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The Work of Dr. Seuss in Bibliotherapy

Abstract
Developmental bibliotherapy is an approach to ensuring normal development and a means of educating children about affective aspects such as feelings and behaviour. Although bibliotherapy is still not commonly used by teachers in classrooms, as many still lack the guidance and knowledge about the process, the therapeutic effect of books is becoming increasingly apparent among the populace. Dr. Seuss, as an esteemed children’s author, is already present in many classrooms and his works offer much more than literacy education. They guide the reader in developing positive thinking patterns, awareness of self and others, as well as reinforce the importance of critical thinking and developing problem-solving strategies. As a proponent of positive psychology, Seuss’ works can serve as a gateway to bibliotherapy in the classroom. The aim of this paper is to further examine the possibility and plausibility of the implementation of the works of Dr. Seuss in a bibliotherapy lesson in the classroom. Through the analysis of one of Seuss’s better-known picturebooks Oh, the Places You’ll Go!, further insight is given to the complexity of the seemingly simple works of Dr. Seuss and the potential of use in developmental bibliotherapy. The aforementioned title is used as a base for the development of a potential bibliography lesson and accompanying activities.

Keywords: Developmental Bibliotherapy; Bibliotherapy in Classroom; Dr. Seuss; Oh the Places You’ll Go!

Introduction – Bibliotherapy
Although the term bibliotherapy is just over a century old, the concept of healing and growing through stories and the spoken or written word has been present since the beginning of humankind. According to Byatt (2004) “stories are a pervasive and perpetual human characteristic, like language, like play”. Stories give us pleasure, but also help us articulate our thoughts, thus allowing us “to explore our own mind and the mind of others, as a sort of dress rehearsal for the future.” (Cron, 2012, p. 9). This is why some have, rightfully, described humans – not only as Homo sapiens but also – as Homo narrans (Fisher, 2005) or Homo fabulans, the tellers and interpreters of narrative (Currie, 2011, p. 6, as cited in Bland 2015). Stories have been used for generations to teach and to learn through the experience of others. Cron (2012, p. 1) states that “story, as it turns out, was crucial to our evolution – more so than opposable thumbs. Opposable thumbs let us hang on; story told us what to hang on to.”

Even as far back as Ancient Greece, people were aware of the power of literature, which can be seen by the placement of a sign saying “healing place for the soul” above one of their libraries (Sullivan and Strang, 2002). Aristotle also recorded the therapeutic value of reading and healing potential of books through their ability to arouse emotions (Cardenas, 1980, as cited in Afolayan, 1992, p. 137). The first recorded and printed description of treatment using bibliotherapy was published in
1840 by John Gait (Afolayan, 1992, p. 138). The actual term *bibliotherapy* was first officially used in 1916, during the First World War by Samuel Crothers (Afolayan, 1992; Beatty, 1962; Myracle, 1995). It was a cost-effective and simple method of dealing with the vast number of soldiers suffering from PTSP. Bibliotherapy and its theoretical background and practical applications saw great development in the second half of the 19th century (Sullivan and Strang, 2002). At first, the term *bibliotherapy* was used to refer to treating adult medical patients (Maich and Keen, 2004). Throughout the years, there has been a steady progression in the implementation from adult medical patients and adults needing emotional remediation, towards including children experiencing a variety of emotional and developmental difficulties (Sullivan and Strang, 2002).

Bibliotherapy is a continuously developing method. Currently, bibliotherapy is successfully practised in a variety of settings, such as by religious teachers and advisers, clinical psychologists, counsellors, and librarians, health professionals, and professionals working with school-age children in the classroom setting (Sullivan and Strang, 2002).

There are many definitions of *bibliotherapy*, and therefore, approaches to it. According to Pehrsson and Mcmillen (2005, p. 3), the most useful distinction to arise is the classification of ‘clinical bibliotherapy’ and ‘developmental bibliotherapy’. While therapists practice clinical bibliotherapy, librarians and/or teachers may practice developmental bibliotherapy (often referred to as ‘DB’) (Catalano, 2008). Škrbina (2013, p. 222) makes a similar categorization, using the terms ‘implicit’ and ‘explicit’ bibliotherapy; explicit being when a professional therapist is the organizer of the session, and implicit when the organizer is a parent, teacher or similar. Bašić (2011, p. 17) adds a third category, therefore categorizing bibliotherapy into institutional, clinical, and developmental. She differentiates them by aim, the person leading the therapy session, the person receiving it, and the program itself. In contrast, Shechtman (2009, p. 22) classifies bibliotherapy into two categories: cognitive and affective. Cognitive therapy relies on cognitive processes as the catalyst for change in an individual. On the other hand, affective therapy focuses on the role of non-cognitive factors in the process of therapy. This approach uses literature to explore feelings, thoughts and experiences that may have even been concealed until that point. Therefore, affective therapy leans towards psychodynamic theories.

Developmental bibliotherapy is the form of bibliotherapy most commonly implemented in the classroom (Catalano, 2008). Proponents of bibliotherapy in the classroom emphasize the importance of teacher-led discussion (Forgan, 2002, Burns, 2005), meaning the form implemented is interactive developmental bibliotherapy. According to Forgan (2002), the process of developmental bibliotherapy involves the selection of material, followed by the presentation of the material and completed by guiding students in developing their comprehension of the issue. Depending on the nature of the literary source, the therapy could be either cognitive or affective. When working with children, three different types of targets can be outlined: “the emotionally troubled, those with minor adjustment problems, and children with typical developmental needs.” (Pardeck, 1989, as cited by Doll and Doll, 1997, p. 7). This means that bibliotherapy can also be implemented in a classical classroom setting, to the benefit of the children, even when working with a group of children with “typical developmental needs”.

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Bibliotherapy is still a growing and developing concept, and it is currently a wide term applied within many fields. This paper will look at bibliotherapy from an educator’s perspective and with the intent of its implementation in the primary school classroom.

Potential of Dr. Seuss’ Work in Bibliotherapy

With the right implementation and preparation, nearly any good quality source of literature can have therapeutic potential. A wide range of authors and books can be explored, however, this paper will study the works of a world-renowned children’s author who is already present in many classrooms. Dr. Seuss (born under the name Theodor Seuss Geisel in Springfield, Massachusetts on March 2, 1904) is an acclaimed author, whose work is immediately recognizable due to his unique style of writing and playful and imaginative illustrations. He wrote and illustrated many picturebooks, with 44 of them being published during his lifetime (Hamilton Waxman, 2010). His works have great literary value and have been made timeless with their underlying positive, yet realistic messages delivered through non-patronizing, comical verse. Dr. Seuss often addresses the reader personally, imploring them to think critically, to be proactive and to be accountable. He manages to educate without moralizing. As Schulman (2004) states “Dr Seuss was the best kind of teacher – virtually invisible” (p. 6).

Although Dr. Seuss doesn’t deal with explicit problems and therefore may not be the first author that comes to mind when one thinks about bibliotherapy, it is undeniable that his work can lead children to think about life and facilitate them in navigating their own life experiences. His books can help children build confidence and self-esteem while giving guidance to children during their transition into the ‘adult world’. As Held and Wilson (in Held, 2011, p. 117) state: “He communicates, entertains, and transforms us through his stories; stories that don’t tell you what is right or wrong, but which begin the process of moral education through the presentation of scenarios and laudable and shameful characters.”

In many of his titles, he advocates fairness, peace, and taking care of the environment, and speaks against discrimination and consumerism, starting from his first title published in 1937, *To Think I Saw That on Mulberry Street* (Hamilton Waxman, 2010). *Horton Hears a Who*, published in 1954, is one of Seuss’s earlier books, in which he already clearly speaks against discrimination and the importance of helping others (*A person’s a person, no matter how small*), as well as the importance of standing up for what you believe in, even in the face of ridicule. *The Lorax*, published in 1971, sends an important message about taking care of the environment through the story of a creature called a Lorax and his quest to save the Truffula trees. This story emphasises the importance of responsibility while also sending the message that an individual can make a difference. This, in turn, may also provide children with a sense of empowerment (*Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot / Nothing is going to get better. It’s not.*).

With the bird-like creatures of the island Katroo in *Happy Birthday to You* (1959), again individuality is celebrated. According to Schuman (2010, p. 230), in this book the importance of individual differences is emphasized and praised (*Today you are you! / That is truer than true! / There is no one alive / who is you-er than you!*). The book may help address negative self-talk and lead to the development of enhanced self-perception in the reader.
A similar message is present in The Sneetches (1953). With the Star-Bellied and the Plain-Bellied Sneetches, the importance of individuality and the dangers of discrimination and bigotry are explored. The book promotes self-acceptance and appreciation of others’ differences. It addresses denigration (of self and others) along with feelings such as lack of contentment. The story also speaks about the problem of being manipulated, through the character of Sylvester McMonkey McBean, and can ultimately help promote the development of critical thinking. The developmental outcome offered for the reader is contentment and acceptance (The day they decided Sneetches are Sneetches/ And no kind of Sneetch is the best on the beaches).

The Zax is a short story published in the same book as The Sneetches (in The Sneetches and other stories). It is about two stubborn creatures that have a disagreement. It can be used to teach the importance of adaptability and compromise. It can be a resource in developing negotiation skills and used to address the problem of failing to see other's perspectives.

What Was I Scared of? (originally published in 1976) is a short story about a pair of rogue moving pants. The story can help develop empathy and understanding of others while also questioning the validity of our fears. It may be useful for dealing with problems such as fear, bullying, or seeing the worst in others. The story can be used to promote the development of positive thinking styles and skills for managing fear. It can promote the willingness to explore new things and instil the message of the importance of giving new people a chance and looking at things from other's perspectives. (Those pants began to tremble/ They were just as scared as I!).

Hunches in Bunches (1982) is a comical story about creatures called Hunches that actually represent various choices in life. The story promotes acceptance of the fact that we sometimes make wrong decisions – But the next thing I knew, I was following a Nowhere Hunch, a real dumb thing to do! It also explores the motive of being smart about which choices we take and who to trust. The book also deals with the problem of self-doubt and as with many Dr. Seuss stories it promotes a sense of accountability – Only you can make your mind up! You’re the one and only one! (p. 33).

I Had Trouble in Getting to Solla Sollew (1965) explores the adventure of a Seussian character from Valley of Vung as he/she deals with all sorts of life’s problems on the way. With the retelling of a journey, it is reminiscent of the much later published but more well-known book, Oh, the Places You’ll Go!. I Had Trouble in Getting to Solla Sollew deals with problems such as limited thinking, lack of contentment and trying to run away from problems. It is narrated in the first person and speaks of frustrations from a child’s perspective – Then he sat and he worked with his brain and his tongue / And he bossed me around just because I was young. / He told me go left. Then he told me go right. / And that’s what he told me all day and all night. It promotes the development of ownership of own thoughts and feelings along with the development of resilience and learning to trust your own capabilities to solve problems along while appreciating your own environment (But I’ve bought a big bat. / I’m ready, you see. / Now my troubles are going / To have troubles with me.)

The aforementioned titles do not cover the whole scope of Dr. Seuss’ works with the potential for use in bibliotherapy, but instead serve as an overview of the underlying and perhaps underestimated power of his stories. They present Dr. Seuss as more than a children’s author, and rather as a ‘Doctor of positive psychology’.
In order to further explore the potential of a Dr. Seuss picturebook in the implementation of developmental therapy in a classroom, the next section of this paper will analyse one of his most well-known books in greater detail. This analysis serves as an indication of the potential lying behind Seuss’s seemingly simple picturebooks and rhymes and as a template for the development of a bibliotherapy lesson in the classroom.

**Analysis of the Picturebook *Oh, the Places You’ll Go!***

*Oh, the Places You’ll Go!* was the last book Dr. Seuss wrote before he passed away (Giesel, in Schulman, J. & Goldsmith, C., 2004, p. 338). Appropriately, it speaks about life’s ups and downs and ultimate success, as if a summation of his life achievements. As soon as it was published, on the author’s birthday in 1990, it became number one on the New York Times bestseller list.

Upon analysing the therapeutic characteristics of *Oh, the Places You’ll Go!* (2003), it is clear that there are several problems addressed in this relatively short picturebook. Some of the problems are subtler than others. The book addresses feelings of powerlessness, helplessness, hopelessness, the uncertainty of life, and fear of the unknown. Through the narrative, it also deals with comparing oneself to others and trying to be perfect. It addresses failure and great success, and how to deal with both. Like in the *Hunches in Bunches*, the book addresses the difficulty of making decisions. All of the problems are addressed in typical Seussian verse, which eases the assimilation into children’s minds and aids future recall.

The illustrations in *Oh the Places You’ll Go!* are not a simple symmetrical representation of the text, but rather have a complementary and enhancing role. The book follows a little man dressed in yellow as he walks and travels alone through various scenarios that serve as an allegory of life. He is the protagonist of the journey, but no reference is made to him. The book is written as if the narrator is addressing ‘you’, be it the little man or the reader him- or herself. In essence, the book speaks to the reader both literally and figuratively. The protagonist of the journey is shown in the same picture on the first and last page as if coming full circle through the journey he set out upon. The circle is rounded off with the repetition of the same lines: Today is your day. and You’re off to Great Places. “Great Places” is capitalized as if being the name of a real place.

The book encourages the reader to take responsibility for their own destiny and accountability for themselves, which is seen already in the verse on the second page – You’re on your own. And you know what you know. / And YOU are the guy who’ll decide where to go; and reiterated later with Whether you like it or not, / Alone will be something you’ll be quite a lot. (p. 34). The book promotes courage and the importance of choosing the right option for yourself. It gives readers a sense of accountability for their own life path. Life’s path is also depicted literally in the pictures showing a web of streets. Seuss says - With your head full of brains and your shoes full of feet, you’re too smart to go down and not so-good-street (p. 4).

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1 N.b. The pages in *Oh, the Places You’ll Go!* are not numerated. In order to give more precise reference to the illustrations and verses in the book, the pages have been counted manually, classifying the page where the poem starts as as page one.
The metaphor of a not so-good-street is used to represent all ill-advised decisions and possible bad influences that we can encounter in life. This can be seen in the illustrator of a little man refusing to go in the direction of the peculiar creatures popping up out of the ground. The message can be very meaningful to teens and preteens as they are introduced to drugs and alcohol, or even for younger students presented with making choices about friends they want to associate with.

The book speaks positively about the reader putting emphasis on how intelligent and competent they are: *you’ll be the best of the best… You will top all the rest* (p. 17) and *People as brainy and footsy as you* (p. 8). In typical Seuss fashion, he even invents words such as ‘footsy’. Footsy could pertain to courage and drive to take action as it ties into a preceding line - you have brains in your head, You have feet in your shoes (p. 2). He speaks about having the courage to step outside the box and explore what life has to offer. Dr. Seuss also advocates the importance of adapting to the situation you find yourself in: *And when things start to happen don’t worry. Don’t stew. Just go right along. You’ll start happening too* (p. 9).

Dr. Seuss uses his illustrations to depict how confusing life can be. For example, the illustration on page 11 shows the little man in yellow in an undefined space filled with horizontal and vertical stripes. It is difficult to make sense of the image; the large stripes around the little man make the world seem hypnotical and confusing. Size is also another important element in this illustration as the little man is depicted as being especially minute as if being swallowed by the enormity of confusion around him.

As noted earlier, Dr. Seuss shows life realistically. He prepares the readers for life’s ups and downs and calls for them to be positive and optimistic but not unrealistic. This is best seen in the hot air balloon sequence (p. 12-13). He speaks about ‘high heights’ that the reader will reach, the hot air balloon being a metaphor for success in life. Seuss says that you will join the high fliers, probably meaning that you will become part of a successful group of people. He shows the little man thoroughly enjoying himself, and further states how sometimes in life you take the lead and you can even become better than all the rest. Seuss then contrasts this high with the next sequence where the hot air balloon pops, and the reader learns that sometimes you don’t succeed (p. 16). The illustration that follows shows the little man stuck on a tree in his burst air balloon, looking on in despair as his friends fly off. The overall message is that one has the potential to be the best of the best and to strive for that, but to not be discouraged when one isn’t. Failing is a normal part of life - Bang-ups and Hang-ups *can* happen to you. (p. 19) and sometimes your peers and friends will have the success that you do not experience while you are left in a Lurch.

Dr. Seuss uses a contrast of colour to emphasise a change of mood. When the tone is positive and encouraging, he uses bright and warm colours. As soon as he is speaking about the more negative parts of life, cold and dark colours dominate the illustrations. This can be seen in many illustrations, e.g. in the illustration of the Slump (p. 18-19), a lonely and dark place, which Dr. Seuss again made into an actual place by capitalizing the noun, turning it into a proper noun.

Another word that he invents is the process of coming out of a negative frame of mind: ‘un-slumping’ and *Un-slumping is not easily done*. This new word gets the meaning across very efficiently. Dr. Seuss’s made-up vocabulary may actually help children to better express what they are feeling and help them to deal with the situation. He was also aware that words empower children. To further convey the
meaning of a slump, the scenery is appropriately glum and undefined, with the unusual blue forms drooping off the cliff as if in despair.

The illustrations of “unmarked streets” (p. 20-21) also promote feelings of confusion and uncertainty with the change in the depiction of the houses. At the beginning of the book, when the man sets off on his journey, the houses are all brightly illustrated with simple shapes. On this page, however, the houses become dark, hidden in the shadows, distorted in shape. You will come to a place where the streets are not marked. / Some windows are lighted. But mostly they’re darked. The streets and houses, in this case, could again serve as a representation of decisions. For some decisions, it is clear what you are getting yourself into, but for some, it isn’t; those decisions are ‘darked’.

Dr. Seuss further discusses how life can sometimes be confusing and bring inevitable moments of downfall. Another place he invents is the eerie ‘Waiting Place’. The accompanying illustration sets a rich scene with many things happening at once, depicting all the many occasions people wait for. Dr. Seuss’s message is not to wait, to escape the waiting place, and to live life to the fullest and in spite of setbacks, to get back up on your feet and set out for new victories.

Dr. Seuss has written a book that leads the reader through oscillations as real life would. He creates tension and a culmination of fun and hope, and then on the next page brings the reader down again. As with the hot air balloon scene being followed by a metaphorical burst of the bubble and a literal burst of the balloon, he again builds up a scene of life bringing fun and fame, but then with a sharp turn he shows that sometimes this isn’t the case: Except when they don’t / Because, sometimes they won’t (p. 35). Dr. Seuss also illustrates an abundance of different games that depict the fun to be had in life (p. 30-31). He refers to points being scored and games being won as a metaphor for accomplishments and successes, but when he states not all games can be won, the illustration changes to a comical house with all sorts of elaborate additions standing on a very unstable base. Dr. Seuss explores an important thought – some games you can’t win/’cause you’ll play against you. In essence, you are your own biggest problem or challenge to conquer, and changing your thought process is half the battle.

The power of your own thoughts is also seen in the illustration of undefined dark objects waiting for us when we are all alone (p. 35) and in the verse: And when you’re alone, there’s a good chance/ you’ll meet things that scare you right out of your pants. Although at first, it may seem that this is emphasising the importance of independence and the inevitably of dealing with external struggles on your own, perhaps it can be interpreted at a deeper level. Maybe once one is truly on their own, left to their own thoughts without external distractions, that is when the scariest things come about – our own negative thoughts.

The second last page shows the metaphorical mountain mentioned at the beginning of the book. One would take ‘you will move Mountains’ to mean you will do great things, but Dr. Seuss takes this saying and makes it literal with the character moving a real mountain. He even emphasises this thought and capitalises it – KID, YOU’LL MOVE MOUNTAINS. The very last verse is affirmative and, in a sense, pushes the reader towards action as it is written as an imperative: Today is your day! Your mountain is waiting. So… get on your way!

The verse that sums the message of the whole book is: And will you succeed. Yes! You will, indeed! (98 and ¾ per cent guaranteed.) It gives the message of success
with a dose of healthy realism.
It is interesting to point out the difference between the cover pages between the original publication from 1990 and the later reprint in 2003. The original shows the little man in yellow looking somewhat confused as he stands on top of an unidentified object surrounded by a landscape of hills made of intermittent coloured stripes. With the title *Oh, the Places You’ll Go!* above him, the whole cover leaves the impression of uncertainty. The 2003 publication, probably created in the attempt of rebranding due to changing needs of the public, uses the artwork from the title page of the original publication to serve as the cover page. This illustration depicts the little man thoroughly enjoying himself as he floats upwards and forwards in his little makeshift hot air balloon. This new cover page, although with the same title, leaves a different impression – the endless opportunities of the places we can go. Already at first glance, it instils positivity and catches the imagination of the reader.

**Oh, the Places You’ll Go! in Bibliotherapy – Lesson Plan**

As Catalano (2008, p. 20) emphasizes, adequate planning and preparation are essential in implementing a successful bibliotherapy lesson, especially in a classroom setting. In considering that bibliotherapy involves the steps of identification, (projection), catharsis and insight (Afolayan, 1992; Forgan, 2002; Shechtman, 2009), the teacher should plan how to aid their students through these stages. Identification is aided by preparing the children for the topic. By identifying with the literary character, students can recognize that they are not alone in experiencing certain problems. In *Oh, the Places You’ll Go!* the narrator speaks directly to ‘you’ which may aid identification of the students, which in turn leads to their involvement. Through prereading discussion, the teacher should set the base for students to naturally identify with the character during listening. Students will then project their own struggles onto the character in the book. Once they have done that, they can experience catharsis or an emotional release of suppressed feelings. The ultimate goal is for students to develop further insight into how to deal with their own problems. This is done by them implementing behaviour shown in the book into their own life. The final stage should be guided and reinforced by the teacher through post-reading discussion and activities.

1. **Preparation**
The teacher should take care to create a safe environment and prepare the children for the topic. The teacher can introduce the book through a discussion about the book itself and their own personal experiences in order to ease personal involvement and potential identification. The teacher may ask the class what they think the title means, what is depicted on the cover (in the 2003 publication – a man flying in a hot air balloon), how the man feels, the students’ predictions for the man. The teacher can then further ask the children about their own journeys and experiences, whether they have ever been lost, and discuss in all cases how they felt.

2. **Guided reading**
It is important the book is read naturally, with appropriate pauses and intonation while respecting the melody and rhyme of Seuss’ verse. As in all picturebooks, the pictures play a key role, so the teacher should ensure all children can see the pages. Children can sit on the floor, in a semi-circle around the teacher, to create an intimate
reading atmosphere. In a big class of children, the illustrations can be presented on a PowerPoint presentation so all can see, but in doing this, some of the intimacy of the book is lost. Ideally, an enlarged edition of the book can be used. While reading, the teacher should take short pauses to show the children the pictures, but also to allow them to process what they have just heard and seen. The voice of the reader should affectively follow the words. For example, in the scenes in the hot air balloon (page 14), the voice naturally heightens and speeds up - ‘best of the best…/ top all the rest’. Emphatic reading of these verses evokes excitement, which is appropriately followed by the turn of events and fortune when the balloon bursts, where the voice can follow the mood by slowing down and deepening.

Upon finishing the book, the children should be given a moment of silence to reflect. They should be allowed an intimate moment with their own thoughts. They can be guided with suggestions such as – How did you feel while listening? Think about the journey of the man, is it what you expected? Did anything surprise you? What was interesting or unexpected for you? Which pictures did you find interesting?

3. Post-reading discussion

The post-reading discussion involves the students evaluating their own emotions and assessing their own situations. The discussion may start with the students expressing their own feelings that they instinctively feel before any further analysis of the book. Once they have thought about their own emotions, the teacher can guide them to deeper thought with the following questions: What feelings did the man have? Was he always happy? How else did he feel (sad, scared, confused)? (See pages 16/17). How did he deal with the situation? When was he scared? (See pages 13 and 14). What happened after that? (He looked the monster right in the eye - page 15). Who is bigger? But who is in control? What does Dr. Seuss mean when he says ‘Kid, you’ll move mountains’? What kind of places does the little man go? Are some better than others? How? Why? Let’s look at the Waiting place – how do you feel when you have to wait?

4. Post-reading activities

There is a wide range of possibilities for post-reading activities. It is important that the activities support the goal of the bibliotherapy lesson, but it is also preferable that they can be connected to some other curriculum goals to allow for complete integration in the classroom. The teacher should choose the activities based on the goals of the bibliotherapy lesson, as well as the students interests and abilities. Activities should look to include the students actively while stimulating their creativity, as well as considering different styles of learning and the importance of kinaesthetic engagement. In correlation to Oh, the Places You’ll Go!, emphasis can be put on activities that will promote positive thinking and problem-solving. The activities listed are in no particular order and can be implemented in combination or individually.

• Activity 1 - Brainstorming

As a post-reading activity, the class can brainstorm and the teacher can either write on the board or on a poster to be kept in the classroom. The central concept can be ‘problems’. The students can offer ideas of how they feel; this will give them an understanding that it is normal to feel various emotions when they encounter any problem. Then they can add further ideas, perhaps written in a different coloured marker, about what do when we encounter a problem, any problem.
• Activity 2 – Path to Success
Through discussion, the class can create a signboard with the steps in handling a problem. This can also be permanently displayed in the classroom and be used during the year when a student is feeling frustrated with a problem or their behaviour is out of balance. Through heuristic conversation and the teacher's guidance, the students can be led to form a sequence map based on principles similar to the Forgan's (2002) ‘I SOLVE’ strategy. The students and teacher can make the sequence into road signs, to include the theme of a journey.

![Picture 1: Problem solving sequence map](image)

Once the map has been created, the class can take real-life problems that they have encountered within or outside the classroom, and analyse the problem in the steps shown in Figure 1.

• Activity 3 – Hot air balloons of goals and ambitions
The students can make hot air balloons with any technique in an Art class (such as collage, watercolour, poster paint in a study of colour patterns, pencil in drawing the basket in a study of lines, etc.), which allows for parallel correlation with the curriculum goals in that field. The students can write their goals in the balloon. The teacher can decide what is relevant at the moment, whether it is short or long-term goals. In order to truly give the children guidance in attaining the goals, they can add a rope ladder to their balloon baskets. On each rung they can write a step, action, or change they need to make to achieve their goals. The teacher should assist the children in this activity, mingle with all the children in the classroom, and dedicate a few one-on-one minutes to every student. These balloons can be hung on the class pinboard so the children have a daily reminder of their own goals.

• Activity 4 – Class Goals Balloon
As a supplement to activity 2, or as even as an activity on its own, the class can also create a class balloon with their mutual goals and steps they plan to take for the school year. This activity would be especially applicable at the beginning of the school year and can even serve as a reminder for classroom discipline.

• Activity 5 – Poster of Positivity
The class can create a poster of positive thoughts to display in the classroom and to have for reference in everyday life. The teacher can also refer the students to the poster when their behaviour is out of balance due to some inner frustration. The class collectively creates the poster by each student writing a positive thought on a coloured piece of paper and adding to the poster to make a patchwork of positive thoughts.
and reinforcing phrases. They can create their own original sentences in correlation to creative writing class; they can research positive quotes on the internet in an IT class or other books in a library class, or simply find quotes from the book *Oh, the Places You’ll Go!* that had meaning for them.

**Activity 6: Creative Writing**
During a Language Arts class, the students can write their own story about a journey. They should be prompted to include a problem and some resolution, but given the creativity to include any type of problem that comes to mind, as long as they include feelings. They can write from personal experience or make up new stories altogether. Even in the creation of made up stories, students are prompted to think of problem-solving strategies, which they, in turn, may apply later in their own lives.

**Activity 7 – Walk through the Book**
To recreate the literal journey the protagonist of *Oh, the Places You’ll Go!* takes, the teacher can put copies of the pages from the book and stick them on the walls of the classroom. This idea could even be implemented in the halls or staircases of a school building. The students can then walk around and physically, as well as mentally, take a journey through the story of the book. This activity includes the students kinaesthetically and allows them to linger at points of the book that speak most to them. This is also a good reinforcement activity as it can remind the students of what they have heard/read and felt. Younger students will focus on the illustrations, but older students can also read the verses for themselves.

**Activity 8 – Class Tally**
All the students may be given a copy of the verses in the book. They are then instructed to highlight the verses that speak to them most or that they feel a connection to. Once all the students have reread the story, the class can make a tally of which verses were highlighted the most often. This activity can be correlated to math class and can even be expanded into making graph or pie charts. The activity itself may lead the students to greater insight and self-knowledge, as they will become more conscious of what was meaningful to them and perhaps help reinforce the message. The activity will also promote knowledge about others, allow for students to see that they do have some of the same inner feelings (in the verses that are common amongst them) and to also have understanding for and celebrate differences (through the verses that are not common).

**Activity 9 – Perseverance**
The teacher can create an obstacle course in a P.E. class and, through conversation, develop further understanding of the underlying message of perseverance in *Oh, the Places You’ll Go!* The class may discuss how they felt when a certain part of the course was challenging for them. Did they succeed all of the time? Did they keep going? Did they get discouraged? How did they motivate themselves to keep going?

5. Reinforcement
Reinforcement is important to promote the long-term effects of the personal changes evoked by the bibliotherapy session. Reinforcement activities can be implemented and revisited at any time after the initial reading of the book. For the lesson to truly be
a bibliotherapy lesson, students need to gain more than just being prompted to plan their goals, which is a common motive in the standard implementation of Oh, the Places You’ll Go! in the classroom. With bibliotherapy, children will optimally develop new thought patterns and problem-solving skills. It is important that students are encouraged to externalize their own inner thoughts to help them become more aware of them. The students can write a diary during the year, recording their successes and challenges. They can make ‘bucket-lists’ with their goals for themselves. The teacher can help them differentiate short-term and long-term goals, and set a certain time in the month or week when each student can individually revisit their lists to see how they are going.

An activity that would not only engage the students actively but also prepare them for naturally occurring future events, is a card game the teacher can prepare. The teacher can prepare a set of cards with problem scenarios that are realistic in the students’ lives. The game can be called ‘What would you do?’, in which the students can draw cards and reply to the situation. To make it more challenging and fun, they can be given time limits with an egg timer. The students should be introduced to this game as a whole class, but the cards can be later left in the classroom for the students to play amongst themselves whenever they have free time. The teacher can add new cards and take students’ suggestions for new problem scenarios. Students can reference activity 2 (post-reading activities) in their answers. Another way to use the cards is to have one or two students act out the problems, and the other students have to guess what the problem was, thus giving insight into feelings and emotions expressed when encountering such a situation. Once the situation is guessed, the students can again give ideas of how to approach the problem. Students could also be given the activity to write a letter to a friend giving them advice about a problem that the teacher sets. This will allow them to actively use any knowledge and insight they have gained.

Conclusion

Primary school teachers are instilled with the great responsibility of guiding a class of children, not only through their education but their personal development. Bibliotherapy offers an integrated approach to therapy that can be used by implementing literary materials in the classroom. Developmental bibliotherapy allows teachers to use books or other literary sources with a class of children, with the aim of addressing behavioural problems, as well as addressing their emotions, self-acceptance, and self-esteem.

Although the literary value of Dr. Seuss’ works is generally recognized, his works are not listed in most bibliotherapy guides or booklists. This paper explored the potential of the use of his works to implement developmental bibliotherapy in the classroom.

As shown in the example of the book Oh, the Places You’ll Go, Dr. Seuss’ picturebooks are multi-faceted and have a lot to offer to a teacher wishing to organically integrate developmental bibliotherapy into their class. His works have the potential for the use in bibliotherapy, as they not only deal with various problems but promote positive thinking. With supplementary discussion and activities, the bibliotherapy process can lead to long-lasting insight. As each class and teacher is individual, there is not one universal lesson plan that can be offered for the implementation of a certain book. However, this paper presented a lesson guide, which can serve as a source of ideas for other teachers in their endeavours in their classrooms.
References
