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PART K/N
HOW OF SCHOOL LIBRARY

PART K

HOW OF SCHOOL LIBRARY
OBJECTIVES OF
SCHOOL LIBRARY WORK

CHAPTER KA

SCHOOL LIBRARY TO CREATE LIBRARY HABIT IN STUDENTS

1 Familiarising the Student with the Library

The formation of library habit in students requires some detailed examination. On a student coming to the library, the librarian should familiarise him with the varieties of the reading materials in the library, the ways of using them, and the working of the library apparatus.

2 Care of Book

The student must be initiated in the care of a book. He must be made to realise the fragile nature of its physique. His attention must be directed to the internal parts of an ordinary book — title page, back of title page, contents page, list of illustration, preface, bibliography, and index. This is apart from his attention being invited to the arrangement of the text of the book in parts, chapters, sections, and paragraphs.

3 Linguistic Dictionary

Initiation of the use of a linguistic dictionary requires special attention:

1 The use of the dictionary should normally be taught by the teacher. But usually this does not happen. Therefore the librarian has to do it.

2 All the points should not be brought to the notice of a student in one sitting. They should be staggered among the different cycles of the Concentric System in the method of teaching (See Chap TF).

3 As often as possible the student should be told about the necessity, throughout life, for looking up a dictionary quite often to pick up the correct meaning of a word and of the correct word for an idea.

4 His attention should be drawn to the following:

41 A dictionary often gives two or more meanings for a word; the student should be trained to select the word with the meaning needed by him; and

42 In the same block, a dictionary gives associated phrases and idioms.

4 Open Access

The student must be shown the different part of the library and the distinctive service expected from each part. He must be made to realise the extraordinary freedom allowed to him in the library — he can go directly to the shelves and pull out and examine any book he likes, unhampered by shyness or fear.

5 Library Classification

To benefit by open access the student must be helped to appreciate the shelf arrangement. It is not necessary, however, to tell him straightaway all about classification.

6 Library Catalogue

The library catalogue, no longer a “one book, one entry” affair, needs considerable initiation. In the case of a card catalogue, the student will have to be told about the cards in a tray progressing from the front to back. He should be made to appreciate the use of guide cards. He should be enabled to evaluate the significance of the colour scheme of the cards. By slow degrees he must be accustomed to the kinds of entries and their respective functions. Eventually he must be helped to observe and appreciate the different parts of an entry and the different kinds of headings. Even graduates tumble over the inversion of surnames and forenames. Books are themselves artificial entities requiring initiation; and in the library catalogue of books we reach an artificiality of a still higher order. They are full of conventions; these can never be known fully without prolonged and proper initiation and practice.

7 Notes-Taking

The student has also to be taught the art of taking notes while

reading. The upper quartiles among the students in the intellectual scale may themselves arrive at a suitable method by trial and error. But most of the students may not be able either to realise the need for notes-taking or to evolve a correct technique by their own effort. They stand in need of the school librarian's individual attention for a long while.

8 Bibliography

No doubt, bibliographies of various kinds covering vast subjects exist in a published form. They belong to the class of reference books and as such the student should be taught their structure and their use. But each reader, be he old or young, should have his own bibliography prepared to suit his intimate needs. In the first place it need not be exhaustive. The intension of its subject and the time possible to spare for it, will decide the degree of its selectiveness. Secondly the purpose will limit the scope of the bibliography.

The student has therefore to be taught the elements of the art of bibliography-making. He must be given practice under guidance. No doubt he will be ripe for preparing a full blown bibliography only at the college stage. But even at school he will be in need of constructing miniature bibliographies. At any rate the habit should be started even while young; for a bibliography is vital for an intelligent and exhaustive use of the resources of a library.

CHAPTER KB

SCHOOL LIBRARY TO CREATE LIBRARY CIVICS IN STUDENTS

1 Library: A Public Institution

A library is one of the public projects shared by everybody without direct payment, in all civilised communities of today. Hence it suffers from two handicaps. It is public property for the use of every member of the present generation as well as of the future ones. It will take a long time to make the students understand this. It will take even a longer time for the realisation of the full implications of this fact.

2 Fate of Books in a Library

Many communities have introduced a public library system only during recent years. The fate of the books in these libraries makes one sad. They suffer at every stage:

- 1 The tops of their backs are broken while being pulled out of the shelf.

- 2 The stitches are broken by careless and forced opening of the book.

- 3 Many of the leaves have their top corners folded to serve as book marks; eventually these corners break away.

- 4 Margins are taken as free spaces to write upon.

- 5 Line after line in the text is underlined as if it had only one reader to serve. In 1932, the Madras University Library found each line of some medical books underlined in ink. This created a problem for us. On the addition of a new medical book of that kind, it was, as usual, put on the Recent Additions Shelf. A member of the staff was asked to observe the persons using the book. After finishing his reading for the day, in accordance with the Rules, the reader would leave the book on the table and go away. Then the member of the staff, watching this book for the underlining of the lines, would examine it. In the case of some readers this did not happen. But lines were found marked after a parti-

cular reader — let us call him “Med” — left the book on the table and went away. This was followed up till about half of the lines in the book were underlined. The book was then brought to me. I found the underlining of all the lines had been done with ink of a peculiar colour. During the next visit of “Med” to the Library, as usual, he took that book to his seat. Within a couple of minutes thereafter, I went round and took “Med” to my room. In the meantime, that book also reached my table.

S R R.— Do you particularly like this book?

Med.— It is a very good book on the subject.

S R R.— How did you locate it?

Med.— I always go to your Recent Additions Shelf on every Sunday, the day of putting new books on it. I found this new book on one Sunday. I found it absorbingly interesting. Therefore I came to the Library for an hour or two each day and read through the book, line by line with great care.

S R R.— Are you in the habit of underlining each line while reading?

Med.— I am not aware of it.

S R R.— Here is the new book you have been reading. How much of it have you read already?

Med.— About a half of it.

S R R.— Look here, all the lines in the first half of the book have been underlined.

Med.— Could I have done it?

S R R.— You have to decide it. Compare the colour of the ink used for underlining with the colour of the ink in your Fountain Pen.

Med.— I now realise that I myself would have done all these underlinings unconsciously. I feel guilty. I feel extremely sad. I shall buy a new copy of the book for the library.

S R R.— It is very good of you to have said so.

Med.— I shall also replace all the other books spoiled by me in this way.

S R R.— Doctor, you are really generous to this public institution.

Med.— On account of this unconscious despicable habit of mine, I shall not hereafter come to the Library. This habit has evidently become inexorable.

S R R.— This statement of yours pains me. That resolution of yours would make me lose a “reader.” There is no greater sin for a librarian than to lose a “reader.”

Med.— What can I do to escape committing this vandalism?

S R R.— Will you be kind enough to accept a suggestion of mine. That will save me from the sin. It will also allow you to come to the Library as usual and enjoy our books.

Med.— What is it, Sir?

S R R.— On your entering the Library, leave your pen with the Counter Assistant.

Med.— But, evidently, I cannot read without underlining each line.

S R R.— I shall provide for it. I shall leave this pen-like stick with a blunt end, with the man at the counter. As soon as you surrender your pen at the Counter, take this stick with you. While reading draw this stick along each line. Your habit will be satisfied; at the same time there will be no impression left in the book. On your leaving the library give back the stick to the Counter Assistant, and take back your pen.

Med.— I am extremely grateful to you for this suggestion. I shall adopt it.

S R R.— Thank you Doctor. You have been extremely nice to me.

6 Its pictures were deformed beyond recognition by the addition of beards, caste marks and spectacles.

7 Some pictures were lost for ever.

8 The book as a whole had not infrequently to serve not only against the sun but also against the rain.

9 There was no limit to the load of dirt it had to carry silently.

3 Library Civics and Adults

The first generation of librarians tried all methods to teach the adults the elements of library civics. They

- 1 Distributed leaflets;
- 2 Gave talks;
- 3 Made pictorial appeals;
- 4 Tried personal persuasion;
- 5 Pressed the theatre into service;
- 6 Arranged for dramas with books as characters, narrating their woes;
- 7 Even went to the desperate length of making splashy demonstrations such as conducting a public funeral of a murdered book and in it the orator bemoaned its premature death and the thoughtless ways which deprived them of the long service the murdered book had intended to render them.

4 Children's Department in a Public Library

What were the first generation of librarians to do? Were they to depose the First Law of library science — Books are for Use — and reinstate the Anti-First Law — Books are for Preservation? Were they to stop the lending of books? Certainly not. They were heroic enough to develop patience and forbearance. They said "Let the present stock of books perish with the present generation of adults. Let us work for the future generation of books by taking the future generation of adults on hand even in their early age." Accordingly Children's Departments were opened in public libraries.

5 Prophylactic Measure

The prophylactic measure appears to have been effective. For instance, a young girl, often coming to read, brought her little brother one day. Suddenly there was a sound of a slap and a roar from the young boy. Above the tumult was his sister's angry voice "Don't do that. You'll break it. This is the way to open a book." The training of children in library civics is most effectively done in school libraries.

CHAPTER KC

OBJECTIVES OF SCHOOL LIBRARY: FROM THE ANGLE OF STUDENTS

1 Class Room Work and Library Hour

In a sense all class room work may have to be looked upon as a means to make the experience of the students in the school library produce lasting benefits to them. In other words all class room work should have a slant to students' work in the library.

2 Holistic View

This may look like over-emphasis for effect. But it will be so only on taking a distinctive atomistic view of the school-life of students. But the proper view to be taken is the holistic one, not merely of the school life of the student but of his whole life — in the school, in the field, in the home, and indeed in whatever environment he may be from moment to moment. All the experiences of students are concrete and they hang together. From the point of view of the student the experience in the formal class hour cannot be separated from that in the library hour. In his experience in each setting, he is acting and reacting integrally on his experiences in every other setting. Any one setting of his at any moment colours his experience in other setting and reciprocally it also gets coloured by them.

3 Principle of Holism and School Library

The statement, ventured already about all class room work being focussed on the school library, is not an over-emphasis for effect but a reality flowing from the Principle of Holism. The particular enunciation of this general Principle, pertinent to our problem, is:

- 1 Class room work and school library work influence each other reciprocally;
- 2 Either should be focussed on the other; and
- 3 Moreover school library work will have similar reciprocal

relation with the physical and social environment of the student whatever be the extent in which it is taken — from the distant stars to the road surface and from the distant international occurrences to the intimate happenings at home.

For, to the school student his entire environment is a unity and his experience is itself part of that unity. He is like the young Ulysses saying,

“I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch where thro’
Gleams that untravelled world, whose margin fades
For ever and for ever when I move.” (71)



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