

Theoretical Innovation of “Natural Healing” from a Practical Perspective and Its Educational Application in Vocational Schools: Empowering Landscape School Students with the Wellness Concept to Develop Brand Construction

XUE Lin¹, GU Qiang²

(1. Student Development Center, Beijing Landscape Architecture School, Beijing 102488, China; 2. Basic Course Teaching Department, Beijing Landscape Architecture School, Beijing 102488, China)

Abstract The landscaping and wellness industry is in a critical stage of standardized and high-quality development, with vast room for improvement. Based on the three major national strategies represented by Healthy China, the theoretical system of “natural healing” is innovated. Grounded in systems theory and other theoretical foundations, a practical system consisting of four elements: experiential, healing environment, standardized activity carrier, and guide is constructed, and the ten healing pathways of intervention for “natural healing” are clarified. The integration between theory and the cultural, commercial, and sports industries, as well as the compatibility of holistic development in vocational education, are demonstrated. The “1-3-4-10” universal model has been extracted to provide theoretical support and practical solutions for industry standardization, vocational education quality improvement, and industry integration.

Keywords Natural healing, Integrated education and healing, Garden health and wellness, Integration of culture, commerce, and sports, Vocational education, Holistic development

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Against the backdrop of the Healthy China strategy, the upgrading of cultural and tourism consumption, and the high-quality development of modern vocational education, the horticultural wellness and horticultural therapy industry has entered a new stage of standardized, professional, and inclusive development. The “*Healthy China 2030*” *Plan Outline* released in 2016 clearly proposed to promote non-medical health interventions and advocate green and healthy lifestyles, elevating the promotion of national health to a national core strategy. In 2022, the forest-garden healthcare practitioner was included in the *Occupational Classification System of the People’s Republic of China*, marking that the garden healthcare practice in China has officially entered a professional and standardized development stage. At the same time, the deep integration of culture, commerce, and sports has become the core engine for residents’ consumption upgrading and industrial transformation, providing important policy and industrial support for the innovation of health and wellness industry scenarios and the expansion of business formats. In the field of vocational education, the focus is on the integration of industry and education, the integration of moral cultivation and technical skills, and the development of the five educations, emphasizing the training of all-round and full-cycle technical and skilled talents. The combination of multiple policy dividends provides an important historical context and development foundation for the

natural healing theory to move from academic theory to practical implementation, and from single healing to holistic education.

At present, natural healing industries such as horticultural wellness, horticultural therapy, and forest therapy are developing rapidly in China. However, the industry as a whole still faces problems such as fragmented theoretical systems, disjointed practical paths, single healing functions, and lack of long-term mechanisms, making it difficult to adapt to industrialization and education.

Based on the dual perspectives of culture, business, tourism and sports integration and vocational education, a natural healing research system that integrates theoretical construction, scenario adaptation, practical implementation, and effectiveness verification is constructed. The core content includes defining the core concept of natural healing and reviewing relevant research progress both domestically and internationally; based on interdisciplinary theory, establishing the triple theoretical foundation and complete system framework of natural healing; analyzing the adaptation logic between the theory of natural healing and the integration of culture, commerce, tourism and sports and vocational education goals; using vocational colleges as empirical carriers to establish standardized practice models and educational brands; verifying the scientificity of the theoretical system and the replicability of practice. The research innovation lies in the construction of an original

theoretical system of “integrated education and healing”, forming a standardized practice paradigm of “1-3-4-10” that is suitable for vocational education scenarios, and achieving a breakthrough in natural healing from short-term physical and mental intervention to long-term whole person cultivation, and from single technology application to multi-dimensional scene integration.

1 Definition of core concepts and review of domestic and foreign research

1.1 Definition of core concepts

Natural healing is an original theoretical and practical paradigm that takes the inherent nature of life “returning to the essence of inner perfection and allowing all phenomena to exist according to their natural appearance” as its core, with the natural ecosystem as its core carrier. Through structured natural connections and immersive experiences, it synchronously achieves the restoration and sequencing of the true state of life (healing) and the empowerment of life’s full potential for growth (nurturing). This theory breaks through the logic of single physical and mental intervention in traditional natural healing, focuses on the reconstruction of the relationship between humans and nature, and ultimately achieves mutual symbiosis between individuals and themselves, others, nature, and society, with multiple functions of physical and mental healing, holistic cultivation, and value

transmission.

The theory of natural healing has formed a mature system architecture: with the integrated education and healing as the core kernel, the four elements of experienter, healing environment, standardized activity carrier, and guide as the system operation architecture, and the ten healing pathways (horticultural wellness, horticultural therapy, forest therapy, and other technical channels) as the core intervention methods. The various elements and technological approaches collaborate with each other, and the combination method can be flexibly adjusted according to the characteristics of the field, the depth of intervention, and the adapted group, forming a standardized, implementable, and replicable path for the implementation of healing.

1.2 Research progress at home and abroad

The international research on natural healing started earlier, and a systematic theoretical system and professional certification mechanism have been formed. At the end of the 19th century, Europe and America were the first to initiate scientific and systematic research on horticultural therapy. Some scholars proposed the theory of stress reduction, which scientifically confirmed the positive role of the natural environment in relieving psychological stress and emotional recovery in the human body. Wilson's biophilia hypothesis^[1] explains the innate natural connectivity needs of humans from a biological perspective, providing theoretical support for the underlying logic of natural healing. Relying on the advantages of forestry resources, Japan has built a theoretical system of forest healing, practical standards, and professional certification system based on forestry, and has formed a mature industrial operation model^[2]. The United States has established a comprehensive practitioner qualification certification system through the Horticultural Therapy Association, promoting the standardized development of the industry. Relevant studies in the Taiwan region of China further verified the positive enabling effect of natural contact on individual stress repair, natural connection ability improvement, and creativity stimulation, providing empirical reference for natural healing practice in the East Asian context^[3].

In recent years, the research on natural healing, horticultural wellness, and forest wellness in China has developed rapidly, forming a diversified research pattern. Li Shuhua et al.^[4] systematically reviewed the development trajectory, type characteristics, and mechanisms of action from horticultural therapy to natural

healing, and clarified that neural regulation and immune regulation are the core physiological mechanisms of natural healing. They pointed out that China is currently in the rapid formation stage of a diversified natural healing system. Li Shuhua et al.^[5] focused on the professional development of the industry and systematically constructed a knowledge system, competency standards, and career development framework for forest-garden healthcare practitioners, promoting the standardization of the industry. Deng Sanlong^[6] conducted a special study on forest healthcare, and clarified the theoretical basis, practical path, and industrial development model of forest healthcare.

Overall, existing research in China mostly focuses on single healing technologies, industry standards, and industrial development, and there are still obvious research shortcomings: the lack of a systematic theoretical framework for "integrated education and healing", emphasis on healing over cultivation, short-term effectiveness over long-term value, insufficient completeness of the theoretical system, lack of paradigm for educational scene implementation, and difficulty in adapting to the dual needs of holistic education for vocational education and industrial integration development, leaving research space for the theoretical construction and empirical innovation of this study.

2 System construction of natural healing theory

2.1 General systems theory: the bottom-level operational logic of natural healing

Natural healing is supported by Ludwig von Bertalanffy's general systems theory and Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecosystem theory^[7-8], and a fully closed-loop operating system of "demand-design-implementation-feedback-optimization" is constructed, completely solving the problems of fragmentation, no closed loop, and difficult iteration in traditional natural healing practices. The system operates on four core elements as carriers, forming a collaborative and interconnected mechanism: the experienter is the core subject of the system, and their comprehensive needs for physical and mental healing, growth and development are the starting point and ultimate goal of the system's operation; the healing environment provides the physical foundation, adapting to the field requirements of the ten healing pathways, achieving full coverage of forests, gardens, campuses, rural areas, and other scenarios; the standardized activity carrier serves as the core of the system connection,

transforming abstract healing goals into ten feasible technological paths; the guide is the core of system assurance, responsible for requirement assessment, scheme design, activity guidance, effectiveness review, and optimization iteration. The four major elements mutually empower and operate in a closed-loop manner, achieving the transformation of natural healing theory from an academic concept to an operational practical guide.

2.2 Temporal and spatial continuity: the logic of ensuring the effectiveness of natural healing

The theory of spatiotemporal continuity is formed based on four major theories: holistic development, lifelong education, continuous intervention, and cultural ecology. It responds to the industry call for the construction of a systematic and long-term evaluation system in the field of natural healing, and is the core support for ensuring the stability, sustainability, and accumulation of natural healing effects. This theory includes four core dimensions: temporal continuity covers the complete growth cycle of individuals, which can adapt to the growth and healing needs of different stages of the population; relying on the ten healing pathways, spatial continuity connects diverse fields such as on- and off-campus, urban and rural areas, and leisure and health care, and builds a comprehensive healing network; the continuity of the path progresses from physical relaxation and emotional regulation to spiritual nourishment and personality development; cultural continuity integrates material and intangible cultural heritage, deeply combining natural experience with cultural cognition and cultural inheritance. The four dimensions jointly construct a long-term mechanism for natural healing, addressing the pain points of traditional interventions that are short acting and fragmented.

2.3 Relationship reconstruction: the fundamental value logic of natural healing

Relationship reconstruction is the core value kernel of natural healing, and its theoretical foundation comes from deep ecology, ecological psychology, and caring education theory. Deep ecology breaks down anthropocentric cognition and advocates for equal coexistence between humans and nature^[9]. Ecological psychology reveals the deep connection between individual mental health and natural native connection^[10]. The theory of caring education emphasizes that relationship construction is the core essence of educating people^[11]. Meanwhile, the meta-analysis conducted by Capaldi et al.^[12] confirmed

a significantly positive correlation between natural connectivity and individual well-being, providing empirical support for the therapeutic value of relationship reconstruction.

Based on the above theory, a four-fold progressive relationship reconstruction system is constructed. The first is the reconstruction of the relationship between humans and nature at the core layer. Through immersive natural interaction, a deep emotional and spiritual connection is established, which is the origin of all healing values. The second is the reconstruction of the relationship between individuals and themselves at the basic layer, achieving emotional regulation, self acceptance, and physical and mental reconciliation. The third is the reconstruction of the relationship between people and others at the interpersonal layer, which enhances empathy, communication, and collaboration abilities through group natural activities. The fourth is the reconstruction of the relationship between people and society at the extended layer, relying on industrial services, rural revitalization, and public welfare practices to strengthen social responsibility and achieve coordinated coexistence between personal growth and social development.

2.4 Internal logical relationship of the triple theoretical foundation

The three theoretical foundations of systems theory, spatiotemporal continuity, and relational reconstruction form a progressive, mutually supportive, and closed-loop self consistent theoretical framework. The systems theory answers the question of "how to regulate the operation" of natural healing and builds an overall practical framework. The continuity of time and space answers the question of "how to achieve long-term sustainability" in the healing effect, and builds a sustainable guarantee mechanism. Relationship reconstruction answers the question of "why it possesses educational and healing value", revealing the theoretical origin and core. Taking the four core elements as carriers and the ten healing pathways as technical channels, the three theories together form a complete original theoretical system of natural healing, providing solid theoretical support for subsequent scene adaptation and practical implementation.

3 Adaptability of natural healing theory to the historical context

3.1 Integration of culture, business, tourism, and sports: industrial practice support for natural healing

The core of the integration of culture,

commerce, tourism, and sports is to break down the boundaries of cultural, commercial, tourism, and sports formats, and achieve consumption upgrading and industrial value-added through scene reconstruction and content innovation. The current industry integration has shifted from simple format stacking to deep content integration, and there is an urgent need for specialized and systematic content core support. The theory of natural healing and the ten standardized technological approaches can provide a standardized content system for diverse integration scenarios such as cultural tourism and health care, rural leisure, urban parks, sports and health care, and cultural and creative commerce, filling the shortcomings of content homogenization and insufficient specialization in current integration formats, and providing a new practical path for high-quality industrial development, industry synergy, and value upgrading.

3.2 Educational goal of vocational education: isomorphism of educational value of natural healing

The theory of natural healing and the educational philosophy of modern vocational education have a triple core isomorphism, with strong educational adaptability. Firstly, the educational philosophy of health-first is highly compatible with the core values of natural healing and physical and mental healing, and can be integrated into campus health construction and mental health courses to help students develop their physical and mental health. Secondly, the fundamental task of cultivating moral character and promoting the development of the five educations is deeply compatible with the core of holistic cultivation in natural healing, which can run through the all-round process of educating people in morality, intelligence, physical fitness, aesthetics, and labor, and achieve the unity of value guidance, ability cultivation, and personality shaping. Thirdly, the core function of vocational education in serving society and integrating industry and education is matched with the value of socialization empowerment in natural healing, which can achieve a two-way unity of students' professional skills improvement, vocational literacy cultivation, and social service empowerment.

3.3 Theoretical implementation advantages under dual scene overlay

The strategic combination of the integration of cultural, commercial, tourism and sports industries and educational scene of vocational education provides a unique practical soil for the theory of natural healing. Vocational colleges

have core advantages such as professional faculty, training venues, school-enterprise cooperation resources, and stable student populations, making them the optimal carrier for theoretical verification, talent cultivation, and model innovation. Based on the vocational college platform, a three-dimensional collaborative mechanism of "theoretical verification+talent cultivation+industry services" can be constructed to achieve the systematic implementation, standardized iteration, and social promotion of the theory of natural healing.

4 Empirical implementation of natural healing theory in the context of vocational colleges

In this paper, Beijing Landscape Architecture School is taken as an empirical case. Relying on a complete theoretical system of natural healing, a distinctive student development service brand is created, and a specialized "1-3-4-10" standardized practice model for vocational education is innovatively constructed, completing the implementation verification and practical optimization of the theoretical system.

4.1 Brand core positioning and construction goals

The campus brand construction is based on the theory of natural healing as the spiritual core, with the core educational concept of "integrated education and healing", and a normalized healing support system covering the entire growth cycle of students is constructed. The construction goals are divided into two dimensions. Internally, it focuses on student development, assists students in achieving harmonious physical and mental growth, promoting the integrated development of the five educations, and strengthening core vocational abilities, and realizes holistic cultivation. Externally, it focuses on social empowerment, providing professional services in the fields of horticultural wellness and integration of cultural, commercial, tourism and sports, promotes the universal dissemination of natural healing theory, and realizes the socialization of educational value.

4.2 Construction of a four-dimensional practical system based on theoretical framework

Based on the four core elements of natural healing, a systematic practice system that is suitable for vocational colleges is established, to achieve precise correspondence between theory and practice.

The first is to focus on the experienter and accurately match the growth needs of students. Centered around the pain points of

students' adaptation to enrollment, academic growth, career development, and employment and further education throughout the entire cycle, differentiated healing themes are designed in stages: for the lower grades, the focus is on alleviating enrollment adaptation anxiety, the academic stage focuses on improving focus and learning ability, the vocational preparation stage builds stress resilience, and the graduation stage strengthens employment competitiveness. Through the integration of courses, extracurricular activities, club activities, and practical training, students are empowered with personalized development in all aspects.

The second is to build a comprehensive healing field based on the healing environment. It plans and constructs exclusive fixed venues such as horticultural therapy bases and garden healing areas on campus. By relying on school-enterprise cooperation outside the school, it jointly builds forest recuperation and garden health practice bases, forming a comprehensive landscape healing space that links the school and the outside world. It strictly follows the principle of "environmental rehabilitation", and standardized construction plans are developed from multiple dimensions including spatial planning, plant selection, and facility configuration to provide hardware support for the implementation of rehabilitation activities.

The third is to build a modular activity matrix supported by standardized activity carriers. Combining the four major educational scenarios of five-education integration, mental health, vocational training, and social practice, and relying on the ten healing pathways, standardized activity packages that are layered and classified are designed, to create an integrated system of "natural healing+professional skills". All activities are designed around the dual drive of student development goals and core healing goals, achieving modular, standardized, and normalized implementation.

The fourth is to build a hierarchical collaborative system with multiple guides as the guarantee. A three-level linkage mechanism consisting of a coordination layer, an execution layer, and a landing layer is established. The coordination layer integrates resources from families, schools, and communities, and formulates overall development strategies. The execution layer focuses on innovative activities and the implementation of solutions. The landing layer is centered around the class adviser, deeply implementing daily rehabilitation practices in the class. At the same time, special training is carried out for teachers, student backbone,

and parents to achieve the transformation from one-way education to diversified collaborative education.

4.3 Core implementation measures for brand landing

To ensure the regular implementation of the healing system, four core implementation paths are constructed. Firstly, an integrated education and healing curriculum system is established. By integrating natural healing theory into general and professional courses, and compiling specialized guidance manuals, a distinctive curriculum system that emphasizes both theory and practice is formed. Secondly, students' daily management is embedded. By integrating lightweight healing micro activities into daily class management and club construction, and collaborating with families to carry out home-school co-education, the concept of natural healing is promoted. Thirdly, a comprehensive growth service system is established. The exclusive healing plans for students' personalized needs are customized, and teachers and class advisers are empowered to grow synchronously, achieving collaborative development between teachers and students. Fourthly, the social practice for the integration of culture, commerce, tourism, and sports is implemented. Relying on school-enterprise cooperation, volunteer services, and social service projects, the alignment of students' professional skills with industry needs is promoted, achieving a two-way implementation of education and empowerment.

4.4 The "1-3-4-10" practice mode in vocational education scenarios

Based on a complete set of theories and practical explorations, a specialized "1-3-4-10" standardized practice model for vocational education scenarios is extracted and formed. One original natural healing theory is the core guidance. The three major theories of systems theory, spatiotemporal continuity, and relational reconstruction provide theoretical support. The operating framework consists of four elements: experiencer, healing environment, activity carrier, and guide. The ten healing pathways are core technical channels. This model constructs a closed-loop education system that covers the entire life cycle and scenario of students, and includes the entire process of needs analysis, environmental optimization, program design, teacher construction, implementation, effectiveness evaluation, and iterative optimization. It effectively meets the core requirements of vocational education, such as moral education, simultaneous development of five educations, integration of industry

and education, and health-first, and innovates the theoretical implementation paradigm of horticultural wellness industry in educational settings.

5 Practical effectiveness, promotion value, and future prospects

5.1 Scientific verification of theoretical system

Through long-term empirical practice at Beijing Landscape Architecture School, the scientific, complete, and universal nature of the natural healing theory system has been fully verified. The overall logic of the theory is self consistent, and the architecture is complete. The closed-loop operation of the four major elements effectively solves the pain points of traditional natural healing practices being fragmented in the industry. The ten healing pathways are flexibly adaptable to different scenarios and groups, with strong operability and replicability. It effectively breaks down the barriers between academic theory and practical application, and achieves efficient transformation of professional technology from academic research to universal application.

5.2 Multi dimensional effectiveness of empirical practice

This practice has achieved three-dimensional collaborative development among students, teachers, and the school. At the student level, a normalized and comprehensive growth support system has been established, effectively improving students' physical and mental state, enhancing their comprehensive literacy, professional abilities, and career competitiveness. At the teacher level, through systematic healing practices and conceptual empowerment, it can effectively alleviate the professional burnout of class advisers, enhance the professionalism and professional value of education, and create a stable and high-quality healing oriented teaching staff. At the institutional level, it has successfully created a distinctive educational brand of "natural healing+health and wellness education", and formed differentiated education paths, which significantly improves the quality of professional construction, education level, and social industry influence of the school.

5.3 Promotion value and future prospects

The theory of natural healing has dual promotion value in both educational and industry contexts. In the educational context, this theoretical and practical model can be adapted to various educational entities such

as primary and secondary schools, vocational colleges, and universities, providing a replicable and implementable standardized paradigm for holistic education, mental health education, and characteristic campus construction throughout the entire school stage. In the industry scenario, its core logic of "professional technical practice and professional value popularization" can provide systematic practical solutions for the implementation of garden healthcare, forest rehabilitation, and horticultural therapy in diverse scenarios such as cultural tourism, rural areas, communities, and sports, promoting the popularization and high-quality development of the industry.

Future research can further optimize the quantitative evaluation system of natural healing effects, expand empirical research in multiple regions and types of scenarios, continuously iterate theoretical and practical models, and promote natural healing as an important

supporting force for promoting national health, ecological civilization construction, and educating people in the new era.

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entities, and solve the problem of insufficient expression of traditional flower border culture. The well-established organizational mechanism, scientific evaluation criteria, and rich practical experience of the flower border competitions provide replicable technical templates and operational paradigms for urban renewal. An established management mechanism driven by competition can achieve landscape enhancement, ecological optimization, and cultural inheritance in urban renewal. With the increasing emphasis on cultural connotations and ecological values in the industry, flower borders are bound to become an important carrier of urban renewal, which can provide strong support for the construction of livable, resilient, and urban spaces.

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