Teachers have been attacked at one and the same time for being bookish (and therefore boring) and for being illiterate (and therefore incompetent), criticism which reflects a proper disquiet about reading standards but makes no attempt to identify the real problem. The speaker suggested that the real problem lay in the lack of teaching how to make use of the ability to read. Reading for learning was not taught. It appeared to be assumed that repeated exercises in the 'project method' would somehow equip a child to approach the study of a subject on his own, although he had been given no instruction in the techniques of such an approach.

There were three aspects to the subject under consideration: 1) the importance of reading to learn and of being able to use an index; 2) the problems raised; 3) the solutions offered.

1. The importance of reading to learn

The higher aims of all education depend on reading to learn. One must be able to read in order to become an independent learner and be able to educate oneself all through life. It follows that the teacher's aim should be to free children from their dependence on the teacher's selection of passages from texts; children should be taught themselves to select, analyse, and then synthesize. New discoveries are made by synthesizing old knowledge. Education must therefore be a continuous demonstration of synthesizing knowledge, and the importance of reading must be stressed, even in the more practical school subjects. (The research scientist often needs to study articles or books.)

The index has three separate functions. The first is to reveal the scope, level and detail of a book and thus its suitability for the purpose in hand ("reviewing"). Secondly, the index has "unorganized" the author's organization, and allows the reader to make his own reorganization. Thirdly, it is a recall device. All these uses should be taught. (It was pointed out incidentally that indexers often omit references to negative findings, and may therefore give a totally false impression of the emphasis in the text. A graphic illustration of this shortcoming is found in the first and second editions of *The psychology of sex differences*, by Macoby and Jacklin, the first edition having been compiled from index references, the second from perusal of the articles themselves, where negative findings were in much greater evidence.)

Literacy is both an aim in itself and a means to other learning. Teachers should put value on reading, give more time for it, and give help to those who can read as well as to the less able. American schools seemed to have made more progress in this direction than English schools.

2. Problems

1. Specialization increases the difficulties of communication, witness the problems which arise between teachers and librarians. The art of running an institution is generalizing the specialists.

2. Teachers are ignorant of how a library works, of children's fiction, of book technology and book strategies, of indexing. They have no training in such skills or in handing them on. There is a general fallacy, shared with parents, that a threshold divides non-reading from reading, but in reality 'we are all of us learning to read all our lives'.

3. There is no overall curriculum planning in British schools which admits reading into all departments: Reading is Words, Words are English.

4. Inadequate resources lead to the lack of sufficient, varied and appropriate books.

5. The emphasis on new methods of teaching—discussion, practical work, field work—tends to discount reading, and the long-established success of the school library movement leads to the assumption that all is well on that score. It is not.

3. Solutions

1. The provision of resources for maintaining an adequate book stock in both classroom and library.

2. Adequate staffing of the library. In this country professionals have to waste their time...
and talent doing sub-professional work. Librarians should be provided with adequate ancillary staff.

3. The librarian’s role needs definition. In most schools the part which the library can play in the curriculum is ignored. The librarian should have a seat on the academic board, and proper study skills should be woven into the course.

4. A print-availability policy. At present no relationship is seen between school, bookshop and library. A teacher may give his class an interesting book, but its suggestions for further reading cannot be followed up because the school library has not the books listed. In addition, books studied by children on their own need to be easier to understand than those studied with a teacher, but in the school library they tend to be harder.

5. A language-across-the-curriculum policy. Speaking, reading, writing all use language for understanding and transmitting ideas. The enhancement of language leads to the improvement of learning. Vocabulary should be taught. American and Australian schools are more active in this respect than we are.

6. Inter-institutional co-operation. School and school, and school and library should agree on a policy of presenting books to children, instead of bewildering them with different practices.

7. Proper teaching of non-narrative reading. Most reading done in schools is narrative. It does not prepare children for non-narrative reading. Vocabulary and sentence length and structure differ, and the example is apt to be seized upon rather than the generalization. Also, the teacher gives the meaning of difficult words, the pupil is not led to make intelligent guesses.

8. Teaching of study skills and library use. Children need to be taught how to make notes and to lay out a page; how to reject the irrelevant; and how to find books in libraries. (It is important that the books should be there.) Children cannot use an index without study.

Alphabetization, alternative terms, the significance of typography and layout, notably subordination of terms, are not obvious. Good indexes should be used to demonstrate these features. Handling an index is a central part of reading for learning.

9. Specialization by some pupils in study skills.

10. In-service training for teachers—not just the English teacher, but all subject teachers, and the librarian as well.

DISCUSSION

Mrs McCarthy suggested that the work Mr Marland was doing should also be done with the less well endowed children, who did not use the public library and so acquired virtually no ability to use books. Mr Marland agreed, and added that the school library should be a stepping-stone to the public library.

Mrs Gordon warned against letting pupils think that ‘the library’ is a school subject. If they did they were liable to reject it. The library should have some connections with life outside school. Indeed, yes, and the children need not be aware of the deliberate planning which achieved this aim.

Mr Coyne asked how many physics teachers could teach the use of reading. Would it not be better to exploit the specialist? Mr Marland thought he could get co-operation throughout the school curriculum and that the science lesson could sometimes be taken in the library or the librarian go to the science lesson.

Mrs Wallis asked why the capitation fee for books was so low and why publishers allowed such bad writing in children’s books. Mr Marland thought that too much specialization and practical work, even in college, led to inability to read or write well, or even to appreciate their necessity. He reiterated his key answer: Curriculum planning, not separate activities.

OPEN SEMINARS

A. Learning and teaching

During Saturday afternoon, four open seminars were held, the discussion groups being dispersed over the grassland around the lake—a most pleasant way to enjoy the sunshine and international indexers’ company alike.