

11 JUN 02 1994

BIBLIOTHERAPY  
as a  
SUPPLEMENT TO THE READING AND MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS  
in the  
PRIMARY GRADES

AN ABSTRACT OF A THESIS  
PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY  
OF DANBURY STATE COLLEGE

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE  
MASTER OF SCIENCE

by  
Elizabeth J. Emig  
June 1962

The purpose of this thesis is to present bibliotherapy as a practical technique, designed to consolidate the efforts of the primary teacher to make reading meaningful and to create sound mental health. It is based on the conviction that psychology through imaginative literature can be a potent force in the development of the young child by molding and modifying social and emotional attitudes and behavior in desirable directions.

The first procedure for this thesis was to research theoretical and experimental contributions made in the field of bibliotherapy. The second procedure was to explore reading material of primary level relating to problems common to all primary children as well as to the particular problems of the individual. A third procedure was to investigate suitable methods by which such materials could be presented.

An Introduction sets forth the reasons for this study as well as the breadth and scope of the study. It points to the fact that imaginative literature has always been useful as a projective mechanism, but that bibliotherapy as a scientifically recognized technique is in its infancy. Professional opinion differs as to whether bibliotherapy is a preventive or curative technique.

Chapter One provides background for an understanding of the relation between reading and emotions. A brief examination is made of the nature of emotion and the nature of the reading process. Certain factors of general emotional development are explained, including a summary of characteristic fears of the primary child. The suggestion is made that reading may

be one way of handling such fears. Further, since reading is a function of the total personality, it may be used to measure personality in order to determine and meet children's emotional needs. The advantage of a literary projective technique is outlined.

Chapter Two consists of the definitions, goals and processes of bibliotherapy from the viewpoint of numerous authorities, including psychiatrists, sociologists, educators, authors and librarians. Emphasis is placed on the parallel nature of bibliotherapy and psychotherapy. Two studies, involving adults and adolescents, are reported, in addition to a description of bibliotherapy as employed in a third grade. These are followed by an outline of the dangers of bibliotherapy from the standpoint of the young child and the general public.

Chapter Three deals with the practical classroom application of bibliotherapy setting forth basic teacher requirements and possible approaches. The proposal is made that parents be encouraged to consider this technique in the child's home reading program.

Chapter Four contains selected reading materials appropriate for bibliotherapeutic use, with indications as to reading level and situations involved. Books recommended are those which meet problems relating to physical, social, economic, family, emotional and personality adjustment.

Chapter Five points out possible resource areas for the teacher and concludes with the observation that there is a place for bibliotherapy in the primary grades, but that the future of bibliotherapy as a recognized means of action depends on further experimentation and validation in the classroom and clinic.