW SCRIPTS
Past Family Life Experiences

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Tell me about your family.
3. Tell me about your relationship with your family members.
4. How did your parents treat the siblings in your family differently because of their genders?
5. What was your parents’ expectation of what kind of person you would become?
6. Tell me about the happy experiences you have had in your life.
7. In what ways do you look for happiness?
8. In what ways did your family help you to look for happiness?
9. In what ways did your family help your brothers or sisters to look for happiness?
10. Tell me about the sad experiences you have had in your life.
11. Tell me about how you recuperate from sadness
12. In what ways did your family help you recuperate from sadness?
13. In what ways did your family help your brothers or sisters recuperate from sadness?
14. What do challenges mean to you?
15. Tell me about some of your biggest challenges.
16. What do you do to face challenges and why?
17. Tell me about how your family has supported you when you have faced challenges.
18. In what ways did your family help you to learn how to be resilient in your life?
19. In what ways did your parents help your brothers or sisters learn how to be resilient in their lives?
20. What experiences show how your parents motivated you in your life?
21. In what ways did your parents motivate your brothers or sisters in their lives?
22. Thank you for talking about your family. Did any other family members, such as grandparents, spouses, in-laws, or children, influence your approaches to facing challenges in your life?

23. Who are the first people you look for support from when you have challenges in your life?

24. Do you have any other stories that you would like to share with me in order to give me greater understanding of your attitude about facing challenges?

Past Educational Learning Experiences

1. Tell me about how you have trained to become an art teacher.

2. Tell me about your best learning experiences with your teachers.

3. Tell me about your worst learning experiences with your teachers.

4. What American educational learning experiences have influenced your motivational beliefs?

5. What Taiwanese educational learning experiences have influenced your motivational beliefs?

6. In your learning experiences, what methods did your American art teachers use to teach you how to be motivated?

7. In your learning experiences, what methods did your Taiwanese art teachers use to teach you how to be motivated?

8. How did your American art teachers motivate you differently according to your gender?

9. How did your Taiwanese art teachers motivate you differently according to your gender?

10. What learning experiences in America have influenced you to be resilient?

11. What learning experiences in Taiwan have influenced you to be resilient?

12. In your learning experiences, in what ways did your American art teachers teach you how to be resilient?
13. In your learning experiences, in what ways did your Taiwanese art teachers teach you how to be resilient?

14. Thank you for sharing with me your educational learning experiences. Do you have any other stories that you would like to share with me in order to give me more understanding of your attitude about facing challenges in your educational learning experiences?

Past Teaching Experiences

1. Why did you want to choose art teaching as your career?

2. Would you tell me about your career; where and when did you start teaching?

3. Could you describe your experience as an art teacher?

4. What goals did you have as an art teacher when you started teaching?

5. What factors in your life have influenced you to become an art teacher?

6. Who have been significant influences on you as an art teacher?

7. Tell me about some of your best memories of teaching.

8. Tell me about some of your worst memories of teaching.

9. What are some challenges you have had with students?

10. How have students treated you differently because of your gender?

11. What are some challenges you have had with parents?

12. How have parents treated you differently due to your gender?

13. What are some challenges you have had with your colleagues?

14. How would your colleagues treat you differently due to your gender?

15. What are some challenges you have had with school administrators?

16. How have school administrators treated you differently due to your gender?
17. How have your past American learning experiences influenced your motivation in your teaching career?

18. How have your past Taiwanese learning experiences influenced you to be motivated in your teaching career?

19. How have your past America learning experiences influenced you to be resilient in your teaching career?

20. How have your past Taiwan learning experiences influenced you to be resilient in your teaching career?

21. How have these stories you have shared with me helped you to gain understanding about your past as an art teacher?

22. Thank you for sharing with me your past teaching experiences. Do you have any other stories that you would like me to know in order to have a better understanding of your attitude about facing challenges based on your past teaching experiences?

Present Teaching Experiences

1. Tell me about how you would describe yourself as an art teacher.

2. How has your career rewarded you?

3. Tell me about how your past experiences influence you as an art teacher.

4. How would your students portray you as an art teacher?

5. How would parents portray you as an art teacher?

6. How would your colleagues portray you as an art teacher?

7. How would administrators portray you as an art teacher?

8. Whose opinion is most significant to you and why?

9. What professional development opportunities do you have at your university?
10. What extra duties have school administrators asked you to do besides regular teaching?

11. What approaches would you use to appeal to students in order to receive high scores on student evaluations?

12. Has recent education reform impacted your teaching? Why/why not?

13. In what ways have you changed your teaching beliefs due to educational reform?

14. Tell me about how your past life experiences influence your present teaching beliefs.

15. Tell me about how your past learning experiences influence your present teaching beliefs.

16. Tell me about how your past teaching experiences influence your present teaching beliefs.

17. How do your teaching beliefs guide you when facing challenges?

18. What teaching beliefs do you apply in order to be motivated as an art teacher?

19. What strategies do you use to deal with challenges in school?

20. What strategies do you use to be motivated as an art teacher?

21. What intrinsic factors motivate you to continue to make a long term commitment to your teaching?

22. What extrinsic factors motivate you to continue to make a long term commitment to your teaching?

23. What kinds of internal resources do you use to help you be resilient?

24. What kinds of external resources do you use to help you be resilient?

25. How does your cultural background influence you to cultivate motivation?

How does your cultural background influence you to cultivate resilience?

26. How do gender differences influence you to cultivate motivation?

27. How do gender differences influence you to cultivate resilience?

28. How have your professional experiences motivated you in your present teaching beliefs?
29. How have your professional experiences fostered your resilience and your present teaching beliefs?

30. From your own experiences, do you think it is significant for art teachers to understand their past life experiences to have more understanding about themselves as well as to foster better learning experiences for students? Why/why not?

31. How have these stories you have shared with me helped you to gain understanding about your present as an art teacher?

32. Thank you for sharing with me your past teaching experiences. Do you have any other stories that you would like me to know in order to have a better understanding of your attitudes about facing challenges based on your present teaching experiences?

Future Teaching Beliefs

1. What does good teaching mean to you?

2. What kind of character do you think a good teacher should have?

3. What kind of art teacher do you want to be, based on your current teaching experiences?

4. Which art teacher do you want to be like and why?

5. How do you want to model yourself as an art teacher?

6. How have you transformed your teaching beliefs to overcome challenges in teaching?

7. How would you examine your past in order to solve current teaching difficulties and to overcome challenges in the future?

8. What experiences from our interview will foster your motivation in the future?

9. What experiences from our interview will improve your resilience in the future?

10. What insights from your stories will help you motivate yourself to continue working in the art education field?
11. How will you use insights from your stories to overcome challenges in your future teaching career?

12. What insights from your stories will you use to inspire students’ motivation in the future?

13. How will you use insights from your stories to help students overcome challenges in the future?

14. Tell me about how these stories you have shared with me will help you to gain a better understanding about your future as an art teacher?

15. What stories or words would you want to give to other art teachers to encourage them to continue their careers?

16. Thank you for sharing with me your future teaching beliefs. Do you have any other stories that you would like me to know in order to have a better understanding of your attitude toward facing challenges in your future teaching career?
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