

An Exploratory Analysis of “Reading Therapy” Activities for University Students under Multi-disciplinary Integration: Case Studies of Specialized Library Services at North China University of Science and Technology, Sichuan University, and Zhejiang Chinese Medical University (Post-print)

Authors: Li Mengyao, Xu Yan

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Abstract

University libraries’ provision of “reading therapy” services for college student groups holds significant practical significance for improving students’ emotion management and psychological development capabilities. Over the years, the “reading therapy” services implemented by the libraries of North China University of Science and Technology, Sichuan University, and Zhejiang Chinese Medical University, which integrate distinct disciplinary characteristics, have demonstrated certain exemplary value domestically and have gained recognition from faculty and students at their respective institutions. This article employs the case study method to interpret and analyze the “reading therapy” activities conducted by the libraries of the aforementioned three universities, aiming to systematically examine and summarize the role of multidisciplinary integration in college student “reading therapy” activities, and to propose recommendations for university libraries to develop multidisciplinary integrated “reading therapy” activities.

Full Text

Abstract

University libraries’ provision of “reading therapy” services for university students is of great practical significance for improving students’ emotional management and psychological construction abilities. Over the years, the

reading therapy services launched by the libraries of North China University of Science and Technology, Sichuan University, and Zhejiang Chinese Medical University—which integrate distinctive characteristics from different disciplines—have achieved demonstrative significance domestically and gained recognition from faculty and students at their respective institutions. Through case study methodology, this paper interprets and analyzes the reading therapy activities conducted at these three university libraries, aiming to systematically review and summarize the role of multidisciplinary integration in university students' reading therapy activities, and to propose recommendations for university libraries to carry out multidisciplinary integrated reading therapy activities.

Keywords: Reading therapy; Bibliotherapy; University libraries; University students; Multidisciplinary integration

1. The Significance of Multidisciplinary Integrated Reading Therapy Activities for University Students

University students are at a critical stage of life, facing identity transitions from high school to university while simultaneously bearing multifaceted pressures from academics, employment, and emotional states. As social and economic development intensifies societal competition, students' mental health has attracted scholars' attention. With psychologically immature self-emotional regulation capabilities, students lacking experience and mature coping strategies often struggle to resolve negative emotions, making them susceptible to emotional distress and psychological problems. According to the China College Student Health Survey Report, among surveyed students, a significant percentage experienced health issues, with emotional problems being the primary concern. However, a considerable proportion of students actively seek solutions to psychological anxiety, with distraction being their first choice, though often without scientific guidance.

Reading therapy serves as an effective auxiliary method for mental health regulation that can maintain and promote university students' psychological well-being. As crucial venues for humanities education, university libraries play an irreplaceable role in cultivating students and enhancing their qualities. Bibliotherapy, through individuals' reading or guided instruction, uses books as a medium to improve mental states and treat psychological deficiencies and disorders. Integration, based on interdisciplinary connection points, organically combines two or more disciplines to guide exploration of real-world problems and facilitate knowledge transfer. Multidisciplinary integrated reading therapy activities employ reading as the primary means, integrating knowledge and elements from multiple disciplinary fields to promote university students' mental health and enrich their reading experiences.

The innovative practices of reading therapy at North China University of Science

and Technology, Sichuan University, and Zhejiang Chinese Medical University not only demonstrate profound understanding of interdisciplinary integration but also show keen insight into user needs. Through thorough investigation of these libraries' reading therapy initiatives that fuse different disciplinary characteristics, this paper provides new perspectives and references for university libraries to develop multidisciplinary integrated reading therapy services.

Reading therapy helps break down disciplinary barriers and enriches the service connotation of university libraries, extending activities from pure library science to emotional and psychological services, thereby highlighting libraries' mental health construction functions. Multidisciplinary integrated reading therapy activities expose students to interdisciplinary knowledge, cultivate cross-disciplinary thinking patterns, enhance comprehensive abilities, and positively influence students' future career development and lifelong learning capacity. By effectively combining disciplinary knowledge with reading therapy, these activities provide students with comprehensive, dynamic services that alleviate academic pressure and emotional distress while innovating library service models.

2. Overview of Reading Therapy Activities in University Libraries

Bibliotherapy constitutes the core of reading therapy services in university libraries. The booklist is fundamental to implementing reading therapy, with libraries developing suitable collections based on students' mental health conditions and reading needs, often under expert guidance and drawing on excellent reading therapy practices. Targeting common psychological issues among university students, booklists are typically categorized into types such as psychological knowledge, leisure reading, biographical literature, and mythological stories.

Since 2018, the Beijing Normal University Library has recommended books addressing emotional distress, academic anxiety, and campus love issues. Reading therapy activities in university libraries take diverse forms, including reading salons, film screenings, and essay contests. For instance, libraries at Nanjing University of Science and Technology and Soochow University have held annual reading therapy reader activities from 2014-2016 to help students overcome communication difficulties and relieve love-related stress. These libraries invite professional psychological counselors to participate throughout the activity design process.

Creating dedicated reading therapy spaces represents another important approach. Properly designed spaces can help students feel relaxed and comfortable, eliminating tension and fatigue. These spaces serve as both reading areas and discussion salons. Libraries such as Shandong Taishan Medical College have established reading therapy research institutions, like the Reading Therapy Research Office founded in 2006, which provides psychological consultation and helps shape healthy student psychology. In 2023, Tianjin University Ren'ai Col-

lege established a reading therapy activity base to provide training venues for reading therapy teams and comfortable, private spaces for individual guidance.

Multidisciplinary integrated reading therapy provides students with higher-quality activities. North China University of Science and Technology integrates human services into reading therapy, establishing trusting connections through face-to-face communication. Yantai University Library, based on reading therapy concepts and using reading and film viewing as pathways, aims to relieve tension and treat psychological issues.

3. Case Studies of Multidisciplinary Integrated Reading Therapy Activities

North China University of Science and Technology Library

The library's Reading Therapy Association, with the mission of promoting reading therapy concepts and improving students' mental health literacy, conducts rich multidisciplinary integrated activities including member recruitment, training, book recommendations, reading exchanges, and film analysis. The association publishes an internal journal and organizes therapeutic film analysis activities that integrate film studies and aesthetics, using emotionally warm, positive films to guide viewers toward self-exploration and meaning-making.

For example, when screening "A Man Called Ove," instructors provide brief introductions before guiding participants to discuss character images and therapeutic values, encouraging them to share understandings and promoting emotional catharsis and healing. The library also hosts "Human Library" activities, which facilitate face-to-face exchanges between people. These activities integrate library science, interpersonal communication, sociology, and psychology, offering targeted book recommendations based on readers' interests and needs. The library invites experts for lectures and multiple forms of exchange, selecting themes carefully according to different majors' characteristics.

Sichuan University Library

To create a strong reading atmosphere and enhance students' reading literacy and lifelong learning capabilities, Sichuan University Library introduced reading therapy in 2014 as a "second classroom" for personality development. The library organizes emotional intelligence training activities using reading therapy to address psychological distress related to leaving home, interpersonal relationships, and job seeking. The activity team, primarily composed of master's students, possesses multidisciplinary backgrounds, providing strong talent support for professional reading therapy implementation.

In terms of resource construction, the library has built a foundational collection of quality books based on recommendations from the Reading and Mental Health Subcommittee of the Chinese Library Society. The library has also established a reading therapy service space website and regularly reports on activities.

By integrating multidisciplinary knowledge, the library provides comprehensive mental health support, helping students gain deeper understanding and inspiration during reading to resolve psychological difficulties.

Zhejiang Chinese Medical University Library

The library creatively integrates Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) culture into reading therapy, combining TCM emotional health concepts with bibliotherapy. Activities include reading exchanges, micro-book reviews, DIY crafts, and midday healing music salons. The micro-book review activity invites students to select books and write reviews incorporating herbal medicine names, combining reading therapy with TCM herbal knowledge to enhance understanding of TCM heart-nurturing theory and evoke emotional resonance.

The midday healing music salon integrates reading therapy with musicology, providing piano performances to help participants relax. Bookmark and incense plate making activities combine reading therapy with handicrafts, using elements related to herbal medicine and aromatherapy. Participants experience mindfulness and flow states during production, deepening their understanding of reading therapy concepts while releasing academic pressure. These activities, integrating multiple disciplines including neuroscience, provide comprehensive mental health support and enhance user engagement.

4. Recommendations for University Libraries' Multidisciplinary Integrated Reading Therapy Activities

Developing multidisciplinary integrated reading therapy activities represents both the responsibility and value of university libraries. To establish a professional, distinctive service brand, libraries should:

Build brand identity and leverage disciplinary strengths. Libraries should integrate their institution's advantageous disciplinary resources to create brand effects. For example, Zhejiang Chinese Medical University combines TCM concepts with reading therapy, establishing a TCM emotional therapy themed reading space. On World Book Day, the library collaborates with the Student Affairs Department, Mental Health Education Center, and peer counseling groups to customize TCM emotional health and mental health booklists, including series like "Licorice Honey-fried Books," "Free and Easy Wanderer Qi-moving Books," "Interpersonal Four Diagnosis Books," and "Poria Spirit Tranquilizing Books."

Establish effective interdisciplinary cooperation frameworks. Libraries must identify disciplinary advantages and form close collaborations with teachers and students from different disciplines, as well as mental health education centers. This broadens promotional channels while providing more targeted services.

Analyze user needs and determine service strategies. Libraries should

investigate user characteristics to provide unique value. By combining the institution's distinctive disciplines, libraries can develop corresponding service strategies covering resource collection, activity design, promotion, and staff training. Regular evaluation mechanisms should assess implementation effects and user satisfaction to adjust strategies promptly.

Innovate activity forms by integrating disciplinary characteristics. Libraries should monitor social hotspots and design activities based on relevant disciplines. For instance, combining reading therapy with tea ceremony culture allows participants to read while tasting tea, achieving relaxation and emotional 疏导. Integrating information technology enables digital platforms for anytime, anywhere access. Creative reading handicraft workshops can attract users through artistic expression, helping them understand social issues while achieving inner healing.

Recruit and train specialized talent. Libraries should hire professionals with backgrounds in psychology, literature, reading culture, and other relevant fields. Training programs should cover reading therapy basics, book selection, program design, and implementation skills to enhance librarians' professional competence. When psychological issues beyond reading therapy's scope emerge, libraries should promptly connect students with professional psychological services.

5. Conclusion

Reading therapy activities embodying multidisciplinary integration provide university students with rich, diverse experiences that combine literature, psychology, medicine, and other disciplines. The successful experiences of North China University of Science and Technology, Sichuan University, and Zhejiang Chinese Medical University libraries offer valuable references for other institutions. University libraries should actively explore and implement these concepts and methods, enabling activities that promote campus reading while benefiting students' emotional well-being and psychological development. By inviting users to participate in handicraft production and artistic expression, libraries can satisfy personalized needs and attract broader participation. As Professor Chen Shumei of Taiwan University noted in the preface to *From Melancholy to Calmness: A Bibliography of Emotional Healing Picture Books for College Students*, beyond helping students select suitable reading materials, such initiatives encourage libraries to address students' potential healing reading needs, collect emotional healing resources, and fulfill their social responsibility to support student mental health.

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