

Appeal for Aesthetics Education among Teenagers

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Abstract: *The study explores the significance of calligraphy in Chinese traditional art and its role in fostering aesthetic education among teenagers. Qualitative research methods, including interviews and literature analysis, were utilized. The study highlights the importance of calligraphy education for youth as a critical component in the development and dissemination of this art form. It also addresses the current shortcomings in cognitive concepts, teaching methods, and content for teenagers' calligraphy education. The abstract emphasizes the need to align modern calligraphy education with the evolving artistic identity of the art form and proposes innovative solutions for its enhancement.*

Keywords: *Calligraphy education, Youth Calligraphy transformation, Aesthetic education*

1. Literature Review

At present, there are many literatures on the innovative teaching of aesthetic education in calligraphy education. For example, Chen (2018) [1] believed that the current effort on writing techniques and contempt for aesthetic education has become a common problem in calligraphy education. He suggested that under the new situation, the positioning, teaching methods and training goals of calligraphy should be carefully examined and rethought. Huang (2018) [2] proposed to use calligraphy as an important means of aesthetic education to interpret the aesthetic function of calligraphy and analyzed the status of calligraphy education in modern universities. But the two authors did not put forward feasible suggestions for calligraphy teaching methods for youth. There are also some literatures that focus on the research of calligraphy education methods, Li (2017) [3] discussed the teaching methods of primary school calligraphy from three aspects: stimulating primary school students' interest in calligraphy, insisting on intensive teaching and more practice, and rational use of modern information technology; Yang (2020) [4] conducted a research on the feasibility of combining calligraphy teaching methods in primary schools with art teaching methods; He (2021) [5] proposed a method of aesthetic education in calligraphy in the new era from three perspectives: appreciation and evaluation of calligraphy works, criticism of calligraphy theory, and cultural connotation of calligraphy. The three authors did not classify the objects of calligraphy aesthetic education and put forward more operable educational methods from the perspectives of the learning ability and psychological characteristics of the objects of calligraphy aesthetic education [6].

Most of the current research literature on calligraphy education agrees with the view that calligraphy education is an important part of aesthetic education, but the research on the teaching methods of calligraphy aesthetic education is too superficial and vague. Most of the calligraphy learning objects of literature research focus on primary school students and college students majoring in calligraphy, and do not make specific group divisions for calligraphy learners of different ages. There is no specific and operable research on the teaching methods of calligraphy aesthetic education for youth who are in the critical period of aesthetic conception formation.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Hu Kangmei's theory of "writing is different from calligraphy".

Calligrapher Hu [2019] [6] believes in his book "Calligraphy is Form" that the modern transformation of the traditional form of calligraphy has become a fact in the history of contemporary calligraphy art. This transformation began with the abolition of the imperial examination system in the early 20th century and the popularization of Western hard pen writing tools in China. Calligraphy with a brush as the main writing tool has its artistic features constantly magnified, while its functionality for practical purposes is constantly covered by its artistic features for appreciation. Hu's point of view that "writing is not the same as calligraphy" shows that calligraphy has become an art category with visual

images as the main object of appreciation. This point of view fundamentally resolves the debate on whether calligraphy education should focus on techniques or focus on aesthetics.

2.2 Chen Zhenlian's Calligraphy "Aesthetic Education" Theory.

Calligrapher Chen (2018) [7] points out in the introduction of his book *Calligraphy Aesthetic Education* that the purpose of calligraphy aesthetic education is to eliminate "aesthetic blindness", establish the aesthetic value of calligraphy as an art subject, and solve the bad phenomenon of chaotic aesthetic value of calligraphy. In his opinion, modern calligraphy education has no aesthetic education, only writing culture and skills education, but no aesthetic education based on artistic aesthetics. Therefore, he put forward two basic teaching principles in the teaching process of calligraphy aesthetic education: one is to strengthen the aesthetic analysis in the teaching process of calligraphy. The second is to "problem" as the goal, change the traditional teaching methods only teach "what" rather than "why" and "how to do".

2.3 Significance of the study

In the context of modern transformation, calligraphy, as an art category with Chinese characteristics, has been generally recognized by the academic circles. With the confirmation of the identity of calligraphy art, the modern transformation of calligraphy education is also imperative. In the teaching process of calligraphy for youth, changing the traditional outdated calligraphy teaching methods and increasing the content of traditional Chinese art aesthetic education can not only continue to promote the modern transformation of calligraphy art and calligraphy education, but also improve the identity of calligraphy as an art discipline. At the same time, it can also promote the sustainable development of calligraphy art, carry forward China's excellent traditional culture, and help realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

2.4 Objectives

The main objective of the study is to determine the reasons of the lack of aesthetic education among the teenagers.

- 1) To identify the best methods and approaches used in teaching calligraphy education among the teenagers.
- 2) To determine the reasons of the lack of appreciation of aesthetic education among the teenagers
- 3) To put forward solutions of the lack of appreciation of aesthetic education among the teenagers

3. Results and Discussion

The current methods used in teaching calligraphy education among teenagers often lack a focus on aesthetic education and appreciation of artistic aesthetics (Chen, 2020). The teaching approaches predominantly involve repetitive exercises in hard pen and brush calligraphy but fail to foster students' interest and enthusiasm in learning. Moreover, students struggle to evaluate and appreciate different styles of calligraphy works from various periods.

To address these issues, a more effective teaching method should aim to cultivate students' ability to recognize, understand, and appreciate the beauty of calligraphy, while also nurturing their creativity in creating calligraphy. The approach proposed by Chen (2020) emphasizes two fundamental principles for calligraphy aesthetic education: enhancing aesthetic analysis in teaching and adopting a problem-solving approach to understanding "why" and "how to," not just "what" to write.

By incorporating more aesthetic analysis of calligraphy works in the teaching content, rather than solely focusing on techniques, students can develop a deeper understanding and appreciation for calligraphy's beauty (Chen, 2020). This approach fosters their ability to create and appreciate the aesthetic value of calligraphy works more effectively.

4. Reasons of the lack of appreciation of aesthetic education among the teenagers.

The contemporary youth calligraphy education is facing a deficiency in aesthetic education. This

issue arises from both subjective and objective factors. Calligraphy teachers, despite having received higher education in calligraphy, often prioritize teaching techniques over aesthetic principles. While they possess theoretical knowledge of aesthetic education, they tend to only use a fraction of it to assist in teaching calligraphy techniques to teenagers.

Jingru (2017) emphasized the importance of combining intensive teaching and modern technology to enhance calligraphy education. However, during interviews with calligraphy teachers, it became evident that the lack of adequate time and resources hampers the integration of aesthetic education into the teaching process. Pressure from parents for practical results, such as improved handwriting for exams, further diverts the focus from aesthetic appreciation.

The limited exposure to diverse calligraphy aesthetic styles leads to a lack of interest and enthusiasm among students. Calligraphy teachers tend to prioritize neatness and standardization in their teaching, neglecting the exploration of various aesthetic expressions, thus failing to cater to students' individual preferences.

Additionally, educational institutions often diminish the importance of calligraphy courses, allocating minimal time and resources for them. The pursuit of high academic performance in other subjects takes precedence, leaving little room for comprehensive calligraphy education.

To address these challenges, it is crucial to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical implementation in calligraphy education. Educators should allocate sufficient time to foster aesthetic education and encourage the exploration of diverse calligraphy styles. Furthermore, policies should be established to promote the significance of arts courses, allowing ample opportunities for students to delve deeper into calligraphy and appreciate its aesthetic value. By combining these approaches, contemporary youth calligraphy education can truly embrace aesthetic education and enrich students' artistic experiences (Jingru, 2017).

5. Solutions of the lack of appreciation of aesthetic education among the teenagers

The discussion above reveals several issues in calligraphy education for teenagers, including the lack of emphasis on aesthetic education, backward teaching methods, insufficient attention from schools, and limited understanding of the art of calligraphy among teachers. To address these challenges and enhance calligraphy education for young students, several key strategies can be implemented:

Shifting Teaching Focus: Calligraphy teachers should reexamine their teaching methods and move away from solely focusing on technical aspects. Instead, they should adopt an approach that places aesthetic education at the forefront. This involves integrating aesthetic analysis of ancient classical calligraphy works into the teaching content and explaining calligraphy aesthetics within the context of contemporary aesthetic theory. By providing diverse experience modes and exposure to various calligraphy styles, students' aesthetic appreciation can be enriched.

Continuous Learning: Calligraphy teachers should take the initiative to improve their own calligraphy skills and deepen their understanding of traditional Chinese culture. Engaging in continued learning through courses and workshops offered by renowned calligraphers and institutions can significantly enhance their cultural literacy, leading to more effective teaching practices.

Curriculum Differentiation: Schools should distinguish between hard brush calligraphy and brush calligraphy courses. The hard brush calligraphy can be integrated into the Chinese language curriculum, focusing on improving students' ability to write standardized Chinese characters. On the other hand, brush calligraphy should be incorporated into the art education curriculum, allowing students to study classic works, understand calligraphy history, and appreciate the aesthetics of ancient calligraphy works.

By implementing these strategies, calligraphy education for teenagers can be transformed to foster students' appreciation and creation of the beauty of calligraphy. The comprehensive integration of aesthetics, cultural understanding, and skill development will contribute to a more enriching and fulfilling calligraphy learning experience for young learners. (Rongqian, 2018; Chenlong, 2018).

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

The cultural literacy of calligraphy teachers needs to meet the needs of calligraphy teaching work

for teenagers. According to the above content, the content of calligraphy teaching for teenagers is not only based on the technique of brush operation, but also requires calligraphy teachers to have a knowledge reserve of Chinese calligraphy history, ancient calligraphy theory, aesthetic theory, poetics, ancient philology, philosophy, etc.. In addition, because the age of teenagers is defined as 10-17 years old, teenagers at this age are an important period for the formation of their world outlook and values.

As a calligraphy teacher, it is necessary to have a deep understanding of the psychological characteristics of teenagers at this age and their tendency to appear. Based on these problems, we can design calligraphy teaching content and improve young people's interest in calligraphy learning. Therefore, in the design of teaching content, we can put more emphasis on story-based and visual teaching. Through story-based narration, young people can resonate with the thoughts and emotions of calligraphers or calligraphy works; The aesthetic theory is easier to understand.

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