

# Current Status and Countermeasures of Calligraphy Teaching in the Basic Education of Chinese Painting

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**Keywords:** Calligraphy, Chinese painting, Current status, Countermeasures.

**Abstract.** As the important teaching part in the college fine arts, basic education of Chinese painting not only let students equip with abundant professional theory knowledge and practical ability, but make students pay attention to the relationship with surrounding art categories. This paper made an attempt to discuss the current status and countermeasures of calligraphy teaching in the basic education of Chinese painting.

## 1. Introduction

The major of college fine arts not only aims at training middle and superior art teachers with humanistic spirit, but also provides excellent talents for museum, art plan and local youth palace. In the model of professional location and talent training, they must pay attention to the enhancement of students' literature quality and moral quality as well as the professional skill and art practical ability to comprehensively develop the overall quality of students. However, the basic education of Chinese painting, as the significant teaching part of this major, should make students equip with abundant professional theory knowledge and practical ability and let students pay attention to the related art categories, especially paying attention to the effect of calligraphy education on the major.

## 2. Current Status of Calligraphy Teaching in the Basic Education of Chinese Painting

Along with the gradual popularization of Chinese college calligraphy teaching in the early 1990s, calligraphy teaching has been gradually established in the subject of fine arts without massive effect. Connecting with the reality, it is easy to find some worrying problems such as lacking of teaching faculty, inferior teaching quality and teaching level. Through the research of local colleges in the Yunnan Province, the writer finds the following problems: the first one is lacking of qualified calligraphy teachers in the local colleges and many teachers who are not majoring in calligraphy take part in the teaching posts. The second one is that these colleges employ teachers with some calligraphy foundation, but the practice proves that some teachers misinterpret ancient calligraphy theory due to their low culture level; and some teachers falsely report ancient calligraphy due to lacking of professional exercise; and some teachers don't know how to teach others; while another kind of teachers are common calligraphers who are driven by the economic profit to run the school or teach, and they are not aware of college psychology and education. They don't understand the aesthetic characteristics of students, just putting several stale rules to waste time. The third one is short calligraphy hour and irrational course setting. It is impossible for students to learn calligraphy well in a short period just as the professional public optional course. Many students have to bid farewell to calligraphy class with regret at the beginning of class. The fourth one is unideal calligraphy teaching effect of local colleges. In general, there is no doubt that various technical college adjust the course setup with the opportunity of upgraded colleges. They adjust the calligraphy public compulsory course to specialized optional courses or delete them from the course setup, which is worse for the local college calligraphy teaching. This series of phenomena result in the not enough popularity of calligraphy teaching in the local colleges and draw our attention.

There are four colleges in the Yunnan province that are confirmed as the experimental schools, namely, Yunnan Arts University, Yunnan Normal University, Yunnan Qujing Normal University and

Yunnan Yuxi Normal University. And Yunnan Normal University is the model of the province owing to its teaching characteristic. The establishment of calligraphy (seal) compulsory course requires the freshman to learn for two weeks. This college attaches great importance to professional training and the sophomores who major in Chinese painting will study calligraphy (seal) for two or three weeks. According to the limit research of the author, the current eight art institutes and experimental colleges invite the professional teachers of calligraphy to teach calligraphy (seal). Perfect teaching faculty can provide powerful guarantee for standardizing students from simple writing to flexible writing and lay a good foundation for the later basic education of Chinese painting, but part colleges still include it into the professional optional course.

### **3. Countermeasures of Calligraphy Teaching in the Basic Education of Chinese Painting**

#### **3.1 Establish the Compulsory Course of Calligraphy (Seal Cutting) and Strengthen the Construction of Teaching Faculty**

Calligraphy teaching plays a significant role in the basic education of Chinese painting, and calligraphy teaching regards the character as its performance targets. It is the central manifestation of line beauty and satisfies the aesthetics of students through the appreciation activity of teaching. It can not only train students' ability of finding beauty, feeling beauty, appreciating beauty, comprehending beauty and creating beauty, but affect the thoughts and feelings and spiritual outlook of students to make students have aesthetic thoughts, sentiment, quality and attainment. Calligraphy teaching belongs to art education and it makes the image of art beauty as the intermediary. It is the most energetic and colorful field in the whole education.

It is very hard for us to fully excavate the aesthetic content of calligraphy teaching due to its abundance, which needs the training of aesthetic vision. And it is more important than training manipulative ability. While the training comes from the touch with classics, so when students are learning calligraphy, especially appreciating good works, the stipple, structure, line, organization, ink intensity, cadence and change of brush handling can give people strong aesthetic feeling, such as powerful, magnificent, classical or unadorned. People cannot help standing there and contemplating, and vanity and noise will be cleaned. Exactly as Marx said that you must be a person with aesthetic quality if you want to enjoy the art. The quality of art refers to the quality of basic knowledge and practice. No certain quality usually cannot obtain excellent achievements no matter what kind of the art it is. From this perspective, the training of skill and innovation thought is to deeply and comprehensively serve the aesthetic culture quality education. Without the dominance of general aesthetic awareness just the skill education of calligraphy practice, it usually becomes the education of "craftsman".

Therefore, calligraphy (seal cutting) must be set as one professional compulsory course of undergraduate students majoring in art, especially local colleges. If the measure and strength of professional reform are not been enhanced, they will have a longer distance from national art institute and experimental institute. Starting from the objective of art professional talents training, students must be equipped with perfect political quality and solid professional knowledge. Only by taking the characteristic of fine arts and having the powerful support of calligraphy teaching at the same time of model exercise can the shortcoming of basic education of single Chinese painting be effectively complemented.

Based on the current status analysis of calligraphy teaching in the basic education of Chinese painting of Yunan province, local colleges should pay attention to the introduction of professionals and construct teaching faculty through multiple means, ways and perspectives. Besides, they should fully take advantage of various associations and employ the visiting professors (Senior professional calligrapher, theorist and expert and scholar) to regularly instruct or establish the calligraphy lecture. And these colleges should rationally adjust specialty setting and strengthen the management and supervision of calligraphy teaching quality to gradually enhance the specialty teaching of fine arts.

### **3.2 Adopt Scientific Training Methods and Strengthen Students' Specific Quality Education**

Students should obey scientific learning methods in the calligraphy teaching, namely, methods corresponding to the study principle of art specialty. Only the scientific learning methods can get greater harvest and make double effect with rather little time and energy.

The specific teaching process can adopt the sectional teaching and arrange the calligraphy (seal cutting) course and Chinese painting teaching at the same semester and use the teaching method of previous calligraphy and later painting. The fourth semester is oriented with the teaching of seal character, official script and regular script, and the fifth semester gives priority to running script and cursive script, and the sixth semester focuses on seal cutting. The rational class arrangement should effectively connect the calligraphy teaching and Chinese painting teaching.

In people's daily study and work, the most proper chirography is running script; the most distinctive art means to show the expression are the running script and cursive script. But those fresh students have rather thin basic skill for calligraphy. Based on the reason, the introduction should pay attention to the standard and avoid "taking a shortcut" and "leaping style". Therefore, the teaching objective of regular script should be the principle of study. "Kai" of the regular script has the meaning of "model". Regular script suits the fresher and has some practicability, and starting from regular script is beneficial to learn other chirography styles. As for this, ancient people have made such lively and vivid metaphor that regular script is like standing, and running script is like walking and the cursive script is like running. Regular script has rigorous shape and strokes, strict structure and stronger standard. Starting from the regular script, people can easily master the basic strokes and structure principle of calligraphy. In the study, we can refer to many typical works left by the ancient people. An ancient saying goes that people can get the middle experience from the upper works and the lower experience from the middle works. It highlights the importance of taking the model. Some students don't choose the excellent traditional calligraphy works as the model but to learn those common works. They will be misguided and hard to succeed if they keep doing this. From this perspective, it is necessary to learn the rigorous research attitude of ancient people and learn the knowledge one step by one step. After laying the foundation of regular script, the study emphasis of latter period should be on the further training of running script. After all, it is the most proper calligraphy style and beneficial for students inscribing on the painting. But as for the teaching of seal script, official script and cursive script, teachers should focus on the character characteristic and writing training. In the seal cutting teaching, students are supposed to understand the art history, title, use, tools and species of seal cutting and master the seal cutting to practice.

Calligraphy learning needs long time and repeated practice. Copy is one of the significant methods to learn calligraphy. It means the practice phrase of skill training after mastering the related theory knowledge of calligraphy. The meaning of copy is abstracting the excellent calligraphy experience from the copy of inscription, namely, learning the writing methods and mastering strokes characteristics and structure rule to lay solid calligraphy basic skill. Besides, it can enlighten the art creation and lay the good foundation for the learning of Chinese painting. In the Chinese calligraphy history, those calligraphers with great achievements usually start from the copy. Wang Xizhi learned the copy of Mrs. Wei, and Yan Zhenqing learned the copy of Zhangxu; while Wang Duo in the early Qing Dynasty learned best from Wang Xizhi and his son, Mi Fu and Yan Zhenqing, especially skillful at the copy of Wang Xizhi and his son and Mi Fu, and he created magnificent "style of Wang Duo", showing a distinctive art pattern to people; and contemporary calligraphist Shu Tong, Qi Gong and Sha Menghai stick to copy until their old age. So it can be seen that copy the calligraphy work still is the most important method and impetus for calligraphy art to develop, and it is decided by the particularity of subject. It is the beneficial reference and inheritance with ancient excellent and classical works. Copy in the teaching can be completed through reading, depicting, copy, reciting and recreation. In the process, it can adopt the accuracy training of single word and the training of upper-down and left-right relationship and analyze the writing method of former people and some rather scientific teaching methods.

As for the students with copy basis, writing is a foundation or transition for truly entering the free creation of calligraphy. Its purpose is to test the training result of former phrase and test whether they have the ability to independently write the “harmonious and united, standard and beautiful” works. In the teaching, teachers should select the copies to exercise at first and choose representative characters to help students master. Then they can adopt the “method of collection”. Select the characters from original works and arrange them to the significant contents. And teachers can draw up the contents (including celebrated dictum, epigram and poetic prose) by themselves. This principle is not similar with pure copy, giving students the sense of achievement and peak experience through the understanding from the practice, and it strengthens the interest and ability of students learning calligraphy at the same time of enhancing the aesthetic feeling.

At present, Chinese education is in the process of deep reform, and the importance of quality education, aesthetic education, art education and traditional culture has been attached great importance. To train excellent talents of education and art in the new era, school aesthetic education and art education must be highlighted and strengthened. The launching of calligraphy teaching in the college art specialty will benefit the promotion of Chinese traditional culture, socialist ideological and ethical progress, implementation of quality education and enhancement of basic education of Chinese painting. With the advancement of society and the progress of era, Chinese college art education also has kept up with them and formulated “effective, scientific and pragmatic” calligraphy teaching system to let our future “engineer of human soul” and art specialty talents faithfully inherit the tradition of Chinese character writing art. It can not only make our late generation feel proud with ancient traditional art, but lay the solid expressive ability for the perfect aesthetic awareness and model concept construction of traditional Chinese painting.

### **Acknowledgements**

Special Training Program for Outstanding Young Teachers in Colleges and Universities of Education Department in Yunnan Province Yunjiaogao[2015] No. 92 Fund Project.

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