

Practical Pathways for Collaborative Education between College Bibliotherapy Courses and Library Resources

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Abstract

Contemporary college students face multiple psychological pressures, making mental health and the cultivation of humanistic qualities key focuses of higher education. This paper explores the logic and pathways for collaborative education between college bibliotherapy courses and library resources. It defines core concepts: bibliotherapy courses are intervention-based educational programs that use literature as a medium, integrating narrative therapy and positive psychology theories, with objectives including psychological adjustment, humanistic qualities, and self-awareness; library resources encompass literature, physical space, and digital resources, providing material and content support for healing. Unveiling the Internal Logic of Collaboration: The shared goal is to pursue “holistic personal development,” balancing mental health and humanistic cultivation; in terms of resources, courses provide directional guidance while resource scenarios offer support, achieving mutual empowerment in both directions. Four practical pathways are proposed: integrating curriculum systems with resource construction, innovatively merging teaching scenarios with spaces, fostering specialized collaboration among faculty teams, and establishing bidirectional linkage between service models and student participation. Collaboration can overcome fragmented educational approaches, promoting the unity of “nurturing the heart” and “cultivating the intellect,” thereby providing a new paradigm for mental health education in higher education institutions.

Keywords

Higher education institutions; bibliotherapy courses; library resources; collaborative education

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1. Introduction

Contemporary college students face multiple psychological pressures, including academic competition and self-identity issues, making mental health education and the cultivation of humanistic qualities important topics in the educational endeavors of higher education institutions. Bibliotherapy

offers gentle psychological support through textual empathy and narrative reconstruction but often falls into the dilemma of “having theory without a carrier, having resources without direction” due to the disconnection between courses and resources. Libraries, with their rich therapeutic resources (literature, spaces, digital platforms)

and professional capabilities, are naturally suited to support bibliotherapy. Exploring the collaborative mechanism between the two is not only a response to student needs but also a pathway for libraries to transform into “communities for spiritual growth.” Therefore, by analyzing core concepts, clarifying collaborative logic, and constructing practical pathways, this study aims to provide a reference for higher education institutions to create an integrated ecosystem of “nurturing the heart and cultivating the intellect,” helping students enhance their psychological resilience and humanistic sentiments.

2. Core Concepts

2.1. Connotation and Objectives of Bibliotherapy Courses

Bibliotherapy courses are intervention-oriented educational programs that utilize documentary resources as a medium to promote individual mental health and spiritual growth through systematic reading practices. Their theoretical foundation integrates narrative therapy and positive psychology: narrative therapy emphasizes the reconstruction of self-identity by individuals through retelling their life stories, transforming dilemmas into opportunities for growth; positive psychology focuses on exploring strengths and cultivating psychological resilience, guiding readers to focus on their inner strengths. The course objectives are structured in three dimensions: psychological adjustment serves as the core, utilizing empathetic texts to alleviate anxiety and depression, such as trauma literature providing an outlet for catharsis and philosophical essays guiding cognitive reconstruction; humanistic qualities are extended through exposure to classical and multicultural works, cultivating aesthetic and empathetic abilities, such as poetry awakening emotional resonance and historical biographies inspiring life wisdom; self-awareness is elevated by encouraging readers to explore their values through role immersion and reflection, such as autobiographical novels reflecting life trajectories and speculative readings stimulating critical thinking^[1]. Ultimately, the course aims to facilitate a dynamic dialogue between “readers and texts,” internalizing abstract theories into flexible wisdom for coping with reality, and achieving a transformation from passive healing to active growth.

2.2. Types and Functions of Library Resources

As the physical carrier and resource hub for bibliotherapy, libraries support the entire process of psychological intervention through their multidimensional resource systems. Literary resources form the core toolkit: books are stratified by theme, with titles such as *Counseling for Toads: A Psychological Adventure* included in the depression counseling category to provide concrete guidance, and neuroscience works like *The Body Keeps the Score* selected for trauma recovery. Journals track cutting-edge therapeutic research, while databases (e.g., PsycINFO) provide empirical research support. Spatial resources create healing environments: quiet reading areas reduce sensory overload with natural light, greenery, and low-noise design, while individual booths ensure privacy for contemplation. Discussion rooms facilitate group narrative sharing, strengthening a sense of belonging through peer feedback, while cultural exhibition areas trigger nonverbal expression through artistic installations (e.g., healing illustration exhibitions)^[2]. Digital resources transcend temporal and spatial constraints: online libraries (e.g., OverDrive) enable instant access to e-books, while audiobooks (e.g., Audible’s healing section) cater to individuals with visual impairments or attention disorders. Specialized platforms integrate meditation audio, interactive reading communities, and AI-powered book recommendation systems to dynamically match users’ emotional states. These three types of resources form a closed loop of “content-scenario-technology,” transforming libraries from repositories of knowledge into breathable sanctuaries for the soul.

3. The Internal Logic of Collaborative Education between College Bibliotherapy Courses and Library Resources

3.1. Consistency of Objectives

The primary logic underlying the collaborative education between college bibliotherapy courses and library resources lies in their highly aligned objectives, both aiming at “holistic human development” and forming a synergistic force in promoting students’ mental health and spiritual growth. On the one hand, the course takes psychological adjustment as its starting point, guiding students to reconstruct their life stories through texts via

narrative therapy and to explore their own strengths within the framework of positive psychology, directly addressing common issues faced by college students, such as anxiety and self-identity confusion. Library resources, on the other hand, provide concrete support for this objective through the emotional healing properties of literature (such as the cathartic function of trauma literature and the cognitive calibration effect of philosophical essays), the immersive sense of security in space (low-disturbance design of quiet reading areas), and the personalized adaptation of digital resources (AI book recommendations matching emotional states), transforming abstract “psychological growth” into tangible reading practices. Furthermore, both the course and library resources share deeper objectives of “cultivating humanistic spirit” and “forging critical thinking”: the course cultivates empathy and cultural depth through analysis of classic texts (such as the wisdom for conducting oneself in society in *The Analects* and the insight into human nature in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*), guiding students to transcend utilitarian learning; the library, with its diverse literature system (cross-civilization classics, niche thought monographs) and open discussion spaces (seminar rooms supporting the clash of viewpoints), provides a “repository of materials” and a “training ground” for critical thinking, enabling students to learn dialectical thinking through comparative reading^[3]. This alignment of goals breaks down the separation between “psychological counseling” and “knowledge instruction” in traditional education, elevating the library from a mere “resource repository” to a physical foundation for a “community of emotional growth.” Meanwhile, the curriculum transforms from a tool for “one-way intervention” into an engine for “resource activation,” ultimately achieving the unity of “nurturing the heart” and “cultivating the intellect.”

3.2. Resource Complementarity

The underlying driving force for collaborative education stems from the bidirectional empowerment between courses and resources, namely the “targeted traction” of course content on library resources and the “contextual support” of library resources for course practice. Firstly, course content generates clear and targeted demands for library resources, endowing resource application with professionalism and specificity. The reading therapy

course is not a generalization of reading but rather a structured text sequence designed based on types of psychological issues (e.g., depression counseling, intervention for social phobia) and developmental stages (e.g., the adaptation period for freshmen, the anxiety period for graduates). For instance, for the module on “vague self-awareness,” the course requires targeted access to autobiographical novels (such as *Educated*), monographs on personality psychology (*The Courage to Be Disliked*), and supporting databases (research on identity in *PsycARTICLES*). For the theme of “trauma repair,” resources such as *The Body Keeps the Score* from a neuroscientific perspective, collections of art therapy cases, and audiobooks (e.g., audio narratives of trauma) are needed. These demands compel libraries to optimize resource allocation—shifting from a “comprehensive but broad” approach to a “specialized and refined” one. This involves creating specialized reading therapy booklists, connecting with clinical psychology databases, and developing thematic digital resource packages (e.g., an audio album for “mindful reading”), transforming resources from “dormant inventory” into “ready-to-use tools.” Secondly, library resources provide comprehensive support for course practice, addressing the scenario bottlenecks that hinder the implementation of the curriculum. Literary resources supply “therapeutic ammunition,” while spatial resources create a “safe container” (the quiet reading area ensures individual contemplation and privacy, and the seminar room supports group narrative sharing). Digital resources break through “spatio-temporal barriers” (online libraries meet immediate reading needs, and specialized platforms integrate meditation training and progress tracking). For instance, the “Narrative Reconstruction Workshop” within the course can utilize seminar rooms for peer feedback, combined with instructional books such as *Stories That Heal* provided by the library, enabling students to achieve self-reconciliation through collective narratives. The post-class extension session leverages the AI book recommendation system on the digital platform to dynamically adjust reading tasks based on students’ reflective journals^[4]. This complementarity ensures that the course is no longer an “ivory tower,” and resources are no longer “shooting in the dark.” Instead, both achieve a dynamic balance between “demand and

supply,” constructing a closed-loop educational model of “curriculum design—resource adaptation—practice feedback—iterative optimization,” ultimately realizing a synergistic effect where $1+1>2$.

4. Practical Pathways for Collaborative Education between College Reading Therapy Courses and Library Resources

4.1. Deep Integration of Curriculum System and Resource Construction

The collaboration between college reading therapy courses and library resources begins with the systematic coupling of course content and resource systems, achieving precise matching between “demand and supply” through the construction of graded bibliographies, thematic modules, and specialized resource databases. The graded reading bibliography system based on library collections needs to break away from traditional subject classifications and design levels using a dual-dimensional framework of “psychological development stages + issue types”: The beginner level targets common psychological distress, featuring highly narrative and easily relatable popular readings such as *Counseling for Toads: A Psychological Adventure*, supplemented by library reading guides that highlight key healing points. The intermediate level addresses specific issues, incorporating classics with both theoretical depth and practical guidance, such as *The Courage to Be Disliked* and *Man’s Search for Meaning*, paired with research summaries from psychological databases for further exploration. The advanced level caters to self-exploration needs, introducing autobiographical novels like *Educated*, existentialist philosophy works such as *The Myth of Sisyphus*, and collections of art therapy case studies, guiding students to clarify values through textual engagement. Developing thematic reading modules requires close alignment with high-frequency psychological issues among college students. For instance, the “Stress Management” module integrates mindfulness meditation books like *Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction*, popular science works on the physiological mechanisms of stress such as *The Body Keeps the Score*, and breathing training audio from library digital resources, accompanied by a course design featuring “stress diaries + textual annotations”

practices. The “Career Planning” module links alumni career biographies, vocational interest assessment tools, and the library’s career counseling database, activating self-awareness through role-immersion reading. Establishing a dynamically updated featured resource repository serves as critical support, on one hand collecting book recommendations from alumni with annotations of real-life healing scenarios, and on the other, mining regional cultural healing elements from local literature, such as landscape-themed essays by local writers, forming a composite repository of “universal resources + local resources.” This repository is updated in real-time through the library’s official website “Bibliotherapy Special Page,” ensuring resource and course iterations remain synchronized.

4.2. Innovative Integration of Teaching Scenarios and Spatial Services

By breaking the boundaries of traditional classrooms, we deeply integrate the physical spaces and digital platforms of libraries with curricular activities to create healing scenarios that are “perceptible, participatory, and sustainable.” Differentiated designs are required for the establishment of both physical and online “Reading Therapy Workshops”: physical workshops, utilizing library seminar rooms, adopt a “shared text reading + situational drama enactment” model, combined with “emotional card writing” guided by librarians to release inner conflicts; online workshops, conducted through the library’s live streaming platform, feature a “Cloud Silent Reading Corner” and a “Bullet Screen Empathy Zone,” with access to a digital resource library for instant literature retrieval^[5]. Immersive scenarios are created through spatial design to activate the healing power of the library environment: the silent reading area is divided by emotional themes, such as an “Anxiety Relief Zone” equipped with low-saturation soft furnishings and natural light, and a “Self-Acceptance Zone” featuring floor-length mirrors and walls adorned with positive quotes, incorporating five-sense reading elements like lavender aromatherapy for smell and the sound of running water for hearing; the cultural exhibition area regularly hosts “Healing Text Art Exhibitions,” transforming classic quotes into calligraphy works and themes into illustrations, triggering resonance through non-verbal means. When organizing interactive activities such as reading clubs and

author lectures, priority is given to selecting books from the library's collection that align with the theme, inviting authors to share their healing experiences during the creative process, and simultaneously setting up a "Library Treasure Hunt" to strengthen the connection between resources and activities. For example, in collaboration with the library, a lecture titled "Wisdom in Adversity from Su Shi's Poetry" was held, with Su Shi's collected works, related research monographs, and reproductions of Song Dynasty paintings and calligraphy on display. Attendees could instantly borrow these materials and participate in creating "My Poems on Adversity," achieving a multi-dimensional immersion of "listening-seeing-reading-writing."

4.3. Professional Collaboration Mechanism for the Faculty Team

The core of collaborative education effectiveness lies in breaking down departmental barriers and establishing a professional "librarian-counselor-subject teacher" trinity team. This team achieves complementary strengths through clearly defined roles and regular collaboration. Librarians are required to deeply participate in curriculum design, evaluating the suitability of course texts based on library collections and serving as "resource guides": explaining the distribution and retrieval skills of healing resources at the beginning of the course, providing bibliographic adjustment suggestions for students' reading dilemmas mid-course, and assisting in organizing excellent reading reflection cases for archiving later. Counselors and subject teachers jointly deliver instruction using a three-stage "theory-text-practice" teaching model: psychological teachers explain narrative therapy techniques, subject teachers lead analyses of resilience in classic texts, and librarians simultaneously demonstrate how to supplement similar cases through specialized databases. Establishing institutionalized cross-departmental collaborative lesson planning and teaching research systems requires regular joint meetings to share student psychological assessment data and reading behavior analyses, adjusting course content accordingly. Joint case study seminars are conducted, where librarians report on resource utilization feedback, counselors analyze intervention effects, and subject teachers propose new perspectives on text interpretation, forming a closed loop of "joint problem research-joint solution

determination-joint effect evaluation." For instance, when the mechanism revealed high student interest in the topic of "digital dependency," a collaborative course titled "Offline Reading and Concentration Cultivation" was developed. Librarians set up screen-free reading areas, counselors designed paper book challenge activities, and subject teachers recommended classic texts on concentration, with all three parties collaborating to enhance the course experience.

4.4. Two-way Linkage Between Service Model and Student Participation

A linkage mechanism of "service guidance - active participation - value co-creation" is constructed with students at the center, which not only leverages the professional service advantages of the library but also stimulates students' subjective initiative, forming a sustainable educational ecosystem. The "Reading Buddy Program" is implemented to establish a peer support network: Trained upperclassmen are paired with freshmen, with precise matching achieved through the library's "Buddy Matching System." Regular activities such as "joint reading check-ins + emotional sharing sessions" are conducted, with librarians following up on group progress and providing book recommendations. A student reading therapy case-sharing platform is established with a focus on privacy protection and motivation: An anonymous submission section is set up on the library's official website, encouraging students to share real stories of "how a book changed me." After review, these stories are compiled into the "Campus Reading Therapy Story Collection" and stored in the special collection area. Simultaneously, an annual "Reading Therapy Star" competition is held, with winners receiving customized booklists or opportunities to participate in author meet-and-greets. Self-service reading guidance tools are developed to enhance technological empowerment: A "Mood-Matching Booklist" mini-program is designed, allowing students to select emotional keywords or complete a simple questionnaire, after which the system automatically filters appropriate books and provides reading action suggestions. A "Reading Progress Tracking Map" is developed to visually present individual healing journeys, linked with a "Reading Achievement Badge" system to incentivize continued participation. For

example, after piloting the “Mood Booklist Robot,” the number of students independently borrowing therapeutic books increased. Backend feedback showed that most users believed the precise recommendations saved them trial-and-error costs. Meanwhile, students spontaneously formed “self-help reading communities,” autonomously initiating activities such as “Midnight Poetry Sessions” and “Therapeutic Picture Book Doodling” in library spaces, truly achieving a transformation from “passive service reception” to “active value creation.”

5. Conclusion

The collaborative effort between college reading therapy courses and library resources aims at “holistic

human development,” harnessing shared goals and complementary resources to foster a collective educational force. This paper reveals its inherent logic—pursuing common goals of mental health and cultural cultivation, while enabling bidirectional resource empowerment. It proposes four practical pathways to overcome bottlenecks in course implementation, stimulate student agency, and transform libraries from mere “resource repositories” into “educational arenas.” Looking ahead, it is essential to deepen resource exploration (local culture, digital technology), refine mechanisms (cross-departmental collaboration), and optimize services (responding to individual differences), ensuring that this collaboration is both profound and effective, and providing sustained momentum for nurturing new talents for the era.

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