

Curriculum Development for Teaching Chinese Calligraphy in Thailand: A Case Study of Xuanpu Academy

Lin Zekai¹, Dr. Manus Kaewbucha^{2*}

¹ Chakrabongse Bhuvanarth International College of Interdisciplinary Studies, Rajamangala University of Technology Tawan-ok, Thailand.
(zekai.lin@rmutto.ac.th)

ORCID: 0009-0005-8042-2936

² Chakrabongse Bhuvanarth International College of Interdisciplinary Studies, Rajamangala University of Technology Tawan-ok, Thailand.
(manus_ka@rmutto.ac.th)

ORCID: 0009-0000-5156-3311

Corresponding Author:

Dr. Manus Kaewbucha

Email: manus_ka@rmutto.ac.th

Abstract: This study explores the development and implementation of a Chinese calligraphy curriculum for overseas learners through a case study of Xuanpu Academy in Thailand. The research aimed to design a structured curriculum that integrates technical calligraphy training with cultural learning and to evaluate its effectiveness in improving students' learning outcomes. A qualitative case study approach was adopted, and data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations during the implementation of the course. The curriculum was organized into four modules: basic brush techniques, character structure, copying classical works, and the cultural background of calligraphy. The findings indicate that the curriculum significantly improved students' calligraphy skills, increased their learning engagement, and enhanced their understanding of the cultural and artistic significance of Chinese calligraphy. The study also highlights the importance of structured curriculum design, interactive teaching strategies, and the integration of cultural content in overseas calligraphy education. These findings provide practical insights for teachers and educational institutions seeking to promote Chinese calligraphy learning in international contexts

Keywords: Chinese calligraphy education; curriculum development; overseas Chinese education; cultural learning; case study

Introduction

In recent decades, China's expanding global engagement has been accompanied by increasingly intensive cultural exchanges with countries around the world. As a result, international interest in Chinese language and culture has grown substantially (Jihua & Ocón, 2024). Within this broader context, international Chinese education has become an important channel for promoting cross-cultural understanding. One prominent initiative in this area is the establishment of Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms worldwide, which aim to support Chinese language learning while also facilitating the dissemination of Chinese culture (Li, 2025). According to the China Foundation for Chinese International Education, by early 2025, 499 Confucius Institutes and 764 Confucius Classrooms

had been established in 161 countries and regions through cooperation between Chinese and foreign institutions. This global expansion reflects the increasing demand for educational programs related to Chinese language and culture (Song & Sercu, 2025)...

Among the various forms of traditional Chinese culture, Chinese calligraphy occupies a distinctive position. Beyond its function as a writing system, Chinese calligraphy represents a unique artistic tradition that integrates linguistic expression, aesthetic principles, philosophical reflection, and historical consciousness (Liu, 2025). For overseas learners, the study of Chinese calligraphy provides not only technical training in brush writing but also a meaningful pathway for engaging with Chinese cultural values and aesthetic traditions (Wei et al., 2025). Consequently, calligraphy education has gradually become an important component of cultural instruction within international Chinese education.

Thailand provides a particularly relevant context for exploring the development of Chinese calligraphy education. As a neighboring country with long-standing historical and cultural connections with China, Thailand has experienced increasing interest in Chinese language and cultural learning in recent years (Xiao & Tian, 2024). This trend is reflected not only in the expansion of Chinese language education but also in the growing attention paid to traditional Chinese cultural practices, including calligraphy. For many Thai learners, Chinese calligraphy is attractive both as an artistic discipline and as a means of gaining deeper insight into Chinese culture (Guirong & Liu, 2024). However, despite this growing interest, the development of systematic Chinese calligraphy curricula in Thailand remains relatively limited.

In many overseas educational settings, Chinese calligraphy instruction often relies heavily on individual teachers' experience rather than on systematically developed curricular frameworks (Zhu, 2025). Compared with the relatively mature field of Chinese language teaching, Chinese calligraphy education abroad still lacks clearly structured curricula, localized teaching objectives, and appropriate evaluation mechanisms (Li, 2021). This situation is particularly evident in multicultural learning environments, where students may have diverse linguistic backgrounds, varying levels of familiarity with Chinese culture, and different motivations for learning. As a result, there is a clear need to develop structured and context-sensitive curricula that make Chinese calligraphy both accessible and pedagogically effective for overseas learners.

Xuanpu Academy in Thailand offers a meaningful case for addressing this issue. As an educational setting where learners have shown a strong interest in Chinese calligraphy, the academy provides an opportunity to examine how a curriculum can be designed to respond to local educational conditions while preserving the cultural and artistic characteristics of Chinese calligraphy. The development of a well-structured calligraphy curriculum in this context is significant not only for improving instructional effectiveness but also for promoting cultural exchange between China and Thailand. Through systematic instruction, students may enhance their understanding of Chinese cultural traditions while also developing important personal qualities such as patience, concentration, creativity, and aesthetic awareness.

Against this background, this study focuses on the development of a Chinese calligraphy curriculum for learners at Xuanpu Academy in Thailand. In order to address the pedagogical needs of this context and to contribute to the improvement of Chinese calligraphy education in overseas settings, the objectives of this study are as follows:

RO1: To study Chinese calligraphy teaching.

RO2: To develop Chinese calligraphy courses for Xuanpu Academy.

RO3: To evaluate the efficiency of the developed Chinese calligraphy courses for Xuanpu Academy.

Literature Review

2.1 Chinese Calligraphy Education

Chinese calligraphy education has long been regarded as an important component of traditional cultural education in China. As both a cultural practice and an artistic discipline, calligraphy teaching integrates technical training, aesthetic cultivation, and cultural transmission (Gao, 2024). In recent decades, with the increasing emphasis on preserving and disseminating traditional culture, Chinese calligraphy education has gradually developed a relatively systematic instructional framework across different educational levels, including primary schools, universities, and specialized art institutions (Lin et al., 2025). Educational policies have also emphasized the role of calligraphy education in strengthening students' understanding of Chinese characters and traditional culture (Xu, 2025).

Within the Chinese educational system, calligraphy instruction typically follows a structured and progressive pedagogical approach. Teaching usually begins with the practice of basic strokes and the study of regular script, followed by gradual exposure to other calligraphic styles such as clerical script, running script, and cursive script (Ma, 2026). This sequential progression reflects the traditional principle of mastering fundamental techniques before advancing to more complex artistic expression. Classroom instruction often adopts demonstration-based teaching, in which instructors demonstrate writing techniques while students learn through observation, imitation, and repeated practice of classical model works. In addition to technical training, Chinese calligraphy education emphasizes the cultivation of aesthetic appreciation and cultural understanding (Zhao, 2024). Through the analysis of classical works and the study of calligraphy history, learners are introduced to the stylistic diversity, artistic characteristics, and cultural meanings embedded in Chinese calligraphic traditions (Wei et al., 2025). In this way, calligraphy education combines skill development with cultural interpretation, enabling students to engage with both the artistic and cultural dimensions of calligraphy.

Recent developments in education have also influenced the teaching of Chinese calligraphy. With the integration of modern educational technologies, multimedia tools, digital calligraphy devices, and online learning resources have been increasingly incorporated into calligraphy instruction (Prado & Yahui, 2026). These innovations provide new possibilities for enhancing classroom engagement and supporting more flexible and personalized learning experiences. At the same time, educators have explored pedagogical approaches such as project-based learning, collaborative activities, and individualized instruction in order to stimulate learners' interest and creativity in calligraphy practice. Chinese calligraphy education has also expanded beyond China as part of the global dissemination of Chinese language and culture. In overseas educational contexts, calligraphy is often incorporated into Chinese language programs, cultural courses, or extracurricular activities rather than being taught as an independent academic discipline (Cao & Champadaeng, 2024). Educational institutions such as Confucius Institutes, universities, and cultural centers frequently offer calligraphy classes as part of cultural exchange programs, introducing students to both the techniques and cultural significance of Chinese calligraphy (Chu, 2025).

The objectives of overseas calligraphy education often differ from those in China. While domestic calligraphy education tends to emphasize systematic technical training and artistic mastery (Lyu, 2025), overseas programs commonly focus more on cultural appreciation and intercultural communication (Kathy Tannous et al., 2023). In many cases, calligraphy courses are organized in the form of workshops, short-term training sessions, or cultural experience activities designed to stimulate learners' interest in Chinese culture, although such formats may not always support systematic skill development (Wang & Tang, 2025).

Scholars have therefore emphasized that Chinese calligraphy education in international contexts should consider learners' cultural backgrounds, learning motivations, and educational environments (Ying & Meng, 2024). Curriculum design needs to incorporate localized elements and flexible teaching strategies in order to make calligraphy learning more accessible and meaningful for students from diverse cultural backgrounds. Integrating cultural explanations, creative activities, and interdisciplinary approaches may further enhance learners' engagement and support cross-cultural understanding through calligraphy education (Gao, 2024).

2.2 Curriculum Development in Art Education

Given the characteristics and challenges of Chinese calligraphy education discussed above,

curriculum development plays an important role in organizing effective teaching and learning experiences. Curriculum development is generally understood as a systematic process that involves the planning, organization, implementation, and evaluation of learning activities (Supriani et al., 2022). In educational research, it provides a framework through which educational objectives are translated into teaching content, learning strategies, and assessment methods. Effective curriculum design is typically guided by learners' needs, instructional goals, and the specific educational context (Eyland & Leung, 2025). In the field of art education, curriculum development presents distinctive features compared with other academic disciplines. Art education emphasizes experiential learning, creative expression, and aesthetic appreciation (Lukaka, 2023). Consequently, art curricula often integrate theoretical understanding with practical training, enabling learners to develop technical skills while cultivating artistic perception and creative thinking. Teaching activities commonly include demonstration, guided practice, and analysis of artistic works, which support the development of artistic competence and cultural awareness (Egana-delSol, 2023).

Another important aspect of art curriculum design is the progression from basic techniques to more advanced forms of artistic practice. In disciplines such as painting, music, and calligraphy, technical mastery forms the foundation of artistic learning (Schneider & Rohmann, 2021). Curriculum designers therefore structure learning sequences that gradually develop students' technical abilities while introducing broader artistic concepts and historical traditions. This sequential approach allows learners to move from foundational skills to more complex forms of artistic interpretation and creative expression.

Recent developments in educational theory have also influenced curriculum development in art education. Student-centered learning, collaborative activities, and project-based approaches are increasingly emphasized as effective strategies for encouraging creativity and engagement (Yu, 2024). In addition, the integration of digital technologies has expanded the possibilities of art instruction through multimedia resources, digital tools, and online learning platforms (Bedir & Freedman, 2024). When art education takes place in cross-cultural contexts, curriculum development must also consider cultural diversity and learner background. Educational scholars suggest that teaching materials and instructional strategies should be adapted to local educational environments in order to ensure that learning content is accessible and meaningful to students from different cultural backgrounds (Gurjar & Bai, 2023).

For traditional cultural art forms such as Chinese calligraphy, curriculum development therefore involves not only the transmission of artistic techniques but also the interpretation of cultural meanings embedded in the art form. Educational programs often integrate cultural explanations, historical context, and aesthetic analysis with practical training in brush techniques and character structure. In international educational settings, the localization of curriculum content has become an important principle, requiring teaching materials and instructional methods to be adapted to local learning conditions while maintaining the cultural integrity of the art form (Sharma, 2024).

2.3 Localized Curriculum Design in Intercultural Contexts

As Chinese cultural education expands internationally, the design of culturally responsive curricula has become an increasingly important issue in educational research. In intercultural educational settings, curriculum development must take into account differences in cultural background, learning traditions, and educational expectations (Markey et al., 2023). Scholars in intercultural education emphasize that effective curriculum design should adapt teaching content and instructional strategies to the social and cultural contexts in which learning takes place (Shih, 2022). In cross-cultural educational environments, learners often possess diverse linguistic backgrounds and varying levels of familiarity with the cultural traditions being taught (Urgun et al., 2025). As a result, teaching approaches that are effective in one cultural context may not always be directly applicable in another. Curriculum designers are therefore encouraged to incorporate localized elements that respond to learners' interests, learning styles, and cultural experiences (Shih, 2024). Such adaptations help make educational content more accessible while maintaining the cultural integrity of the subject matter.

The concept of curriculum localization has been widely discussed in the field of international education. Localization refers to the process of adapting curriculum content, teaching materials, and instructional methods to fit the needs of specific educational contexts (Natano, 2023). Rather than directly transferring teaching models from one cultural environment to another, localized curriculum design emphasizes the adjustment of teaching strategies according to local cultural conditions and learner characteristics. In the teaching of traditional cultural subjects, localization is particularly important because cultural meanings and artistic practices may be interpreted differently across societies (Popescu & Pudelko, 2024). Educational programs that introduce traditional cultural arts often combine technical instruction with contextual explanations that help learners understand the historical and cultural significance of the art form (Liu et al., 2024). Such an approach supports both skill development and intercultural understanding.

Within the field of Chinese cultural education, localized curriculum design has been increasingly recognized as an effective strategy for promoting meaningful learning experiences among overseas students (Shen & Luo, 2025). Chinese language and culture programs in many countries have begun to integrate locally relevant teaching methods, interactive activities, and cultural comparisons in order to enhance students' engagement and comprehension (Liu, 2022). For Chinese calligraphy education in overseas contexts, localized curriculum design may involve adapting teaching content, pacing, and instructional strategies to match students' prior knowledge and learning motivations (Fengxian et al., 2025). Cultural explanations, creative practice activities, and interdisciplinary learning experiences can be incorporated to help learners connect calligraphy practice with broader cultural understanding. Such approaches support the development of both technical skills and intercultural awareness in the learning process.

In educational institutions where Chinese calligraphy is introduced as part of cultural learning programs, localized curriculum design also requires consideration of institutional conditions, teaching resources, and students' learning goals. By adapting curriculum content to local educational environments, educators can create learning experiences that are both culturally authentic and pedagogically effective.

2.4 Summary

The existing literature on Chinese calligraphy education highlights its significant role in cultural transmission and its systematic development in China's educational system. While curriculum development in art education emphasizes the integration of technical skills and cultural understanding, studies on Chinese calligraphy curricula in international contexts remain limited. Although research on curriculum localization has been conducted, few studies address the design of Chinese calligraphy courses tailored to specific cultural settings, particularly in Thailand. This gap underlines the need for developing a localized curriculum for Chinese calligraphy at Xuanpu Academy, which this study aims to address.

Method

3.1 Research Design and Site

This study adopted a qualitative case study approach to explore the development and implementation of a Chinese calligraphy curriculum in an overseas educational context. A case study design was considered appropriate because the research aimed to examine curriculum development within a specific institutional setting and to understand how a localized calligraphy curriculum could be designed, implemented, and evaluated in practice. Through this approach, the study was able to investigate the teaching context, curriculum design process, and learning outcomes in a real educational environment.

The research was conducted at Xuanpu Academy in Thailand, an institution where learners have demonstrated a strong interest in Chinese language and culture, including Chinese calligraphy. In recent years, Chinese cultural education has gained increasing attention in Thailand, and calligraphy has gradually become one of the cultural practices that attracts learners seeking a deeper understanding of Chinese traditions. However, despite this growing interest, systematic calligraphy curricula tailored

to local learners remain limited. Xuanpu Academy therefore provides an appropriate setting for examining how a structured calligraphy curriculum can be developed to meet the learning needs of students in Thailand.

The selection of Xuanpu Academy as the research site was also based on its suitability for implementing and evaluating a newly developed curriculum. The academy offers a practical instructional environment in which calligraphy teaching activities can be organized, observed, and assessed. This setting allowed the researcher to conduct curriculum development, classroom implementation, and evaluation within an authentic learning context, thereby providing valuable insights into the effectiveness of Chinese calligraphy education in a cross-cultural educational setting.

3.2 Participants

The participants in this study were students from Xuanpu Academy in Thailand who were interested in learning Chinese calligraphy. A total of 45 learners participated in the teaching experiment and curriculum implementation. These participants were selected from a larger group of overseas Chinese calligraphy enthusiasts involved in the preliminary investigation of calligraphy learning in Thailand. The participants were chosen because they had basic knowledge of Chinese calligraphy and expressed willingness to participate in the calligraphy courses designed for this study. Their participation provided a suitable sample for examining the development and implementation of the calligraphy curriculum in the local educational context.

In addition to the student participants involved in the teaching practice, several experts and educators related to Chinese calligraphy education were invited to provide professional opinions during the research process. These experts included calligraphy scholars, art educators, and teachers with experience in Chinese calligraphy instruction. Their feedback was used to support the curriculum design and evaluation process. By including both learners and professional experts, the study was able to obtain diverse perspectives on the development and effectiveness of the Chinese calligraphy courses at Xuanpu Academy.

3.3 Curriculum Development Procedure

The development of the Chinese calligraphy curriculum in this study followed a systematic procedure consisting of four main stages: needs analysis, curriculum design, teaching implementation, and evaluation. This step-by-step process was designed to ensure that the curriculum addressed learners' needs, incorporated appropriate instructional strategies, and could be effectively implemented and assessed within the educational context of Xuanpu Academy.

The first stage involved a needs analysis to understand the current situation of Chinese calligraphy learning and teaching in the target context. Data were collected through literature review, field observations, questionnaires, and interviews with learners, teachers, and relevant experts. These investigations provided information about learners' prior knowledge of calligraphy, their learning interests and motivations, as well as the challenges faced in existing calligraphy instruction. The results of this analysis served as an important basis for determining the objectives and content of the calligraphy curriculum.

Based on the findings of the needs analysis, the second stage focused on curriculum design. In this phase, the teaching objectives, course content, instructional strategies, and teaching materials for the Chinese calligraphy course were developed. The curriculum was designed to integrate technical skill training with cultural understanding, allowing students to learn both the basic techniques of calligraphy and the cultural and aesthetic values embedded in the art form.

The third stage involved the implementation of the developed curriculum at Xuanpu Academy. The calligraphy course was conducted through classroom instruction and practical writing activities. During the teaching process, students practiced fundamental strokes, character structures, and classical calligraphy models under the guidance of the instructor. Classroom observations and students' learning performance were recorded to monitor the effectiveness of the teaching process.

The final stage was the evaluation of the curriculum. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to assess the effectiveness of the developed calligraphy courses. Student learning outcomes,

classroom performance, and feedback from experts and participants were analyzed to determine whether the curriculum achieved its intended objectives. The evaluation results also provided suggestions for further improvement and optimization of the calligraphy curriculum for Xuanpu Academy.

3.4 Data Collection and Data Analysis

Data for this study were collected through multiple methods in order to obtain a comprehensive understanding of Chinese calligraphy teaching and learning at Xuanpu Academy. The main data collection methods included questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations. Questionnaires were distributed to learners involved in calligraphy study in order to understand their prior knowledge of Chinese calligraphy, learning motivations, expectations for calligraphy courses, and perceived learning difficulties. These responses provided important information for identifying learners' needs and guiding the development of the calligraphy curriculum.

In addition to the questionnaire survey, semi-structured interviews were conducted with experts, teachers, and individuals involved in Chinese calligraphy education. These interviews aimed to gather professional perspectives on calligraphy teaching methods, curriculum design principles, and the adaptation of Chinese calligraphy education to overseas learning contexts. Classroom observations were also carried out during the implementation of the calligraphy course at Xuanpu Academy. Through direct observation of teaching activities and students' participation in writing practice, the researcher was able to document the teaching process and learners' engagement in the course.

The collected data were analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Quantitative data from the questionnaires were examined using descriptive analysis to summarize learners' background information, learning preferences, and overall trends related to calligraphy learning. Qualitative data obtained from interviews and classroom observations were analyzed using thematic analysis. Through coding and categorizing the collected information, key themes related to calligraphy teaching practices, curriculum design considerations, and student learning experiences were identified. The combination of these analytical approaches helped provide a comprehensive basis for evaluating the effectiveness of the developed Chinese calligraphy curriculum at Xuanpu Academy.

Curriculum Design

4.1 Curriculum objectives

The development of the Chinese calligraphy curriculum at Xuanpu Academy was guided by the goal of providing learners with a balanced learning experience that integrates technical skill development with cultural and aesthetic understanding. As Chinese calligraphy is both a writing practice and an artistic tradition deeply embedded in Chinese culture, the curriculum was designed to help students not only acquire practical calligraphy skills but also develop an appreciation of the cultural meanings and artistic values associated with this traditional art form.

The first objective of the curriculum is to develop students' fundamental calligraphy skills. Through systematic instruction and guided practice, students are expected to learn the basic techniques of brush handling, stroke formation, and character writing. These skills form the foundation of Chinese calligraphy learning and enable students to gradually improve their writing accuracy, control of the brush, and understanding of character structure. By practicing basic strokes and simple characters, learners can build the technical competence necessary for more advanced calligraphy study.

The second objective is to enhance students' understanding of Chinese culture through the study of calligraphy. Chinese calligraphy reflects historical traditions, philosophical ideas, and aesthetic principles that have evolved over centuries. By learning about the historical development of calligraphy, the cultural significance of Chinese characters, and the styles of famous calligraphers, students are able to gain deeper insight into Chinese cultural heritage. This cultural dimension of the curriculum helps learners recognize calligraphy not only as a writing technique but also as a meaningful cultural practice.

The third objective is to cultivate students' aesthetic appreciation of Chinese calligraphy as an art

form. Through exposure to classical calligraphy works and guided analysis of calligraphic styles, learners can gradually develop an understanding of the aesthetic qualities of calligraphy, such as balance, rhythm, and harmony. By observing and practicing classical models, students are encouraged to appreciate the artistic expression embodied in calligraphy and to develop their own sensitivity to visual form and artistic creativity.

Together, these three objectives—calligraphy skill development, cultural understanding, and aesthetic appreciation—form the foundation of the curriculum design. By integrating these dimensions, the curriculum aims to provide learners at Xuanpu Academy with a comprehensive learning experience that supports both practical skill acquisition and deeper engagement with the cultural and artistic traditions of Chinese calligraphy.

4.2 Curriculum structure

The curriculum developed for this study was organized into a sequence of learning modules designed to support students' gradual development in Chinese calligraphy. The structure follows a progressive learning path, beginning with fundamental brush techniques and gradually moving toward more advanced writing practice and cultural understanding. Through this arrangement, learners are able to build technical skills step by step while also gaining broader knowledge of the artistic and cultural dimensions of Chinese calligraphy.

The first module focuses on basic brush techniques, which form the foundation of calligraphy learning. In this stage, students are introduced to essential skills such as brush holding, ink control, and the execution of fundamental strokes. Through repeated practice of basic stroke patterns, learners become familiar with the tools and materials used in calligraphy and develop better coordination between hand movement and brush control. This stage also emphasizes correct writing posture and stable brush movement, which are essential for producing balanced and controlled strokes.

The second module addresses character structure and composition. After becoming familiar with basic strokes, students begin to learn how strokes combine to form complete Chinese characters. Instruction in this stage emphasizes principles such as balance, proportion, and spatial arrangement within characters. By analyzing and practicing commonly used characters, learners gradually understand the structural patterns of Chinese writing and how visual harmony is achieved in calligraphic composition.

The third module introduces copying classical calligraphy works, which is a traditional and widely used method in calligraphy education. Students practice by imitating selected classical models created by well-known calligraphers. Through careful observation and repeated copying of these model works, learners develop a deeper understanding of brush rhythm, stroke variation, and stylistic features in Chinese calligraphy. This stage helps students refine their technical skills while becoming familiar with the artistic traditions represented in classical calligraphy.

The final module explores the cultural background of Chinese calligraphy, introducing learners to the historical development of calligraphy, the contributions of influential calligraphers, and the aesthetic ideas reflected in calligraphic works. By combining cultural explanation with visual examples of classical works, students are encouraged to recognize calligraphy not only as a writing technique but also as an important form of artistic and cultural expression, thereby connecting their technical practice with a deeper appreciation of the cultural significance of Chinese calligraphy.

4.3 Teaching strategies

The teaching strategies adopted in this curriculum were designed to support the development of students' calligraphy skills while also enhancing their understanding of the cultural and artistic aspects of Chinese calligraphy. Because calligraphy learning requires both technical practice and aesthetic perception, the teaching approach combines demonstration, guided practice, cultural explanation, and interactive learning activities. These strategies allow students to observe, practice, reflect, and gradually improve their writing abilities within a supportive learning environment.

One important teaching strategy used in the course is demonstration. In calligraphy instruction, visual demonstration plays a crucial role because students need to observe how strokes are executed

and how the brush is controlled. During classroom teaching, the instructor demonstrates the writing process step by step, including brush posture, stroke order, and the movement of the brush. By watching the instructor's writing process, students are able to understand the techniques involved in forming strokes and characters before attempting to practice them independently.

Another key strategy is guided practice, which allows students to apply the techniques demonstrated by the instructor. After observing demonstrations, students engage in writing exercises under the guidance of the teacher. During this process, the instructor provides individual feedback on stroke formation, character balance, and brush movement. This guided practice helps students gradually refine their writing skills and correct common mistakes, making the learning process more effective and structured.

In addition to technical training, cultural explanation is incorporated into the teaching process. Since Chinese calligraphy reflects historical traditions and aesthetic values, brief explanations about the background of calligraphic styles, famous calligraphers, and the cultural meaning of characters are included during instruction. These explanations help learners understand the broader cultural context of calligraphy and encourage them to appreciate calligraphy as an artistic and cultural practice rather than simply a writing technique.

The curriculum also integrates interactive learning activities to enhance student engagement and motivation. For example, students are encouraged to discuss their work, compare different writing styles, and participate in classroom discussions about calligraphy aesthetics. Such activities create opportunities for learners to exchange ideas and reflect on their own writing practices. By combining demonstration, guided practice, cultural explanation, and interactive activities, the teaching strategies support both skill development and deeper appreciation of Chinese calligraphy within the learning process.

4.4 Learning materials

The learning materials used in the calligraphy curriculum were designed to support students' gradual development of both technical writing skills and cultural understanding of Chinese calligraphy. Because calligraphy learning requires continuous observation, imitation, and repeated practice, the materials were carefully selected to provide clear visual guidance and structured practice opportunities. In this curriculum, three main types of learning materials were used: calligraphy models, practice worksheets, and visual instructional materials. These resources were organized to correspond with the different stages of the curriculum so that learners could progressively improve their writing abilities while also gaining familiarity with the artistic and cultural context of Chinese calligraphy.

Calligraphy models formed the core reference materials for students' writing practice. Selected examples from classical calligraphy works were introduced during the course to allow students to observe the structure, rhythm, and style of traditional Chinese calligraphy. By studying and copying these models, learners were able to examine how strokes are executed, how characters are balanced, and how brush movement creates expressive visual effects. This method of copying classical works has long been regarded as a fundamental approach in traditional calligraphy education and helps students develop a deeper understanding of calligraphic aesthetics.

Practice worksheets were also developed to guide students through structured writing exercises. These worksheets included stroke practice patterns, character writing grids, and guided exercises that help students focus on specific aspects of brush control and character formation. By practicing on these worksheets, learners could repeatedly apply the techniques demonstrated in class while gradually improving their writing accuracy and coordination. The worksheets also allowed instructors to monitor students' progress and provide feedback on specific technical issues.

In addition to calligraphy models and worksheets, visual instructional materials were used to assist the teaching process. These materials included images of classical calligraphy works, diagrams illustrating brush techniques, and visual examples explaining character composition. Such visual resources help students better understand abstract concepts related to brush movement, stroke order, and character structure, particularly for learners who are not familiar with traditional Chinese writing tools. The integration of visual materials therefore supports both technical learning and cultural

appreciation within the course. Table 1 presents the main types of learning materials used in the curriculum and their instructional purposes.

Table 1 Types and Instructional Functions of Learning Materials Used in the Chinese Calligraphy Curriculum

Material Type	Instructional Purpose	Example of Use in Teaching
Calligraphy models	Provide visual reference for brush techniques, character structure, and stylistic features of traditional calligraphy	Students practice copying selected classical works to observe stroke rhythm and composition
Practice worksheets	Support structured writing exercises and help learners gradually master strokes and character formation	Worksheets with stroke drills and character grids used during guided practice sessions
Visual instructional materials	Facilitate understanding of brush techniques, character composition, and cultural background	Diagrams of brush movement, images of classical works, and visual examples used during explanation and demonstration

The combination of these learning materials allows students to engage with calligraphy through observation, guided practice, and visual interpretation. By integrating practical writing exercises with visual references and cultural materials, the curriculum provides learners with a supportive environment for developing both technical competence and aesthetic appreciation in Chinese calligraphy.

Results and Discussion

5.1 Improvement in calligraphy skills

One of the main outcomes observed during the implementation of the curriculum was the improvement in students’ Chinese calligraphy skills. Through systematic instruction and continuous practice, learners gradually developed better control of the brush and a clearer understanding of how Chinese characters are constructed. The structured learning sequence—from basic brush techniques to character structure and copying classical works—provided students with a step-by-step learning path that allowed them to build technical competence over time.

At the beginning of the course, many students had limited experience with traditional Chinese calligraphy tools such as the brush and ink. Some learners showed difficulties in maintaining proper brush posture and controlling the thickness and direction of strokes. In their early writing attempts, strokes often appeared uneven, and characters lacked balance and proper proportion. These challenges are common among beginner learners, particularly for overseas students who are not accustomed to brush writing. During the initial stage of the course, the teacher focused on demonstrating basic stroke techniques and guiding students through repeated practice exercises in order to establish fundamental writing skills.

As classroom instruction progressed, noticeable improvements in students’ writing performance were observed. Through repeated guided practice and teacher feedback, students began to demonstrate more stable brush control and smoother stroke execution. Their understanding of stroke order and character composition also improved, resulting in characters that were more balanced and visually organized. Students became more capable of coordinating hand movement with brush pressure, which

helped them produce strokes with clearer form and rhythm.

Another aspect of improvement was students' growing confidence in calligraphy practice. In the early stages of the course, many learners were hesitant when writing and relied heavily on the instructor's demonstration. As they became more familiar with brush techniques and classical calligraphy models, students showed greater willingness to practice independently and experiment with writing. Some students also began to pay attention to stylistic elements such as stroke variation and overall visual harmony in their characters. Table 2 presents the main areas in which students' calligraphy skills improved during the course, based on classroom observations and analysis of students' written works.

Table 2 Improvement in Students' Calligraphy Skills During the Course

Skill Aspect	Before the Course	After the Course
Brush control	Limited control of brush movement; strokes often uneven	Improved brush stability and smoother stroke execution
Character structure	Characters often unbalanced or poorly proportioned	Better understanding of character composition and balance
Writing accuracy	Frequent mistakes in stroke order and stroke formation	More accurate stroke execution and clearer character forms
Writing confidence	Hesitant and dependent on teacher guidance	Greater confidence and increased independence in writing practice

The comparison in Table 2 shows that students demonstrated improvements in brush control, character structure, writing accuracy, and overall confidence during the course, indicating that the structured curriculum and guided practice activities supported the development of their fundamental calligraphy skills.

5.2 Increased learning engagement

In addition to improvements in technical writing skills, the implementation of the calligraphy curriculum also led to increased learning engagement among students. Classroom observations and feedback collected during the teaching process indicated that students became more actively involved in calligraphy practice and showed greater interest in participating in classroom activities. This increased engagement can be attributed to the structured curriculum design and the interactive teaching strategies adopted in the course.

At the beginning of the course, some students showed limited participation in calligraphy practice. Because many learners were unfamiliar with traditional Chinese calligraphy tools and techniques, they initially felt uncertain about their ability to write with a brush. As a result, some students were hesitant to participate actively during early practice sessions. However, the use of teacher demonstrations and guided practice helped reduce this hesitation. By observing the instructor's writing process and receiving step-by-step guidance, students gradually became more comfortable with brush writing and more willing to participate in classroom exercises.

As the course progressed, students began to demonstrate stronger motivation to practice calligraphy. Many learners showed increased concentration during writing practice and spent more time refining their strokes and characters. Interactive teaching activities, such as discussing calligraphy works and sharing individual writing results, also encouraged students to participate more actively in the learning process. These activities created a supportive classroom atmosphere in which learners felt encouraged to experiment with their writing and learn from one another.

Students' engagement was also reflected in their willingness to practice outside of class. Several learners reported spending additional time practicing calligraphy after class in order to improve their writing. The structured learning materials, including worksheets and classical models, provided students with clear guidance for independent practice. As a result, students gradually developed stronger learning motivation and a more sustained interest in calligraphy. Table 3 summarizes the main

indicators of learning engagement observed during the course. The comparison illustrates how students' participation, motivation, and practice habits developed during the implementation of the calligraphy curriculum.

Table 3 Changes in Students' Learning Engagement During the Calligraphy Course

Engagement Indicator	At the Beginning of the Course	During and After the Course
Classroom participation	Some students hesitant to participate in writing practice	Students more willing to participate in writing and discussion activities
Learning motivation	Limited confidence in brush writing	Increased motivation to practice and improve calligraphy skills
Concentration during practice	Short periods of focused practice	Longer periods of concentrated writing practice
Independent practice	Few students practiced outside class	More students practiced calligraphy independently after class

The observations summarized in Table 3 indicate that students became more actively engaged in the learning process as the course progressed. The combination of demonstration, guided practice, and interactive classroom activities helped create a learning environment that encouraged participation and sustained interest in Chinese calligraphy.

5.3 Cultural understanding

Another important outcome of the curriculum implementation was the enhancement of students' cultural understanding of Chinese calligraphy. While many students initially approached the course as a technical skill-learning activity, the integration of cultural explanations and historical context gradually helped them recognize calligraphy as an important form of Chinese cultural expression. Through exposure to classical works, discussions of historical calligraphers, and explanations of the cultural meanings embedded in Chinese characters, students developed a deeper appreciation of the cultural significance of calligraphy.

At the beginning of the course, students' understanding of Chinese calligraphy was generally limited to its function as a writing technique. Many learners perceived calligraphy mainly as a form of artistic handwriting without a clear awareness of its historical background or cultural values. During the early stages of instruction, students often focused primarily on copying characters correctly rather than understanding the cultural ideas associated with calligraphic styles and classical works. This situation is common among overseas learners who have limited exposure to traditional Chinese artistic practices.

As the course progressed, cultural elements were gradually incorporated into teaching activities. For example, when introducing classical calligraphy models, the instructor explained the historical context in which these works were created and discussed the artistic characteristics of different calligraphers. Students were also introduced to basic knowledge about the development of Chinese calligraphy, including major script styles and the contributions of influential calligraphers. These explanations helped learners connect technical writing practice with the broader cultural traditions of Chinese art.

Students' responses during classroom discussions and informal feedback suggested that their understanding of Chinese culture became deeper during the learning process. Many students began to recognize that calligraphy reflects aesthetic values such as harmony, balance, and rhythm, which are closely related to traditional Chinese artistic philosophy. By observing and practicing classical works, learners also became more aware of the relationship between language, art, and cultural expression in Chinese civilization. Table 4 summarizes several aspects of cultural understanding observed during the

course. The comparison highlights how students' perceptions of Chinese calligraphy evolved from a purely technical activity to a broader appreciation of its cultural and artistic significance.

Table 4 Development of Students' Cultural Understanding of Chinese Calligraphy

Aspect of Understanding	At the Beginning of the Course	After Curriculum Implementation
Perception of calligraphy	Viewed mainly as a handwriting skill	Recognized as both an artistic and cultural practice
Knowledge of calligraphy history	Limited awareness of historical development	Basic understanding of major calligraphy traditions and famous calligraphers
Appreciation of aesthetics	Focus mainly on writing correctness	Greater awareness of balance, rhythm, and artistic expression
Cultural interest	Limited connection between calligraphy and Chinese culture	Increased interest in the cultural background of Chinese calligraphy

The observations presented in Table 4 suggest that the integration of cultural explanations and historical context into calligraphy instruction helped students develop a broader cultural perspective. Through the combination of practical writing activities and cultural learning, students were able to connect their technical practice with a deeper understanding of the cultural values embedded in Chinese calligraphy.

5.4 Implications for overseas calligraphy education

The findings of this study provide several important implications for the development of Chinese calligraphy education in overseas learning contexts. While the curriculum implemented at Xuanpu Academy represents a specific case, the results offer insights that may be relevant to other institutions seeking to promote Chinese calligraphy education outside China. In particular, the study highlights the importance of structured curriculum design, effective teaching strategies, and the integration of cultural learning in overseas calligraphy instruction.

First, the results suggest that a structured and progressive curriculum design is essential for teaching calligraphy to overseas learners. Many students who participate in calligraphy courses abroad have limited prior experience with Chinese characters or brush writing. Therefore, the curriculum should provide a gradual learning pathway that begins with basic brush techniques and gradually develops toward more complex writing practices. The four-module structure used in this study—basic brush techniques, character structure, copying classical works, and cultural background—demonstrates how a systematic curriculum can help learners build technical skills step by step.

Second, the study indicates that interactive and practice-oriented teaching strategies play an important role in promoting student engagement in calligraphy learning. Demonstration, guided practice, and interactive classroom activities were found to be particularly effective in helping students understand brush techniques and maintain learning motivation. Because calligraphy is a highly practical art form, opportunities for repeated practice and direct teacher feedback are essential for skill development. These teaching strategies can therefore serve as useful approaches for instructors who teach calligraphy in international educational settings.

Third, the findings highlight the importance of integrating cultural learning with technical instruction. Chinese calligraphy is not only a writing technique but also a cultural and artistic tradition deeply rooted in Chinese history. By introducing cultural explanations, historical context, and examples of classical works, teachers can help learners better appreciate the cultural significance of calligraphy. This integration of skill training and cultural education allows students to understand calligraphy as both an artistic practice and a meaningful expression of Chinese culture. Table 5 summarizes the main implications of this study for overseas calligraphy education.

Table 5 Implications of the Study for Overseas Chinese Calligraphy Education

Key Findings from the Study	Implications for Overseas Calligraphy Education
Improvement in calligraphy skills through structured curriculum	Overseas calligraphy courses should adopt systematic and progressive curriculum structures
Increased student engagement through interactive teaching strategies	Demonstration, guided practice, and interactive learning activities should be incorporated into calligraphy instruction
Development of cultural understanding through integrated cultural explanations	Calligraphy education should combine technical training with cultural learning to enhance students' appreciation of Chinese culture

The implications presented in Table 5 suggest that effective overseas calligraphy education requires a balanced approach that integrates structured curriculum design, active teaching strategies, and cultural learning components. By adopting these principles, educational institutions outside China can develop calligraphy programs that not only improve students' technical writing abilities but also foster a deeper understanding of Chinese artistic traditions and cultural values.

Discussion

6.1 Research Findings

The findings of this study reveal several significant outcomes regarding the development and implementation of the Chinese calligraphy curriculum at Xuanpu Academy in Thailand. The results indicate that the curriculum design adopted in this research not only improved students' technical writing abilities but also enhanced their engagement in learning and deepened their understanding of the cultural significance of Chinese calligraphy. These findings suggest that a structured and culturally integrated curriculum can effectively support calligraphy education in overseas learning contexts.

One important finding of the study is that a structured curriculum framework significantly supports the development of students' calligraphy skills. Compared with traditional approaches to overseas calligraphy instruction, which often rely primarily on repetitive copying of characters without a clearly defined learning sequence (In'ami et al., 2024), the curriculum developed in this research introduced a systematic progression of learning modules. Beginning with basic brush techniques and gradually moving toward character structure, copying classical works, and cultural background, the curriculum provided learners with a clear pathway for skill development. This structured progression helped students gradually build confidence in brush control and develop a better understanding of the principles underlying Chinese character composition.

A second finding concerns the integration of technical skill training with cultural learning. In many overseas learning environments, calligraphy teaching tends to focus mainly on handwriting techniques, with limited attention given to the cultural and artistic meanings associated with calligraphy (Liu, 2025). In contrast, the curriculum implemented in this study incorporated cultural explanations into the learning process by introducing historical background, famous calligraphers, and the aesthetic values reflected in classical works. This integration allowed students to understand calligraphy not only as a technical writing practice but also as an important component of Chinese artistic and cultural traditions. As a result, learners demonstrated greater appreciation for the cultural significance of calligraphy.

Another important finding relates to student engagement in calligraphy learning. The teaching strategies used in this curriculum—particularly demonstration, guided practice, and interactive classroom activities—encouraged students to participate more actively in learning activities (Bing & Simon, 2025). Compared with more passive forms of instruction that rely heavily on individual copying exercises, the interactive teaching environment created in this study helped maintain students' interest and motivation. Learners were more willing to practice calligraphy, share their writing experiences,

and engage in discussions about calligraphic works, which contributed to a more dynamic and supportive learning atmosphere.

In addition, the study highlights the role of structured learning materials in facilitating calligraphy instruction. The use of carefully designed worksheets, classical calligraphy models, and visual instructional materials provided learners with clear guidance during practice activities. These materials helped students understand complex aspects of brush movement, stroke formation, and character composition more effectively. Compared with learning situations in which students rely solely on copying characters from model texts, the use of diversified instructional materials created a more supportive learning environment for beginners. By combining a structured curriculum design, culturally integrated content, interactive teaching strategies, and supportive learning materials, the program provides a comprehensive framework that addresses both the technical and cultural dimensions of calligraphy education. The results therefore suggest that similar curriculum models may be beneficial for institutions seeking to promote Chinese calligraphy learning among international students.

6.2 Practical Implications

The findings of this study provide several practical implications for the development of Chinese calligraphy education in overseas contexts. As interest in Chinese language and culture continues to grow internationally, educational institutions and cultural organizations are increasingly seeking effective ways to introduce traditional Chinese arts to international learners. The curriculum developed and implemented in this study demonstrates a practical approach to integrating skill training, cultural learning, and interactive teaching strategies in overseas calligraphy education. The results therefore offer useful insights for teachers, educational institutions, and broader international Chinese education initiatives.

First, the findings provide important implications for teachers of Chinese calligraphy, particularly those working with international learners. The study suggests that adopting a structured and progressive curriculum design can significantly improve the effectiveness of calligraphy instruction. Instead of relying solely on repetitive copying exercises, teachers may benefit from organizing their teaching into clearly defined learning stages that gradually develop students' skills. The integration of demonstration, guided practice, and interactive classroom activities was also found to support student engagement and skill development. These teaching strategies can help instructors create a more supportive and motivating learning environment, especially for beginners who may initially find brush writing difficult. In addition, incorporating cultural explanations into technical instruction allows teachers to present calligraphy not only as a writing skill but also as a form of cultural expression, which can enrich students' learning experience.

Second, the findings offer implications for educational institutions and cultural organizations that aim to promote Chinese calligraphy learning. Schools, cultural centers, and institutions such as Confucius Institutes increasingly recognize the value of calligraphy as a medium for cultural education. The results of this study indicate that a well-designed curriculum with clear learning objectives, structured modules, and appropriate teaching materials can significantly improve the learning experience of students. Institutions seeking to introduce calligraphy programs may therefore consider developing systematic curricula that combine technical instruction with cultural content. Providing appropriate learning materials, such as classical calligraphy models, structured worksheets, and visual instructional resources, can also help learners better understand both the practical and artistic aspects of calligraphy.

Finally, the study provides implications for the broader field of international Chinese education and cultural exchange. Chinese calligraphy represents an important component of Chinese cultural heritage and serves as a meaningful medium for cultural communication. The integration of cultural explanation and artistic practice in calligraphy teaching can help international learners develop a deeper understanding of Chinese aesthetic traditions and cultural values. As demonstrated in this study, calligraphy education can function not only as a form of art instruction but also as an effective channel for promoting intercultural understanding. Therefore, incorporating calligraphy into

international Chinese education programs may contribute to expanding the scope of cultural learning and strengthening cross-cultural engagement between China and other countries.

Conclusion

This study explored the development and implementation of a Chinese calligraphy curriculum at Xuanpu Academy in Thailand and examined its effectiveness in supporting overseas learners. The findings indicate that a structured curriculum that integrates technical skill training, cultural explanation, and interactive teaching strategies can significantly improve students' calligraphy skills, increase their learning engagement, and deepen their understanding of the cultural significance of Chinese calligraphy. By organizing the course into progressive modules and incorporating diverse teaching materials and activities, the curriculum provided learners with a systematic learning pathway that supported both practical skill development and cultural appreciation. The results suggest that such a curriculum model offers a useful approach for promoting Chinese calligraphy education in overseas contexts and highlights the potential of calligraphy as an effective medium for cultural learning and intercultural communication within international Chinese education.

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