Title of Thesis

Narrative Study on the Teacher Beliefs of Yi Jin Instructors in Hong Kong

by

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Statement of Originality

I, SIU On Chi, Steve, hereby declare that I am the sole author of the thesis and the material presented in this thesis is my original work except for those indicated in the acknowledgement. I further declare that I have followed the University's policies and regulations on Academic Honesty, Copyright and Plagiarism in writing the thesis, and no material in this thesis has been submitted for a degree in this or other universities.

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April 2017

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Abstract

Teachers generally prefer teaching students who are high academic achievers because such students are considered to be more intelligent and thus more 'teachable'. Instructing such students also yields greater work satisfaction. However, some dedicated teachers in Hong Kong have chosen to direct their teaching efforts at students with low academic achievement enrolled in the Yi Jin (YJ) programme.

The YJ programme provides an alternative pathway for people who left school after completing their secondary education and adult learners who wish to obtain a formal qualification for employment or further study. The programme is attractive for students who failed previous public examinations or their secondary schooling. Because the YJ programme enrols mostly low achievers, the instructors teaching its classes encounter numerous challenges. This study recruited YJ instructors to comprehensively examine their beliefs and gather some insights to encourage and help other instructors to teach and deal with their students in YJ.

A narrative study was conducted to facilitate YJ instructors' reflections on, and identification of, their perceptions about the teaching practices, the students they teach, and their roles as instructors in YJ through the collection of their stories in the interviews. Then, the characteristics that define teacher beliefs, the factors affecting the establishment and change of these beliefs, and the influence that these beliefs have on instructors' teaching practices were determined and elucidated from the stories of their interviews herein.

In total, three instructors were interviewed. The participants indicated that they felt effective

as YJ instructors, with a responsibility for building students' capacities and skills in order to improve their futures. They also expressed understanding for the YJ students who felt frustrated, hopeless, helpless, unmotivated, and were unwilling to study due to their long history of academic failures. Nevertheless, the instructors added that they believe the students are capable of changing and of performing successfully in nonacademic areas. The instructors noted that they adopted various teaching strategies to: make students aware of their shortcomings; encourage students to think about and trust themselves; foster students' unique abilities; and guide students past their mental barriers to enable them to reach their goals. The many students who graduate from YJ and become successful in life are a crucial reward for the instructors, assuring them of their beliefs and cultivating their continued dedication to the YJ programme. Notably, the instructors confirmed that teachers should maintain belief in their students because even those with limited academic achievement are capable of success. Teachers should aim for overall student growth and personal progress before addressing their academic performance.

Keywords: narrative study, low academic achievers, teacher beliefs, Yi Jin Programme

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Finally, I am eternally grateful to my family and close friends who have encouraged me over these seven years. I dedicate this thesis to my wife, Chi Kwan, son Jabez and daughter Esther, for the extraordinary support, patience and love during this time.

I hope my Lord and Savior God Almighty will continuously delegate me to distribute His blessings and love to others with this doctoral training granted from Him. Amen.

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List of Abbreviations

DYJ	Diploma of Yi Jin
EdB	Education Bureau
EdUHK	The Education University of Hong Kong
FSTE	Federation for Self-financing Tertiary Education
HKCEE	Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination
HKDSE	Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination
PYJ	Project Yi Jin
QF	Qualifications Framework
YJ	Yi Jin

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

1.1 Aim of the Study

The Yi Jin (YJ) Programme is an alternative education programme for students who left school after completing their secondary education and adult learners who wish to obtain a formal education qualification for employment or further study (EDB Yi Jin, 2016). The YJ Programme formerly involved the now-obsolete (since 2012) Project of Yi Jin (PYJ), and it now offers the Diploma of Yi Jin (DYJ).

The present study was conducted to examine the teacher beliefs of YJ instructors, who are teachers at one of the seven postsecondary institutions in Hong Kong that offer the YJ programme (Federation for Self-Financing Tertiary Education, 2016). Each year, the YJ programme recruits students who possess low academic achievements or who have failed their previous public examinations or other secondary school levels, with the aim of supplementing their basic qualifications for further study or work.

Most teachers prefer to teach students who have high academic achievements because such students are considered by the teachers to be more intelligent and, thus, more 'teachable' (Kraker-Pauw et al., 2016); moreover, teachers feel more self-efficacious with such kind of students (van Uden, Ritzen, & Pieters., 2013b). By contrast, students who have limited academic achievements, such as those commonly enrolled in YJ, are perceived as being more difficult to teach, providing less satisfaction to teachers. The common societal belief in Hong Kong is that low-achieving students are not smart, probably behave poorly in class, and are unmotivated, lazy, and unwilling to study.

These notions stem from the fact that such students typically receive lower, or even failing, test scores.

However, when I began teaching with YJ seven years ago, I discovered that the reality was completely different. Many dedicated instructors have taught with YJ for several years and have altered the lives of numerous students. My personal experience with YJ stoked my interest in conducting this study. In particular, I was curious about the type of instructors who decided to teach with YJ, especially those who are highly qualified and have sufficient experience to teach at a more prestigious school. Borg (2001) argued that the emotive commitments imbued in teachers probably originate from their personal teacher beliefs, which can serve as a guide to understanding their thoughts and behaviours. Therefore, in the present study, I analysed the teacher beliefs of YJ Programme instructors to determine the influence such beliefs had on their commitment to their work, as well as to their students. I believe that the findings and insights of this study will encourage and assist other instructors in teaching and managing students in the YJ programme.

1.2 Study Background

1.2.1 *Origin*

Currently, I am an instructor in one of the seven tertiary institutes, which I joined in 2010, that operates the YJ Programme. Previously, I taught in secondary schools for more than ten years and worked with students who had a range of academic achievements. This experience mitigated any fear I might have had for teaching low-achieving students, and it fostered my understanding of, and empathy towards, the more difficult time faced by my

colleagues teaching in YJ, especially those who had not had any prior experience with such students. Indeed, there is currently almost no specific training for instructors in dealing with low-performing students, with only a few days of seminars occasionally provided by the Federation for Self-Financing Tertiary Education (FSTE). Moreover, these seminars only cover basic teaching knowledge and minimally discuss YJ student characteristics.

Additionally, due to the self-financing that occurs in every YJ institute (because the government has limited the amount of financial support it provides to the programme, as well as to the institutes), the wages and related prospects for YJ instructors can be even worse than those of teachers in secondary or primary schools. In particular, some YJ instructors are only recruited for part-time work and receive hourly wages based on which subjects they teach and how many teaching hours are assigned to them in a year, which hinders their ability to commit to teaching with YJ. The lack of attractive job benefits and opportunities for teachers with comparable qualifications and experience means that most instructors do not teach at YJ for long.

Nevertheless, as mentioned, I have found that many of my colleagues, both full-time and part-time teachers, are still committed to their teaching at YJ. Over the years, I have also met many students for whom YJ was the motivator and catalyst for continuing their studies with the help from the instructors, which sharply contrasts the very passive and lacking-in-confidence

personalities that were dominant during their first days at YJ. This transformation has continually attracted my attention and desire to explore the origins of the beliefs of YJ instructors.

1.2.2 *Yi Jin Programme in Hong Kong*

"Yi Jin" (YJ) collectively included "Project Yi Jin" (PYJ) and "Diploma Yi Jin" (DYJ), which both were founded by the Education Bureau (EdB). PYJ is now defunct, due to the implementation of the New Academic Structure for secondary schools and the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE) in the 2012-2013 academic year. PYJ mainly targeted failing students in previous Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examinations (HKCEE) while DYJ targeted DSE failing students. The programme is currently operated by seven postsecondary institutes in Hong Kong (FSTE, 2016).

The programme provides students with various generic skills, general knowledge, mathematical reasoning skills, information technology skills, interpersonal skills, and basic language proficiency. Moreover, the YJ programme is designed to enhance the motivation of students and helps them develop self-learning skills to pursue further independent study (EDB Yi Jin, 2016). Hence, instructors in the YJ programme work to both impart knowledge of various subjects and foster change in the students.

Students who complete the current DYJ programme receive dual qualification recognition in Hong Kong. The first recognition is that the qualification

obtained is deemed comparable to attaining a passing level with five standard subjects, including Chinese and English, in the HKDSE. The other recognition is that completion of the DYJ programme is equivalent to the Level Three accreditation standards of the Qualifications Framework (QF) (EDB Yi Jin, 2016). The QF is a seven-level cross-sectorial hierarchy that orders and supports the qualifications of various academic, vocational, and continuing education programmes in Hong Kong. The aim of the framework is to help Hong Kong people to set clear goals and directions for continual learning in order to obtain quality-assured qualifications (EDB QF, 2016). Students who successfully complete this DYJ programme are eligible to continue their studies by pursuing a higher diploma or associate degree; they are also eligible to begin careers in various fields. A list of the various academic qualifications that are comparable to the seven QF levels is provided as follows:

Table (1) The academic qualifications in different Qualifications Framework (QF) Levels

QF Level(s)	Academic Qualification
7	Doctorate
6	Masters/Postgraduate Diploma
5	Bachelor's Degree
4	Associate Degree/Higher Diploma
3	HKDSE / DYJ /Diploma
2	Foundation Certificate

1	Foundation Certificate

Because the YJ programme has relatively low entry requirements, i.e., completion of secondary education or age older than 21 years (EDB Yi Jin, 2016), it attracts students with various academic aptitudes. At the high-achievement end of the spectrum, some students have reported that they obtained a degree from mainland China or a higher diploma from other institutions but had not received a formal English or Chinese qualification to apply for civil service jobs in Hong Kong. Thus, they had enrolled in the YJ programme. Other students reported that they had failed one or two subjects on the examination and did not have the basic requirements for obtaining degrees or sub-degrees and, therefore, had enrolled in the YJ programme. At the low-achievement end of the spectrum, some students admitted to failing all of the subjects on the examination and, therefore, disliked those academic subjects. Some students, mostly mature students (older than 21 years), also enrolled in the YJ programme after not studying or taking lessons for several years; these students generally considered themselves to be at only a primary school level. Still other students enrolled because their parents perceived them as demonstrating various levels of learning difficulties. Consequently, students who exhibit a diverse range of learning abilities and levels gather in a single classroom and endeavour to achieve a set qualification level as indicated by the year-long YJ programme. This objective is not only difficult for the students, but also a considerable challenge for YJ instructors.

The YJ programme is mainly comprised of two parts. The first part focuses on

five core subjects: namely, Chinese, English, mathematics, liberal studies, and communication skills, which are common in the curricula of various institutes, to provide students with a firm foundation. The second part offers clusters of three elective subjects in various academic streams or for specific careers to cater for the different interests of students, which increases their motivation to either further their studies or commence a career. Currently, nearly 200 clusters with 18 main themes have been designed and are provided by various YJ institutes. Such clusters include disciplined services, sports training and coaching, civil service practices, medical care and nursing, early childhood education, social services, psychology, infotainment and digital video production, information technology and multimedia, hospitality and tourism, catering, design, performance arts, culture, and several business-related subjects (EDB Yi Jin, 2016). The background and expertise of YJ instructors are, thus, also diverse. For example, some of the instructors at my institute have transferred from secondary schools to teach Chinese, English, mathematics, and liberal studies to YJ students; others may be social workers or counsellors that teach communication skills. Most of the elective subjects are taught by experts or professionals in the respective fields.

Notably, the duration of the YJ programme is short, with only 420 contact hours for the 5 core subjects and 180 contact hours for the elective courses. Because the programme provides an option for students to continue their studies, full-time students enrol in this 600-hour diploma programme immediately after the release of the HKDSE results. The academic term commences at the beginning of September, and all lessons are completed by

the end of April, with examinations beginning mid-May. The examination results are released and the diplomas are issued ahead of the release of the results of the HKDSE (which occurs at the beginning of July each year). With such a short programme, YJ graduates can obtain sub-degrees from various postsecondary institutes and avoid direct competition with recent HKDSE graduates.

In short, teaching in, and learning from, the YJ programme are challenging, but meaningful. The YJ programme instructors teach and undertake a mission to augment the potential of typically low-academic-achieving students, enabling them to continue their studies or begin careers in the future. However, the 9-month duration of the programme creates difficulties for instructors attempting to teach and transform the lives of their students.

Having explained the development of the YJ programme in this section, for the rest of this thesis, the term Yi Jin (YJ) will be used collectively to represent both the Project Yi Jin (PYJ) and the Diploma Yi Jin (DYJ).

1.2.3 *Challenges and Difficulties of Teaching in the YJ Programme*

In addition to the preceding comment, YJ instructors face two major challenges: teaching failed or failing students, and teaching in a limited period.

1.2.3.1 Teaching failed or failing students

Many YJ students regard themselves as academic failures or consider the traditional education system to define them as such. These students tend to have very low self-esteem, and experience low motivation and hopelessness towards their studies or work. Many believe that YJ will not help them succeed in further study or work. If the programme fails to improve the students' mindset and performance, most of the students may expect to repeat their prior academic failures in YJ, with similar beliefs possessed by their parents and teachers.

Some students in the YJ programme dislike school and studying because they had many negative experiences of failure throughout their mandatory schooling, and many did not pass all or part of the examination. However, because job opportunities for those who have not passed the examination are rare, or because of the pressure and expectations of their parents, these students often decide to enrol in the YJ programme and continue their education.

1.2.3.2 Teaching in a limited period

Because the YJ programme usually recruits more than 30 low-achieving students in one classroom, it is almost impossible for them to achieve their set standards within the markedly short period of study (9 months) without any

additional support or resources. Moreover, it is difficult even for the most dedicated instructors to build an adequate rapport with students within these few months; without such rapport, it is challenging to influence students to change.

Although the aforementioned points highlight the challenges and difficulties of the YJ Programme, they also substantiate the meaning and significance of YJ instructors' continual efforts.

1.2.4 *YJ Programme in the Institute Under Study*

The institute I work at belongs to one of the universities in Hong Kong, and its mission is to provide high-quality academic and professional courses that meet the various needs of students in their pursuit of education. The institute began offering the YJ Programme seven years ago for students who had not completed their secondary six, as well as for people in general who aspired to further their education. The YJ Programme is a whole-person education system that cultivates its students towards personal growth and encourages the establishment of positive attitudes in their lives. Thus, the programme emphasises both academic and practical education to strengthen student abilities in languages, thinking, and communication and social skills, which improve their overall capabilities for future study or work. The YJ team consists of the programme director, full-time and part-time teaching staff, and administrative staff. They are all required to understand and agree to work towards the mission before they are admitted to the YJ Programme. The YJ mission is also shared and reemphasised by all the staff members at various

academic meetings and on staff development days.

1.3 Significance of the Study

The Hong Kong society frequently blames the current education system for producing many academically failing students. Indeed, many people suggest that alternative educational measures are necessary to prevent students who struggle in the traditional school environment from failing, for which the YJ Programme has been regarded as the solution developed by the government. However, it is unclear whether or not this programme is truly more effective than traditional education or is simply a system that retains the low-achieving students for a year. The government has called for research on the programme to be conducted, as well as for the results and the varying experiences of students and instructors regarding the curricula and the programme as a whole to be consolidated.

Besides, YJ brings together a good number of low academic achievers, teachers in this programme often feel overwhelmed by the challenges faced every day in class. These challenges make it very difficult for teachers to teach in class, causing the teachers to lower their expectations on the students which in turn reduce the satisfaction of the teachers. Eventually, the teachers have lost expectations on the students. They shift their attention from the students, and are no longer willing to give support to them. This scenario can descend into a vicious spiral, wherein the students (who typically start YJ with less confidence on their abilities compared with other students and who tend to rely more on their teachers) would face greater difficulty in achieving and would probably repeat their failures (Archambault et al., 2012).

However, Borg (2001) argued that the commitment of teachers is influenced by their underlying beliefs. Hence, this narrative study is to comprehensively examine the teacher beliefs of YJ instructors who for many years have chosen to direct their teaching efforts at students with low academic achievement. It is targeted that the study will gather insights from these dedicated instructors so as to encourage and help other instructors teach and deal with their low achieving students in YJ.

1.4 Objective and Scope of the Study

As mentioned before, I have found many YJ instructors to be especially dedicated to their teaching, and these instructors have also helped and altered numerous low-achieving students in YJ. Thus, the objective of the present study was to learn about and understand the teacher beliefs of the YJ instructors. For a comprehensive examination of the nature and origin of these instructors' teaching beliefs, I set the following three research questions to guide this study:

Question 1: What are the characteristics of the teacher beliefs held by YJ instructors?

Question 2: What are the factors affecting these beliefs?

Question 3: How do these beliefs manifest in their teaching practices?

This thesis consists of six chapters. This first chapter provides an introduction to the whole study and outlines the origins and background of the research. Chapter 2

presents a literature review of teacher beliefs. Chapter 3 describes the methodology and its underlying rationale, as well as the research plan of this study. Chapter 4 narrates the stories of three YJ instructors. Chapter 5 discusses the YJ instructors' stories, revealing the characteristics of, origins of, changes in, and influences of their beliefs. Finally, Chapter 6 presents the conclusion and implications of the study, in addition to identifying the limitations being encountered and providing suggestions for improvement in future studies.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter is divided into six sections. Section 1 provides a brief overview of beliefs, and Section 2 describes the distinction between beliefs and knowledge. Moreover, Section 3 presents the definitions of teacher beliefs, and Section 4 explores the origins of teacher beliefs. Section 5 examines the possible changes in, and development of, teacher beliefs. Finally, section 6 revisits the research framework about the study.

2.1 Beliefs

Pajares (1992) argued that it is difficult to define, conceptualise, and understand beliefs and belief structures. Similar propositions have been made by other researchers, including Herrera (2010), Melketo (2012), and Galvis (2012). For example, Galvis concluded that 'there is no agreement in the literature as to where the boundaries of the scope [of] "beliefs" originate and finish' (p. 98). Instead, he suggested that commonalities from the various definitions of belief should be considered, rather than attempting to produce a singular definition. Accordingly, herein I describe the commonalities and variations of different researchers' understandings of belief.

Pajares (1992) defined belief as 'an individual's judgment of the truth or falsity of a proposition, a judgment that can only be inferred from a collective understanding of what human beings say, intend, and do' (p. 316). Similarly, Richardson (1996) suggested that 'beliefs are thought of as psychologically-held understandings, premises or propositions about the world that are felt to be true' (p. 103). Elsewhere, Borg (2001) indicated that beliefs colour people's memories, evaluations, and judgements, and that they serve to frame people's understanding of events. Moreover, she contended that

beliefs help individuals make sense of the world by influencing how new information is perceived and whether it is accepted or rejected. Sanger and Osguthorpe (2010) similarly asserted that a person's beliefs can simply be understood as the propositions made by that person in response to what he or she has said or done. In addition, both Borg (2001) and Bryan and Atwater (2001) have stated that beliefs serve to guide people's thinking and that they are referenced to make decisions and judgements, as well as when assessing the future and deciding on behaviours.

Moreover, some researchers further added that the beliefs, which are derived from people's value determinations about some "good" and "bad" attributes of a person, group, object or concept, are rooted strongly and stably in temporal and contextual grounds (Zembylas & Chubbuck, 2015); and they are resistant to change because of the corresponding emotional determinations produced by them (Skott, 2015 and Gill & Hardin, 2015).

After reviewing these diverse definitions, I selected the definition of beliefs provided by Borg (2001) to guide the meaning of belief in the present study:

> '*A belief is a proposition which may be consciously or unconsciously held, is evaluative in that it is accepted as true by the individual, and is therefore imbued with emotive commitment; further, it serves as a guide to thought and behavior'* (p. 186).

I anticipated the commitment, the thought and behaviour of the YJ instructors are due to their beliefs.

2.2 Beliefs versus Knowledge

In addition to the difficulty inherent in understanding beliefs, the difference between 'beliefs' and 'knowledge' can be challenging to elucidate. As Pajares (1992) contended, 'Distinguishing knowledge from belief is a daunting undertaking' (p. 309). After adopting Lewis' (1990) notion that the origin of all knowledge is rooted in belief, Pajares further added that ways of knowing are basically ways of choosing values. Additionally, Alexander and Dochy (1995) referred to beliefs as components of a person's knowledge. Knowledge, on the contrary, encompasses all a person knows or believes to be true.

Borg (2001) also indicated that beliefs are propositions that are often accepted as truth by the individuals holding them, but which may be viewed alternatively by others. She added that knowledge is different from beliefs because knowledge must be true in some external sense. More recently, Debreli (2016) stated that knowledge refers to things we know or things that are or have been demonstrated as truth. Conversely, neither are beliefs conventionally accepted, nor are they demonstrable; instead, they only reflect the acceptance of propositions. Debreli also argued that beliefs are formed from subjective evaluation and judgement; whereas, knowledge is objectively based on the condition of truth.

Additionally, Nespor (1985) stated that people often change and accumulate their knowledge in accordance with some well-established methods of evidence and arguments, while their beliefs are relatively static and resistance to change. Besides adopting Pajares' (1992) views, Galvis (2012) further described beliefs as being

typically associated with emotion; whereas, knowledge tends to be more empirical.

For the teaching profession, Levin (2015) pointed out that beliefs and knowledge of teachers are closely related; especially, they guide the behaviours of the teachers in the classroom. Buehl & Beck (2015) similarly elaborated that beliefs may serve as a filter for teachers to interpret information and to frame a problem or task, as well as act as the basic inherent guides when they needed to take immediate action. Hence, I anticipated any response or action found in the YJ instructors' practice may relate to their professional knowledge possessed and thus their beliefs behind.

2.3 Teacher Beliefs

Similar to the concept of belief held by Richardson (1996), Tondeur, Hermans, Van Braak, & Valcke (2008) described teacher beliefs, which are established by multitudinous experiences, as the understandings, premises or propositions about education. Likewise, Melketo (2012) defined teacher beliefs as the 'conceptions', world views, and 'mental models' that shape learning and teaching practices. Galvis (2012) further supplemented this view by arguing that teacher beliefs are a subcategory of their conceptualisations about the orientations of teaching. Basturkmen et al. (2004) clearly stated that teacher beliefs are '*statements teachers [make] about their ideas, thoughts, and knowledge that are expressed as evaluations of what should be done, should be the case, and is preferable*'(p. 244).

Çobanoğlu (2015) operationally defined teacher beliefs as the assumptions or claims made by preservice and in-service teachers about the ideal way of conducting education. Assen et al. (2016) also contended that tutor beliefs (equivalent to teacher beliefs in this

study) are the suppositions and commitments made by teachers based on their own evaluations and judgements.

Moreover, Kagan (1992) indicated that teacher beliefs act as filters through which information from outside sources or other teachers' performance are interpreted, translated and absorbed into teachers' unique pedagogies. A similar contention can be found in Galvis (2012) who deemed teacher beliefs to be a major influencing factor in many areas of education. Galvis described these beliefs as a major source of decision-making in education because they serve as the filters of new knowledge and meaning. In practice, Galvis suggested that teacher beliefs underlie teachers' planning, decisions, and behaviour in the classroom. More recently, Utami (2016) also stated that teacher beliefs often serve as a filter through which instructional judgements and decision are made.

In addition to the importance in teacher planning, decision-making, and behaviour in the classroom, Galvis (2012) supplemented that teacher beliefs are relatively stable, context-free, broad and cannot be explained in detail.

2.3.1 *Categories of Teacher Beliefs*

Pajares (1992) noted that all teachers hold beliefs about their work, students, subject matter, and roles and responsibilities. This echoes other scholarship conducted on teacher beliefs. For example, Joram and Gabriele (1998) described teacher beliefs as the suppositions inherently held by teachers about their students, classrooms, and the courses they taught. Chan and Lam (2003) alternatively suggested that teacher beliefs help teachers make sense of their

work, working environment, professional knowledge and skills, students, and teaching strategies. Similarly, both Çobanoğlu (2015) and Tamimy (2015) have contended that teacher beliefs constitute teachers' assumptions or the idiosyncratic unity of their thoughts about their students (people), learning (events), classrooms (objects), and subject matter (objects), as well as the characteristics and relationships that affect teachers' planning and interactive thoughts and decisions.

More specifically, Herrera (2010) defined teacher beliefs as teachers' attitudes (or professional and educational beliefs) about education, teaching, and learning, which are the basic constructs of teaching. For Braun (2011), teacher beliefs are the perceptions and judgements that teachers hold regarding certain educational concepts such as disability, learning, and inclusion. Braun also linked teacher beliefs to teachers' willingness to take responsibility, efficacy, and philosophy and instructional practice. Notably, both Herrera and Braun have defined teacher beliefs from a teacher's perspective.

Additionally, Porter and Freeman (1986) stated that teacher beliefs are related to various educational components such as the beliefs about students and how they learn, the beliefs about teachers themselves, the curriculum and pedagogy used, as well as the perceptions of the role of schools within a larger social context. Similarly, Melketo (2012) categorised teacher beliefs according to the nature of teachers' knowledge, teachers' perceptions of the self and feelings of self-worth, and teachers' confidence to perform certain tasks (including those related to their work, students, subject matter, and roles and responsibilities).

Galvis (2012) added that teacher beliefs are also related to the students, the target course material, and the roles and responsibilities of teachers.

Some research into teacher beliefs has also focused on student learning. For example, a study by Kraker-Pauw et al. (2016) described how teacher beliefs are related to the long-term aim of learning (value orientation) and the alleged learning abilities of different students. Similarly, Debreli (2016) categorised teacher beliefs by aptitude, motivation, and willingness of learners, use of materials, teaching techniques, classroom management, and teacher roles in learning. Vibulphol (2004) argued that teacher beliefs reflect ideas about: who learns and who teaches; why certain learning and teaching strategies (i.e., objectives) are used; the various strategies, approaches, methods, or techniques that teachers and learners use to learn; what should be the focus of a subject; where teaching and learning should take place; and the optimal time for, and the phases or stages of, teaching and learning.

On the basis of the preceding descriptions, I summarise and divide the concerns about and understandings of teacher beliefs into three areas: teacher beliefs about their roles as teachers, teacher beliefs about the students they teach, and teacher beliefs about their teaching practices.

2.3.2 *Teacher Beliefs about their Roles as Teachers*

Table (2) The main researchers and topics related to the teacher beliefs about their roles as teachers

Researcher(s)	Topics
Pajares (1992), Borg (2001), Galvis (2012), Utami (2016), Braun (2011), Melketo (2012)	Perceptions of the self; feelings of self-worth as a teacher; role as a teacher; teacher roles for learning, self-efficacy, self-esteem
Pajares (1992), Chan and Lam (2003), Braun (2011), Melketo (2012), Galvis (2012)	Roles and responsibilities, professional knowledge and skills, the role of schools in society or in the education process

Teacher beliefs about their roles as teachers generally involve how they personally perceive themselves as teachers, which is related to their perceptions of the self and feelings of self-worth in the teacher role (and particularly the ways this role affects student learning). This type of teacher belief is also related to the beliefs about teachers' understandings of themselves, including self-esteem (perceptions of the self and feelings of self-worth) and self-efficacy (confidence to perform specific tasks).

Self-esteem refers to the image that a person has of one's own self, including attributes, abilities, attitudes, and feelings. Self-esteem is generally established from a person's self-assessments of one's experiences or the various activities in which one participates, as well as the comparisons or feedback received from family, friends, teachers, and others. Overall, self-esteem describes how a person values and feels about her or his strengths and weaknesses and the person's competence in performing tasks effectively (Vialle, Heaven, &

Ciarrochi., 2005). The concept of self-efficacy originates from social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986). Teachers with self-efficacy can be identified by the confidence they have in their abilities to achieve specific teaching goals. Teachers with high perceived self-efficacy exert time and effort to achieve certain expected outcomes in their practice (van Uden et al., 2013a). Nishino (2012) argued that personal teaching efficacy is one of the key factors that motivates teachers to put sufficient effort into their teaching and to alter their practice as required for improvement. In another study, Srivastava (2013) connected teacher efficacy with teachers' satisfaction with their ability to facilitate students' academic achievements.

This type of teacher belief also reveals how teachers perceive their level of professionalism, which is based on their knowledge and skills as a teacher. Moreover, the variation in these beliefs depends on how teachers judge the importance of their responsibilities as a teacher, as well as how they understand the role of schools in society and in the education process.

Zembylas and Chubbuck (2015) also added that there are many different aspects of teachers intertwined with their beliefs: their emotional status, aspects about their narrative and discourse, teachers' self-reflection and their perspectives about the schools or agencies. Skott (2015) pointed out these intertwined teacher beliefs take on teachers' lives with the function to influence the teachers' practices in the classroom.

2.3.3 *Teacher Beliefs about the Students They Teach*

Table (3) The main researchers and topics related to teacher beliefs about their students

Researcher(s)	Topics
Pajares (1992), Joram and Gabriele (1998), Borg (2001), Chan and Lam (2003), Galvis (2012), Melketo (2012), Çobanoğlu (2015), Tamimy (2015), Utami (2016)	Role of students as learners
Kraker-Pauw et al. (2016), Debreli (2016)	Abilities, aptitudes, motivation, and willingness of students/learners
Kraker-Pauw et al. (2016)	Students' learning styles

Teacher beliefs about students include perceptions of their students and the role of students in learning. These beliefs also encompass the assumptions and judgements that teachers make about the aptitudes, abilities, motivation, and willingness of their students, in addition to students' learning styles.

Some teachers believe that students should be responsible for their own learning, specifically by being active agents in acquiring new knowledge; by contrast, students tend to view their teachers as the agents responsible for making them learn (Maclellan, 2014). Other teachers argue that learning is

easy for everyone once students are sitting calmly and carefully listening to the lesson; these teachers suggest that it is unnecessary to plan how they will manage a class or to determine how they will attract the attention of and generate motivation in their students (Joram & Gabriele, 1998). However, scholars have indicated that most students are unable to focus long enough with their interests and motivations in the studies (Chan & Lam, 2003 and Jabeen & Khan, 2013).

Some teachers have also noted that environmental factors such as students' families and peer groups, current social norms, and the curriculum may substantially influence students' academic success because these factors often affect students' motivation, time, and resources for learning (Chan & Lam, 2003). Furthermore, these factors influence student's self-esteem and self-confidence regarding their studies, especially those who are young adolescents (Joshi & Srivastava, 2009 and Imran, 2013). Lower self-esteem easily fosters emotions of depression, anxiety, and general dissatisfaction with the self among students; such students lack confidence when faced with difficult course work, which gradually diminishes their motivation to learn (Joshi & Srivastava, 2009; Roy, Sinha, & Suman, 2013).

Besides, Kraker-Pauw et al. (2016) pointed out in their study that the current research of the teacher beliefs about students is also concerned with the ways in which students' learning takes place. This is what we called the learning styles of students. Kolb & Kolb (2013) described learning style as a learning habit of students, which is established through their prolonged learning

experiences and choices of how they would feel they learned the most with such styles. In addition, Robotham (1999) stated that teaching students based on their learning styles would significantly improve their academic achievements, while Garland & Martin (2005) believed that students would construct their knowledge more easily when teachers' instructional approaches were designed with students' learning styles in mind. Therefore, the perception of different learning styles of students may also relate to what the teachers believe about their students in the learning.

McCarthy (2016) described four main types of learning styles: diverging, assimilating, converging, and accommodating. Students with the diverging learning style often have various cultural interests and are imaginative, affectionate, and creative thinkers. Thus, they are generally eager to search for and gather new information, and they may experience greater achievements in arts courses. This type of student learns best by receiving advice and personal feedback in group settings. Students of the assimilating learning style are highly capable of digesting a wide range of information and organising it concisely and logically. They also perform better through the use of abstract ideas and concepts, rather than by communicating with people or conducting practical activities. This type of student prefers to learn silently and passively through readings and lectures. By contrast, students of the converging learning style enjoy applying their learned knowledge for practical uses. This type of student prefers to learn by conducting experiments to cultivate new ideas, running simulations, completing laboratory assignments, and developing practical applications. Similar to the assimilating learning style students,

converging learning style students tend to avoid interacting with other people but enjoy engaging in technical tasks and problem-solving. Finally, students of the accommodating learning style prefer engaging in 'hands-on' experiences for learning, and they eagerly face new and challenging tasks. However, this type of student does not carefully consider the facts before making decisions; instead, this type of student is highly reliant on others for help and information. Therefore, students of this learning style prefer to work in a team.

Students with low academic performance such as YJ seem to like the accommodating learning style most. They prefer learning through their 'hands-on' experiences rather than to sit calmly and listen (Wiesman, 2012). However, they greatly need the help from teachers or other classmates (Archambault et al., 2012). Therefore, experiential learning in a group may be suitable for them. For the experiential learning, Kolb & Kolb (2013) further refined the original learning style types – Accommodating, Assimilating, Converging and Diverging – into nine learning styles of students to better describe their individual learning process and patterns in the experiential learning cycle. They are:

(1) Initiating Style: With abilities to initiate to deal with experiences and situations;

(2) Experiencing Style: With abilities to find meaning from concrete experience in balance with active experimentation and reflective observation;

(3) Imagining style: With abilities to imagine possibilities by

observing and reflecting on the concrete experience;

(4) Reflecting style: With abilities to connect experience and ideas through sustained reflection between the concrete experience and abstract concepts;

(5) Analyzing style: With abilities to integrate and systematize ideas through the combination of reflective observation and abstract concepts;

(6) Thinking style: With capacities for disciplined involvement in abstract and logical reasoning;

(7) Deciding style: With abilities to use theories and models to decide on solutions to problems and courses of action;

(8) Acting style: With a strong motivation for goal directed action that integrates people and tasks;

(9) Balancing style: With abilities to adapt; weighing the pros and cons of acting versus reflecting, and experiencing versus thinking.

Notably, Kolb & Kolb (2013) pointed out that students with an accommodating style possibly manifest the initiating style or the experiencing style in their experiential learning.

2.3.4 *Teacher Beliefs about their Teaching Practices*

Table (4) The main researchers and topics related to teacher beliefs about their teaching practices

Researcher(s)	Topics
Herrera (2010), Braun (2011), Kraker-Pauw et al. (2016), Utami (2016)	Educational concepts and philosophy about the learning and teaching, the aims of learning and teaching
Pajares (1992), Joram and Gabriele (1998), Borg (2001), Melketo (2012), Galvis (2012), Çobanoğlu (2015), Tamimy (2015), Debreli (2016), Utami (2016)	Nature of knowledge, course content, use of materials
Pajares (1992), Borg (2001), Chan and Lam (2003), Herrera (2010), Braun (2011), Melketo (2012), Çobanoğlu (2015), Tamimy (2015), Debreli (2016), Utami (2016)	The practice of teaching, teaching and learning, attitudes about teaching and learning, teaching strategies, instructional practices, teachers' planning, interactive thoughts and decisions, teaching techniques, classroom management
Joram and Gabriele (1998), Chan and Lam (2003), Galvis (2012),	Classrooms, teaching environments

Çobanoğlu (2015), Tamimy (2015), Utami (2016)	

Teacher beliefs about their teaching practices involve the perceptions and judgements that teachers have regarding the concepts and philosophies of education, as well as the aim and objective of learning and teaching. These beliefs also involve what Pajares (1992) called the epistemological beliefs about the nature of knowledge, the specific subjects or disciplines, and the materials used. The beliefs also include: the instructional practices teaching strategies, approaches, methods, or techniques; classroom management skills and plans; and interactive thoughts, decisions, and attitudes towards teaching and learning that are adopted by teachers. Borg (2001) referred to these beliefs as teachers' pedagogic beliefs. Utami (2016) added that teachers are often unaware of the existence of this type of belief in their daily practices. Nevertheless, these pedagogical beliefs play a central role in selecting teaching methods, determining the subjects and activities to present in class, making decisions, and evaluating the practices.

In short, as Fives, Lacatena, and Gerard (2015) stated, these types of teacher beliefs, including how the teachers think what pedagogies are most effective, what should be done in the classes, and who would be responsible for their teaching and learning, would dominate the teachers' decisions in the classroom.

2.4 Origins of Teacher Beliefs

The origins of teacher beliefs are often attributed to several sources, namely teachers' experiences, teachers' self-reflection of those experiences, and social or cultural factors.

2.4.1 *Teachers' Experiences*

Teacher beliefs are sometimes thought to originate from teachers' experiences or memories. Buehl and Fives (2009) considered that teacher beliefs and their related teaching knowledge would come from teachers' past experiences in formal education, in their collaboration with others or learning from observations, as well as from their previous teaching practices.

Stergiopoulou (2012) further explained that these teachers' past experiences contributing to the beliefs may include the teachers' learning experiences, from their first schooling experience up to the most recent, as well as the experiences of daily teaching in the classroom, sharing ideas with colleagues, receiving stimuli from attending seminars, reading, or even from any other general contexts.

Similarly, Pajares (1992) interpreted teacher beliefs as a reflection of the early student experiences of a teacher, what his or her former teachers and mentors said to him or her, and the training s/he has had.

2.4.2 *Teachers' Self-Reflection of their Experiences*

Teacher beliefs are also thought to emerge from teachers' self-reflection of their reality (Joram & Gabriele, 1998). This involves a teacher's logical deductions, as well as her or his sense of right or wrong based on the value system s/he has adopted (Pajares, 1992).

Farrell & Ives (2014) stated that the reflection of the teachers included what they thought about what they did, how they did it, why they did it, and also what the impact of one's teaching was on student learning times in their teaching practices. This might result in either the change of their inherent beliefs or further affirmation of them. Utami (2016) supplemented that the self-reflection-based teacher beliefs also comprise teachers' educational development in response to their experiences, such as experimenting with new teaching methods.

The above concept is similar to what Schön (1983) proposed for the reflective practices among professionals. Through the reflective practices; professionals like teachers, can reveal their understandings from experiences of a practice such as daily teaching and make sense of the uncertainties and new situations in the coming academic years. Levin (2015) anticipated that teachers would be more capable of justifying their practices, putting themselves in right positions in the class, and questioning mandates or policies to benefit their students and bring about social justice when they reflect and are aware of their teacher beliefs.

2.4.3 *Social and Cultural Factors*

Some teacher beliefs also originate from teachers' feelings of acceptance in terms of certain cultural and social factors regarding their teaching. Utami (2016) noted that these factors include the general stereotypes of their students' abilities, the curriculum standard, education-related policy, the school culture and community, and instructional resources would hinder the enactment of teacher beliefs to their teaching practices. Notably, some of these factors cannot be controlled, changed, or modified by teachers.

In fact, Levin (2015) pointed out that the context of teacher beliefs and the related teachers' practices cannot be excluded from the environments in which they existed. These context and practices include mainly their current and historical social, cultural, political, and economic climates, as well as the current schools in which they served.

Braun (2011) also added that teacher beliefs are influenced and enmeshed in teachers' personal and professional values and by the prevailing culture in which they work. They formed their beliefs gradually through their day-to-day interactions with their superiors, fellow teachers or colleagues, students, and their families (Tschannen-Moran, Salloum, & Goddard, 2015). Therefore, teachers who come from the same school or culture share similar beliefs about teaching and learning and may develop similar teaching practices despite their diverse life experiences (Wang & Teng, 2016).

2.5 Change and Development in Teacher Beliefs

Although Joram and Gabriele (1998) and Galvis (2012) have both stated that beliefs are relatively stable internally and resistant to change, changes do occur as part of teachers' development following various encounters; these experiences also alter teachers' perceptions and can foster new beliefs (Pajares, 1992; Chan & Lam, 2003). Skott (2015) also agreed the change in beliefs is not easily accomplished and needs a long-term endeavour, which refers to some of teachers' significant experiences rather than the duration of their involvement. Two main types of factors related to change have been identified: those that inhibit change and those that facilitate change.

2.5.1 *Factors Obstructing Change*

Levin (2015) stated that teachers' perceptions, in many cases, serve as an important determining factor for teachers enacting their beliefs. Influenced by their experiences as students or by their teaching experiences, some teachers perceive themselves to be the typical examples of students, and expect them all to behave alike. Others believe that learning should be easy for everyone because they themselves were successful in their own previous studies. Preservice teachers in particular also tend to believe that students would automatically learn from their teachers once they were sitting quietly in an orderly fashion in the classroom (Joram & Gabriele, 1998). Because of these biased thoughts, most of these teachers face difficulties when attempting to understand the academic-related problems and needs of their students.

Additionally, some teachers believe that students should shoulder the responsibility for learning and should work harder on their own to achieve

more favourable academic results – notions that reflect the traditional Confucian beliefs of China (Chan & Lam, 2003; Maclellan, 2014). Most of these teachers consider that students with low academic achievements are not smart, are lazy, and troublesome. Notably, these beliefs can be heavily influenced by social and cultural norms, rather than by the reality judgements made by individuals (Kraker-Pauw et al. 2016).

Teachers' presumptions or biases probably originate from their experiences and would be both strongly influential on the beliefs held and highly resistant to change. Teachers who possess many of these preassumed thoughts may never become aware of the problems inherent in their teaching, which inhibits their understanding of the unique abilities and needs of individual students.

Associated with their negative perceptions, the relative emotions aroused may also hinder the teachers' willingness to change their beliefs, and this would eventually influence their goals and appraisals on the promotion of student learning because teachers would experience anxiety and uncertainty as to whether they are doing a good job in the classroom (Gill & Hardin, 2015).

2.5.2 *Factors Contributing to Change and Development*

Although some presumptions and biases render teacher beliefs resistant to change, Aelterman et al. (2016) noted that factors such as teachers' temperaments, the social contexts to which teachers have been exposed, the perceived characteristics of their students, and the motivational beliefs that teachers hold can contribute to changes in teachers' approaches and,

eventually, their beliefs.

Aelterman et al. (2016) explained the origin of changes in beliefs, which are similar to Herrera's (2010) description of the relationship between teaching practices and belief changes. Both researchers have indicated three types of changes to teacher beliefs that occur. The first type involves altering teachers' practices, which leads to changes in their beliefs. Different teachers find particular teaching strategies to be effective and meaningful, and they thus tend to strongly endorse and internalise such strategies in their beliefs. In the second type of change, teacher beliefs are changed first, followed by the adoption of new practices. It was revealed that if the teachers feel uncomfortable with, and incompetent in, their current method of teaching, they would be more likely to undertake change. In the third type of change, teachers alter their practices and beliefs interactively. For example, if teachers' experiments with new ideas or approaches are found to be more efficient, practical, and easier to enact, those teachers' practices and beliefs are modified at the same time.

However, Utami (2016) contended that teachers' experiences also affect the changes and relative development of their teacher beliefs. Specifically, Utami indicated that if teachers gain more experience in their teaching, they can construct, confirm, or disconfirm any hypotheses about their teaching and eventually shape their beliefs.

Farrell & Ives (2014) pointed out that although many teachers don't conduct

their reflections frequently and aren't aware of the relationship between their thoughts and decisions in the classroom, it was still worth it to promote such reflective practice, for it could help to close the gap between what they do and what they think they do.

Moreover, as Nishino (2012) suggested, new teachers with limited experience are generally considered to have a more difficult time altering their beliefs because their reflections are only shaped by their experiences as students or their training. By contrast, experienced teachers can more easily regulate their beliefs and practices by reflecting on both their own various teaching experiences as well as those of their colleagues.

In addition, Tschannen-Moran et al. (2015) also said that if teachers in the same school can share and hold a communal belief about their students that they are capable to learn, the teachers would consequently set higher achievement goals and foster the kind of learning for their students that would result in stronger academic attainment. This communal belief stems from the interactive dynamics and the collective analysis among the teachers as well as the enactive and vicarious learning experiences, social pressure, and the emotional tone of the school.

2.6 The Research Framework of the Study

On the whole, as Figure 1 below indicates, instructors' past experience, such as their early student experiences, what their teachers and mentors said, their training, and the number of years of their teaching practice, may influence the characteristics of their

beliefs. Besides, the social and cultural factors, e.g. the general stereotypes about the students, the curriculum standard, education-related policy, the school culture and community, instructional resources in YJ, or teachers' personal and professional values as well as the culture in which they worked, may also influence the beliefs of the instructors. In addition, as their years in YJ accumulate, instructors' experiences and deeper perceptions in YJ, and their observations about the different outcomes emerging from their students, may lead to their self-reflections of the reality in which they existed. This, in turn, can alter their teaching practices as well as the characteristics of their underpinning teacher beliefs. All these factors formulated the research framework in the study.

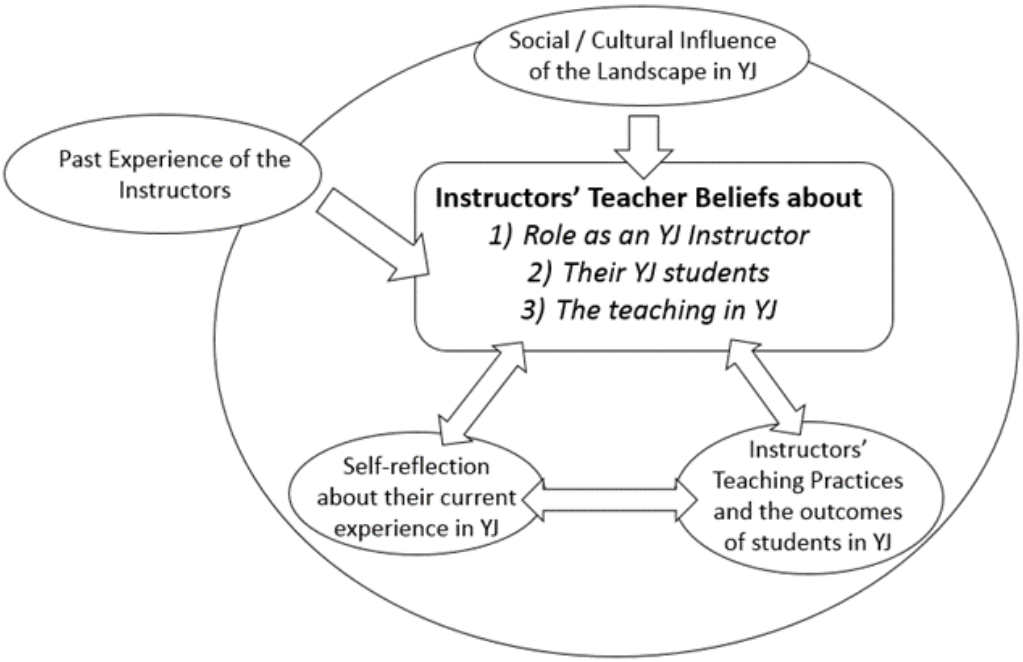

Figure 1: Factors affecting the teacher beliefs of YJ instructors

Chapter 3: Methodology and Research Plan

This chapter is comprised of three sections that detail the methodology adopted in this research. The first section describes the narrative method for the study. The second section discusses the plan of the research. The final section discusses how triangulation was applied to validate the data collected from the interviews and classroom visits.

3.1 Methodology

3.1.1 *Quantitative verus Qualitative*

Research methodologies are broadly divided into two streams: quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative research investigates the 'quantities' of a phenomenon or problem, as well as the relationships among those quantities. In the social sciences domain, quantitative research entails descriptions and analyses of the relationships between actions, policies, interventions, and related phenomena that determine the success or failure of interventions, as well as tests of theories against collected quantitative data. In practice, opinion surveys are a common quantitative research approach, wherein respondents are asked a set of structured questions, and their responses are subsequently tabulated or graphed for analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The study of teacher beliefs can be (and has been) conducted quantitatively by quite a number of researchers. The following table reveals the scope and main themes about teacher beliefs borne from selected quantitative research.

Table (5) The scope and main themes about teacher beliefs from selected quantitative research

Researcher	Scope / Main themes
Silverman (2010)	Examining preservice teacher beliefs about their various identities (sample size: 88 preservice teachers)
Archambault et al. (2012)	Determining the effect of teachers' expectancies and efficacy on the relationship between students' achievement and their cognitive engagement (sample size: 79 teachers and 1,364 students)
Nishino (2012)	Exploring the relationship among Japanese high school teacher beliefs, their teaching practices, and the socioeducational factors that influence communicative language teaching (CLT) (sample size: 139 Japanese teachers)
van Uden et al. (2013a)	Identifying the role of teacher beliefs and interpersonal teacher behaviour in fostering student engagement in vocational education (sample size: 118 male teachers and 82 female

	teachers)
Aelterman et al. (2016)	Demonstrating how the psychological need satisfaction experienced during teacher training is related to a change in teachers' effectiveness and feasibility of the beliefs regarding autonomy, support, and the structure of the education system (sample size: 80 experienced PE teachers)
Assen et al. (2016)	Examining discrepancies between teacher beliefs and behaviour in a problem-based learning (PBL) environment (sample size: 83 teachers)
Kraker-Pauw et al. (2016)	Exploring teacher beliefs and gender-related challenges (sample size: 107 teachers)
Wang & Teng (2016)	Assessing teacher beliefs about behaviour, learning, and teaching related to minority students (sample size: 401 teachers)

By contrast, qualitative research seeks to understand the concepts of a phenomenon or problem by exploring the 'qualities' of items. Qualitative

researchers thus focus on examining the breadth and depth of phenomena, and they thus ask what, where, when, why, and how questions to improve their understanding of a topic. These researchers note what people say and describe their experiences in depth; they are also concerned with the reasoning and feelings that motivate people to take certain actions. Various approaches, including a field study, a case study, storying, a naturalistic method, ethnography, grounded theory, an interpretive method, and an historical approach, are typically adopted in qualitative research to collect people's views or observe phenomenon; subsequently, an analysis of the data is conducted to reveal and describe patterns, identify themes, and interpret the meanings of the results or personally reflect on the research problem. The following table provides a summary of the main themes and ideas about teacher beliefs that have emerged from qualitative studies.

Table (6) The scope and main themes about teacher beliefs from selected qualitative studies

Researcher	**Main Focus/Ideas**
Chan and Lam (2003)	Exploring the development of student teacher beliefs through their initial teacher education (sample size: 19 student teachers)
Xie, Wang, & Ma (2006)	Identifying the teacher beliefs of college English teachers (sample size: 3 college English teachers)

Han (2008)	Investigating Chinese college English teacher beliefs and conceptual changes in relation to the government-mandated shift from traditional grammar-based teaching to language teaching to CLT (sample size: 6 college teachers)
Phipps and Borg (2009)	Examining tensions in the grammar teaching beliefs and practices of three English teachers working in Turkey (sample size: 3 experienced EFL teachers)
Masterson (2010)	Exploring (1) how teachers build knowledge, (2) the influence of prior beliefs on knowledge building, and (3) the degree to which teachers use this new knowledge to facilitate changes in their practices (sample size: 12 female teachers)
Borg (2011)	Determining the impact of an intensive 8-week in-service teacher education programme in the United Kingdom on the beliefs of six English language teachers (sample size: 6 teachers)
Braun (2011)	Examining the relationship between three teacher participants' beliefs and their classroom practices (sample size: 3

	teachers)
Melketo (2012)	Examining tensions between English teacher beliefs and their practices in teaching writing (sample size: 3 teachers)
Farrell and Ives (2014)	Exploring and reflecting on the relationship between the stated beliefs and observed classroom practices of one second-language reading teacher (sample size: 1 teacher)
Biesta, Priestley, & Robinson (2015)	Analysing teacher beliefs to obtain a sense of the individual and collective discourses that inform teachers' perceptions, judgements, and decision-making, and motivate teachers' actions (sample size: 6 teachers)
Tamimy (2015)	Investigating the relations between teacher beliefs and classroom practices (sample size: 5 Iranian EFL teachers)
Debreli (2016)	Examining the beliefs about learning and teaching that preservice teachers held before starting the practical phase of their training programme, and determining whether and how the practical phase changed their beliefs in a 9-month period

	(sample size: 12 pre-service teachers)

A comparison of studies on teacher beliefs that have employed qualitative or quantitative methods indicated that researchers who have employed quantitative methods seemed to obtain more generalisable findings (e.g., Nishino, 2012; van Uden et al., 2013a; Wang & Teng, 2016). Such studies may also be more effective at testing and proving hypotheses or predictions (e.g., Kraker-Pauw et al., 2016). Moreover, the causal effects among various factors have been determined in quantitative studies such as those by Silverman (2010), Archambault et al. (2012), and Aelterman et al. (2016). These quantitative research studies would often be conducted mainly with surveys to get the information. Conversely, qualitative researchers have focused on elucidating teacher beliefs through detailed descriptions of phenomena (e.g., Xie et al., 2006; Phipps & Borg, 2009; Farrell & Ives, 2014; Debreli, 2016). Some researchers have also developed new hypotheses and theories through their qualitative studies (e.g., Chan & Lam, 2003; Han 2008). Scholars including Borg (2011), Braun (2011), Melketo (2012) and Biesta et al. (2015) have conducted fully exploratory studies using various qualitative approaches; whereas, researchers such as Masterson (2010) and Tamimy (2015) have studied how teacher behaviours are related to teacher beliefs in diverse environments. These qualitative research studies are usually conducted through interviews, case studies, and classroom observations.

3.1.2 *Narrative Study*

The present study determined the profiles, origins, and development of teacher beliefs among YJ instructors in terms of three main areas: their roles as teachers, their teaching practices, and their perceptions of the students in YJ. According to the extant literature reviewed in Chapter 2, these beliefs are imbued within teachers' practices and involve their perceptions, judgements, behaviours, and emotive commitments to their teaching roles and students (Borg, 2001). Teacher beliefs can also be traced to their experiences and changed perceptions from before and after they worked at YJ, as well as to what they expect of themselves and their students over time. Because the current study focused on exploring the depth rather than breadth of various phenomena (i.e., experiences related to YJ instructors' teacher beliefs), a qualitative approach was more appropriate than a quantitative approach.

However, the findings of the above quantitative research may be helpful in providing the concepts of teacher beliefs, as well as understanding and analyzing the findings of this qualitative study. For example, the study by Assen et al. (2016) helped understand how teachers' behaviours, evaluations and judgements were affected by their teacher beliefs. The studies by Kraker-Pauw et al. (2016) and Archambault et al., (2012) concerned the relation of students' learning and the teachers' beliefs on students. These may serve as useful reference to explain how the YJ instructors dealt with their students as well as the teacher beliefs they

possessed. Furthermore, the studies by Aelterman et al. (2016) and Wang & Teng (2016) contended that some factors such as teachers' temperaments, their perceptions of the students, social and cultural norms may also influence the teacher beliefs. This would also be useful in understanding the teacher beliefs of the YJ instructors in this study.

Of the diverse qualitative methods, the narrative study, which aims at studying the ways in which humans experience the world (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), was selected. It is the most suitable research approach for answering the research questions. This is because narrative study always brings into the research richsocial and personal perspectives (Hyvärinen, 2008). Therefore, the teachers' experiences can be studied in a more open and detailed way. Narrative study also provides an opportunity for teachers to reflect on their teaching practices and explore queries they have about their professional decisions, as well as the related teacher beliefs behind them (Cavendish, 2011).

Narrative study refers to any research that uses or analyses narrative materials (Lieblich, 1998). The narrative materials are infinite in their varieties and can be found everywhere. These narrative materials can be collected as a story, which is possibly provided in an interview or a literary work, or gathered in field notes of the researchers who write up their observations, or even documented in personal letters or diaries written by the participants (Lieblich, 1998). Earthy and Cronin (2008) said that the

narrative analysis can be conducted by different approaches, such as autobiography, life history, oral history, auto-ethnography, life narrative and the sociology of story-telling.

The study of YJ instructors' teacher beliefs involves, among other things, the understanding of their teaching lives in the YJ programme. YJ instructors were expected to describe their teaching lives or interpret how their past has shaped their daily stories in YJ when they narrated their experiences and perceptions. Hence, the narrative interview approach was employed in the study. For the narrative interview, the researcher collected stories from the participants through some unstructured or semi-structured interviews in which the participants were allowed to speak without interruption or with rare prompts until their stories ended. These stories were then analyzed for insights into the structure, coherence and meaning in a particular social context. (Greenhalgh, Russell, & Swinglehurst, 2005). Through the narrative interviews, the participants were encouraged to tell a story about a significant event in their YJ lives. This began with understanding their histories and significant experiences, as well as the transitions in teacher beliefs that have occurred since joining YJ. Additionally, the instructors were encouraged to speculate on what may change in the future and consider what effect these changes will have, with emphasis placed on real situations and problems they currently encounter as teachers in YJ. Hence, engaging in story-telling in the present study fostered understanding among both the researcher and the storytellers (instructors) about how the instructors' teacher beliefs influenced their

teaching lives in YJ as they attempted to explain the gap between ‘what happened’ (the experience) and ‘what it means’ (the underlying teacher beliefs) (Kay, 2004). Eventually, the instructors presented all their considerations involving their behaviours, expectations, and commitments when they work as instructors of YJ.

In short, through the narrative study, the participants, together with the researcher, recall what has happened, put experience into sequence, find possible explanations for it, and play with the chain of events that shapes individual and social life in YJ, so as to get new or deeper insights behind their teacher beliefs (Jovchelovitch et al., 2000; Earthy & Cronin, 2008).

3.2 Research Plan

To utilise the narrative method, I divided the present study into seven steps: select participants, conduct narrative interviews, interview the alumni, transcribe interviews, identify themes, classroom visits and write the final report.

3.2.1 Select Participants

Because I endeavoured to examine the teacher beliefs of YJ instructors and thus uncover the characteristics, origins, and influences of those beliefs, participants were purposely sampled to ensure that the information collected from them would be relevant and representative. The number of participants was limited to three to ensure that sufficient time was available for the in-depth enquiries of each participant regarding their teaching and work experiences prior to YJ, training and education backgrounds, and

demographic information (e.g., age and religion). I anticipated that the participants would perceive their YJ lives, their students, and their teaching practices differently based on these factors because teacher beliefs are constituted by experiences, and perceptions are influenced by these individual factors.

The following table outlines the basic information of the three instructors (with pseudonym) from the same institute that participated in the present study.

Table (7) The basic information of the three instructors who participated in the present study

	Participant	**H Sir**	**Miss L**	**R Sir**
1.	Teaching Experience in YJ	4 years	7 years	7 years
2.	Formal Teacher Training	No	No	Yes
3.	Working / teaching experience other than YJ	Social worker/ teaching in higher diploma degree	Trainer for social work/ teaching in part-time evening course / Business	Secondary school teacher
4.	Subject mainly taught in	Media, Ethics and Values, or Daily	Ethics and Values, or Daily	English

	YJ	Psychology	Psychology	
5.	Working Mode	Part time	Part time	Full time
6.	Religion / Belief Adopted	Catholic	Christianity	Nil
7.	Age	Nearly 40	Around 50	Around 30
8.	Sex	Male	Female	Male

I have close working relationships and friendships with all three of the participants, and I am well aware of their backgrounds and daily practices. Hence, I was able to affirmatively recognise them as some of the most dedicated YJ teachers at the institute. I was also able to confirm their approximate ages, differences in training or education, and religious affiliations and ensure that there would be a suitable variety of factors in the study. However, I acknowledge that extra caution should be taken to consider the influence my relationships with the participants likely had on the positive impressions obtained in this study.

It was difficult to conduct the lengthy formal interviews at several points during this one-year study. The interviews actually lasted from February to the end of May. This is because YJ instructors are extremely busy, particularly during the period from February to May, every year. However, my close working relationships and friendships with the participants helped facilitate the narrative interviews efficiently and effectively without the

necessity of any ice-breaking activities. Additionally, all of the participants were comfortable in self-disclosing most information with limited guidance required because we already had a strong rapport with each other. Our frequent informal contact also facilitated swift responses when I had further enquiries or needed clarification concerning their answers. Overall, these close relationships helped supplement the small number of interviewees.

The consent form and information sheet about the study was sent to each participant to acquire their consent prior to starting the study. A sample of this form is presented in Appendix A. The pseudonym is used for each participant to preserve anonymity and confidentiality during the study and in the thesis.

3.2.2 Conduct Narrative Interview

After confirming with the participants, in-depth semistructured narrative interviews were conducted individually. The purpose of the interviews was to collect relevant information about, and stories from YJ instructors and specifically to determine the teacher beliefs about their YJ lives. To balance focusing on the objectives of the study with the narrative freedom provided to the instructors, I drafted a set of interview guidelines (see Appendix B) in connection to the research questions. These documents were distributed to the participants for review prior to their interviews; however, unless their discussion substantially deviated from the direction of the study, they were encouraged to tell their stories and explain their experiences freely, according to their own perceptions and in their own time, during each

interview.

I began the interviews by encouraging the participants to share their experiences with, and stories about, teaching in YJ, to explain their opinions regarding their students, and to self-reflect about how their teaching roles changed as YJ instructors. The participants also discussed their experiences as students themselves, as employees in nonteaching fields, and as teachers in other positions. Conversations about the participants' relationships with, and influence of, their families, colleagues, and communities required an awareness of the time frames and the cultural and social norms to accurately understand the stories. Transitions in roles and statuses, such as starting new studies, leaving a previous job, or being admitted to the YJ programme, were also discussed at length. In all of the interviews, discussions began with present experiences and perceptions. We then talked about past experiences, gradually returned to the present, and finally contemplated the participants' desired future experiences. Some of the interviews also explored the moral reactions, feelings, and hopes of the participants' present conditions and environments.

Besides, with reference to suggestions by Jovchelovitch et al. (2000), the narrative interview was conducted roughly in four phases. They include firstly initiating and formulating the initial topic for narration, which mainly upheld the guidelines of the interview. The second phase was mainly the narration of the interviewee, with only the non-verbal encouragement and rare interruptions. The third phase facilitated the narration with questioning

such as, ‘What happened then?’ The interviewer tried his best to offer no personal opinion or attitude. At the fourth phase, the interviewer asked some ‘why’ questions, if necessary, and lastly, ended the whole conversation.

3.2.3 Interview the Alumni

In addition to the narrative interviews with the instructors, I conducted third-party interviews with some YJ alumni who had been previously taught by the participants in the present study. The aim of the alumni interviews was to gather alternative views about the teachers. These interviews were comparatively more structured and focused, with the sole aim of obtaining alumni impressions, perceptions, feelings, and memories about their YJ teachers. The guidelines for these interviews are presented in Appendix C.

Through the alumni, I was able to alternatively understand what the participating instructors had expressed in their own interviews about their teaching practices and student management strategies. Crucially, the alumni’s experiences validated the narratives provided by the instructors. I interviewed three alumni, one each introduced by the three instructors.

Each former student was also provided with a pseudonym to protect the student’s identity; the student’s backgrounds in brief are noted as follows:

3.2.3.1 *R Sir’s Student: Lam*

R Sir was Lam’s classroom and English teacher for both of her

two years in the YJ programme. At the time of the interview, Lam had just finished her second year in YJ and was planning to return and obtain her associate's degree. Notably, I was also her mathematics teacher during her second year in YJ. R Sir selected Lam as his alumni student because he considered her to be his most improved student and the one who was the most satisfied with him during the previous year.

3.2.3.2 *H Sir's Student: Chan*

Chan was a student of H Sir during the instructor's first year with the YJ programme. Currently, Chan is continuing her education at university, aiming to obtain a degree in mass communication. Chan and H Sir have maintained frequent contact several years after her graduation from YJ.

3.2.3.3 *Miss L's Student: Tung*

Tung was taught by Miss L throughout her tenure in the student fellowship programme, and she has also volunteered with Miss L during her time in the YJ programme up to the present.

Given that the alumni were recommended by the participating instructors, it must be noted that these former students were likely biased against stating any negative thoughts about their teachers, despite the interviews being conducted independently (i.e., not in the presence of the instructors).

3.2.4 Transcribe Stories Verbatim

All interviews were audiotaped with the participants' consent, which minimised the amount of field notes that must be taken and allowed my focus to remain on the narratives of the participants. These taped conversations were transcribed verbatim as soon as possible following the completion of the interview. Notably, I conducted this step independently in order to precisely record both the verbal and nonverbal messages I observed during the interviews.

The transcribed interviews were subsequently verified with the participants to ensure accuracy and to clarify any vague points.

3.2.5 Identify Story Themes

After transcription, I analysed the text using three main processes to identify story themes.

First, I analysed the stories comprehensively and with continual self-reflection. I read and reorganised the textual stories into chronological order to outline what the participants thought and felt over time. I endeavoured to focus particularly on the participants' discussions of changes in their roles and status, such as when they decided to become YJ instructors, along with their understanding of, and reflection on, those changes.

A coding system was used to help summarize and synthesize the findings

during the reading of verbatim notes. During the first cycle of coding proposed by Saldafia (2009) and Stuckey (2015), with reference to the storylines told by each participant in the interviews, I preset several "a priori" codes to guide my reading, including: 1) the roles as a teacher; 2) the way to become a YJ Instructor; 3) the comments on, and the relationships with, YJ students; 4) the teaching strategies adopted to teach YJ; 5) the challenges or difficulties encountered in YJ; 6) the achievements and satisfactions acquired in YJ; and 7) the expectations and results gained by teaching YJ. Dialogues from verbatim notes were extracted with reference to the "a priori" codes. In addition, when I found that some ideas or concepts emerged from the verbatim that were different from "a priori" codes, I would label them as "emergent codes" (Stuckey, 2015). One example was an "in vivo" code (Saldafia, 2009): "tough love" concept shared directly by H Sir. A sample of the first cycle of coding is presented in Appendix E.

I considered the potential of self-bias during this process. Thus, I referred to the field notes, in which I had logged my observations or findings during the interviews and classroom visits, and performed continual self-reflection to ensure that I acknowledged my personal interpretations of the participants' stories as well as my own thoughts or beliefs that I held throughout the study (Bailey, 2007). For example, prior to the interviews, I had assumed that Miss L always loved to teach YJ students because she never talked negatively about them. However, she noted in the interview that she had initially felt very demoralised and disgusted by the YJ students. When we worked together, R Sir had noted that he preferred to teach high-achieving academic

students; consequently, I anticipated that he would quickly leave the YJ programme or lower his expectations of the students. However, he stated in the interview that his high expectations helped the students improve, and as a result, he retained his employment with YJ to continue helping students improve. Finally, H Sir confessed that he had only joined YJ to earn a satisfactory salary, and I had assumed that he would prefer to teach degree and higher diploma courses rather than the YJ programme. However, he admitted in the interview that he had chosen to teach YJ because it was aligned with his personal beliefs and desire to support struggling students. Thus, throughout my analysis of the interviews, I regularly repeated the reading-understanding-reflecting process to reduce the potential for bias and facilitate accurate insights for framing formations (Jackie, 2011) and for refining the participants' narratives.

For the second step of the analytical process, I identified thinking and behavioural patterns (Smith, 2006) in the participants' stories, particularly focusing on the diverse meanings that the instructors attributed to their YJ lives. In order to do that, in the second cycle of the coding exercise, I would group those segments or portions coded with similar meanings or explanations into several categories. Some remarks or meanings would be added to refine the categories. This process was repeated and revised several times to recode and re-categorize the categories (Saldafia, 2009).

I also sent each YJ instructor a copy of their textual story, organised into the initial theme findings, and then conducted second interviews to ensure that

these findings aligned with the participants' original intended meanings. Feedback and supplementary information were also collected during the second interviews.

Ritchie, Kidman, and Vaughan (2007) argued that storytellers (i.e., the YJ instructors) narrate themselves in three layers. The first layer concerns the instructors' identities of themselves, which illustrate their trans situational perceptions and feelings of the core self; this is also somewhat about their self-concept as a teacher. The second layer concerns their subidentities or their cognitions and affections about who they are in school, in their families, or within their work. This relates to how a teacher perceives her or his responsibilities as a teacher, as well as the students s/he teaches. The third layer focuses on the instructors' roles as teachers in certain classes and how they apply certain pedagogies for different lessons. This may involve how the teachers think about the aims of teaching and learning, as well as the strategies they employ in class.

The major categories would be compared with each other and consolidated in various ways in response to the research questions. Eventually, those categories of data would ascend towards thematic, conceptual, and theoretical ideas. (Saldafia, 2009).

As Maria (2008) noted, storytellers typically narrate their stories around a central theme to define themselves in relation to their present, past, and future states. Hence, to finalise and confirm the themes, I reviewed the key

statements, words, and phrases utilised by the instructors regarding their experiences in YJ, with reference to Ritchie et al. (2007) and Maria (2008). The key terms were organised as ‘meaning units’ and then further classified and refined into the main themes of teacher beliefs.

3.2.6 Classroom Visits

Classroom visits were arranged after I had identified the preliminary themes describing the participants’ teacher beliefs. These visits enabled me to determine whether my findings about the instructors’ beliefs could be observed in their daily teaching practices. As a practical matter, arranging several visits within the study period was difficult; however, because I have close working relationships with all three instructors, I was able to continue our discussions after the visits, if necessary. I could also validate their beliefs according to my observations of them outside of their classrooms. Moreover, I visit H Sir and Miss L several times each year because, as the subject coordinator, I often work alongside them in the same courses in the YJ programme. This history of working together facilitated my understanding of the teaching strategies and rationale they adopted, which further validated my findings in the present study. The guide for class observations is presented in Appendix D.

3.2.7 Write Final Report

After identifying the key themes in the participants’ stories, I wrote a final report on the study. I wrote this report not only to fulfil one of the requirements to obtain my doctoral degree, but also to consolidate the study

findings and respond to the aims and research questions set out in Chapter 1.

3.2.8 Timeframe of the Study

The study was conducted according to the following schedule:

Participants Invited	Jan 2016
Narrative Interviews	Feb-May 2016
Verbatim Transcription	Jun 2016
Theme forming	Jul – Dec 2016
Class Visits	Nov-Dec 2016
Report Writing	Jan-Apr 2017

3.3 Triangulation

Muhammad, Muhammad, and Muhammad (2008) contended that a reliable and valid qualitative study can provide clear and in-depth information on a phenomenon. Moreover, the reliability and validity of a study should be considered to prevent narratives from becoming too narcissistic, solipsistic, or 'Hollywood-like'. However, the understanding of a phenomenon heavily depends on the abundance and rationality of information that a storyteller provides, as well as the perception and preconcepts of both the storyteller and researcher.

Hence, I continually reviewed each segment of the participants' stories for contradictory statements. I also maintained awareness of, and reviewed, the participants' stories in full to mitigate any biases that I may have unintentionally attributed to their narratives. Moreover, I maintained frequent and close

communication with the three participants to ensure that my interpretation of their stories fully considered their views. As is recommended in qualitative research, I used triangulation to validate the participants' stories.

I adopted two methods to triangulate the findings derived from the participants' stories: third-party interviews with YJ student alumni and classroom observations (see Sections 3.2.3 and 3.2.6). These varied sources of data provided additional information or fostered alternative interpretations that enabled me to fully study and deeply understand the participants' stories and related findings (Kouritzin, 2000). Specifically, the interviews with former students provided information that validated how the participants executed their roles as YJ instructors along with the teaching strategies they adopted. In addition, the classroom observations provided me a first-person experience and understanding of the teaching strategies that the participants had articulated in the stories.

Chapter 4: The Stories of Three YJ Instructors

4.1 Introduction

This chapter tells the stories of the three instructors, incorporating the data from the interviews with the three YJ instructors and student alumni, as well as my classroom observations.

The narratives began at the participants' transitions into their roles as YJ instructors. All of the participants explained their transition by describing their experiences as students, of working in nonteaching fields, and of teaching previously. Furthermore, they detailed how their past formed their initial presumptions about their expected teaching roles and students of YJ. During the course of their storytelling, the participants shared their current thoughts and feelings about teaching in the YJ programme and reflected on their roles and their perceptions of the students enrolled at YJ. The participant narratives were subsequently enhanced by information gleaned from the alumni interviews and classroom observations.

One central theme that emerged from the interviews was the notion of the 'YJ student'. The participants' narratives on the YJ students covered several areas: those related to their past and present experiences, perceptions, and feelings regarding the role of the teacher for YJ students; those related to their perceptions of and affections towards their YJ students; and those related to the actual experiences of teaching YJ students (i.e., the strategies used and the student performance observed). Other themes identified include: how the participants thought and reacted, how they understood their disclosed statements, and how they currently perceived the past. This was

invaluable for constructing a complete picture of the participants' teacher beliefs.

4.2 Researcher and the Three Instructors

The three participants, R Sir, H Sir and Miss L, ranged from nearly 30 to around 50 years of age. As a typical secondary school teacher, R Sir graduated from a teacher training institute and he constantly taught English in a secondary school. In the interview with R Sir, he was highly concerned with teaching and his students' learning performance within the classroom. On the contrary, H Sir and Miss L had social work training and were rather concerned with the alteration of students themselves. However, in their interviews, H Sir focused more on how to change students' narrow mind-sets while Miss L was concerned with students' whole life changes.

In addition, I met R Sir when I joined the same institute, and both of us currently work as full-time teachers on the YJ team. Although I am not an English teacher, I had the opportunity to work with R Sir to develop a new YJ elective two years ago. My first impression of R Sir was that he was young but conscientious regarding his academic work. For example, while we developed the elective, he always meticulously reviewed every bullet point of the course outlines well before submission. His desk also contains numerous reference books for preparing his courses and lectures. In his daily lectures, R Sir is diligent and focused on his teaching, but he also loves to join his students playing soccer; he would undoubtedly participate in every soccer match if time allowed. Currently, both of us remain in frequent contact and work together on various administrative duties regarding the teaching and learning of the YJ team. R Sir is not ambitious (he prefers to follow

given instructions or orders), but he has been a great assistant to me in our shared work.

On the other hand, I have known H Sir since he taught the Communication Skills and Ethics and Values courses four years ago. In addition to teaching, H Sir has helped me with various student projects during his years with YJ, and he has demonstrated creativity and dedication to his students and work. I fully appreciate and trust his judgement. Generally, I allow H Sir to introduce any new practices he suggests, because his ideas are reliably beneficial for the students. In only four years, H Sir and I have developed a close partnership and friendship, both in and out of work. We consistently share perspectives on life and work.

For Miss L, I worked alongside her to teach the Ethics and Values class on my first day with YJ. Because our institute underpins its courses on Christianity, we also worked together to launch student fellowship programmes and organise some voluntary activities. Sharing the same faith and desire to help students, Miss L and I are the closest of friends; she is even close with my wife and family. Miss L is devout to her faith to Christianity. She always considers and views actions with reference to what she understands from God.

My impression of Miss L is that she is a devoted Christian teacher who is dedicated and passionate about working with the YJ programme. She chose to teach YJ students in response to her faith, even though her initial judgement suggested that they were helpless and hopeless. Indeed, Miss L recognises that their behaviours likely originated from their struggles with past adversities and failures, but also believes that

these students could be motivated to move forwards persistently once they reconnected with their values and were made aware of their unique abilities, which would restore their confidence and enable them to develop their dreams and goals for the future.

In short, I had been working closely with the instructor participants. This facilitated the construction of a mutually trusting relationship before the narrative interviews. In other words, the good relationship between the researcher and participants helped enhance the trustworthiness of stories gathered from the interviews.

4.3 R Sir's Story in YJ

4.3.1 *Passion in teaching*

R Sir told me in the interview that he had loved to teach others since he was young, which he attributed to his family because many of his relatives were teachers.

> '… I thought teaching was amusing in the very beginning. After I completed Form Five, I started to tutor students in primary one or two. I felt that teaching was really fun …'

R Sir eventually entered university and majored in Education and English. He has worked as an English teacher since his graduation. Afterwards, R Sir taught in a band one secondary school for two years. At the end of his contract, he quit working at the school in order to reserve more time to begin his master's study on a part-time basis. He was simultaneously teaching on a part-time basis at some tutorial schools, facilitating training courses at the Employees Retraining Board, and working with PYJ. Then, he started his teaching life in YJ.

4.3.2 *The first impression of YJ*

On his first day as a YJ teacher, R Sir was informed by his new colleagues that most of the YJ students were unwilling to focus on lessons and performed terribly in every subject. They also constantly fought in class and were frequently insubordinate to their instructors. Luckily, R Sir met with a completely different type of class. He recalled his first impression of

the group fondly:

> '… I still remember my first lesson with YJ. …. Their [the students'] behaviour was better than that of the students at the secondary school I taught at before; they sat still and did what I told them. Certainly, that might have been the result of a guise during the first lesson with a new teacher. However, they gradually proved in appearance and abilities to be totally different from my initial expectation. Although they tended not to respond to questions, they always sat politely during lessons …'

However, R Sir encountered problems when attempting to manage his YJ classes because most of the students did not want to be treated like secondary school students:

> '… I would prefer that we [the students and I] had what we called a "Master and Apostle" relationship. My appearance may make me appear too young [to be a teacher] to the students. Therefore, I would establish a clear baseline with them to ensure that everyone knew their role and the difference between teacher and student. I could make friends with them based on mutual respect later on.''

R Sir was also aware that YJ students probably had a more difficult time learning English compared with other subjects, and he admitted the following:

> '… I think I prefer more academically inclined students. I wish I could teach more smart students because at least half of them in any given class grasp what I teach …'

Honestly, R Sir stated that he worked vigorously to engage students in his lectures. However, the lack of effectiveness disappointed him.

4.3.3 *Never give up teaching in YJ*

Although disappointed, R Sir did not stop seeking new ways to teach the YJ students. He compared the YJ students' motivation and intelligence with that of the students at his former secondary schools.

> '… the key difference for them is managing their time and arranging their priorities. I suppose that such soft skills highly affect students' academic success, more so than intelligence …'

R Sir found that his characteristic 'Do the right job at the right time' slogan helped foster students' self-discipline in learning English. He noted that this characteristic was cultivated when he was very young. He always stresses the most crucial regulations or boundaries of a particular lesson, which enables students to set targets and priorities and follow step-by-step guidelines to help them achieve specific learning targets:

> '… I would always tell them what the most important concept was, and we would cover that first. I would also tell them that something that may seem difficult at first, such as tense, is actually very simple. If they are willing to work hard to

understand tense, they eventually will.'

Besides, R Sir also noticed that YJ students could not tolerate prolonged monotonous lecturing, so he began incorporating various teaching strategies into his lectures:

> '… If you give them a detailed explanation, they may not be willing to try and figure out a problem themselves. … I usually try to talk for half of the class time, and get them to talk for the other half … because in a 2-hour lesson, it can be hard for them to just take in everything you're saying. They have to be involved. … [Otherwise] the students here can't concentrate for very long.'

> '… In group projects, you can group together students of various abilities and let them interact within the group [to complete a complex assignment]. … If they actively participate, this strategy works. Like in the class with banking and finance elective, it really worked …'

For students with less motivation, such as those he encountered in the Fire Services course, R Sir adopts recognition strategies. For example, R Sir has these students present worksheet answers on the blackboard and include their names beside the answers they provided. This forces students to become more diligent with their assignments to avoid being negatively judged by their classmates or R Sir.

In addition to addressing the need for students' involvement in their learning, R Sir first distributed easy assignments. He later gradually raised the number of requirements and difficulty level to allow students to participate in 'hands-on' learning experiences. In the class visit with him, I observed this strategy in R Sir's classroom.

The lesson that day was about English writing skills, and the assignment required students to compose a story based on a specific topic. The students first focused on completing a series of sentences according to the information provided (knowledge application), and they subsequently wrote a story with those same sentences (higher-order critical thinking). Acknowledging that low academic achievers (as many YJ students are) tend to heavily depend on others, especially teachers, for help, R Sir constantly moved around the classroom to help students individually and provide on-the-spot feedback. This appeared to markedly help many of them learn how to write a story.

Overall, the observations indicated that R Sir's strategy was successful in engaging students in their learning. Most students seemed willing to complete the worksheets and then write the stories, and none of them stopped working during the class or did anything unrelated to the assignment. Both the students and teacher seemed satisfied with the results (i.e., students had learned how to write a story in English) at the end of the lesson.

Till now, R Sir still kept trying his best to improve his teaching by listening to students' feedback, eavesdropping on colleagues' chatting, as well as discussing concerns with his friends.

> '… I only think about how I can improve my teaching. I would review what problems I faced in the teaching at the past year, such as some problems about the lesson design, the pedagogies used, the effectiveness of the lessons, the interests to the students, or anything to motivate them, etc. I will then fine tune the teaching designs and the related materials in the coming year.'

4.3.4 *Concern for the students' progress rather than their scores*

Additionally, R Sir is always concerned about the students' overall progress instead of their academic performance.

He described one of his students, a mature student in the Fire Services course who had worked for many years before enrolling in the YJ programme. R Sir believed that this student had not reached even the junior secondary level in English. However, while with YJ, R Sir was impressed with the student's progress. He also felt satisfaction with him.

If possible, R Sir also sought opportunities to examine students' strengths and weaknesses and encouraged them to suggest strategies for personal improvement. He thought that poorly performing students were perhaps

unaware of why they struggled to learn certain concepts or subjects, and he anticipated that they would manage and reorganise their priorities and time once they recognised these problems. For example, student Lam was one for whom R Sir expressed a deep satisfaction in having taught, and not because of the improvement of her academic performance but because of the total difference in Lam as a person.

> '… This year, I think Lam is doing okay. Truly, she is very different from the previous year. I am not sure what she thinks. She did say to me that I was a great help, but I really don't know why she said that. However, I think she is better overall than last year. During course registration last year, I could see her back, but she dared not glimpse at me. She sat down with her head hiding under her file. She seemed to fear being identified by me. But now, she shares her thoughts and feelings with me and talks about her relationship with her family. She is really different. Her relationship with her classmates has also changed … I think she [Lam] has really changed. I suppose she tried her best to change herself and had teachers who influenced her to different extents.'

4.3.5 *A Master of "Men" rather a "Book"*

Evidently, R Sir's preference for being a 'Master' is not confined to student academic performance, but also extends to managing the nonacademic needs of students. He discovered that YJ students tended to have many enquiries about their future studies or about peer and family relations. In

response, R Sir actively sought advice from his colleagues and friends about how to address students' problems. Indeed, as his experience at YJ accumulated, R Sir has not confined his judgement of students to their English abilities. As a 'Master' of students, he prefers to see changes in their lives.

> '… A teacher should teach knowledge and be a role model for the students to let them know how to deal with others and in what ways they should handle various challenges …'

After almost seven years of teaching in the YJ programme, R Sir concluded that his major satisfaction from the job would not be getting one or two high-achieving students admitted to university. Instead, he felt inspired by those students he taught who became motivated to chase their aspirations and live fulfilling lives. Indeed, R Sir also worked hard to become a teacher of 'man' to help his students learn how to handle challenges unrelated to academia, a concept that is aligned with R Sir's stated goal of fostering student growth. It is clear that R Sir feels more efficacious when changing students as a whole, rather than when simply teaching English. Finally, R Sir expressed the following statement to summarise his YJ teaching experience:

> 'Assist in the growth of students, establish desirable values, let them learn from failure, and provide them with a new lease of life!'

4.4 H Sir's Story in YJ

4.4.1 *Earn for a living or lives*

Before joining the YJ programme, H Sir was a supervisory social worker. He received a master's degree in social work from the University of Hong Kong (his first degree, surprisingly, was in Chemistry), which suggests that H Sir wanted to be a social worker from a young age. However, H Sir noted that he had quit the social work profession because he and his partner wanted to start having children. He then began teaching on a part-time basis, a career in which he believed himself capable:

> '… I resigned [from social work] for my family because we wanted a baby, and I took a part-time teaching job instead. At the time, there was the double cohort and, thus, a shortage of post-secondary school teachers. Although I had received training for social work, even earning a master's degree in the field, I was interested in teaching … Most people I knew dared to do just about anything except teaching. They didn't so much worry about the teaching aspect, but about being disliked because of having to deal with or control the students. But it was okay for me.'

H Sir said to me that he had taught different levels of courses: degree courses and higher diploma courses at the beginning. His identity as a high-profile professor initially made H Sir reject the idea of teaching with YJ:

> '… I have talked about teaching a degree course … Inside a big lecture hall, with 300 people at a time … including not only Hong Kong students, but also exchange students … I felt good, like a real professor …'
>
> '… I was [also] very satisfied teaching the higher diploma courses for career-oriented students. Right after graduation, they were highly likely to enter the social services profession. I could feel their readiness and willingness to listen to the practical education I provided … especially when I discussed specifics about a career in social services … I felt like a Master.'

However, H Sir eventually changed his mind about YJ, based on his beliefs about how various courses should be taught. Specifically, the policies guiding the degree courses he taught contradicted his personal beliefs:

> '… When I taught the degree course, I disagreed with … their [the university course administration] policy … [For example, they] only allowed me to distribute six pages of a PowerPoint presentation to make sure that students attended the lessons and took notes … So I diminished my entire lecture to four or six PowerPoint pages … [to ensure that] they [the students] didn't need to copy anything. They then could fully concentrate on thinking during the lesson. … However, because I blatantly went against them [the course administration], they surely won't recruit me again.'

Additionally, he considers it essential to cultivate a conscientious attitude towards learning among students, although not in the way adopted by the higher diploma course administration for which he taught. Indeed, he felt that the administration did not take organising the programme seriously:

> '… I really disliked my colleagues who were in charge [of the higher diploma programme]. I thought they were unprofessional and I disliked that they didn't see the importance of student benefits. For me, probably related to my work in social services, it is of the most important things. If my bosses didn't see the benefit of their clients as the first priority, I knew right away that our values did not match. They might have been professionally successful, but I wouldn't count them as peers.'

Moreover, students in degree or higher diploma courses focused solely on receiving tips about exam questions and ensuring high assessment scores. By contrast, H Sir found that the YJ administration at my institution ran our courses tightly and earnestly. He also felt that the YJ programme was created specifically for students, who may have encountered failure, to have the opportunity to re-evaluate themselves and thus gain a new lease on life:

> '… I suppose that the YJ programme is a time for them [the students] to reform themselves, retell their [life] stories, and reflect on their [inner] qualities … They [the students] could realise that their lives had the potential to be totally different'.

In the end, H Sir decided that he prefers the YJ approach to teaching because

it aligns more suitably with his trusting Catholic faith and his personal beliefs borne from his previous social work.

4.4.2 *From stranger to understanding*

When H Sir was still a social worker, he did not know much about the YJ programme. Indeed, he noted in the interview that he only knew that YJ is an equivalent qualification to the basic secondary-level education that enables people to apply for jobs.

> '… I had tried to recruit some PWs [programme workers] with around 11,000 a month. However, for my agency, he or she [an applicant] wasn't acceptable with just English, Chinese, and Mathematics [credits] … he or she needed to demonstrate that he or she had passed five courses [in the HKDSE/HKCEE]. I stayed at the role of a user, and even if I liked and wanted to recruit a person, they had to at least show me a certificate [of basic qualification]. Otherwise, I couldn't get their recruitment [approved by the agency] … I think YJ counts as a basic certificate….'

However, when H Sir started teaching with YJ, he acknowledged that he had negative perceptions about the students. Specifically, he imagined that the students were a bit ignorant, showed no motivation towards their studies, had no self-discipline, often acted insubordinately, yelling at the teachers, and fought in class.

> '… I originally thought that they [the students] were

> disobedient. I had this impression that they would be unmotivated to study and that they might even yell or talk back to the teachers. I had such a negative perception, especially when I started preparing to teach with YJ and considered how I would deal with such students. So I thought about how they were likely to be. At the time, my impression was so clear. Everyone outside of YJ had a similar image of the students: that they were unmotivated to study, that their academic performance was bad, that they swore and used bad language in class, and that they would fight with each other or talk back to the teacher in class. Basically, it's like people thought every student was a "Chan Ho Lam" [a triad] from that movie in the '90s ….'

Of course, the reality of teaching at YJ was different from how H Sir had imagined. Instead, he found YJ students to be 'lazy' and ignorant; he also realized that many students think that they still have plenty of time to fool around in class because selecting careers and choices for the future is still a relatively far distance away.

> '… In fact, they are quite ignorant, as in lacking knowledge about society, about things related to the reality of the society, and about the customs of life … They seem to think that they still have copious amounts of time to choose a future path. For their stopping at this year, they deem they are able to see, to think or to take some things … Careers are still so far in the

> periphery, some of which may require them [the students] to enrol in a higher diploma programme after graduating from YJ. I think this is why they seem to think that they are getting a 'pass' by enrolling in YJ for a year …'

H Sir considers these characteristics to stem from the failures and frustrations that most YJ students have faced in previous schooling; in other words, they avoid placing any expectations on themselves or their future to avoid having to deal with additional failure. H Sir described the story of one former student, Chan, in a very similar manner. Chan's family disagreed with her decision to enroll in YJ, and they placed a considerable amount of pressure on her despite believing that she was not smart enough to graduate from the programme. Hence, Chan perceived herself, and her decision to join YJ, poorly.

4.4.3 *Tough love to students*

The belief among the students stirred the conscience of H Sir. In addition to the influence of his Catholic faith and personal beliefs stemming from his social work with minorities, H Sir admitted that he also had a similar negative background. Hence, as a YJ teacher, H Sir had anticipated he could help students surpass their own expectations regarding learning and education so that they could graduate and continue their education or achieve meaningful work. As he stated:

> '… I could teach according to students' specific personality types. I could directly put the seeding on or even restructure

> your basic characters … I dared to trust that the students were capable of change. However, I preferred that that change be due to a student's potential rather than the system or the programme of YJ … I suppose, from my experience, I must acknowledge that I play a role in the growth of the students, but I would still argue that they can enact their own changes in themselves, especially when they accept themselves and their abilities. That is the beauty of the butterfly effect.'

The trust that students hold regarding their potential and capabilities also compelled H Sir to consider that he should make students work harder for improvements or breakthroughs while they are still enrolled in the YJ programme in order to ensure a brighter future. H Sir described his own experience that buttressed this underlying belief:

> '… I believe that I am not that smart … however, since childhood, one particular notion has been ingrained in me: that hard work makes anything possible. I trust that I can succeed if I am hard-working … I fully believe this, based on my experiences, and I constantly extend that encouragement to my students …'

Primarily, H Sir is concerned about most YJ students' low self-esteem and their doubt in their abilities. To demonstrate his concern and care, and to prove that he accepted them, H Sir maintains close contact with the students and initiates friendships with them. H Sir also guides his students, similar to

the way Jesus Christ guided His masses, in hopes of altering their mindsets towards education. Specifically, H Sir wants to convey that they could both play hard and work hard (as he himself did), and enjoy status in their chosen field and success in their careers. H Sir anticipates that this strategy would result in students working harder on their own as their self-expectations increased.

> '… I would let them [the students] know… that I could play and drink … but I needed to ensure that they knew that true "ethics" do not simply constitute the standards espoused or practised by a teacher. I wanted them to understand ethics from a new angle. You could play harder as long as you also worked harder. [In other words,] you could know about a bad activity, but you do not necessarily have to engage in such an activity … Because they were often confused about what was good or evil, I provided explanations such as the following: playing at certain times is good, but playing all the time is not good; however, smoking is completely bad for a person. I provided such or similar explanations! …'

To address students' ignorance, H Sir also incorporates trivial 'cold' knowledge about society into his lessons to garner students' interest and facilitate their thinking about the real-world applications of various topics. Specifically, he aims to attract the students' attention, stimulate them to think thoroughly about trivial examples he discloses, and enable them to experience the satisfaction derived from acquiring new knowledge.

> '… I would ask the students if they knew how much they would earn once they graduated … [I would ask them] "did you have a happy Valentine's Day with your girlfriend?" If they said "yes", [I would respond] "you didn't if you two made a baby, then you [your future] would be finished". I told them how much I paid for rent, for kindergarten, for insurance … [and] I would say, "could you pay for all of that?" … [To initiate further discussion, I would ask them] "do you know why there are pirate copies of adult videos of Japan?". "How would they run such businesses?" "Did you know how much a female adult video star earned from a set of movies?"'

During the classroom visit, I was able to observe H Sir employing these strategies throughout his lesson. For example, he initiated a discussion among the students about various movies, which both attracted their focus to the lesson and got them thinking about how the various techniques incorporated in movies that they had seen could be used in their own movie production and scriptwriting assignments. As H Sir contended in his interview, this is a more effective strategy than direct teaching.

H Sir also argued that students tend to listen once they discover that their teachers have considerable experience in various fields. Although not all of the students will be interested in working in a specific field, they may realize that they originally did not know about the topics being discussed by their teachers regarding such a field and would thus pay more attention to

gain more information.

Additionally, H Sir employs such strategies in his teaching because he considers all types of knowledge acquisition (regardless of whether such knowledge is academic or nonacademic, good or bad, abstract or conceptual) and learning should occur daily and be practical. He emphasised that learning should not end once students have left the classroom, and he shared his own practice as an example of daily learning.

Besides, H Sir also likes to subject students to challenges in order to demonstrate their conscientiousness to their studies and encourage them to enhance their capabilities. He anticipated that the students would be capable of recognising their potential, and shared an event that occurred one day during roll call:

> '… I try to remember the names of all my students … [and] I would randomly call them during roll call in an attempt to remember them. … One time … a student sitting at the back said to me, "Sir! If you forget [a name], I will do 30 push-ups!" … He didn't have any animosity towards me, and he was just innocently playing with me. I smiled and replied, "I will remember that!" … He didn't realise, but I planned to miss one or two names after that; when he lost, everyone in the class shouted, "Thirty times! Thirty times!" He then said, hesitating, "Sir! It was only a joke". I responded, "Let's keep your promise and do the push-ups together!" We both got down and I counted

> each push-up while the rest of the class kept silent. The student was a bit overweight, and he was gasping and exhausted after only 15 repetitions, but I did every one, which surprised the students. When we got to 25 push-ups, he got up and wanted to give up. The rest of the class booed him … while I completed the remaining five. I didn't want to shame him afterwards, so I said "It was only for fun, and I can see his effort because he joined me in conducting one task!" Then, I carried on teaching as if nothing unusual had happened … For the student in this case, he was friendlier with me thereafter … In fact, the student would understand that I would tell him in another way that we did and completed it for we said we would [the accountability rather the champion]. I suppose then that the merits of teaching with YJ involve witnessing the previously unknown possibilities that they [the students] experience.'

Furthermore, H Sir often responds promptly and meticulously to students' requests or assignments. This has impressed and stimulated his students to also cultivate a conscientious attitude and motivation to reflect on what they had performed and learned from their studies. H Sir shared the following as an example:

> '… A student once submitted an assignment on a topic of something like, "What was the most influential experience of your life that has shaped who you are today?" and used a single sentence answer: "All of the things and persons in my life have

> been crucial in forming who I am today." … I was enraged by his submission. Now, I don't necessarily mind when students submit answers with so few words, but in this case, I did mind that this student did not realise that he provided the wrong answer, despite considering himself to be smart; in particular, he often chatted at the back [during lessons] … I gave him back three pages of feedback … [and] clearly identified his errors … Then, at the next lesson, he resubmitted the assignment with a three-page answer … I subsequently responded with five pages of feedback … Very quickly, he moved himself to the front row of the classroom and ignored his friends every time I started my lecture. It was obvious that this student was finally starting to pay attention and think during the lessons.'

H Sir expects that his students, despite 'only' being in the YJ programme, could surpass their set thinking frameworks to learn more deeply (namely, by applying the theories they learned in class to practical situations). H Sir also allows students in his classes to select their own topics for analysis and term paper writing, rather than conforming to the usual style of setting assignments (i.e., wherein the instructor preselects two or three questions that the students must answer). This unconventional course arrangement empowers students, which fosters motivation to learn, because they could make their own choices about their studies.

> '… I let them select their own psychology-related research topics. … Papers on anxiety and depression were the most

> common. … Others were about past lives and existence, which was related to Carl Jung's theories. … Some students talked about ADHD [… One paper was particularly interesting. The student focused on personality disorders and co-morbidities (that is, a dissociative identity disorder combined with another type of psychosis). … Most notable in this case was that co-morbidities were really only taught in master's-level psychology courses. …'

H Sir also requires his students to refer to English journals and taught them how to select appropriate journals for a specific topic, which further heightens their competence in self-study.

> '… I talked about correlation regarding their assignments in the next lesson, using the example of how scientists determine differences and correlations between diverse species of fish in a lake. I also taught them how to interpret a matrix table, which actually exceeded the scope of their assignment.'

Both H Sir and his students admitted that this assignment was time-consuming; nevertheless, he knew that making students work harder while they were in school would benefit them in the long term. H Sir referred to this way of teaching as 'tough love'; in other words, H Sir wants to eliminate students' restrictive concepts or customs about learning (e.g., English is too difficult for YJ students), and instead promote their full capacity to learn.

H Sir believes that students should cultivate a conscientious attitude towards learning daily. He shared with his students his experience of leaning Japanese with smartphone applications while commuting daily, and thus encouraged them to continue their own learning to keep from being knocked out from the society.

4.4.4 *Stem from his previous teachers*

H Sir noted that his adherence to particular teaching style originated from his three previous teachers. The first one is his former chemistry classes in secondary school.

> 'For a time, in a chemistry lesson, my classmates loved to copy the whiteboard as notes. For me, might be, I was lazy. I didn't want to copy … I dared to listen and understand it though I might not succeed to do so. I remembered, our vice principal taught us the chemistry and his style was problem based: "Please think why it would be like that.", he said. He then appreciated me: "The others are copying, but you don't! You are really thinking now."…'

Hence, H Sir disagrees with mechanical practices (e.g., copying notes) and argues that students learn best through critical thinking and self-reflection.

The second one is his own mentor when he was completing his master's degree. H Sir noted that he had initially faced considerable panic in his master's studies, and had sought help from a professor in media education.

Unexpectedly, this professor agreed to be H Sir's personal mentor. Every time they met, they would reflect on a movie or book suggested by the professor that corresponded to the help that H Sir then-currently required with his studies. These discussions helped him to establish a solid foundation for his studies. As H Sir stated:

> '… He served as a personal tutor and met with me once or twice weekly or monthly. He would respond to my needs by recommending certain movies or books. For instance, when I had my internship at the Correction Services Department, he offered some insight about jail and capital punishment for me to incorporate into my papers. Sometimes, when I couldn't submit him draft papers or he couldn't mark them in time, I would go directly to his office, where he would listen to what I thought about the movies and provide recommendations on which books I should review for more details ….'

Having benefitted from such an experience, H Sir also strives to cultivate a similar conscientious attitude towards daily learning in his own students.

The third one is Professor T, who was both H Sir's mentor and thesis supervisor. During H Sir's tenure as a master's student, Professor T was only an associate professor in the social work department (although she was later promoted to head of the department). However, H Sir noted that he chose her as his supervisor instead of another more 'famous' professor because Professor T was very dedicated to her research; because of this, H Sir highly

respected her and trusted that he would learn a lot from her. This experience not only ensured that H Sir approached his thesis writing seriously thereafter, but also affected his subsequent teaching beliefs regarding his own students.

> '… I fully believe in the value of such an experience. When extending the lesson to [my own students] … I am always completely serious in telling them about the appropriate attitude to have towards their learning. I always remind them, "please don't think you should stop learning once you leave the classroom". Instead, I make sure to emphasise that they should continuously employ an open attitude towards learning, in order to absorb and digest new knowledge daily. Based on my own experience, I really believe that if you, the teacher, are conscientious, the students will similarly be conscientious. However, if the teacher performs carelessly, the students are also careless.''

4.4.5 *Love to teach in YJ*

Throughout his four years with the YJ programme, H Sir has dedicated himself to fulfilling this belief; this has undoubtedly influenced how he has taught his YJ students. The joy that he receives when his students succeed has assured H Sir that teaching with YJ is the primary source of satisfaction in his life, particularly because he is much more effective teaching YJ students. Hence, he has exerted more effort and time in YJ.

> '… My job satisfaction derives from the surprises I receive in my

> work, my character, and my views towards the system. Together with my students, such breakthroughs can be made. … That is, to alter them [the students] in ways beyond their academic results or the lessons for the growth [of the students] …'
>
> '… The number of people I add to Facebook is about 200-300 per year … Now, I have almost 1,500 friends on Facebook, most of whom know me personally or were taught by me. Overall, they agree with my values and positions on various issues … These people are still young and may accept key positions [in society] 10 or 20 years from now … [I hope] that they will continue to employ the values I instilled in them to improve their lives. Of course, if they believe that my teaching was so effective, my network [and thus my values and teaching opportunities] will also continue to grow in 20 years ….'

Most critically, H Sir does not simply give his students knowledge; instead, he anticipates that they will arrive at their own understanding of concepts through critical thinking and self-reflection. He trusts in the indefiniteness of education, as well as the potential and capability of his students. Thus, he always works to facilitate a knowledge breakthrough for his students and to guide them past their narrow conceptual frameworks and thinking barriers, regardless of whether they are 'only' in the YJ programme or have had to face many failures before. H Sir actively demonstrates these beliefs in his personal life, especially in his relationships with his students. H Sir's teaching style is highly influenced by his own experiences as a student, and

it can be stated simply as facilitating the transfer of knowledge, rather than the teaching of knowledge, which encourages students to alter their attitudes about learning while in YJ to the benefit of their future. H Sir opined about his teaching philosophy:

> ‘Do not infuse knowledge, but rather encourage students to apply knowledge to facilitate their thinking as well as their attitudes towards life.’

4.5 Miss L's Story in YJ

4.5.1 *The road to be a teacher*

Miss L had worked in the field of international marketing for nearly ten years after receiving a business degree; however, she constantly felt unsuited for the job because she was more interested in people. She noted that from early on, her life has been guided by her faith in Christianity. After deeply reflecting on herself with reference to her faith in Christianity, she changed careers and became a teacher.

However, all of Miss L's applications for teacher positions were initially rejected. Feeling disappointed and doubting God, Miss L eventually came across a recruiting advertisement for a local Master in Social Work Programme. She later applied and was accepted into the programme. After graduating, Miss L worked as the trainer of social work teachers at the University of Yuen Nan in mainland China for three years and organised social enterprises for another two years. Thereafter, Miss L's mother became ill, and she quit her full-time job in the social work field to care for her. Nonetheless, she began teaching some evening courses on a part-time basis at various tertiary institutes. When the PYJ programme was launched at our institute, Miss L was invited to teach the Ethics and Values course as well as some psychology classes. At present, she continues to work with YJ.

4.5.2 *The disappointment in YJ*

Miss L was initially disheartened with the YJ programme, based on the bad impression she had of her first class and her continuing doubts about her ability to be a teacher. She deemed the students mostly hopeless because it was rare to meet students with a positive attitude towards their studies. She compared her impact on these students with that on the students she had taught while working on a part-time basis as an evening teacher and while at the mainland university. Fortunately, her faith helped her process these feelings:

> '… At that moment, I doubted myself, doubted whether I could be a teacher. … However, God spoke to me and said, "… That was the road I prepared for you. You can go forth, just like Moses walked across the Red Sea. You have to trust Me. If you exert effort into your work, you would gain support from S Sir as well as a man called Dr. L and someone called Dr. T. Please don't worry. Let's go!"'

Certainly, this negative perception did not remain for long, especially when Miss L had chances to share and have deep conversations with the fellowship students. Miss L seemed to have an internal conscience that made her determined to help her students. These interactions helped alter Miss L's views towards YJ students.

> '… During the fellowship projects, as you [the interviewer] said, if you didn't chat with them [the students] attentively, you would never understand their struggles and difficulties. … I think they, like us, have the image of God and something that

> He has given for their lives. However, their eyes seemed to be masked when in adverse environments, and they also seemed disappointed and unaware of their importance. But I knew that they could change and would behave totally differently if they developed renewed confidence in their abilities, which would give them the power to control their lives.'

4.5.3 *Changing students' lives*

With the above new perceptions, together with her YJ mission, Miss L actively sought various ways to encourage and help the students. She believes:

> 'Humans are interesting! If you always comment badly about them, they behave very badly. But if you continuously encourage them, say things like, "You're able! You're able!", they can prove themselves to be capable at so many tasks. In other words, change is absolutely possible. We saw many students who behaved totally different when you compared them before and after being in YJ. We also had many success stories. Regardless of whether they served as police officers or worked in any other field, if you ask me, I think the most important success of all is enabling them to trust themselves, be capable of living fully, and be comfortably self-assured. … However, I also think that if people can set a goal and maintain a good attitude … [they] can determine their values and trust

> themselves; I suppose that is still okay … If people can hold tightly onto their dreams, they could eventually find their vocation.'

Miss L shared the story of a YJ graduate who had been in the Policing course to illustrate her point. Although he failed the police recruitment test multiple times, this student eventually found his vocation with competence and satisfaction.

> '… Now, when I met him, he was an Assistant Manager of Security. For a mere YJ graduate, with below-average academic performance and who had failed to be recruited by the police previously, this might be considered a blessing! He also saw his classmates, who had succeeded in becoming police constables at the time and worked harder than him, but didn't earn much more than him. I remember his mother being really proud, saying things like, "Oh! Boy! You've succeeded as a police constable, just like your classmates who also work in the streets bearing sunshine and rain." Notably, during the Umbrella Revolution, police officers constantly had to face protestors whether they were willing or not. Luckily, this former student is now working inside an air-conditioned office with a high salary. Furthermore, his shifts are only nine hours a day, which leaves him with a lot of spare time.'

Furthermore, Miss L is not a traditional 'book-learning' teacher, but focuses

on overall student improvement. She has frequently taught the Ethics and Values course at YJ, which she organised to foster students' self-knowledge rather than requiring them to memorise a set of theories. She shared a 'deal' that she made with a student in one lesson:

> '… I still remembered one student who was in M Sir's Policing course during my first year with YJ. He said to me, "Ha! Miss, please give me marks!" I responded, "why should I give you more marks?"; then he said, "Because I quit smoking". "Oh! That's great, I really will give you bonus marks! But why did you quit?" The student then revealed that he had quit because he wanted to improve his health in order to apply for police officer recruitment. He eventually succeeded in joining the police force, and I think his situation emphasizes the importance of goal setting … Subsequently, another student in that class also said to me, "Oh, Miss, I would also like to quit smoking!" "Oh, will you quit too?" Then, I didn't mind providing extra marks for all members of the class. I know that even if the action did not really help these students become police officers, quitting even for only one or two months was nevertheless good for their health'.

Notably, Miss L also preaches her concepts outside of classroom settings. For example, she would organise services for nearby elderly people and minorities, for which students were recruited as volunteers. These activities encouraged students to rethink and rediscover themselves in the context of

understanding others' stories, as well as trust themselves and their competence in the task.

Additionally, Miss L demonstrates sincere concern and care for her students, even after the conclusion of classes. This, in turn, seems to establish the foundation for her students to exert effort into their learning. Former student Tung remarked that she has never forgotten how touched she was by Miss L's concern the time she got very sick during a lesson:

> Tung: '… I want to say that, as a teacher, you may care about your students during the lesson, but beyond that environment, simple greetings or small talk are all that really happens. But in this case, Miss L led me to the canteen and said, "You have vomited too much and must eat something". … She paid for my food … and insisted that I not go to my next classes. She even asked, "Do you need to see the doctor again?" She then gave me $500 for the doctor's consultation. … Then, she collected a taxi and drove me home.'

From the perspective of Tung, Miss L was wholeheartedly dedicated to helping and guiding her students. This dedication was not confined to verbal support and encouragement, but was also obvious in her actions. Tung noted that as a mature student, she had very low self-esteem and was constantly worried about her studies while in YJ. However, Miss L's help

grew her confidence by believing in the student's capabilities. She encouraged Tung to exert effort in her studies and participate in volunteer activities to gain more experience. She emboldened Tung to express her concerns and needs even outside the classroom.

Another example can be seen in the student fellowship projects. Miss L often spends time with students to listen to their concerns and has deep and extensive conversations with them, and even prays for them in the fellowship. Even after graduation, students would seek psychological or spiritual support from Miss L if they encountered a major decision or difficulty. Miss L shared one interesting example about such a student who had been involved in one of her fellowship projects:

> '… This student wasn't known by me since I hadn't taught him before. However, he asked me to pray for him because he wanted to change jobs. I guessed that he might have been one of my students in the Policing course, but he was not. I later realised that we had met, only once, at one of my fellowship projects, but while I had nearly forgotten him, he still remembered me. I was so pleased at this reaction from even the most minor interactions ….'

It is clear that Miss L's care of and devotion to her students and her desire to elicit positive change imbues her daily practices.

4.5.4 *Be a life educator in YJ*

For Miss L, marks and exams scores are unimportant. Instead, she continually urges her students to focus on understanding their own needs, goals, and dreams, while she herself focuses on developing their intrinsic motivation that drives them to do so. Miss L summarised her understanding of teaching as:

> '… I truly believe that it [teaching] is the building block of life … I foster students' understanding and acceptance of themselves and provide them with the power and skills to do something with that understanding.'

Miss L further indicated that many YJ students' stories are indicators that they will work very hard to overcome their difficulties once they determine their dreams, despite others who may deem such dreams impossible. Miss L views student enhancement as more than teaching them or helping them to get high scores or achieve superior academic performance. Instead, Miss L wants to influence her students to discover and live confidently according to their values and special abilities.

In the daily contact with her, Miss L always discusses her concerns about situations with various students, even those she only taught 2 hours each week. I also observed that Miss L loves to share the success stories of YJ graduates, to which she tends to add commentary about her personal experiences regarding those students. As I noted during the classroom visit, these stories served to animate current and incoming students about

continually persevering through difficult times. Miss L also responded promptly to student enquiries, and reassured those with doubts throughout her lesson. This ensured that the overall classroom environment was supportive and encouraging.

After almost seven years with YJ, Miss L indicated that the changes in her students have become her most treasured achievement, and have driven her commitment to her work with YJ.

> '… Is there anything I would put most of my time and heart into? Something that I would think about everywhere? Definitely, the YJ students; in fact, all of the people in YJ. … I am privileged to witness the changes my students make, which are more than worth the work I put in … meaningful work is by far the most important for me.'

Miss L possesses a different view regarding her road to becoming a teacher and confirming her YJ mission with God. It was evident in her interview that Miss L today feels very self-efficacious as a teacher with YJ.

> '… I deeply trust that God gives everyone a special mission, and if you follow that mission wholeheartedly without too many hesitations, He will open the way for you at an appropriate time. What I should do was: "Wait! Follow orders and instructions!" … I would see the signage while I walked along. Some things cannot be planned. Before teaching, I was truly just waiting around for a sign … I taught my students

about God, and told them to trust in Him. I told them my story of trying to become a teacher, and that trust and patience in God were essential ….'

'… Being a social worker previously really benefitted me when I joined YJ, and indeed still benefits me because I emphasise interacting among people rather than just engaging in unidirectional interactions involving just chalk and talk. Moreover, I have also learned to apply the humanistic solicitude of social work to my students. Over the years, I have found many complementary concepts between social work and teaching.'

Overall, Miss L considers her role and responsibilities as a YJ teacher to be a mission, and specifically one that imparts God's love to the students. Thus, Miss L seeks various ways to foster self-reflection and reassurance among the students, both inside and outside the classroom. In YJ, Miss L abides by the following edict:

'I love my students like I love my children, and I always try to consider their points of view!'

Chapter 5: Findings and Discussion

This chapter comprises three sections. The first section describes the teacher beliefs of the three YJ instructor participants. The second section discusses the factors influencing these teacher beliefs and any belief changes. Finally, the third section illustrates how these teacher beliefs influence the instructors' teaching practices.

The findings presented in this chapter incorporate the analysis of the interviews with three YJ instructors, my interviews with the student alumni, and onsite observations of the instructors' classrooms, with reference to the themes of the identified teacher beliefs.

5.1 Characteristics of the Teacher Beliefs

In this section, the YJ instructors' teacher beliefs are organised into three main types: 1) beliefs about their role as YJ instructors, 2) beliefs about the students of YJ, and 3) beliefs about their teaching.

5.1.1 *Beliefs about their Role as YJ Instructors*

Instructors' beliefs about their role as a teacher generally involve two components: their own self-concept and responsibilities of a teacher. The three YJ instructors perceived their teacher self-concepts as follows:

R Sir: *'Loves to teach'*

H Sir: *'Capable of teaching'*

Miss L: *'Suited for teaching'*

Vialle et al. (2005) defined self-concept as the image of a person's self-assessments, whereas Pajares (1992) described it as the perceptions of the self and feelings of self-worth. All of the instructors who participated in this study demonstrated positive self-assessments and self-worth. For example, R Sir claimed that he loved to teach and had loved to teach since he was young. Specifically, he noted:

> '… I supposed it was interesting. Actually, I thought teaching was amusing in the very beginning … I just felt that teaching was really fun…'

H Sir trusted himself to be capable of teaching, specifically with regards to his professionalism and academic ability:

> '… Although I had the training for social work, even earning a master's degree in the field, I was interested in teaching. … Most people I knew dared to do just about anything except teaching. They didn't so much worry about the technical teaching aspects, but disliked having to deal with or control the students. But it was okay for me.'

By contrast, Miss L considered herself suitable to be a teacher because she was interested in working with people and wanted to adopt a Christian 'teacher' identity to help students by revealing to them God's love.

Miss L: (self-disclosed) '… I found myself interested in obtaining a job related to people, and maybe somehow related to my faith. I quickly concluded that I could be a teacher.'

Tung: (remembering Miss L) '… she wanted to utilise her identity as a teacher to help others, an execution of love as espoused by Christianity.'

The instructors' positive self-concepts further influence their teacher beliefs about their roles and responsibilities as teachers in the YJ programme. The three participating instructors for the present study perceive their teaching roles and responsibilities as follows:

R Sir: *'As a Master to teach YJ apostles (students)'*

H Sir: *'As a support for YJ minorities'*

Miss L: *As a mediator to help YJ students rediscover their core values and belief in life'*

R Sir used the concept of 'Master and Apostle' to define his teacher–student relationships. He believes that a teacher should not only be a 'book (academic) master', but also a 'life (social) master' to his students. He claimed that students would show their respect by calling him 'Sir' once they believed that they could learn from him. Notably, R Sir described

teaching with YJ to be both amusing and rewarding; therefore, he strives to be a good 'Master' for his students' life to facilitate their growth into well-rounded and fulfilled people. He noted:

> '… At least, if you [a student] have been taught by me, you know how to have a fulfilling life after your graduation. … Seeing my students go on to live their most fulfilling lives possible is definitely the most rewarding thing for me. … I see them continuing their studies or working outside on their own accord, and I feel truly happy. … Same thing when graduates establish their own families, I am so happy for them ….'

H Sir is fully confident in his social work skills from his preteaching employment, and he thus considers it his responsibility to help YJ students move forward in their lives (similar to how he had previously helped people as a social worker):

> '… As a teacher with faith, I wish to help them [my students] succeed overall, which is somewhat similar to the altruism that I enjoyed about social work.'

H Sir further indicated that he attempts to cultivate students' conscientious attitudes towards daily learning, emphasising that learning should not end

once they have left the classroom. One former student, Chan, expressed her appreciation to H Sir for this lesson:

> Chan: '… Every time I had any trouble or faced a difficult situation, he [H Sir] would offer me a lot of helpful advice. He also encouraged me to be more active in everything. Even if I wasn't good at something, I still wanted to learn it and master it, and H Sir's support in these moments was invaluable. It was like he had created my will to become good.'

By contrast, Miss L considers herself as a teacher on a mission from God to help students' discover their own value, namely by building up their self-confidence, recognising their unique abilities, and establishing life goals and roles. Moreover, she described herself as a bridge by which she could return faith to her students. As she shared:

> '… I feel as if my mission is caring for every student [in YJ]. … I think that I can serve as a bridge to God. … I can bring them back to their faiths. I suppose, if they can find their own values, they would be able to further converse with the Lord. It is because of my deep trust in Him that we, everybody, have the image of God and we have a place within ourselves for God. …'

Overall, regarding their beliefs about their role as YJ instructors, all three participants have high self-esteem, deem themselves suitable for teaching based on their unique attributes, and are capable of, and enjoy, being a teacher. The participants also noted that they are efficacious and able to take responsibility for their students to appropriately and successfully improve their futures.

5.1.2 *Beliefs about the students of YJ*

Similar to the results described in the preceding section, the three instructors received and judged the YJ students differently. R Sir commented that YJ students:

'Struggle in English'

'Lack the determination to learn'

'Must be involved in their studies'

R Sir particularly emphasised these students' difficulty with English, and shared a disappointing experience that helped elucidate the problem:

> '… For example, I taught about "passive voice" in almost every lesson because it was a significant part of their exam. Honestly, I have put so much time into discussing that one concept. However, at some point later in the semester, only half of the 30 students could

> vaguely remember my discussing it. Ten of them claimed that they had never haven heard of the topic ….'

Nevertheless, R Sir did not think YJ students were unintelligent compared with their university and higher diploma counterparts. Instead, he attributed their tendency to receive lower academic scores and perform more poorly overall to their lack of determination to learn and the minimal or no effort they put into even the simplest assignments. In other words, YJ students avoid doing the work due to a lack of motivation to learn. R Sir added that such students might be unaware of the tasks required to facilitate learning, such as setting priorities and managing time; this means they had not established any self-discipline towards their studies. Moreover, R Sir suggested that most YJ students could not sit quietly for long lectures, and thus, diverse approaches should be utilised to ensure that students can learn according to their specific learning style. Finally, he argued that the students should be involved in their studies.

By contrast, H Sir found that YJ students are:

> *'Capable of change'*
>
> *'Ignorant of reality'*
>
> *'Able to learn through critical thinking and self-reflection'*

In contrast to R Sir, H Sir believes that students inherently possess the

abilities for change and improvement. During his interview, he shared the following story that describes one student's internally driven dedication to improve himself:

> '… The student looked like a triad. Most of the teachers disliked him, for he smoked downstairs and played rudely, often pulling and pushing [his classmates] …. However, if you actually talked to him, you would discover that he didn't simply curse and swear needlessly, but talked about his plans for the future … you would realise that he spent his Christmas holidays revising for English. I think people assumed that he would waste that time on girls or playing with friends … but he didn't, to ensure that he could graduate. If you really looked, you could see he tried his best in his studies. I think that strength of his should have been acknowledged ….'

Additionally, H Sir explained that the supposed 'lazy behaviour' (e.g., lack of motivation and unwillingness to learn) attributed to most YJ students results from their overall ignorance to their realities; in other words, these students are not necessarily unmotivated, but merely believe that they still have sufficient time to 'slack off' before having to consider higher education and careers. As H Sir described, most YJ students had also faced a substantial amount of failure and frustration in their lives; hence, although

they may be smart, their continual defeats have demoralised them so severely that most of these students are wracked with low self-esteem and uncertainty regarding their abilities. H Sir suggested that this has led many students to 'give up' on learning or succeeding in life, a response that triggered his own conscience and drove his commitment to helping the YJ students learn and improve. Specifically, H Sir emphasises learning through critical thinking and self-reflection (the strategies by which he himself learned).

Finally, Miss L described the YJ students as:

> *'Attempting to 'mask' their failures'*
> *'Tending to perform well in nonacademic settings'*
> *'Learning about themselves through experience'*

Similar to H Sir, Miss L also believes that most YJ students struggle to overcome pasts of adversity and failure. She found that many of her students felt consistently disappointed in themselves and that they tended to fake helplessness in class as a cover. Indeed, Miss L had such a bad impression with her first 'hopeless' YJ class that she initially regretted joining YJ:

> '… During that first class, I truly thought that they [the students] were hopeless. They were the first YJ cohort. … I mean, people had warned me that the

> students could be described as rubbish and that it was a waste of time to teach them ….'

However, with her faith and after some self-reflection and developing a more accurate understanding of the YJ students' difficulties and struggles following the sharing in one of the fellowship projects, Miss L altered her opinion. She also decided that some YJ students might not perform well academically, but could succeed in other areas. For example, she noted that her students behaved completely differently and performed much better in volunteer activities than on typical school assignments. Consequently, Miss L contended that some students could better understand and accept their own values and abilities by participating in such experiential learning activities. One former student, Tung, is a successful example of this approach:

> Tung: '… Since joining some volunteer groups, my perspective on the world has widened. As a new student, I felt lonesome and pitiful … but quickly … I was not that bad! … [I began to realise that] if I am capable, why don't I try to … help, or show concern for others who need it; after all, there are only a few decades in life ….'

Generally, the participants in the present study admitted that YJ students

might not be fit for advanced academic study such as learning English; however, they also agreed that these students possess aptitudes and abilities in other areas. Most of them who display a lack of motivation or willingness to learn do so in response to a history of being labelled losers, by both themselves and society. Thus, YJ students typically enter the programme with very low self-esteem and self-confidence and possessing a substantial amount of uncertainty and frustration about themselves and their future. Nevertheless, the YJ instructors believe that with proper teaching and support, these students could 'remember' how to learn because they are both sufficiently capable and intelligent. The instructors also indicated that they understood '*accommodating*' to be the most common learning style among low academic achievers. These students prefer engaging in 'hands-on' experiences for learning, and they eagerly face new and challenging tasks, but they are highly reliant on teachers for help in their studies. Thus, YJ instructors often avoid the traditional sit-and-take-notes style of learning. Instead, they create environments where students can actively engage in learning through practical experiences, critical thinking, and reflection. Because students with an *'accommodating'* learning style also typically require adequate support from their teachers during learning (Archambault et al., 2012), this is also provided in the YJ programme.

5.1.3 *Beliefs about Teaching YJ*

In accordance with the different perceptions towards YJ students, instructors also possess different beliefs about their teaching in the YJ

programme. For example, R Sir identified three main beliefs about his teaching in YJ:

'English is not a strength among YJ students'

'YJ students should be informed of their shortcomings'

'Targets should be set for YJ students to work towards'

R Sir's primary belief related to teaching at YJ is that English learning is not favoured by most of the students, which aligns with the feedback from students complaining that the English classes were too difficult. However, this challenge did not deter R Sir from teaching the subject. Instead, he altered his judgement of students and changed what he considered to be effective teaching according to the students' academic performance in various scenarios. For example, R Sir noted in his interview that one of his favourite students did not have the top English score, and actually had almost zero English ability when he started; however, R Sir appreciated his efforts and improvement over time:

'… Looking at the students who were especially weak, really very weak … for example, student Y in the Fire Services course; he had almost zero ability [in English] on his first day … however, he worked very hard, and that was the most important factor. You could see when he started to pick up what was being taught, and he began to really improve. …'

Hence, in practice, the first responsibility of a *'master'* teaching YJ *'apostles'* is determining how to motivate those apostles (students) to learn. In response to his students' *'lack of determination [towards] learning'* (and, thus, their unmotivated and unwilling behaviour), R Sir typically chooses to honestly but sincerely tell the students about their shortcomings in their studies, with the anticipation that this would improve student awareness, which, in turn, would drive their success. Former student Lam confirmed that R Sir's idea worked:

> Lam: '… R Sir was the only one of all the teachers I had who made me realise that I put too much pressure on myself. He asked me why, and told me that I needed to relax and trust my own abilities. … R Sir also thought that I was easily affected by my emotions. So he told me that I should learn to manage my emotions while pursuing higher achievements. … R Sir's teachings were very helpful to me in different aspects of my life. …'

Additionally, to accommodate students' diverse learning styles, it is critical for teachers *'to be involved in their studies'*. R Sir set learning targets for his students, with gradually increasing requirements, to follow their study progress, noting:

> '… At least, there is a target for them to strive for. This is important for them to find a way to arrive at their "homeland". … You can provide them with assignments they can work on or practise with to increase their chances of passing ….'

H Sir recognised that his teaching in YJ is also influenced by the nature of YJ students. Four major beliefs guide his approach:

> *'Knowledge should be practical and learning should occur daily'*
> *'The aim of education is to facilitate a fulfilling and rewarding life'*
> *'Theories should be applied to facilitate deeper learning'*
> *'Working hard now may ease difficulties in the future'*

H Sir argued that YJ students tend to be *'ignorant of reality'* and thus have few mental frameworks. For example, YJ students mostly believed that they were poor at English and, therefore, they would not consult English sources for their assignments. The students (especially those from the HKDSE) also presumed that they would continue on to higher education after graduating from the YJ programme, rather than starting a career immediately; hence, they had rare interest in discussions about their careers and realities because they believed that there was still time to *'slack off'*.

However, H Sir challenges his students to move beyond this narrow framework and embrace learning and knowledge. In his teaching, H Sir considers all types of knowledge (regardless of whether such knowledge is academic or nonacademic, good or bad, or abstract or conceptual) and its learning should be daily and practical.

Moreover, H Sir disagreed with mechanical learning strategies and argued that YJ students, like himself, would *'learn best from thinking and self-reflection'* and applying their learning. One of his former students, Chan, agreed with his rationale and noted that the approach had a major influence on her ability to learn:

> Chan: '… [When I started in H Sir's class] … my way of thinking was quite narrow. Upon meeting H Sir though, he gave me so much advice and constantly encouraged me. … In fact, he was always willing to give me options whenever we talked. … I suppose you could say he has helped me broaden my mind or escape the constricted thinking that I used to have, enabling me to consider situations in various ways …. He would also discuss ideas, and recommend movies or experiments that encouraged me to think in different ways. …'

Furthermore, H Sir admitted that he himself was not smart, but that hard work brought him the achievements he sought in life. He believes that education can facilitate a fulfilling and rewarding life, and endeavours to instil this same belief in his students to counteract their ignorance. H Sir trusted that his students were capable of change, and told them that they would face less difficulties in the future if they worked harder now. Detailing how he encouraged his students in lessons, he noted:

> '… I would tell them [the students] … that if they felt their English was bad, why didn't they work to improve it? If you don't have the motivation to reach your own goal, how can you expect to improve? How many students were there above them [the higher diploma students] who dropped out by the middle of the term? Did they want to be next? In other words, [I talked about] their attitude regarding how they would deal with their comforts … I told the students that I also didn't stop. On my phone, there were no games; there were only teaching applications, which I used to learn Japanese during my daily commute. I said … I was also not sure when I would be knocked out from the society ….'

H Sir's approach undoubtedly originated from his belief that he has a responsibility to cultivate within his students both a conscientious attitude

towards learning and a continuous desire to improve their lives. He considers this approach as supporting YJ minorities.

Miss L articulated three core beliefs about teaching at YJ, which again reflect the teacher's understanding of her students' needs:

> *'Life education comprises of understanding and accepting oneself'*
> *'Teacher interaction with students is crucial'*
> *'Teachers should assist students in identifying their unique abilities'*

Miss L argued that YJ students tended to *'mask'* their failures within their minds to avoid thinking about them. It was, therefore, difficult to verbally persuade them to change and/or motivate them to learn because they considered themselves to be academically weak. Instead, Miss L would adopt more interactive teaching approaches, such as some experiential learning strategies, to facilitate learning. She anticipated that once students could recognise their unique abilities and rediscover their dreams for the future, they would be motivated to work harder. Miss L shared some stories of students who were successful in this regard to illustrate her point. For example:

> '… There was a chef who was over 30 [years old], yet he had a clear target and, thus, eventually succeeded in

> becoming a fire fighter. … we probably never would have believed that a 34- or 35-year-old man could be recruited as a fire fighter [after graduating from YJ]. But it is not a joke! … [Additionally,] I always talk about one student, Sun, who came from a single-parent family living on public aid; [he] had a dream to be a police officer. Sun, thus, decided to enrol in the Policing course at YJ, despite already being 26 [years old]. He eventually was successfully recruited to the local police force after his graduation. Looking back, I can see that his life has totally changed; he really was a talented boy. If he could hold tightly onto his dream, he could eventually find his vocation ….'

Miss L also contended that life education is not primarily talking about knowledge or principles; rather, life education is about letting students experience things. Moreover, she suggested that learning through hearing others' stories can encourage students to think about, and better understand, themselves. Specifically, this learning approach can enable students to identify their own values and unique abilities, as well as set dreams and goals for the future. Miss L noted that this acceptance process was particularly essential for students who needed to have their belief in life restored and the internal *'masking'* of remembered failures removed.

To conclude, the YJ instructors who participated in this study indicated that

their teaching beliefs are heavily influenced by their perceptions towards the YJ students. Despite the varying perceptions (and, therefore, varying beliefs), two common themes were noted.

First, the instructors do not appear to alter their views based on whether they are teaching specific information or theories in certain disciplines. Instead, they seem to suggest that YJ education should, on the whole, be less academic, with a focus on daily, practical, and student-centred learning. Furthermore, successful learning is not only measured by high academic performance or scores, but by students' progress and the self-changes they make. This belief undoubtedly affects how instructors perceive their epistemological beliefs regarding certain teaching strategies or techniques, as well as their attitudes towards teaching and learning overall (Pajares, 1992).

Second, the instructors disagreed with traditional teaching approaches, such as long, lecture-based lessons and mechanical note-taking, largely because the learning style of most YJ students contradicts these approaches. In particular, the instructors noted that their students do not possess long attention spans or sufficient patience to learn through silent listening. Thus, YJ classes are formulated to encourage active student involvement, practical experiences, and critical thinking. For example, R Sir found that students are better able to grasp English language skills when they are more actively involved in the learning process. H Sir urges his students to learn via trial-and-error approaches, in order to overcome not only the

knowledge difficulties, but also their mindsets related to learning and applying their knowledge. Similarly, Miss L argued that the best way for students to realise their unique abilities and values is to let them experience things and engage in self-reflection when they work with others.

The common teaching strategies employed by these instructors are what Norton, Richardson, Hartley, Newstead, and Mayes (2005) described as 'student-centred approaches'. In these approaches, students are involved in mutual interaction with their teachers during lessons. In other words, instead of directing the lessons, instructors adopt a supportive role that facilitates student learning. Accordingly, YJ students take part in a series of activities organised by their teachers, rather than passively sitting in the classroom. The activities begin with the acquisition and understanding of a particular topic or concept. Then, students analyse and evaluate the theoretical knowledge by engaging in applied experiments. Subsequently, the creative thoughts that are aroused from students' reflections on the experiments are applied, as appropriate to future situations they encounter (Hamilton, 2011; Bethell & Morgan, 2011; Chen et al., 2016). As a result, these experiential approaches successfully meet instructors' aims: that students understand crucial skills and knowledge, overcome narrow mindsets, and develop their capabilities and value systems.

5.2 Factors Influencing Teacher Beliefs and Changes in Belief

As indicated by the extant literature (see Chapter 2), teacher beliefs are also established from, and influenced by, experiences, preconceptions or values about some individual

social or cultural factors, and how present teaching experiences are perceived. The roles of these factors in the teaching beliefs of the YJ instructors who participated in the present study, as well as their roles in changing those beliefs, are described in the following subsections.

5.2.1 *Teachers' Experiences*

Experiences, for the purposes of this study, refer to the YJ teachers' experiences as students (including things their former teachers or mentors said), as teacher trainees, and as teachers in previous positions.

Stergiopoulou (2012, as cited in Utami, 2016) argued that all of a teacher's experiences, from their very first schooling to their most recent employment, contribute to the teacher's teaching beliefs. Thus, the fact that the three instructors described herein chose to become teachers, and specifically to become teachers with the YJ programme, is rooted in their experiences. R Sir noted that his interest in teaching was aroused as a child by watching his aunt grade her students' assignments at home. He added that he had served as a private tutor since he was in matriculation, stating:

> '… my aunt would mark her students' assignments at home … I suppose I found it interesting. Actually, I thought teaching was amusing in the very beginning. After I completed fifth form, I started to tutor students in primary and even junior secondary years. I just felt that teaching was really fun …'

In short, R Sir's *'love to teach'* attitude originated from his family. Similarly, H Sir elected to teach YJ students because, coming from a family that received public aid and having performed poorly on his A Level exam, he felt a connection with many of them:

> '… I came from a family that used public aid throughout my childhood. And although I graduated from university, I wouldn't consider myself academically "smart". I mean, the results of my A Level exam were 3 Ds and 2 Es. These experiences have helped me identify with the YJ students ….'

H Sir's own experiences facilitated his trust in YJ students' capability for change, despite their low self-concept and their reputation for being 'lazy' and 'ignorant'. Moreover, H Sir feels a responsibility to support academic minorities by teaching with the YJ programme. Miss L's intention to be a teacher was also influenced by her experiences. For example, she told a former student, Tung, that she was very poor as a young adult and could not afford university tuition; however, some of her friends helped her. Today, she adopts a teacher identity that emphasises helping similarly struggling students.

Other notable experiences, such as receiving appreciation from their teachers or parents during childhood, also influence the ways the

instructors herein teach today. For example, R Sir was not always obedient as a child and was told, 'Do the right job at the right time!', a lesson which he has retained for his own students:

> '… In the past, I would sit still rather than run around the restaurant. … As I got older, adults around me always said, "Do the right job at the right time!" It's like if you're playing a soccer match, that's where you put in the most effort. …'

R Sir also addressed the reason that YJ students lack determination to learn, arguing that this occurs because they do not distinguish any importance between the different tasks involved in learning, nor do they set studying priorities.

Moreover, H Sir was praised by his chemistry teacher for thinking through concepts rather than merely copying notes in the lesson, which is another practice he encourages among his YJ students today. In other words, H Sir is a proponent of learning via critical thinking and reflection, and largely disagrees with traditional mechanical practices:

> '… I remember our vice principal teaching us chemistry, and his style was problem-based, and so he said things like, "Please explain why it would happen like that." He seemed to appreciate my answers … He said,

> "Look at H sitting there thinking rather than copying. The lesson is meant for thinking!"'

Pajares (1992) argued that teacher beliefs are also established from what teachers' former mentors said to them or from the training they had received. For example, H Sir's argument for daily and practical learning originated from the teachings of his former personal mentor:

> '… His mentorship taught me what a professor was. He also made me realise that knowledge is not divided into good or bad information, and that it can be shared by both scholars and laypeople. … With him, I could talk about any issue, and he would not only respond in a general way, but also in a very realistic and specific way ….'

H Sir today feels a responsibility to similarly cultivate a conscientious attitude towards daily learning among his own students. The importance of a conscientious attitude towards learning was also ingrained in H Sir from another mentor:

> '… I initially came to her [Professor T] for help with essay writing … [I remember once] I roughly drafted some text and sent it off to be 'done' for that week. I can only describe that work as rubbish. However, when it

> was returned, she had marked my rubbish seriously. I was truly embarrassed and regretful, having done so little while she did so much. … That's when I realised, a conscientious teacher could influence her students to work more seriously ….'

Additionally, both H Sir and Miss L had received professional social work training, which they acknowledged influenced their teaching beliefs while in YJ. As H Sir noted in his interview:

> '… My belief, as a social worker, was also to support such persons. By that, I mean I had a belief in humanism that I preferred … many of them [the students] are also very much like my clients from when I still worked as a social worker, and I constantly think about ways to help such students. I suppose such people arouse empathy in me because of my training as a social worker.'

This hints at why H Sir views his role as a YJ instructor to encompass *'supporting YJ minorities'*, and why he employs so many varied methods to motivate his students for their future. Similarly, Miss L considers her social work training to be a gift from God that enables her to be more interactive with YJ students during lessons:

> '[God really gave me a] double gift … I could be a social worker and also a teacher in YJ. Being a social worker previously really benefitted me when I joined YJ, and indeed still benefits me because I emphasise interacting among people rather than just engaging in unidirectional interactions involving just chalk and talk. Moreover, I have also learned to apply the humanistic solicitude of social work to my students. Over the years, I have found many complementary concepts between social work and teaching.'

Farrell and Ives (2014) also indicated that a teacher's previous teaching roles impact the present teacher beliefs. For all three instructors described herein, their teaching experiences considerably influenced their teacher beliefs of YJ students, especially at the beginning. R Sir was a secondary teacher before joining the YJ programme, and he often compared the YJ students with his previous students:

> '[my students] consider themselves to be old enough, and they always try to convince me by saying, "please don't treat me like a secondary boy!" …'
>
> '… Their behaviour was better than that of the students at the secondary school I taught at before.'
>
> '… Are they [the YJ students] very different, intelligence-wise, from the secondary students? I don't

> think so. … They are smart, but they lack determination [regarding their studies] … Honestly … they don't put effort into even very simple tasks ….'

By contrast, H Sir had experience teaching students in degree and higher diploma courses. He considered those students to be more zealous and aggressive, yet fearful; whereas, the YJ students are passive and seemingly study without any direction. The YJ students also constantly deal with uncertainty and obliviousness towards their reality:

> '… Some of them are smart, but have fallen through the cracks, and they feel a high amount of doubt regarding their abilities. Comparatively, their fears are less intense than those of higher diploma or undergraduate students, but they are, nevertheless, doubtful and frustrated. I think this especially applies to those who are deemed lazy or ignorant about the reality of society.'

Miss L was notably disheartened following her first YJ class when the students seemed 'hopeless' and lacking in any motivation to learn. This reaction stemmed, at least in part, from her experiences working as a part-time teacher of evening courses and as a social worker trainer at a mainland university because she had never dealt with such students before:

> '… [It was] because my social circle initially had no such people [YJ]. My students at the part-time evening courses didn't need me to conduct any classroom management! … Honestly, I had been appointed to conduct training back at the mainland university since I graduated. Even when I worked in the business field previously, I managed banding processes and, thus, interacted with beautiful guys and beautiful products in exhibitions. Similarly, when I worked as a trainer at the university in Yuen Nan, all of the students were beautiful boys and girls.'

5.2.2 *Teachers' Preconceptions*

According to Utami (2016), teacher beliefs may emerge from an individual's personal and professional values or from the culture in which they work. Because YJ instructors rarely knew the students in YJ prior to joining the teaching team, their initial impressions generally echo the biases and judgements from society (that YJ students are a group of academic failures who are unmotivated to study and tend to disrupt the class). The instructors interviewed in the present study shared their initial impressions to YJ as follows:

> R Sir: 'They [the colleagues] said that they [YJ students] are unwilling to focus on lessons, are terrible at all subjects, fight in class, and

behave insubordinately to the teacher.'

H Sir: '… I originally thought that they [the students] are disobedient. I had this impression that they would be unmotivated to study, and might even yell or talk back to the teachers … it's like people thought every student is a "Chan Ho Lam" [the triad] from that movie in the '90s.'

Miss L: '… My first YJ students seemed like animals! … I truly thought that they were hopeless in the classroom.'

Notably, it was not only the instructors who entered YJ with these biases. The students I interviewed also recalled similar negative impressions before enrolling with YJ:

Chan: '… There were many people telling me not to join YJ at the time I was accepted, because they thought that the teachers must be bad and that all of the students were also bad, especially at academics. … I also think that the group [of students] agree that they were rubbish, like, who cares about us? Is there

anyone who really cares about "bad guys" like us?'

Tung: '… Every student who is admitted to the YJ program most likely has some experience of failure … [me,] …'

These negative social biases affect the instructors' beliefs about the students and their roles as YJ teachers, especially at the beginning. As H Sir noted:

'… People's reactions would be really different when you tell them what and where you teach. Like, if you reveal that you teach undergraduate courses or with YJ, there would be a notable difference ….'

However, in some cases, these biases may encourage instructors who want to help students to apply to YJ. For example, H Sir and Miss L are both Christians, and they consider teaching to be a way to help students learn about and communicate with God:

H Sir: '… My belief, the belief of Catholicism … leads me to compare my teaching of YJ students with Jesus Christ's teaching of the masses …'

Miss L: '… God said to me: "… That was the road …." I

> think that I can serve as a bridge to God. I may not bring them to the church, but I can bring them back to their faith.'

Moreover, both H Sir and Miss L were social workers prior to joining YJ, and they agreed that their social work training has influenced their efforts to help YJ students, similar to how they helped clients previously.

Furthermore, at my institute, the instructors particularly stress one of the central missions of the YJ programme, which is to strengthen students' capabilities for further schooling or work. Thus, YJ courses are aimed at enhancing the motivation of students and helping them develop self-learning skills to pursue further independent study (EDB Yi Jin, 2016). The instructors in the present study generally share the programme course aims as their own teacher beliefs. Moreover, as mentioned, these three YJ instructors never measured the success of a student based only on academic performance or scores; instead, they also consider students' overall progress and self-change. Although initially focused on academic performance, R Sir has learned some techniques from his colleagues that have enabled him to better handle and respond to YJ students' problems:

> '… I listened to what my colleagues talked about regarding their problems with the students and learned ways to handle different situations. Just by listening and eavesdropping!'

5.2.3 *Teachers' Experiences with Students and their Values*

Joram and Gabriele (1998) contended that teachers' self-reflection is another factor leading to changes in their beliefs. In particular, when teachers reflect on their daily experiences and realise that their knowledge and practices are different from their preassumptions (Utami, 2016), they would re-examine their beliefs and consider whether they should be changed. Schön (1983) specifically used the term "reflective practitioner" to describe the professionals, like teachers who reveal their understandings from experiences of a practice such as daily teaching, and subsequently make sense of new situations in the following academic years. Notably, these three YJ instructors are considered to be a reflective practitioner.

For example, R Sir shared that he used to keep reviews of his lesson designs, the pedagogies used, and the effectiveness of the lessons in order to optimally attract incoming students' interest and motivation to learn. These actions can be attributed to his beliefs that YJ students find English very difficult to learn and that they should be involved in their education. However, he changed tactics upon realising with disappointment that still only a few students were able to pick up learning English, especially at the more difficult levels. R Sir thus further modified his teaching practices to include more active student engagement:

> '… I review the problems I faced during the previous semester related to lesson design, such as the

> pedagogies I used, the effectiveness of the lesson, the interest of the lesson to the students, or motivational factors, and then fine-tune my teaching strategy or the classroom materials used for the coming year.'

Meanwhile, H Sir's initial beliefs originated from his university mentors and chemistry teacher (e.g., 'knowledge should be practical and learning should occur daily' and 'learning occurs through critical thinking and self-reflection'). During his interview, he recalled showing students his idea book wherein he logged the various events and situations that occurred each day for reflection:

> '… I [told them that I] always carried around an idea book, and that I would mark down random things that I saw, thoughts about the students, or events that I attended, whether related to teaching or media. … For me, I consider such reflection to be the most important part of the experience. … I told my students that writing is a key mechanism for contemplating their experiences: writing down key words, full sentences, or even drawing quick sketches all facilitate self-reflection … I myself believe that it is important and helpful to continuously upgrade oneself. …'

Initially, H Sir did not think the idea book strategy was important to teach

to YJ students; instead, he let them choose their own avenue for reflection, as he did previously as a social worker. However, he quickly realised that this did not work very well because (1) the students did not want to self-reflect and (2) they were unsure what other methods for self-reflection there were. Therefore, H Sir altered his views on education, to suggest that the purpose of education is to facilitate a fulfilling and rewarding life. Notably, H Sir altered his beliefs prior to changing his practices in YJ (Herrera, 2010).

By contrast, Miss L's beliefs and practices changed interactively (Herrera, 2010). As she shared in her interview, she was disappointed with her first class of YJ students. However, after reflecting on her own faith and starting the student fellowship projects, she modified her beliefs about the students. Specifically, instead of believing that they were individuals attempting to 'mask' their failures, Miss L realised that many of them were students who performed poorly in academic settings, but they could perform well in nonacademic settings. Indeed, when one student from her first YJ class reported to Miss L that he was joining a short-term missionary project in Japan, Miss L decided she should assist students in identifying their unique abilities and rediscovering their dreams for the future:

> '… Let me say … He worked very hard. He woke up early every day to read the Bible and related booklets. I remember thinking that during his time at YJ he rarely knew the verses. What made him change? Or who? A

> man who can find something and hold it tight can help himself move forward. He was only about 21 [years old] at YJ. Afterwards, he was able to move past the barriers of language, cultural obstruction, and money shortage to complete his missionary project. He was mature enough to do it and commit to doing so. Currently, he does not use a mobile phone. Incredible! Especially that for an adolescent; is it a joke? But it is true. …'

In short, the establishment of teacher beliefs is mainly rooted in instructors' experiences including significant experiences involving their families or former teachers. These experiences affect the teacher beliefs about their self-concept and their role and responsibilities as an instructor. The social and cultural environment around instructors (which herein refers to the biases about the YJ programme and YJ students in Hong Kong) may also influence teacher beliefs, although individual experience plays a comparatively more stable and stronger role. Changes in beliefs, by contrast, are primarily driven by self-reflection about instructors' current perceptions and experiences and generally relate to changing ideas about the students or teaching environment. As indicated herein, although YJ instructors had various preassumptions before joining the programme, these were not the most intense obstructions to change; instead, the values adopted from the instructors' religious faiths, their families, or their former teachers may have contributed the most to modify teacher beliefs in YJ.

5.3 Influence of Teacher Beliefs on Teaching Practices

In this section, I discuss how these teacher beliefs influence the three instructors' daily teaching practices.

First, because R Sir believes the YJ students lack determination to learn, he sets rules and boundaries with the students at the beginning of each term. He also describes the most important components of studying so that they can set targets and priorities and follow step-by-step guidelines for achievement. He believes that setting a target would motivate the students to find a way to arrive at their learning 'homeland'. One former student, Lam, praised R Sir's strategy:

> Lam: '… R Sir's teaching really influenced me. He always said that everything should be done step by step, and that dreams of reaching the sky aren't achieved in a single bound! … [He told me], "you'll achieve more for yourself if you set up the foundation first". I wanted to be the best at everything, but that sometimes made me incapable of doing anything. I skipped some steps in the middle [of the learning process] and didn't have a good foundation. Thus, my results ended up being no good. He helped me realise that the results I achieved would only be as good as the foundation I built them on.'

Additionally, in response to most YJ students struggling with English, R Sir employs several strategies, including verbal persuasion, recognition, prompt feedback, and

collaborative grouping. He creates assignments with different levels of difficulty to enable students to be involved and improve over time following a careful step-by-step approach. He provides an environment wherein his students can be actively involved in their studies, rather than being simply forced to sit quietly through several hours of lecturing. A typical lesson is described as follows:

> '… For example, I hand out a worksheet for them to complete and later instruct them to write their answers on the board and to write their names next to the answers they provided. […] With this strategy, even the Fire Services students [who are weak in English] would work harder on their assignments. Because they must acknowledge their own answers, they would be careful to avoid making mistakes. Let's say I am Johnny and I have to write "Johnny" beside my answers: everyone knows which answers are mine. If I end up being marked wrong by the teacher, I will feel embarrassed, and, thus, I work hard to make sure my answers are correct before writing them out for everyone to see ….'

In summary, R Sir's beliefs about the YJ students influence his enforcement of various teaching practices that address students' difficulties with learning English and aim to alter their motivation and study habits. R Sir targets students' motivation, progress, and overall improvement, rather than simply their academic performance. This aligns with his teacher beliefs of the role and responsibilities of a YJ instructor (i.e., as a Master who teaches apostles) and his goal of providing his students with the skills and knowledge necessary to lead happy and fulfilling lives.

Second, H Sir considers his role as a YJ instructor to primarily be a support for academic minorities. He encourages his students to expand their mindsets the way he himself (as someone who has status in his fields and success in his careers) accomplished. According to H Sir, this mental shift drives students to set higher expectations for themselves and, subsequently, work harder. H Sir also ensures that he always receives student concerns sincerely and responds to them promptly, but with care. Notably, his caring is expressed not only in verbal greetings, but is embodied in his daily practices inside and outside of the classroom. Furthermore, H Sir frequently maintains contact with his former students to further confirm his acceptance and support of them. He believes that such acceptance helps increase YJ students' self-confidence:

> '… I would give them my phone number … I would remain in or nearby the classrooms after lessons if they had questions, and I added them on Facebook. Sometimes I even participated in their class activities … or welcomed them into my home … Even the students that weren't close with me, if they decided to come, I would let them in. They would usually feel surprised that they were really allowed in a teacher's home. Another example, I would go for a meal at a certain restaurant if I knew that one of my students worked there on a part-time basis. I would also talk with them or their colleagues. … they seemed to appreciate that, like, "ah, sir really came!"'

To deal with students' ignorance about reality, H Sir introduces some trivial so-called

'cold' knowledge of the society in his lessons, which typically garners student interest and facilitates critical thinking about real-world applications. He aims to attract the students' attention and trigger their critical thinking when trivial examples are disclosed; notably, H Sir is most satisfied when knowledge has been successfully transferred. The concepts of daily and practical learning, critical thinking, and self-reflection are crucial. He encourages students to conduct experiments, which can help them understand complex theoretical concepts by relating them to phenomena in their daily lives outside the classroom:

> '… In one class, I had some students pretend to queue up in front of the ATM at the campus entrance. Although most people line up vertically from the front of the ATM, they [my students] lined up horizontally. The experiment was a test of social psychological conformance, to reveal how many people "followed the masses", so to speak, by also lining up horizontally in front of the ATM. I consider such [an arrangement] to be practical [for the students' study of psychology]. …'

Furthermore, H Sir views education as a way to facilitate a fulfilling and rewarding life and informs students that working harder now would ease their difficulties in the future. In this way, he forces students to submit their assignments with references from English journals and teaches them how to review and select appropriate journals to increase their competence in self-study. Moreover, instead of setting the usual two or three topics for assignments, H Sir allows his students to select their own topics for analysis:

> '… For an assignment, some teachers will set, let's say, three to four questions on different topics … No matter which question the students choose to write about, the topics and the assignments are guaranteed to remain within the teachers' area of expertise, which means easy marking. … However, for the assignments turned in by my students … the marking sometimes became difficult. Over the Christmas holiday, I had to spend my otherwise free time reading up on a range of topics before I could grade their papers. … I had also required them to submit their assignments with references from English journals. … [Given all this], I can definitely say that their assignments were better than some of those I have received from students in higher diploma courses. They weren't aware of my rationale for assigning such a difficult task, and so they frequently complained. I only replied (though with encouragement), "You will understand after you get through this!"'

In summary, H Sir expresses his beliefs through self-example in order to show "how" and encourage YJ students to overcome any conceptual or competence barriers in their mental frameworks. He also reveals his own history and experiences to students as an example of the *'work harder now to ease difficulties in the future'* belief. Finally, H Sir expects his students to cultivate a conscientious attitude towards daily learning, which they will hopefully maintain even after leaving the classroom.

Third, Miss L considers herself to be a YJ instructor responsible for helping students recognise their unique abilities and rediscover their dreams for the future. However, she

also understands YJ students to be difficult to convince through the excessive use of principles about their lives. Hence, she seeks help from colleagues and started student fellowship and voluntary services projects wherein students could share deep conversations about their struggles and difficulties other than the usual lessons. With these opportunities, students could think about and rediscover themselves through understanding others' stories, as well as redevelop confidence in their ability to help others. Moreover, the skills and knowledge gained can be applied by students to their own work in the future (Yardley, Teunissen, & Dornan , 2012):

> '… In fact, I suppose, "if you present too many principles [to the students] in an attempt to convince them about certain phenomena, they might not be easily convinced. I, therefore, recommend letting them experience certain phenomena, and doing so could enable them to connect with such phenomena!" … I would lead them [the students] to participate in volunteer work. Through these activities, they could meet people from various social classes and discover how their capabilities could be used to help others. Seeing them work, I believe that they could change.'

Additionally, recognition of their unique abilities and a set of clear goals for the future can facilitate students' self-reflection and subsequent rebuilding of their beliefs in life. As a colleague of Miss L contended:

> '… Please don't think that you're merely serving "old people"! Truly, they are the angels letting you serve them so that you can prove your

importance.'

Furthermore, Miss L directs her students to identify and adopt their mastery-approach goals, which helps build an intrinsic drive for achievement (Urdan & Schoenfelder, 2006; Wiesman, 2012). She also encourages students to challenge themselves as they strive for success. The many success stories from former students (e.g., the chef who became a fire fighter, the mature student who was recruited as a police officer, and the boy who joined the Japan missionary) suggest that her teaching approaches are valuable. One of these students, Tung, shared her appreciation of Miss L with a similar thought:

> Tung: '… I was scared, lacking in confidence, and just felt lost and doubtful when I first arrived at YJ … However, Miss L inspired so much confidence in me. She always seemed to trust my abilities and encouraged all of us [the whole class] to try. Now when I face difficulties, I'll recall what she said to me, or some of the things she did … and eventually I can keep up my persistence ….'

Similar to R Sir and H Sir, Miss L demonstrates care and support for her YJ students by listening to, and providing advice about, their difficulties. She also constantly motivates her students to set goals to help them achieve their dreams. Finally, Miss L promotes volunteering along with interacting with, and listening to, others as a core method by which students can learn, think, and know more about themselves.

Overall, the practices of the three instructors described herein correspond to their teacher beliefs. This confirms Borg's (2003, cited in Galvis, 2012) concepts, as well as his argument that instructors' beliefs filter knowledge and meaning during teaching-related decision-making. According to van Uden et al. (2013a), this knowledge and meaning can be divided into three categories. The first category is related to the practices that influence the students themselves. R Sir, H Sir, and Miss L all view their YJ students as lacking in self-esteem and self-confidence, and they noted that the students are reluctant to consider themselves capable of learning (Srivastava, 2013). Therefore, the instructors first seek ways of dealing with this core problem.

The second category describes the instructors' educational goals in teaching. For example, R Sir believes that students should be aware of their learning shortcomings (i.e., regarding skills or habits), after which he would help them prioritise and guide them step by step towards their set targets. H Sir focuses on increasing his students' self-learning competency, rather than simply teaching them some theories. Meanwhile, Miss L believes that the goal of her teaching is to have students understand and accept themselves and to recognise that they have the power to accomplish things.

The third category concerns pedagogical knowledge about student development, and it is related to the methods employed by instructors that motivate their students. For example, the instructors herein perceive the YJ students to have low motivation and an unwillingness for learning due to their narrowed mentalities and struggle regarding feelings of inadequacy. They also noted that such students cannot sustain their attention for long because of their accommodation learning style, and, thus, they should learn through active experimentation (with adequate guidance and support) rather than

lectures and note-taking (McCarthy, 2016). Therefore, the YJ instructors tend to adopt a 'student-centred approach' (Norton et al., 2005) with reference to their beliefs.

Chapter 6: Conclusion, Implications and Recommendations

This chapter is comprised of three sections. The first section provides a brief overview of the results, the second section discusses the study implications, and the third section offers some recommendations for future research.

6.1 Summary of the Results

The idea for this research originated from my observation that many dedicated instructors have taught in the YJ programme for several years and have altered the lives of numerous low-academic-achieving students. To learn more, I conducted a study on the teacher beliefs of these dedicated instructors to examine how their beliefs influence their commitment to both their work and the students. Three instructors who work at the same institute where I serve were invited to participate. In particular, I focused on the characteristics that define the teacher beliefs held by the instructors, the factors affecting the establishment and change of these beliefs, and the influence of these beliefs on the instructors' teaching practices.

The three instructors joined the YJ programme 4-7 years ago. Initially, none of them intended to choose teaching YJ. They viewed their teaching in YJ as one of the job opportunities for earning their living. Therefore, they perceived with confidence that their practice was easy, and simply by teaching the students about the subjects, they felt themselves experienced and professional. Such beliefs of our three YJ instructors obviously originated from their previous experience about teaching. They almost expected that their students would sit properly and silently and learn everything they taught to them without any pedagogy needed. However, in spite of the three instructors

viewing their teaching efficacy as high at the beginning, on the contrary, they had quite bad first impressions of students in YJ. Initially, they viewed the YJ students very negatively and put low expectations on them. They did not believe the students in YJ capable or able to change. Fortunately, these YJ instructors didn't hold onto their fears and bias after they really practiced their teaching in YJ. Instead, over the years of teaching in YJ, they gradually established better perceptions and deeper understanding of YJ students. Accordingly, the instructors' beliefs about the students also altered with the different views on students. They sought various ways to alter their teaching approaches to help motivate their students to learn. Now, after years of teaching practice in YJ, the three instructors would never believe their students to be incapable, unable to change or call them hopeless. Instead, with empathy, they trusted that students could change and be able to chase after their pursuits or dreams if they were motivated. Notably, the instructors confirmed that teachers should maintain belief in their students because even those with limited academic achievement are capable of success. Teachers should aim for overall student growth before addressing their academic performance. Eventually, the three instructors even saw this work with students as their mission and source of satisfaction in YJ.

The characteristics that define the teacher beliefs were evaluated by the instructors, and they found themselves (i.e., their self-concept) suitable and able to teach. Specifically, they consider themselves to have sufficient responsibility and solid goals to alter students and improve their future lives in their capacity as YJ instructors. The instructors admitted that although most of the YJ students might not have a strong academic record, they are capable of performing well in other areas. Moreover, the instructors noted that most YJ students seem unwilling to learn and demonstrate a lack

of motivation in class, which was attributed to these students' frustration and uncertainty following their past failures. The YJ students also tend to have very low self-esteem and lack confidence about both their present and future selves. Nevertheless, the instructors believe their students to be capable of change and growth during their time in YJ. Most often, low academic achievers, such as YJ students, learn best according to the accommodating learning style (McCarthy, 2016), which means that they require adequate support from their teachers (Archambault et al., 2012).

In the YJ programme, the instructors measure student success based on progress and change rather than academic performance or scores. Therefore, the teaching strategies adopted by the instructors are largely aimed at improving students' learning skills, helping students overcome the mental barriers or frameworks that hinder learning, and helping them recognise their unique abilities and determine their life values. Additionally, the instructors mainly utilise a student-centred approach (Norton et al., 2005), which enables students to participate in, experience, reflect on, learn, and apply theory and concepts through practical (experiential) learning activities (Chen et al., 2016); notably, these activities typically correspond to the students' accommodating learning style. Most teachers assume that their students will grasp the delivered skills and knowledge, surpass their narrow mindsets, and rediscover their capabilities and values through experiential learning.

As Utami (2016) argued, teacher beliefs are established from, and influenced by, the instructors' experiences, social and cultural factors, and how the instructors perceive their current teaching experience. Figure 1, which first appeared at the end of Chapter 2, outlines the relationship of these factors, showing how they impact instructors'

teacher beliefs and their practices.

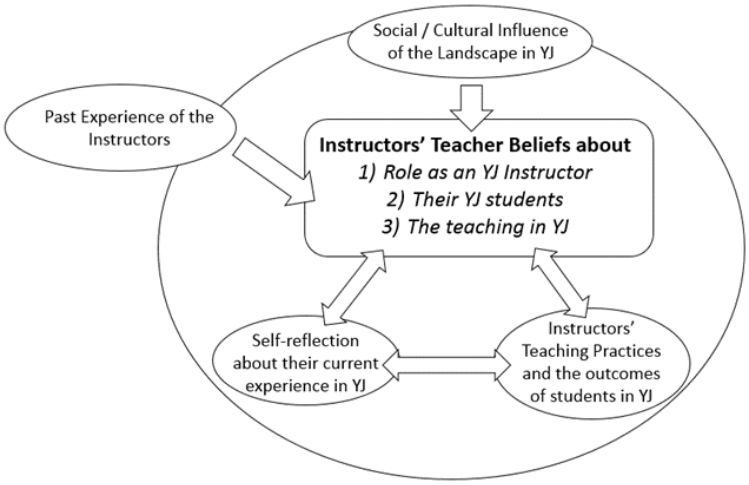

Figure 1: Factors affecting the teacher beliefs of YJ instructors

As the figure indicates, experiences (particularly substantial nurturing or mentoring by instructors' families or former teachers) are the most important formative factor of teacher beliefs, influencing instructors' perceptions about their self-concepts, their roles and responsibilities within YJ, and the teaching strategies they adopt. These experiences are intense and stable factors of instructors' beliefs. By contrast, social and cultural factors also affect the instructors' beliefs but are noticeably less influential and enduring. These factors are most significant when instructors first join YJ (specifically when they still believe the negative stereotypes about YJ students, and the general biases about 'academic losers' that are espoused by society). However, other personal factors (e.g., religious faith, the values borne from previous professions or training, and the student-centred mission of the YJ programme) quickly affect instructors' beliefs and, thus, facilitate change among the students. Teacher belief changes are triggered by instructors' self-reflection about their current perceptions and experiences in YJ, which,

in turn, leads to changes in teaching practices. As Joram and Gabriele (1998) revealed, the teaching strategies employed by instructors are selected based not only on the instructors' different teacher beliefs about the students but also on their experiences as students themselves or as trainees for teaching or other professions.

As mentioned, instructors make decisions about their daily teaching practices by using different knowledge and meaning filters (van Uden et al., 2013a) in response to their teacher beliefs about the students. Three categories of knowledge and meaning emerge from instructors' teaching decisions. The first category refers to the help provided by instructors to restore students' self-confidence and increase their self-esteem, thereby fostering within the students a belief in their capability for future study or work (Srivastava, 2013). The second category concerns instructors' educational goals. Instructors adopt multiple strategies that they consider effective to boost students' grasp of various skills and knowledge, overcome their restrictive mindsets, and uncover their hidden capabilities and forgotten values. The third category concerns instructors' adoption of student-centred teaching approaches (Norton et al., 2005), which correspond to most low-achieving-students' learning styles and are suitable for addressing related behaviour (e.g., lack of motivation, unwillingness to learn, and short attention span). Overall, these students prefer active engagement for learning, but they also require adequate guidance and support; thus, student-centred teaching approaches are the most appropriate.

The YJ instructors' positive teacher beliefs can usually continuously support their practices, even when facing in-class difficulties. Notably, instructors' teaching beliefs were observed to be directly and contradictorily impacted by their former perceptions

of YJ students and the common views about YJ students in society; moreover, these factors both appeared to strengthen instructors' teaching beliefs about their role as YJ instructors because the instructors are driven to help develop this group of students. To a certain extent, changes to instructors' teaching practices could affect students' attitudes and their future outcomes. Student improvement is an important reward for instructors, because it assures them of the validity of their beliefs and encourages their continued dedication to YJ (van Uden et al., 2013a).

6.2 Study Implications

Because YJ brings together a higher-than-average number of low academic achievers, teachers in this programme often feel overwhelmed by the challenges they face daily in class. This is primarily because most of the students are unmotivated and unwilling to learn; some may even create disciplinary problems. These challenges make it more difficult for the teachers to teach the class, cause the teachers to place fewer expectations on the students, and reduce the teachers' satisfaction. Consequently, teachers remove their expectations and attentiveness towards the students, and eventually, they are also unwilling to give support to them.. This scenario can descend into a vicious spiral, wherein the students (who typically start at YJ already less confident of their abilities compared with other students and who tend to rely more on their teachers) would face greater difficulty in achieving notable improvements and would probably repeat their failures (Archambault et al., 2012).

However, the examples provided by the instructors in their interviews revealed that teachers can break this toxic relationship, depending on their teacher beliefs. For instance, the instructors herein maintain a belief in their students' capability to change.

Although the YJ students may not succeed academically, the instructors generally believe that they would be able to perform well in nonacademic settings. Considering the instructors' roles as teachers, the belief in their mission to teach, support, and help students can both maintain and improve instructor attitudes. I think that teachers should share their beliefs with one another because beliefs can directly affect a person's emotive commitment, thoughts, and behaviours, whereas knowledge solely may not have such effects (Borg, 2001).

It has been established that teacher beliefs are influenced by teachers' experiences, their own experiences as students, and their previous teaching jobs or other careers and training (Pajares, 1992). It is thought to be surely irreversible in a person's life. However, similar to the three YJ instructors, who performed as a "reflective practitioner" (Schön, 1983) with their teaching practice not sticking tightly with the previous teaching experiences and beliefs. Teachers in other schools and programmes should self-reflect on their past; and current experiences and practice;, and incorporate new perceptions and feelings of these experiences for their own development, where appropriate. For example, the instructors described in this thesis would not let their preassumptions about former students obstruct changes in their understanding of YJ students. Instead, the different types of YJ students and the differences between YJ and other students they had taught before require our instructors to continually seek novel management and teaching strategies.

Many Hong Kong students, including, but not limited to, those in the YJ programme, suffer from many academic failures throughout their school years. According to the mandatory education system, they are required to remain in school for at least the

12-year basic education; some subsequently enrol in YJ. Overall, these students have had a negative schooling experience. By the time they arrive in YJ, they feel hopeless, helpless, annoyed, and even angry, and they generally have few or no goals for their future. Notably, under the current educational system in Hong Kong, there is a dearth of time, resources, and support for these types of students, and the improvement of the students in the courses is markedly inadequate (e.g., the YJ programme runs for only nine months in a year), which further disadvantages students who attempt to progress.

Nevertheless, the experiences of our instructors reveal that teacher beliefs and practices remain the key difference affecting the result. The instructors herein accept that most of their students might not be academically inclined; hence, they focus on students' overall progress and change rather than academic performance or scores. They also understand that students feel hopeless and helpless due to their very low self-esteem; therefore, they seek teaching strategies that can help restore students' self-confidence, increase the students' self-esteem, and highlight the students' individual capabilities for future study or work (Srivastava, 2013). In particular, YJ instructors employ experiential learning strategies that enable students to engage, experience, reflect, and learn, while simultaneously addressing their lack of motivation and unwillingness to learn. The intentional and sincere care provided by YJ instructors can be seen in all of their practices, which may favour student progress (Wiesman, 2012).

As Maclellan (2014) indicated, some teachers still believe that learning occurs when the students receive knowledge from them (the 'experts'). Therefore, they seem to emphasise teaching students to grasp a large amount of knowledge to enhance their academic performance. However, low academic achievers are aware that their learning

lags well behind the other students (Chan & Lam, 2003). In some cases, they eventually perceive academic learning to be useless, and, thus, lose all motivation to study, which, of course, worsens academic results. It is, therefore, crucial for instructors in the study to be able to deal with and change students' perceptions of education and learning, which must occur prior to increasing those students' academic performance. If the students' mindsets are changed and they feel more self-efficacious in their learning, Wiesman (2012) and Imran (2013) argued that students are more willing to exert effort and remain persistent in the face of learning difficulties.

The YJ programme is regarded as a solution by the government to rescue young and low-achieving students from failure. Thus, the success of the YJ programme does not seem to be caused by the opportunity it presents for students to supplement their formal qualifications for employment and further study (EDB Yi Jin, 2016). According to the present study, the programme may offer a chance for students to become aware of their shortcomings, to think about and redevelop trust in their unique abilities, and to overcome their narrow mental frameworks and the barriers that prevent them from reaching their goals and living their desired lives. Thus, the YJ programme may be more important because of its ability to provide students with the lives they desire. Precisely, the dedication and commitment of the teachers, which are influenced by their teacher beliefs, constitute a key factor in delivering the programme successfully. Similar to the study conducted by Wang and Teng (2016), the instructors interviewed herein have similar beliefs about their roles and responsibilities, similar perceptions about the students, and similar approaches to teaching in YJ. This may be because of the institution's caring culture and dedicated mission to improving students' lives. The school or education authorities should consider this point.

Besides, for Hong Kong education, the current education system is an exam-orientated culture. Students have no alternatives but to focus only on the public examination to meet the university entrance requirements throughout their mandatory schooling. However, only 18 per cent of secondary graduates every year can go into universities in Hong Kong. Every person herein always emphasizes the importance to succeed in examinations. Hence, every day students are busily trained by their teachers on how to respond to exam questions with various answering techniques through doing endless practice or exercises. As a result, learning in schools becomes discouraging and uninteresting, especially for those who are not academically gifted. These students eventually encountered many negative experiences of failure throughout their mandatory school life. Having failed in all or part of the examinations, they are considered a loser in their academic study, resulting in very low self-esteem, with low motivation and a feeling of hopelessness towards their studies or work.

The YJ instructors in the study admitted that most of their students were not academically inclined. They believed the students were changeable and capable of performing successfully in non-academic areas. They measured students' success based on progress and change rather than academic performance or scores. Accordingly, the teaching strategies adopted by the instructors largely aimed at improving students' self-esteem and motivation, through providing opportunities for them to rethink and rediscover themselves and explore their competence in certain non-academic areas.

The education authority in Hong Kong should take note that the aim of education is to empower students with problem-solving skills and to promote their self-esteem for future lives and well-being, rather than to force them to achieve for academic

excellence and compete for a place in a university through taking various examinations from the day when their school life first started. The examples in the YJ programme herein provide a good reference for a reason to reform this dreadful exam-orientated culture.

Schools should stop their exam-oriented over-drilling culture that brings about its related undue pressure for the students. Instead, schools should introduce diversification into their curricula, such as some non-academic, but practical, subjects or career-oriented courses to arouse the interest of students. Schools and teachers should also start to focus on empowering students' aptitudes rather than focusing solely on their scores.

6.3 Recommendations for Future Research

The study provides some encouraging and fruitful results. It was also a precious opportunity for me to interact with three of my colleagues, hear their stories, share their experiences in YJ, and gain a more thorough understanding of teacher beliefs. As the responses from the instructors indicate, these understandings were also intriguing for them; in particular, they noted that they felt refreshed about the meanings and missions underscoring their teaching and strengthened their motives to remain with YJ. During the interviews, I shared similar inspirational stories and reasserted my own intentions to remain teaching with YJ. However, the one-year study period and rushed YJ schedule could not allow me to explore the stories further or even fully reflect on each instructor's story. If possible, a longitudinal study of at least three years about the instructors is recommended to more accurately trace changes in teacher beliefs.

The aim of this study was to illustrate and understand the phenomenon of teacher beliefs and determine how these beliefs affect the instructors' ability to influence low-academic-achieving students. I considered the narrative method to be suitable for guiding instructor interviews for this type of study. However, adopting a qualitative method prevented me from interviewing more than a few participants. Because all of three participants work at the same institute as I do, my understanding of teacher beliefs and their influence is extremely limited. In future research, more instructors from different YJ-operating institutes should be invited to participate.

Moreover, all three participants are colleagues and friends of mine. Although this familiarity eliminated the need for rapport-building in the interviews and made it easy to conduct informal follow-up sessions to make clarifications, it may also create a substantial bias in the study, despite my best attempts to be aware of this and avoid it. Thus, in future research on the YJ programme and teaching beliefs, more third-party interviews (i.e., with students, colleagues, and family members connected to the instructors in some way) should be conducted. If possible, the researcher should also conduct classroom observations to clearly elucidate the behaviours, differences in speech and encounters or interactions inside and outside of classes taught by YJ instructors. By incorporating the views of different people and providing more detailed observation notes, I believe that the discussion of teacher beliefs, practices, and experiences presented herein will be more fruitful and reliable.

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Appendix A: Sample of Consent Form and Information sheet for Participants

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Narrative Study on the Teacher Beliefs of Yi Jin Instructors in Hong Kong

I _ XXXX _ hereby consent to participate in the captioned research supervised by Dr. YU Wai Ming, Assistant Professor of the Education University of Hong Kong (EdUHK) and conducted by Mr. Siu On Chi, Steve, student of the Doctor of Education programme in EdUHK.

I understand that information obtained from this research may be used in future research and may be published. However, my right to privacy will be retained, i.e., my personal details will not be revealed.

The procedure as set out in the attached information sheet has been fully explained. I understand the benefits and risks involved. My participation in the project is voluntary.

I acknowledge that I have the right to question any part of the procedure and can withdraw at any time without negative consequences.

Name of participant

Signature of participant

Date

INFORMATION SHEET

Narrative Study on the Teacher Beliefs of Yi Jin Instructors in Hong Kong

You are invited to participate in a project supervised by Dr. YU Wai Ming, Assistant Professor of the Education University of Hong Kong (EdUHK) and conducted by Mr. Siu On Chi, Steve, who is the student of the Doctor of Education programme in EdUHK.

The Introduction of the Research

The Yi Jin Programme (YJ) in Hong Kong receives numerous low achievers in one programme every year. Instructors teaching such a special group of students encounter various challenges and difficulties from time to time. Despite the hardship, many dedicated instructors keep paying efforts in teaching in the YJ programme, which alters lives of many students. This has aroused my interest in studying the thoughts or beliefs of these instructors on teaching YJ students in a comprehensive manner

You are cordially invited for you have been an YJ Instructor for several years and you are highly dedicated to your teaching. Your experience and sharing will surely be beneficial to the study.

The Methodology of the Research

The narrative method is employed in the study for gathering stories from YJ instructors, so as to enquire, reflect, and identify the characteristics of their beliefs before and after they join

the programme.

The study will commence in Jan 2016 and is targeted to end in Dec 2016. You will be the one of my three targeted participants in the study.

In-depth and semi-structured interviews will be conducted individually with a view to collecting relevant information and stories. The interviews will begin with the participants sharing their opinions of their students, their roles and differences as an YJ instructor, followed by the strategies, experiences and stories of teaching in the YJ programme, and the achievements and satisfaction accomplished. In the study, their shared challenges or difficulties encountered with any solution adopted will also be collected. Interview guidelines will be provided to you later on.

Besides, class visits will be arranged after the interview, and interviews with a student or an alumnus, who is recommended by you, will also be conducted to further validation of the findings collected in the in-depth interviews.

All the interviews will be audio-taped and transcribed into verbatim as textual stories. These stories will be fully studied and analyzed. The findings and the result of this study will then be published in my doctoral thesis.

The society frequently blames the current education system for producing academic failures. For the YJ always receive numerous academic losers, teaching effectively in the YJ is a considerable challenge. Hence, it is definitely worth to examine the experience, knowledge gained, and belief adopted by YJ instructors, like you. The results can serve as an

encouragement or a reference for instructors of low achievers.

No potential risk of the research would be made to you!

Participation in this project is on a voluntary basis. You have every right to withdraw from the study at any time without negative consequences. All information related to you will keep in strict confidence, and will be translated into codes which can only be identified by the researcher. A pseudonym will be used for each participant during the study as well as in the thesis. The personal data or all information collected from you is solely the research purpose and will be obliterated at the end of the study.

If you would like to obtain more information about this study, please contact Mr. Siu On Chi, Steve at telephone number XXXXXX or his supervisor Dr. YU Wai Ming at telephone number XXXXXX.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research study, please do not hesitate to contact the Human Research Ethics Committee by email XXXX@XXXX or by mail to Research and Development Office, the Education University of Hong Kong.

Thank you for your interest in participating in this study.

Siu On Chi, Steve

Principal Investigator

Appendix B: Guide for Interviewing Instructors

(Remark: The guideline is for reference only. You may allow to tell and explain your stories or experience freely in according to your own perceptions and timing during the interview.)

1. Why and how have you become a Yi Jin (YJ) Instructor? (What do you think is the role of a teacher? How do you describe your role as an YJ Instructor? Where do you get these views from?)
2. How would you comment on your teaching in YJ so far? (Tell me some experience or reasons to support your comments.)
3. Do you enjoy teaching in YJ? Why? (Tell me some experience or reasons to support your answers.)
4. How would you comment on YJ students and their performance in general? (What do you think is the role of a student? Is there any difference in comparing with your expectation of them on the first day in YJ? Where do you get these views from?)
5. What is the relationship between the teacher and student to do with students' learning? (What do you comment on this relationship currently? How do you comment on the differences?)
6. What teaching strategies have you adopted to teaching YJ students? Why? (How do you comment on the effectiveness of these strategies so far? Any adjustments made?)
7. What types of challenge or difficulty have you encountered in teaching YJ so far? (Where did these challenges or difficulties come from?)
8. How do these challenges or difficulties perplex you and your students or their performance? (Are they still perplexing you and your students? How deep is the

influence?)

9. What responses do you take in encountering these challenges or difficulties? Why? The results? (How do you comment on the appropriateness of these responses? Are these challenges or difficulties being solved or relieved with your response?)
10. How do these challenges or difficulties influence you, your views, responses or expectations to your students and your teaching in YJ? (Tell me some examples about the influences)
11. What do you expect YJ students to gain from your teaching? The results? (How would you comment on your expectations so far? Any adjustments made?)
12. Do you feel competent or can you contribute to alter the students as well as their performance in your YJ teaching? How? (Tell me some experience or reasons to support your answers.)
13. What types of achievement and satisfaction do you think you can or you have acquired in teaching the YJ? (Tell me some examples or experiences about these achievements and satisfactions.)
14. How do your achievements stated affect your students and their performance? (Tell me some examples to support your answers.)
15. How do these achievements and satisfactions influence you, your views, responses or expectations on your students as well as the teaching in YJ thereafter? (Tell me some examples about the influences)
16. What insights have you gained in teaching YJ so far?
17. What further expectations do you have on yourself, your students and your teaching in YJ? What actions will be taken to achieve these expectations? (How do you comment whether these expectations can be achieved?)

Appendix C: Guide for Interviewing Alumni

(Remark: The guideline is for reference only. You may allow to tell and explain your stories or experience with the teacher concerned freely in according to your own perceptions and timing during the interview.)

1. How do you describe your teacher? (Tell me some experience or reasons to support your answers.)
2. How would you comment on your teacher's teaching in general? (Tell me some experience or reasons to support your answers.)
3. Has anything about your teacher influenced you so far? What? Why? (Verbal encouragement? Experience? Models? Actions?)
4. How have these influences changed your views, life perceptions or expectations? (Tell me the differences in comparing to the past.)

Appendix D: Guide for Class Observation

A Criteria:

1. Teaching Strategies

   ☑ Are the aims of lesson clearly stated and understood?

   ☑ Is the lesson well planned and balanced according to student ability?

   ☑ Any teaching methods / skills mainly used in the lesson?

2. Teacher's Performance

   ☑ Does the teacher well grasp the subject matter of the lesson?

   ☑ Does the teacher effectively control the flow of the lesson?

   ☑ Does the teacher effectively guide the students in the lesson?

   ☑ Does the teacher enjoy the teaching in the lesson?

3. Students' Performance

   ☑ Are students interested in the lesson/topic?

   ☑ Do students participate actively in lesson development?

   ☑ Is the lesson balanced between teacher's talk and students' activities?

   ☑ Can students effectively learn from the lesson?

   ☑ Do students enjoy the lesson?

B Post Observation Interview:

1. Do you (the teacher) consider this lesson successful? Why?

2. What do you think the students can effectively learn from the lesson?

3. What do you think you have achieved or need to improve after this lesson?

Appendix E: Sample of the first cycle of coding

H Sir's Verbatim	Coding
… I really preferred the concept of [1.] "Tough Love" … In fact, [2.] you needed to "beat a fist (some hardships) towards them" for their advantages … [3.] if you wanted to rebuild them. … They would understand that …	1. "in vivo" code :"tough love" 2. "a priori" code: the roles as a teacher 3. "a priori" code: the expectation on students in YJ
… [4.] I let them select their own psychology-related research topics. … Papers on anxiety and depression were the most common topics. … Others were about past lives and existence, which was related to Carl Jung's theories. … Some students talked about ADHD [… One paper was particularly interesting. The student focused on personality disorders and co-morbidities (that is, a dissociative identity disorder combined with another type of psychosis).	4. "a priori" code: teaching strategies
… The most notable issue in this case was that co-morbidities were really [5.]only taught in master's-level psychology courses. … They (students) really searched the journals. …	5. "a priori" code: (students) capable of change

Then, [6.]I talked about the co-relation in response to their assignments in the lesson; just like how you distinguish and co-relate different fishes in a lake. … I also taught them how to see the matrix table. That already exceeded the scope of the assignment. …	6. "a priori" code: teaching strategies
Marking then became a difficulty … [7.]I needed to search and read [various topics of assignment] … before I could mark them.	7. "a priori" code: the difficulties
… [8.]Both of us (H Sir and students) have grown up. … In this experience, [9.]I trusted you worked harder now to prevent a hard future. … I had also told the students, [10.]"You could knock down the others (for your learning and improvement) for I had trained you." They were very happy. …	8. "a priori" code:" the satisfactions 9. "in vivo" code: "tough love" 10. "a priori" code: (students) capable of change