Innovation Dimensions on the Education and Inheritance of Writing Culture of Chinese Characters in the Age of Typing

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Abstract. In the network age, typing with keyboard has been a terrible blow to the traditional handwriting. Under this background, the education and inheritance of writing culture of Chinese characters must be strengthened. The article generalizes the main difficulty the writing of Chinese characters has faced in the age of typing, and analyzes both the subjective and objective reasons. Then it concludes the real significance of conducting the education and inheritance of writing culture of Chinese characters in the age of typing on this five aspects: moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetics and labor education. Finally, this article comes up with some the innovations of measures about the education and inheritance of writing culture of Chinese characters on three dimensions: formality, content and measures.

Introduction

The writing culture of Chinese characters, bringing together the great intelligence of the Chinese nation during five thousand years, is an emblem of the Chinese traditional history. However, with the advent of the age of typing, typing with keyboard is edging out writing with hands. Writing frequency of students is decreasing and meanwhile, the fonts they wrote are more and more careless. They often face such awkward situation like "take pen, forget character" or character amnesia. Writing culture of Chinese characters is facing a crisis unparalleled before. This situation is not only the forgetting of Chinese characters, but it also represents that there is no successor s for writing culture of Chinese characters. So, in the age of typing, it is urgent for us to explore and promote the new way for the inheritance of writing culture of Chinese characters.

The Main Dilemma the Writing of Chinese Characters has faced in the Age of Typing

The existing conditions of the writing of Chinese characters

There have been serious deviations in the postures and methods when writing Chinese characters. Through the personal observation of 200 students from different majors in Nanjing Forestry University, the author conducted a survey on the postures and methods of the students when they are writing Chinese characters. It is found that nearly half of the postures of students meet the basic standard but the proportion of wrong postures is still more than 40%, showing that there exists many problems with the postures of university students. In terms of the way students holding pens, the situation is even sterner. The proportion of the wrong ways of holding pens is nearly 40%, and this straightly leads to the wrong way of writing characters.
There have been serious deviations in the style of calligraphy of Chinese characters. Through studying the applications for Party membership from 50 students majoring in college of Science, the author finds that there are nearly half of the applications are completed carelessly and almost all of them have deviations in Chinese characters they wrote.

The frequency of handwriting decreasing significantly. Through investigating 100 college freshmen in college of Science about the frequency of their handwriting, the author finds that the proportion of students responding "writing everyday" is less than 10% and the proportion of students answering "not writing unless having tests or taking notes" is up to 70%. So it can be easily concluded that the frequency of handwriting is very low in the age of typing.

The attitudes to Chinese characters

Indifferent attitudes of teachers. Through sitting in on some classes by 15 teachers in college of science along with interviewing them, it is found in the survey "The conditions of blackboard-writing written by teachers on classes" that twelve of them almost teach by PPT and in teachers who teach by blackboard-writing, there is only one teacher write standard and the characters that he writes are neat and orderly, others write carelessly. Furthermore, in the survey "The attitudes to the writing of Chinese characters", most teachers believe that weather the characters they write are standard or not has nothing to do with students’ education and have indifferent attitudes to the writing of Chinese characters.
Indifferent attitudes of parents. Through random interviews of 20 parents of students in Nanjing No.13 Middle School, it is found that parents who are prefer letting children participating tutorial classes that teach Mathematics and Physics or English is 80% and they think this can promote students’ grades. They consider that, in information age, writing chinese characters is meaningless and they pay little attention to the writing of Chinese characters.

Table 5. The conditions of choosing different tutorial classes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Calligraphy program</th>
<th>Recreational and sports program</th>
<th>Subject classes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of people</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion (%)</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Indifferent attitudes of students. Through random interviews of 120 students majoring in different majors in Nanjing Forestry University, it is found that more than 90% students hold attitude that they will change their attitudes and pay attention to the writing of Chinese characters while the proportion of students who think that there is no need to changing is less than 20%. So in general, the conditions of the students' attitudes can be positive.

Table 6. The attitudes to the writing of chinese characters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitudes</th>
<th>Think highly</th>
<th>Have no matters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of people</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion (%)</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reason Analysis on the Primal Problems of the Writing of Chinese Characters in the Age of Typing

Objective reasons

Weakening effects the network age has on the writing of Chinese characters. With the continuous development of networking, computers are widely speeded. On one side, computers can make study and work be convenient, but on the other side computers will take serious challenges to the writing of Chinese characters. At present, for lots of middle and colleges requiring electronic work, students have to master the skill of typing. With the increasing frequency of typing with keyboard, the frequency of handwriting is declining. Meanwhile, they write more and more carelessly and even have bad handwriting. Characters on test papers of most students are barely decipherable a crawl. Students' skills of handwriting are weaken generally with the education of the writing of Chinese characters pushed on the edge.\[1\]

The burden of working leads to the decreasing standard of writing. Under test-oriented education system nowadays, if students pay attention to the writing, with a large quantity assignments by teachers, it must affect the efficiency of work completing. So the students have no choice but only to cope with it and ignore the beautiful degree of the characters they write. This situation largely influence the quality of students’ writing. So if we want to improve the standard of
the writing of Chinese characters, we must to lighten the burden of working of students and pay more attention to the quality of working.

Lacking exemplary roles teachers’ play. At present, many teachers, especially college teachers, prefer using multimedia and nearly writing on the blackboard or even never. The exemplary role teachers should play is not work. So if we appear teachers for teaching by blackboard-writing and having standard and neat writing, students must learn to imitate. This will unconsciously influence and improve the standard of students’ writing.

Subjective reasons

Deviations in school’s attitudes. School is the main battlefield of educating the writing of Chinese characters. However, under test-oriented education system nowadays, the single standard to judge whether a student is outstanding or not is his grades and the social always only attach importance to the enrollment rate of a school to evaluate this school's level. Weather the characters the students write are neat or not has nothing to do with entering a higher school. Therefore, schools will not pay enough attention to the writing of Chinese characters.

The absence of parents’ attention. Many parents focus mostly on the classes that teach Chinese, English and Math or the specialized classes of Art due to the pressure from entering a higher school. They believe that choosing these classes can improve students' grades and develop students'specialities so that can gain extra grades of their children in the future entrance examinations. This make them pay little attention to the writing of Chinese characters. [2]

The absence of personal attention. Students will only have interest in the knowledge that they must be tested during learning. They work very hard on subjects like Chinese, English and Math etc. and their assignments are such a large quantity that they have no time that can spend on practicing handwriting. This phenomenon largely cause harm to their driving force to write and so directly influence the standard of writing.

The Realistic Significance for the Education and Inheritance of Writing Culture of Chinese Characters

In the current age of typing, the education and inheritance of the writing of Chinese Characters for students are of important practical significance in five dimensions-moral, intelligence, sports, aesthetics and labor.

Significance for moral education

The education of the writing of Chinese characters is the important mean of inheriting Chinese traditional culture. Chinese characters culture condenses the wisdom of the Chinese nation and implies its tradition. It has rich cultural connotations, being the symbol of Chinese nation and a kind of cohesion. Besides, Chinese Character writing is an important component of the Chinese traditional culture and the bond of inheriting and developing traditional culture. So the best way of traditional cultural education for students is to let themselves feel Chinese characters cultural atmosphere and develop the interest in writing it.

The education of the writing of Chinese characters is the necessary way to enhance the national sense of pride. Undoubtedly, Chinese characters is one of the best part to inherit traditional Chinese culture and is the most widely used and oldest character in the world. Compared with western alphabet, it shows a strong sense of superiority and artistry, expressing the dignity and the sprite of the times. To some extent, the education of Chinese character writing is the classic content of education for patriotism. It let us appreciate the beauty of Chinese character writing, experience its realm and connotation and perceive its wisdom and profound meanings, thus enhancing the sense of Chinese traditional culture and the sense of pride.

Significance for intellectual education

The education of the writing of Chinese characters helps to develop student’s intelligence. When writing the Chinese characters, the exercise of ability is concurrent. It is the process of
applying aesthetics to the writing of Chinese character and also the process of using brain and hand simultaneously. The variability of Chinese characters writing and the beauty of writing movements can enhance the development of student's intelligence, activate their practical ability, develop their observation ability and cultivate their creative ability. Ultimately their intelligence can be improved.

The education of Chinese character writing helps to develop student’s good habits. Once students keep writing every day, gradually habits will internalize into regular actions which is related to their life and work. Careless problems gradually disappeared. Instead, the good habits of meticulousness and perseverance are implicitly cultivated in the process of writing.

The education of Chinese character writing helps to enhance student's cognitive ability. Chinese characters expresses its meaning through its shape, which is unique in the world. In the process of writing and learning, students gradually, independently and correctly analysis problems. Stimulating student's initiative and initiative contemplative faculty can make students dare to think, continuously enhance student’s cognitive ability.

Significance for sports education

Chinese character writing can relieve mental stress, helping students to keep fit. Especially at present, the proportion of myopic students is very high. It is imperative to carry out Chinese character writing education. Correct writing posture make the finger and other parts move in harmony and unity, enhancing their body's flexibility and coordination. Especially when practice writing Chinese character, people can eliminate all misconceptions, cultivate and adjust breath, and relieve pressure.

Significance for aesthetic education

Develop the taste of students. The process of writing characters is the process of finding the beauty of Chinese characters, feeling the beauty of Chinese characters and experiencing the beauty of Chinese characters. Writing artistic and neat characters can make students possess the abilities of appreciating calligraphy, develop the taste of students and increasingly deepen the understandings of the students on the feeling and the judgements of the beauty. Therefore can unconsciously influence their daily studying and perfect their personalities.

The education of the writing of Chinese characters can make people pleasant. The writing of Chinese characters can help to feel and understand the vitality of lives, making students face their lives more actively and improve their tastes and to uplift their minds and spirits. It can also make people gain great pleasant and digest the great beauty of Chinese characters, enjoying the beauty of artistic characters, so that can adjust the moods and make people be cheerful.

Significance for labor education

Writing Chinese characters is also a process of perseverance training and physical training and it can develop hardy perseverance, determined endurance, persistent determination and the confidence of challenging. It can help to develop students’ concepts of participating labor actively and promote students developing great labor skills.

Exploration for Innovation Dimensions on the Education and Inheritance of Writing Culture of Chinese Characters

Formal dimensions on the education of writing culture of Chinese characters

Efficient push by society is a guarantee

(1) Improve the cognition for the writing of Chinese characters. With the push of networking process becoming more and more fast, the capable of writing Chinese characters of people in our country is remarkable decreasing. This phenomenon must rise society's highly attentions. Administrative Department of Education should actively take steps: establish the status of educating the writing of Chinese characters in schools, especially in primary and secondary schools; come up with the standard of handwriting as soon as possible; in different entrance tests of middle schools, high schools and colleges and some GNVQs(General National Vocational Qualification) like civil
service exam, judicial examination, to certain extent and at a certain rate, counting the conditions of writing as criterial for evaluation; suggest that the award students in Chinese Character Writing Competition can gain extra grades in different levels of entrance tests. Generally speaking, only if the whole society attach importance to the writing of Chinese characters, can the writing skills of students be improved.

(2) Perfect relevant systems of Chinese character language. Perfecting relevant systems of Chinese character language, establishing and perfecting the management system of the language and characters to regularize some unhealthy phenomenon’s of handwriting in schools. Society regular conducts exchanges between different students from different schools to let students study and learn various statutes and books relevant to characters such as "The Law of Chines Current Spoken and Written Language", "Basic Vocabulary Table of Modern Chinese Characters" etc. and actively spread relevant policies to people around.

(3) Both propaganda and public opinion guidance of media should be brought into play. Through the broadcast of some relevant TV programs such as "Chinese Character Dictation Contest" broadcasted by CCTV etc. to mainly spread the writing culture of Chinese characters in the whole society, widely popularize the skills of writing Chinese characters, improve the consciousness of the public of the necessity and importance of using language characters correctly and change the cognate of the whole society to the use of Chinese characters.

A high degree of attention of the schools is the key

(1) Enable the status of blackboard-writing on classes. Educating the writing culture of Chinese characters is the bounden duty of primary schools, secondary schools, high schools and colleges. The writing of Chinese characters requires not only standard writing, but also artistic characters. As a front-line teacher, teacher's blackboard-writing has great significance to inheritance of students' education of writing culture of Chinese characters and directly affect the attitudes students hold to the writing of Chinese characters. Thus, the blackboard-writing is not only the representation of educational task, but also the representation of responsibility.

(2) Establish the ideal of collusion development. Different levels of educators should regard the process of writing Chinese characters as the process of contacts between teachers and students and together developing. Change active teaching by traditional teachers and passive learning by students into communicating with each other. During the blackboard-writing and other various writing activities, teachers and students are on the same platform, judging and evaluating each other, learning together and growing up together.

Improved consciousness of parents is foundation. At present, the society is full of fierce competitions so that the knowledge, the academic qualifications and the specialty weigh a lot in employment. Parents only cognize the importance of learning cultural knowledge and can be easily happy by their children's great grades, they pay no attention to the skills of writing. "Handwriting is useless" is a consensus to parents. As a consequence, improving the consciousness of parents of the necessity and importance of writing skills is a task which brooks no dely.

The methodological dimension on the education and inheritance of writing culture of Chinese characters

The leading role schools play in the education and inheritance of writing culture of Chinese characters should be brought into play

(1) Be fully aware of the importance of the writing of Chinese characters. Different kinds of schools at various levels must actively launch education of Chinese characters’ writing and practically improve the writing skills of students. Schools must attach great importance to the educating of the writing of Chinese characters, especially primary schools, and have plans to bring the educating of the writing of Chinese characters into daily educating systematical. Meanwhile, schools should strengthen the evaluation to the writing of characters of teachers on classes, strengthen supervision and constantly examine.

(2) Regularize the evaluation system of the writing of Chinese characters.
Schools in different levels, particularly primary schools, should pay attention to the evaluation on the writing of Chinese characters and work out a standard of the writing. And in the conditional case, record the conditions of writing of students into their personal files. Through doing this, students will attach importance to writing for great evaluations. Only if the students pay attention to their handwriting, can the writing of Chinese characters develop smoothly.

(3) Create great atmosphere for the writing of Chinese characters in schools. Schools should make great efforts to create good atmosphere for writing, leading students find beauty and pursue beauty, and stimulate the enthusiasm of the students for the writing. Primary schools and secondary schools can launch activities like calligraphy exhibitions, students’ assignments and test papers exhibitions etc. Colleges can launch activities like notes exhibitions, extracurricular records etc. to fully represent the conditions of the writing of Chinese characters. These activities can be exposed students to the writing of Chinese characters and unconsciously improve their writing standard.

The main role teachers’ play in the education and inheritance of writing culture of Chinese characters should be brought into play.

(1) Practically work out plans of writing. Teachers in primary schools and secondary schools should have rigid plans about the writing of Chinese characters and make the education of writing become organized and efficient. Schools should organize all teachers, not only Chinese teachers, to strengthen the guidance to the writing of Chinese characters of their students. Teachers can establish standards to regularize students’ writing when they are correcting students' test papers and homework. Only in this way, can we improve the overall standard of students' writing.

(2) Implement new strategy of the education of the writing of Chinese characters. Teachers should continuously update teaching ideas and change teaching roles. Teachers should regard developing pioneering spirit and practical ability of students as center and let students choose actively and learn actively, stimulating students' interests in learning. Teachers can try to use cooperative learning and let students who have neat handwriting but weak in brushwork cooperate with students who are good at brushwork but weak in writing, matching like this so that they can affect each other and improve together. Teachers’ should change traditional learning model and let students find problems, analyze problems and solve problems by themselves. Meanwhile, teachers should encourage students to read books and magazines that are relevant to calligraphy, visit and imitate calligraphy exhibitions and lead students to study the fascination of calligraphy to improve their culture and taste.

(3) Make efforts to improve personal writing standard. Every qualified teachers themselves should have correct way of writing and good skills of writing and their Chinese characters should be standard, artistic and strokes of them are clear and neat. To up to this, Teachers should have experienced continuous practicing and specialized trains about writing. They should make efforts to improve writing standard and be quite qualified for the education of the writing of Chinese Characters so as to help the development of the education of the writing.

(4) Help students to broaden the platforms for learning handwriting. Make efforts to develop the interests of students and lead them to some places like libraries and reading rooms to read books about traditional culture so as to improve writing standard. Let students participate some communities such as literary society, society of poets etc. Arrange more activities that are relevant to characters writing like essay, calligraphy, recite etc. Broaden the platforms in different ways and develop writing-ability and the ability of representing by Chinese characters.

The dimension of content on the education of writing culture of Chinese characters

The content of education of the teachers in the education and inheritance of writing culture of Chinese characters.

(1) The content of teaching materials should with depth. Teaching materials about the writing of Chinese characters should fully reflect the essence of the excellent Chinese traditional culture so that students can fully experience the beauty of the calligraphy art and the meaning of aesthetic culture through appreciating calligraphy works. Characters that are used in teaching materials should be carefully choose. Current materials use mostly regular script in computers as model font
and some materials even have simplified Chinese characters mixed with simplified Chinese characters. This can directly cause the decreasing of quality of students' writing and the decreasing of the taste of students.

(2) **Teach students correct posture and correct way of holding pens.** Teachers should often guide and mind students of their postures and ways of holding pens when students are writing because there never be neat and standard characters without correct postures. When training students writing Chinese characters, the first thing is to write correct fundamental strokes of Chinese characters and the order of the strokes cannot be mistaken. Teachers should let students begin with structure and see the fundamental shape, strokes and structures. And only students master the regularity of changing, can the characters they write be gradually concinnity.

(3) **Use multimedia to teach the writing of Chinese characters.** Teachers in primary schools and secondary schools can carefully making multimedia course wares about the writing of Chinese characters to make students learn the strokes, the order of strokes and pen craft more intuitively and clearly. Teachers can represent some excellent calligraphy works by multimedia to make students understand the beauty of Chinese characters during appreciating. And can make students continuously imitate to improve personal writing standard.

**Learning content of students when they are learning the education and inheritance of writing culture of Chinese characters.**

(1) **Develop personal ability of taste about the writing of Chinese characters.** When students are learning characters writing and mastering the fundamental ways of writing characters, they can learn in terms of developing personal taste and improving personal taste by finding beauty so as to have neat and artistic characters.

(2) **Improve personal quality of using Chinese characters correctly.** When students in schools, they can pay more attention to the writing of the characters on campus stores and signpost introductions to deepen the memories of correct characters. Schools can make every students be allowed to exercise, through various platforms like radio stations, school newspapers, language literary clubs etc., and study in great language atmosphere to practically improve their language literary qualities.

(3) **Inspire personal interests on the writing of Chinese characters.** Through setting up some activities like calligraphy lessons, launching calligraphy competitions and competitions of memory about characters etc. to fully arouse personal initiatives. Participating actively and careful preparations can arouse students' practical abilities and interests on learning chinese characters. This also can decrease the occurrence frequency of "take pen, forget character" and the frequency of writing typos.

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