



J14 Competency for Chinese Handwriting Examination

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The goals of this presentation are to: (1) introduce the basic principles and methods for the examination of Chinese handwriting to the international forensic community; (2) introduce activities organized to assist the in sharing of the latest developments; and, (3) evaluate the competency of the practitioners.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by allowing overseas document examiners to better understand the principles and methodology in Chinese handwriting examination and how to demonstrate their competency in this area.

Chinese characters were invented approximately 4,000 years ago, and, unlike English words that are composed of linearly arranged discrete units (alphabet letters and characters), all Chinese characters are written within a framework of an imaginary box with component radicals arranged in a two-dimensional array. Do these disparities in structure and formation between Chinese and Latin-script writing give rise to significant differences in the methods of examination between the two types of handwriting?

Chinese handwriting and signatures are used by more than 1.3 billion people all over the world; document examiners will have the chance to encounter cases involving the examination of Chinese handwriting and signatures. Extensive studies on the examination of English handwriting and signatures can be found in the literature, whereas publications on the identification of Chinese handwriting are relatively limited. Would it be possible for a document examiner who is unfamiliar with Chinese characters to apply the principles of identification and elimination of authorship described in the various literature sources for the examination of English handwriting to the examination of Chinese handwriting?

Hong Kong is an international city where both English and Chinese writing are used in commercial and legal documents. Document examiners of the Government Laboratory, Hong Kong Special Administration Region (HKSAR) have ample opportunity to examine both Chinese and English handwriting and are provided with the opportunity to compare the methodology used in mainland China and overseas. A series of research projects on the examination of Chinese handwriting has been conducted since the late 1980s. In this presentation, the basic principles and methods for the examination of Chinese handwriting will be introduced to the international forensic community.

This presentation will include a review of Chinese handwriting examination that includes: (1) a brief introduction to the history and development of Chinese characters; (2) methods of Chinese handwriting examination as compared to the examination of English handwriting; (3) the significance of various writing characteristics in Chinese handwriting useful for the identification and differentiation of authorship; (4) methods of disguise in Chinese handwriting; and, (5) a study into the individuality of Chinese handwriting.

Numerous international reviews on forensic science stressed the importance of competency and expertise of the forensic practitioners. How can document examiners demonstrate their competency for conducting Chinese handwriting examination? Over the decades, various activities have been organized with a view to providing an analytical forum for participants in the field of document examination to evaluate the competency of participants and share the latest development for seeking further development. Activities such as Chinese handwriting workshops and proficiency testing programs will also be described in this presentation.

Competency, Chinese Handwriting, Proficiency Testing Programs