

A Case Study of Talent Cultivation in Public Calligraphy Education in Universities -Take Leshan Normal University for Example

Shengjing Wu^{1,*}, Ju Wang²

¹College of Fine Arts, Leshan Normal University, Leshan, China

²College of Teacher Education, Leshan Normal University, Leshan, China

*Corresponding author. Email: 826934920@qq.com

ABSTRACT

In order to improve college students' writing ability and aesthetic level of art, many universities have adopted many effective strategies and methods. Leshan Normal University have trained a group of calligraphy talents who are not majoring in calligraphy through the establishment of a tutor calligraphy studio, calligraphy art specialty classes, the Organization of a Calligraphy Association for Students, the establishment of calligraphy general education courses, etc. Some students have not only improved their writing skills and aesthetic standards, but also achieved good results by taking part in competitions and winning prizes, passing the entrance examination for a master's degree in calligraphy, and serving as a calligraphy teacher at the basic education stage. This case is worth continuing to explore.

Keywords: Calligraphy, Aesthetic Education, Atelier, Specialties class, Association.

1. BACKGROUND

Calligraphy has always been a compulsory or optional course for non-calligraphy majors in colleges and universities in China. However, although the name of the course is calligraphy, the content of the course is not in line with the requirements for the training of calligraphy talents, and most normal universities regard it as the basic skill and ability training of teachers as the course objective, so its course orientation should be the three-stroke (Chalk, Pen, Chinese writing brush) of learning and training. That's why some colleges simply call it Sanbizi course. Therefore, the learning of calligraphy by students in normal universities is limited to the cognition and writing of three-stroke characters in order to write beautiful and standard Chinese characters. The teaching process of teachers mostly involves the learning and training of Kaishu, or at most expands to Xingshu, and it is in accordance with the norms of Chinese characters to teach whether it is Kaishu or Xingshu.

However, the standardized writing of Chinese characters is just the requirement of calligraphy study at the lowest level, so it can't embody the beauty of changes and contradictions in calligraphy art in the philosophical sense, and students can not feel the huge

artistic appeal of calligraphy art. As a result, their judgment on the beauty of calligraphy is ambiguous, unclear, or even wrong. Therefore, it is necessary to improve the calligraphy aesthetic ability of non-calligraphy majors in teachers colleges.

As the carrier and manifestation of culture, the art of calligraphy should be paid enough attention to in the aesthetic education of normal colleges and universities. However, as students of non-calligraphy major in normal universities, they are restricted by the existing teachers, facilities, students' interests, time, energy and other factors, so it is not quite realistic if teachers want to carry on the general calligraphy level enhancement to all non-calligraphy specialty students in normal classes. Therefore, taking into account all kinds of practical difficulties and the situation of many non-calligraphy majors in normal universities, adopting flexible and diverse working methods, and carrying out multi-channel teaching and practicing activities of calligraphy courses, is feasible to formulate, promote and implement the training program for some non-calligraphy majors. This not only satisfies the desire of some students who have a strong demand for calligraphy, but also carries out the opinions on the implementation of the project for the inheritance and development of Chinese excellent traditional culture,

published by the State Council General Office of the General Office of the Communist Party of China in January 2017, for doing certain substantive work to promote the traditional culture of calligraphy in normal colleges and universities.

2. METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION

In order to truly improve the calligraphic skills and artistic aesthetic abilities of students in universities, especially normal universities, many colleges have adopted many effective strategies and methods. Take Leshan Normal University as an example, the following activities have been carried out in recent years:

2.1. Set up Tutor Calligraphy Workshop

In December 2014, the school's teacher-student Skills Committee decided to form a team of teachers from the school to set up calligraphy workshops for Yijia Wu, Zewen Xiong and Shengjing Wu, and formulated on the selection, training, management, output and other related work system.

Starting from 2014, in the second week of the beginning in the fall of each year, the teacher's workshop will be open to all sophomore students of the normal school. In accordance with the procedure of selection, students who have already learned the three-stroke character of the normal school will be advertised, then students will sign up voluntarily, and in the specified time for selection every year, each tutor will select 5-10 students who have certain willingness to become the studio members. After the selection, the instructor will gather all the studio members for Professional Training and guidance in Saturday and Sunday mornings until the student's graduation season.

2.2. Set up Special Skill Class of Calligraphy

In March 2017, in order to promote the opinions on the implementation of the project for the inheritance and development of outstanding traditional Chinese culture published by the General Office of the Communist Party of China and the State Council General Office, the school has decided to set up a number of specialized classes in the Arts and Sports with the function of passing on the excellent traditional Chinese culture, including calligraphy, Chinese painting, national vocal music, national dance, national instrumental music, martial arts and other professional fields, and its target students are all non-arts and sports majors in the second year of the normal school, with no more than 30 students in each class.

Through the Organization of Publicity, Calligraphy Class selected a total of 25 students who come from arts, science and engineering. Subsequently, the Youth League committee organized a class opening ceremony to convey to the students that the school had set up a

idea of special long class, clear the role and significance of opening the special long class, and develop the relevant class system.

In April 2017, the calligraphy specialty class officially began, with a total of eight classes per week, on Thursday and Saturday afternoons. Several calligraphy teachers took on the teaching tasks of seal script, official script, cursive script, regular script and calligraphy theory. And the skill training and the theory study were carried on simultaneously, which would not only achieve the enhancement student's calligraphy skill ability, also raise student's theory level.

2.3. To Organize and Establish a Calligraphy Association for Students

Under the School Youth League Committee, the Student Union, as the student organization, according to the School Youth League committee's Work Arrangement, has also organized a certain number of arts and sports associations, including the Student Calligraphy Association.

At the beginning of each academic year, especially when the new students start to register, the relevant cadres of the student union will organize their own personnel to set up recruiting stations near the new students' registration points, inform the new students of the nature of the Association and the development of its activities, and encourage students who are good at or interested in calligraphy to join the Student Calligraphy Association.

The main work carried out by the Student Calligraphy Association is the study and training of calligraphy. First, they will make use of Friday evening time to regularly arrange some outstanding calligraphy students in the school to instruct members of the association to study, at the same time, calligraphy teachers in the school and those of the Calligraphy Association outside the school will be invited to give talks on a regular basis. Second, they will organize the students' calligraphy competition inside and outside the association, so as to drive the enthusiasm of the whole school students to participate in learning calligraphy. The third is community service activities, in which the Calligraphy Association will carry out certain service activities in the traditional festivals. Especially on the eve of the Spring Festival, the Calligraphy Association always go into the community surrounding the school and carry out voluntary activities of writing spring couplets for the broad masses of the people.

2.4. Open Public and Elective Calligraphy Courses in School

In order to improve the artistic aesthetic ability of all students generally, as the department in charge of

teaching in the school, the Academic Affairs Office of the school has set up the general education elective course of art in every semester, which is arranged for two classes every week, and brought it into the normal teaching curriculum planning and management, including calligraphy popularization courses, calligraphy appreciation courses. At the same time the academic affairs office has clearly formulated the students to take art courses credit requirements in the student curriculum management system, which has played a positive guarantee effect to strengthen the school's aesthetic education and carry forward the traditional culture and art.

Calligraphy popularization course is for students who do not have any calligraphy foundation. Through the study of the course, students can have a basic understanding and cognition of calligraphy, and achieve basic calligraphy writing ability by repeating tries of writing with a brush.

Calligraphy appreciation class is a training course which focuses on the aesthetic cognition of calligraphy. In the course of learning, we can make use of the contents of the pictures displayed on the PPT which the teachers have carefully made to go deep into the appreciation and study of ancient and modern classic works. Through the explanation and analysis of the works, the teacher also can make the students have a clear understanding of the different stages of calligraphic art, learn to appreciate the beauty of calligraphic art, and be able to distinguish the different aesthetic levels of calligraphic art and standard writing of Chinese character.

3. THE RESULTS ACHIEVED

For the Leshan Normal University, under the constant supervision and optimization for the teaching effect of the curriculum from school authority, the multi-channel and multi-mode art training mode that has been adopted in calligraphy education over the years has achieved many remarkable results, which have mainly reflected in the following aspects.

3.1. Improving the Ability of Writing Technique and Level of Aesthetic Cognition

The aim of setting up calligraphy course in university firstly is to let students feel the beauty of calligraphy art, and learn to distinguish the quality of calligraphy works, so as to achieve the goal of aesthetic education. Secondly, let students learn and master certain means of expression of calligraphy technology, so as to pass on China's excellent traditional culture and art.

Over the years, through the above multi-channel and multi-way calligraphy art training, the Leshan Normal University has enabled more students to receive

high-level calligraphic aesthetic education, which has improved their calligraphic aesthetic cognitive level, and has cleared that the art of calligraphy not only is the training of writing, but also should not be limited to the lower stage of writing. In the skill level, the acceptance of systematic skill training has improved some students' calligraphic skills and aesthetic level really.

Now, a number of students at the Leshan Normal University have seen a marked change in their perception of calligraphy as a course of study is no longer chosen solely for the sake of academic credit and is not to standardize the writing of Chinese characters, which is the aim of study, but to constantly improve their aesthetic perception and acquaint them the artistic charm and cultural details of Chinese calligraphy. This really embodies the function of carrying forward the broad and profound traditional culture of China.

3.2. Enter a Contest and Win a Prize

For students in non-calligraphy majors, although participating in competition is not the goal of training, but it is a way to test students' learning effectiveness and skill level. At the same time, participating in different levels of calligraphy competition can not only improve the sense of participation of students, but also constantly broaden their creative vision by participating in the exchange and study, and gradually improve their aesthetic vision.

In recent years, the Leshan Normal University has been cultivating students who excel in calligraphy in a variety of ways, and they have achieved more outstanding results in national, provincial, municipal and school level calligraphy competitions.

So far, two students have been selected for the National Exhibition held by the Chinese Calligraphers Association twice, of which Yikun Xiao won the top 60 in the National Exhibition of more than 20,000 submissions. More than 30 times works have been exhibited or won prizes in national exhibitions organized by provincial calligraphers' associations. In the activities of the Sichuan University Students' Art Festival, the school has participated in the calligraphy works competition of the non-professional group, and has won five first prizes, two second prize results.

3.3. Get a Master's Degree in Calligraphy

In the various calligraphy learning methods organized by the school, some students, while constantly improving their calligraphy skills and artistic aesthetic standards, especially the students in the calligraphy art specialty classes and instructor's workshop, gradually has had the great interest to the calligraphy specialty, and has had idea of engaging in the calligraphy art research lifelong, so taking an

examination of the calligraphy specialty graduate student is a direction that they continue to work diligently.

Over the past few years, more than 10 students have been admitted to calligraphy major graduate students of universities across the country, mainly in the calligraphy specialty classes and calligraphy workshops set up by the university, of which Chongqing University has admitted two, Yunnan University got 1, Ningxia University got 1, Southwest University got 2, Shanxi Teachers University got 1, Chengdu University got 1, China West Normal University got 3, etc. . After graduating from the Shanxi Teachers University, Tao Wu returned to his Alma Mater as a calligraphy teacher through an open recruitment by the Leshan Normal University.

3.4. As a Calligraphy Teacher at the Basic Education

According to figures previously reported by the Ministry of Education, the country is currently short of around 400,000 calligraphy teachers at the basic education stage, while most normal schools such as the Leshan Normal University do not have calligraphic majors. Therefore, with regard to the current situation of professional enrolment in colleges and universities across the country, it is not realistic to rely on only graduates from calligraphic majors to supply such a huge gap in teaching staff, while the orientation of the normal school graduates trained by various normal colleges and universities is to engage in education and teaching at various stages of primary and secondary schools, so it is possible and necessary for normal students of other majors to engage in full-time or part-time calligraphy teaching in basic education.

Since some of the students in the Leshan Normal University have received training in calligraphy, and their calligraphic skills and aesthetic standards have been continuously improved, and let them truly have calligraphy expertise with a certain level of calligraphic art of without affecting their studies in their major.

As a result of having a certain level of calligraphy expertise, some students in calligraphy specialty classes and tutors' calligraphy workshops, when they graduate, can not only apply for professional employment through their major, but also make use of their calligraphy expertise to apply to primary and secondary schools as full time or part time calligraphy teachers which can add fresh energy to calligraphy education at basic education.

4. PROBLEM DISCUSSION

Firstly, the shortage of calligraphy teachers is a common problem in many colleges and universities. As far as the Leshan Normal University is concerned, there are currently nearly 17,000 students in the school and

only five calligraphy teachers. It is almost impossible if we really take care of all the students, given the current strength of the teaching force. Of course, in accordance with the current school curriculum and teacher allocation plan, the introduction of a large number of calligraphy teachers is also unrealistic. Therefore, to solve the difficulties in the teaching staff, we need to develop ideas in the future, such as hiring some calligraphers to do part-time teachers, as far as possible to find a solution.

Secondly, the improvement of calligraphy aesthetics in course teaching can only be realized by the participation of both teachers and students, especially for the target audience. Calligraphic skill training and aesthetic education both need students' meditation to go deep into, but nowadays, students are more keen on modern culture and technical means, and most students are not willing to spend a lot of time and energy to accept the aesthetic education of calligraphy. Although the Leshan Normal University has effectively solved some problems by taking elective courses and offering courses, it would be more effective if the majority of students accepted the course from an interest point of view, this is also the need for in-depth study.

5. CONCLUSION

Take Leshan Normal University for Example, although some universities had made multi-channel and multi-form attempts on the teaching reform and methods in the popularization of calligraphy and aesthetic education, also gained a certain good teaching effect. However, as far as the current situation is concerned, the work done is not enough, and the educational and teaching approaches developed can't meet the current needs of aesthetic education, we hope to find more effective and diversified ways of training artistic talents in the future exchanges and cooperation with similar colleges and universities. So this case is worth continuing to explore.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This paper is the research result of the project of "the first-class undergraduate construction and research project of Leshan Normal University in 2019": The course construction of calligraphy and the training mode of normal students' skills (Project No. KG2019-1-15).

REFERENCES

- [1] Yanfang Qiao. College Calligraphy Education and Related Issues[J]. Beauty and the Age (middle), 2020.6.
- [2] Chunhua Cao. On the influence of college calligraphy education on Aesthetics and personality formation [J]. Chinese literature and artists, 2019.9.