

The Value and Current Status of Calligraphy Education in Primary Schools for the Inheritance of China's Excellent Traditional Culture

Wenhao Yu*

Graduate School, Chinese National Academy of Arts, Beijing, 100012, China

*Corresponding author

Abstract: This study deeply explores the close connection between calligraphy education in primary schools and the inheritance of fine traditional Chinese culture, analyzes the current situation and problems of inheriting traditional culture within primary school calligraphy education, and then proposes approaches such as curriculum integration, teaching innovation, teacher quality enhancement, activity expansion, and evaluation optimization to effectively pass on fine traditional Chinese culture through primary school calligraphy education. It aims to provide theoretical support and practical guidance for the practice of calligraphy education in primary schools, and to help promote and develop fine traditional Chinese culture among the younger generation.

Keywords: primary school calligraphy education; fine traditional Chinese culture; inheritance paths

1. Introduction

In today's surging wave of globalization, competition in cultural soft power is becoming increasingly fierce. As the crystallization of wisdom and spiritual symbol of the Chinese nation, fine traditional Chinese culture carries the nation's historical memory and value pursuit. Its inheritance and promotion are of great significance for enhancing national cohesion, strengthening cultural confidence, and promoting cultural prosperity. Education, as an important means of cultural inheritance, bears the great responsibility of sowing the seeds of traditional culture in the minds of young people.

The primary school stage is the enlightenment period of life, and students are like a blank sheet of paper with strong plasticity [1]. Calligraphy, an ancient and unique art form and a treasure of Chinese culture, is not only a writing skill but also a vivid embodiment of the spiritual outlook and cultural connotations of the Chinese nation. Implementing calligraphy education in primary schools is like opening a door for students to the depths of traditional culture, enabling them to feel the beauty of Chinese characters and the charm of culture in every stroke, thus allowing fine traditional Chinese culture to take root and sprout in their young minds.

This study aims to systematically sort out the internal logical relationship between primary school calligraphy education and the inheritance of fine traditional Chinese culture, deeply explore the potential value of primary school calligraphy education in inheriting traditional culture, and, in view of the existing problems in current primary school calligraphy education, explore practical inheritance paths. It also attempts to construct a comprehensive and multi-level system for inheriting traditional culture through calligraphy education in primary schools, so as to give full play to the positive role of calligraphy education in passing on fine traditional Chinese culture.

Theoretical significance: It enriches and expands the theoretical system of primary school calligraphy education, providing new perspectives and theoretical support for interdisciplinary research on calligraphy education and traditional cultural inheritance. By deeply analyzing the relationship between the two, it further reveals the unique function and mechanism of calligraphy education in cultural inheritance, contributing to the development of relevant theories in the field of education.

Practical significance: It provides practical teaching methods and guidance for primary school educators, helping them better integrate traditional culture into calligraphy teaching and improve the quality of calligraphy education. At the same time, it guides students to deeply understand the essence of fine traditional Chinese culture through learning calligraphy, cultivates their cultural identity, national pride, and cultural confidence, promotes their all-round development, and lays a solid talent

foundation for inheriting and promoting fine traditional Chinese culture.

2. The value of primary school calligraphy education and fine traditional Chinese culture

2.1 The cultural connotations of calligraphy art

Firstly, Chinese characters are the foundation of Chinese culture and one of the oldest writing systems still in use today. Their evolution is like a vivid historical scroll, recording the development trajectory of the Chinese nation. We trace Chinese character evolution from ancient oracle bone inscriptions, which vividly embodied human cognition of nature and society through pictography and ideography. Later, elegant bronze and seal scripts reflected rituals and cultural features of the Pre-Qin period. Clerical, cursive, regular and running scripts emerged successively, all mirroring social changes, aesthetic pursuits and cultural exchanges of diverse historical periods.

As the artistic expression of Chinese characters, calligraphy skillfully integrates the form, sound, and meaning of characters with brush-and-ink lines, structure, and layout, endowing them with richer cultural connotations [2]. Every character under the calligrapher's brush seems to be imbued with life—graceful and dynamic, vigorous and forceful, or dignified and elegant. Through variations in stroke thickness, length, curvature, and the echoing relationships between characters and lines, the calligrapher's emotions, thoughts, and aesthetic pursuits are conveyed. For example, Wang Xizhi's Preface to the Orchid Pavilion (Lanting Xu) features a smooth and natural style with light and flowing strokes, revealing the ethos of Wei-Jin literati who advocated nature and pursued freedom. Yan Zhenqing's regular script, known for its dignity, grandeur, and majestic momentum, embodies the magnificence of the prosperous Tang Dynasty and the Confucian ideals of uprightness, moderation, and unyielding integrity.

Secondly, the art of calligraphy embodies a profound traditional cultural spirit, representing a concentrated expression of multiple cultural elements such as Chinese philosophical thought, moral concepts, and aesthetic tastes. The idea of "unity of heaven and humanity" is manifested in calligraphy as the pursuit of natural and harmonious beauty. In the creative process, calligraphers carefully observe nature and draw inspiration from landscapes, flowers, birds, insects, and fish, so that the brushwork, structure, and layout of calligraphic works align with the way of nature. For instance, Cai Yong mentioned in Nine Forces (Jiu Shi): "Calligraphy originates from nature; when nature is established, yin and yang arise; once yin and yang arise, form and momentum emerge," emphasizing that calligraphy should follow natural laws, reflecting the interdependent and integrated relationship between humans and nature.

The "Doctrine of the Mean" is reflected in calligraphy in brushwork that is neither overbearing nor weak but just right, and in a structure that is well-proportioned, stable, and appropriately dense or sparse. Calligraphy requires a reasonable combination of thick and thin, long and short, curved and straight strokes, avoiding excessive flamboyance or restraint, and pursuing a sense of harmonious and moderate beauty. This aesthetic concept is in line with the Confucian advocacy of the Mean, embodying the Chinese people's aspiration and pursuit of a balanced and harmonious way of life.

Moreover, calligraphy carries the moral education function of "the way of the gentleman (junzi)." Ancient literati cultivated their character and morality through calligraphy. Patience, concentration, and perseverance are required in the practice of calligraphy—qualities that a gentleman should possess. Calligraphy works are also often used to express the author's moral concepts and life aspirations. For example, Yue Fei's calligraphy work Man Jiang Hong (Full River Red), with its vigorous and forceful strokes and imposing momentum, is filled with the patriotic passion of serving the country with absolute loyalty, serving as a spiritual force that inspires later generations.

2.2 The significance of primary school calligraphy education for inheriting traditional culture

The primary school stage is a critical period for the formation of students' values and the establishment of cultural identity. With its unique charm, calligraphy education allows students to gain an in-depth understanding of the cultural stories, historical allusions, and national spirit behind Chinese characters while getting close to and writing them [3]. When students write characters full of vitality, they seem to travel through time and space to converse with ancient sages, feeling the long history and profound richness of Chinese culture. This personal experience and perception can stimulate students' deep love for their own culture, making them identify with their cultural group from the bottom of their

hearts and thus establish a strong sense of national pride and cultural self-confidence.

For example, when learning seal script, students understand that seal script is the final stage of the ancient Chinese writing phase, with strong pictographic features; many characters look like vivid simple drawings. By writing seal script, students can intuitively feel the wisdom of ancient people in creating characters, and develop a strong interest in the origin and development of ancient Chinese culture. This sense of closeness to and identification with traditional culture will accompany students throughout their lives and become a solid cornerstone of their national spiritual homeland.

As the new force of cultural inheritance, primary school students bear the historical mission of passing on fine traditional Chinese culture to the next generation. As an effective means of cultural transmission, calligraphy education enables students to be imperceptibly influenced by traditional culture and to grasp its essence.

In primary school calligraphy classes, students not only learn basic calligraphy techniques but also listen to teachers' stories about famous calligraphers, the creation background and cultural connotations of classic works. These pieces of knowledge and stories are like twinkling stars that illuminate the students' spiritual world and stimulate their desire to explore traditional culture. As students grow and accumulate knowledge, they will become disseminators and promoters of traditional culture, passing on what they have learned and felt to more people, so that fine traditional Chinese culture can be passed down from generation to generation, ensuring the continuity of the cultural bloodline.

3. Analysis of the current situation of inheriting fine traditional Chinese culture in primary school calligraphy education

3.1. Achievements

In terms of policy, the Chinese curriculum standards for compulsory education issued by the Ministry of Education have incorporated calligraphy education into the scope of Chinese language teaching. For example, it is stipulated that a certain amount of practice time for both hard-tipped pen and brush calligraphy should be arranged in primary school Chinese teaching. This has provided a curricular basis for the inheritance of calligraphy at the primary school level. Schools must arrange corresponding calligraphy courses according to the curriculum standards, guaranteeing the basic class hours for calligraphy inheritance.

Education departments also organize calligraphy teacher training activities to enhance teachers' professional calligraphy literacy. For example, regular calligraphy teacher training courses are held, inviting calligraphers or calligraphy education experts to give lectures. The training content covers calligraphy techniques, teaching methods, calligraphy history, and other aspects. Through such training, teachers are better able to impart calligraphy knowledge in primary school classrooms, providing a guarantee of teaching staff for calligraphy inheritance.

Cultural departments protect calligraphy as an important part of intangible cultural heritage. At the primary school stage, "Calligraphy into Campus" activities are carried out, inviting local calligraphers to enter schools, hold calligraphy lectures, exhibitions, etc. These activities allow primary school students to have close contact with the art of calligraphy, feel its charm, and enhance their interest in inheriting calligraphy. Cultural departments also provide some calligraphy cultural materials, such as calligraphy copybooks and historical documents on calligraphy, for use in primary school calligraphy teaching. Meanwhile, through cultural institutions such as museums and cultural centers, primary school students are organized to visit exhibitions of calligraphy cultural relics to understand the important position of calligraphy in history and culture.

Regarding funding policies, cultural departments provide certain financial support for calligraphy competitions and calligraphy club activities organized by primary schools. For example, they provide activity venues, calligraphy equipment (such as brushes and rice paper), or award prizes to outstanding students and guiding teachers. These funding measures help create a good atmosphere for calligraphy inheritance and enable primary school calligraphy activities to be carried out more richly and colorfully.

As for schools, in recent years, with the national emphasis on traditional culture education, more and more primary schools have begun to attach importance to calligraphy education and have incorporated it into the school curriculum system. Most schools can guarantee a certain number of weekly class hours for calligraphy teaching according to the national curriculum standards, providing a

time guarantee for students to learn calligraphy systematically. Some schools are also actively exploring and have developed school-based calligraphy courses with their own characteristics based on their actual situation and regional cultural features.

For example, some schools located in historical and cultural cities with rich calligraphy cultural resources integrate local stories of famous calligraphers and stele inscription culture into their school-based curriculum, enabling students to deeply understand the cultural heritage of their hometown while learning calligraphy. Other schools, combining modern educational concepts and students' interests, have set up creative calligraphy courses, encouraging students to make innovative attempts on the basis of traditional calligraphy, thus cultivating their innovative thinking and artistic personality.

In terms of calligraphy textbooks, various versions of primary school calligraphy textbooks have appeared on the market. These textbooks are rich in content, covering basic knowledge of calligraphy, writing techniques, calligraphy history, calligraphy appreciation, etc., and are compiled in a lively and interesting form that suits the cognitive characteristics of primary school students. At the same time, a large number of supplementary teaching resources such as copybooks, practice books, and calligraphy teaching wall charts have emerged, providing ample materials for teachers' teaching and students' practice.

Regarding multimedia teaching resources, with the development of information technology, numerous high-quality calligraphy teaching videos, animated courseware, etc., have emerged on the Internet. These resources present calligraphy brushwork, structure, and creative process in an intuitive and vivid way, effectively compensating for the lack of clear demonstration and vivid explanation in traditional teaching, thus greatly enriching the means and forms of calligraphy teaching.

To meet the demand for calligraphy teachers in primary schools, local education departments have strengthened the construction of calligraphy teacher teams through multiple channels. On one hand, many colleges and universities have established calligraphy education-related majors, cultivating a number of calligraphy education talents with high professional quality and injecting fresh blood into primary schools. On the other hand, various forms of calligraphy training activities have been carried out for in-service teachers, including short-term intensive training, online training, and school-based training, which have improved teachers' calligraphy teaching level and professional competence.

Some schools have also actively introduced social calligraphy resources, inviting local famous calligraphers to enter campuses, give lectures, provide training, and guide student calligraphy club activities, forming a pattern of combining on-campus and off-campus teacher resources, and providing strong teacher support for the development of primary school calligraphy education.

3.2 Existing problems

Although calligraphy education has received a certain degree of attention at the primary school stage, some teachers still have deviations in their teaching philosophy. They overly focus on the training of students' writing skills, treating calligraphy classes simply as handwriting classes. The teaching focuses mainly on the writing norms of strokes and the structural layout of characters, while neglecting the exploration and transmission of the profound cultural connotations behind calligraphy.

For example, when explaining Chinese characters, they simply tell students the stroke order and writing method, rarely touching upon the origin, evolution, and cultural significance of the characters. When appreciating calligraphy works, they focus on the analysis of brushwork and techniques, while ignoring the historical background, the author's life experience, cultural thoughts, etc. This teaching philosophy leads to the fact that the cultural inheritance function of calligraphy education has not been fully exerted. Although students have learned writing skills, their understanding and perception of calligraphy culture remain relatively superficial.

At present, the teaching methods of calligraphy in primary schools are still relatively traditional and monotonous, mainly based on teacher demonstration and student imitation. In class, the teacher first demonstrates writing, and then students imitate and practice. The teaching process lacks interest and interactivity. Such a teaching mode makes the classroom atmosphere rather dull, making it difficult to stimulate students' learning interest and initiative. This is especially true for primary school students who are lively, active, and curious, as traditional teaching methods cannot meet their learning needs.

In addition, the connection between calligraphy teaching and other subjects is not close enough, and it fails to fully integrate and utilize school educational resources. Calligraphy teaching is often

conducted in isolation, without forming an effective collaborative teaching mechanism with subjects such as Chinese, art, and history, making it difficult for students to fully understand the connotations of calligraphy culture from a multidisciplinary perspective and limiting the improvement of their comprehensive literacy.

The evaluation system of primary school calligraphy education has many shortcomings. In terms of evaluation content, it overly emphasizes the writing quality of students' calligraphy works, such as whether the brushwork is standardized, whether the structure is reasonable, and whether the overall layout is aesthetically pleasing, while paying relatively little attention to the cultural knowledge, cultural emotional experience, and innovation ability students have gained during the learning process.

In terms of evaluation methods, teacher evaluation is the main approach, which is relatively single. Usually, students' grades are determined through periodic calligraphy homework corrections and final examinations. There is a lack of diversified evaluation methods such as student self-evaluation, peer evaluation, and process evaluation. It is difficult to comprehensively and objectively reflect students' actual performance and progress in the learning process. This imperfect evaluation system is not conducive to stimulating students' learning enthusiasm and initiative, nor is it conducive to guiding teachers to pay attention to students' comprehensive development and the cultivation of cultural inheritance ability.

3.3 Improvement strategies

3.3.1 Correcting deviations in teaching philosophy

Schools should encourage teachers to independently study calligraphy cultural knowledge, provide them with relevant books and subscription services to academic journals, and require teachers to write reading notes and reflections each semester and share and exchange them in teaching and research activities, so as to continuously enhance teachers' depth of understanding of the cultural connotations of calligraphy.

In daily calligraphy teaching, when explaining Chinese characters, teachers should not only emphasize stroke order and writing methods, but also integrate content such as character stories and cultural implications. For example, when teaching the character blessing, they can tell the folk tradition of pasting the " blessing " character during the Spring Festival, as well as its pictographic meaning in oracle bone script, so that students understand the connotation of blessings and good wishes it carries.

In the link of appreciating calligraphy works, teachers should collect information about the author's life and the historical background in advance, make illustrated courseware, and guide students to appreciate the works from cultural and ideological perspectives. For instance, when appreciating Yan Zhenqing's Draft of a Eulogy for My Nephew, introduce the background of the An-Shi Rebellion and the heroic feats of the Yan clan. This helps students perceive the grief, indignation and patriotism embedded in the work, and deepen their comprehension of calligraphy's cultural value.

3.3.2 Innovating teaching methods

(1) We can utilize multimedia resources to produce animated videos, mini-games and other materials based on calligraphy knowledge. For example, we may design a game titled Calligraphy Stroke Adventure. In this game, players guide characters to write Chinese characters following standard stroke sequences to clear stages, which consolidates students' writing skills and boosts their learning enthusiasm.

(2) We can adopt group cooperative learning by assigning calligraphy creation tasks, for instance, asking teams to jointly finish calligraphy-themed handwritten newspapers. Group members divide the work of writing, illustration, and data collection, and through cooperation, they exchange ideas and inspire each other.

(3) We can hold a calligraphy quiz session in class. The teacher raises questions about calligraphy knowledge and techniques, and students race to answer, which enlivens the classroom atmosphere and enhances students' active thinking and participation.

(4) We implement interdisciplinary integrated teaching. We can carry out the practical activity Common Origin of Calligraphy and Painting. Students create paintings first and then add inscriptions matching the artistic conception, so they can recognize the similarities between painting composition and calligraphy layout and improve their overall artistic attainment. We also combine lessons with history courses by sorting out the evolutionary history of calligraphy across dynasties. For example,

while learning Tang Dynasty history, we introduce renowned calligraphers including Ouyang Xun, Yan Zhenqing and Liu Gongquan, as well as the historical background behind their styles, broadening students' cultural vision.

4. Conclusion

We should focus not only on writing proficiency but also on students' cultural and emotional experience. We ask students to write calligraphy learning reflections to record their feelings and insights gained from appreciation and creation, based on which teachers assess their emotional growth. We set evaluation criteria for innovative competence and adopt self and peer assessment, helping students learn from peers and identify personal flaws. Besides, we attach importance to process evaluation. Teachers should record process information such as students' classroom performance, participation in group cooperation, and completion of daily assignments, and combine this with the end-of-term work evaluation to comprehensively reflect students' learning trajectory and provide a basis for teaching improvement.

References

- [1] Wu C. *Aesthetic education infiltration in primary school calligraphy teaching [J]. Primary School Teaching Research, 2024, (33), 29-31.*
- [2] Zhou L J. *Exploration of Calligraphy Education Practice in Primary Schools under the Concept of Student centeredness [J]. New Curriculum Research, 2025, (1), 33-35.*
- [3] Fa S T. *On Calligraphy Education in Elementary and Secondary Schools from the Perspective of Core Competency [J]. Journal of The Chinese Society of Education, 2020, (3), 98-102.*