

A National Book Store quarterly magazine for reading educators

The logo for 'passages' features a stylized red book icon with white pages, positioned above the word 'passages' in a white, lowercase, serif font. The entire logo is set against a red background.

passages

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Reena Rallies Reluctant Readers

To Stress or Not To Stress

Book Reports

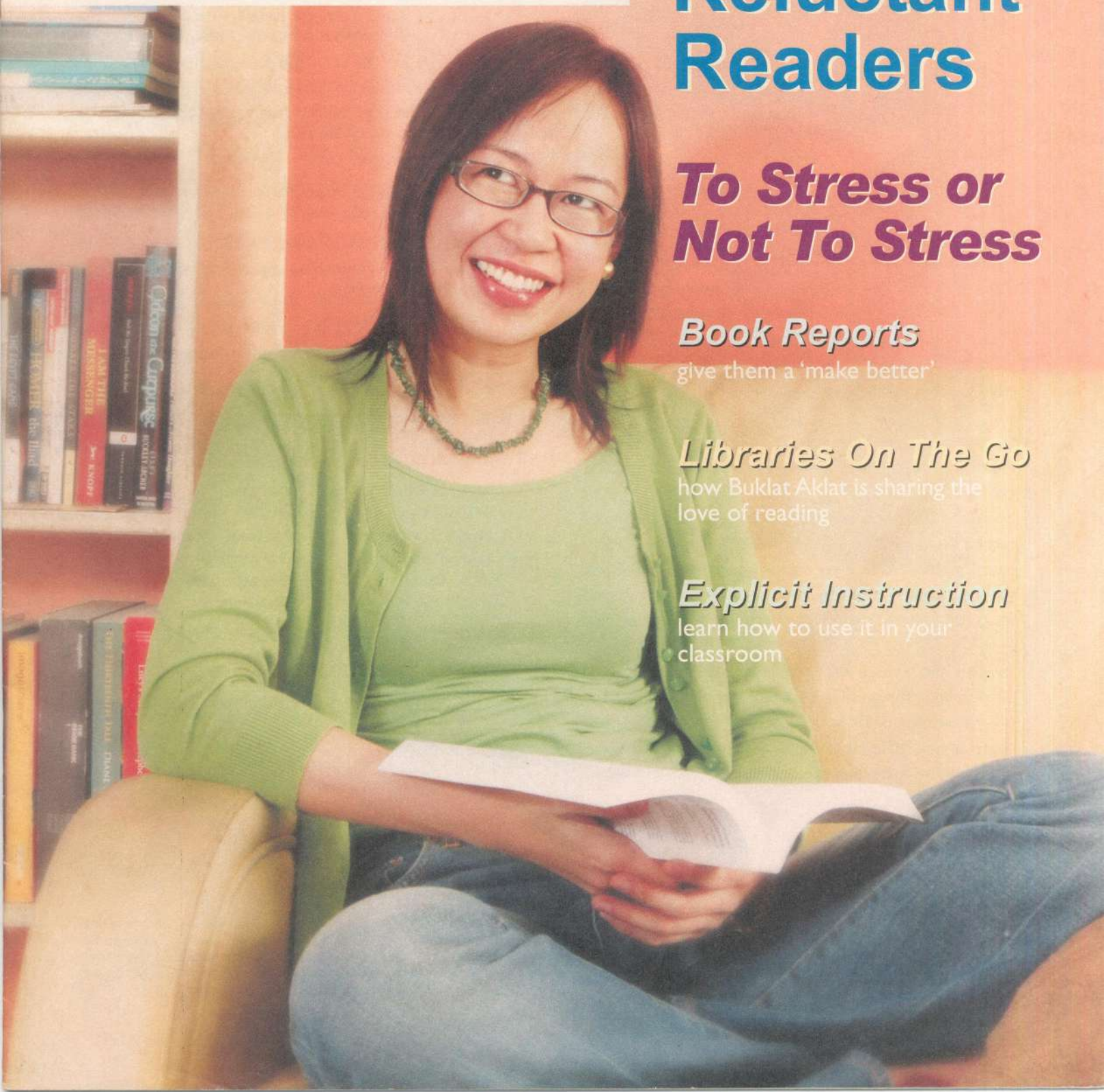
give them a 'make better'

Libraries On The Go

how Buklat Aklat is sharing the
love of reading

Explicit Instruction

learn how to use it in your
classroom



RELUCTANT READERS:

How to Hook Them to the Book

By Reena Ermitaño



HOW OFTEN have we allowed students in class to read for sheer enjoyment without the pressure of being tested or writing the same old book report afterwards? As you begin a new school year, try these different approaches to create positive book experiences for your students.

Make Reading Personal

A critical factor is often the student's lack of acquaintance with people who enjoy reading. As teachers, we exert tremendous influence over our students and we could not be in a better position to model the value of reading for them. The appeal of engaging in any activity lies in the rewards it offers. Share personal experiences of gratifying reading from magazines, newspapers, and books. By portraying reading as a purposeful, enjoyable, and enriching activity, you will have piqued your students' interest and they will hopefully start reading with their own agendas in mind.

Match Books to Students' Interests

This may sound tired, but the reality is, students are highly motivated when what they read interests them. Expose them to books that cater to what they like and know. Have an extensive and diverse collection of books available in your classroom so they may choose from different genres such as non-fiction, fairy tales, fables, mystery, fantasy, adventure, joke books, and sports. Ensure books are attractively showcased!

Make Reading Less Structured

Students are often robbed of the joy of reading because it is an activity imposed upon them. Do not quiz or bombard them with questions. Instead, allow students to comment about a story, share their thoughts, and ask their own questions. Focus on the meaning they bring to a piece of literature, rather than on the writer's intended meaning.

Give book reports a makeover. Give students free rein on how to present a book's summary or theme in a creative manner such as a poster or book report. An alternative is to have students come up with their own story using books they have read as a springboard. I remember how a 5th grade teacher conducted a genre study on fairy tales with her class. They compared old and modern fairy tales such as the classic version of "The Three Little Pigs" with "The True Story of the Three Little Pigs" by John Scieszka. They compared the stories according to its story elements then students crafted their version of a classic fairy tale.

Encouraging learners to hook to the book requires creativity, patience, and perseverance—especially now where there are so many forms of digital entertainment. As teachers, our greatest influence lies in providing children with positive experiences that will inspire them to read for pleasure. And we should be relentless.

How often have we allowed our students to read for sheer enjoyment without the pressure of coming up with a product afterwards?

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When Reluctance Needs A Bigger Intervention continued from page 04

Unfortunately, there are instances when efforts at motivating children to read appear futile. Sometimes, even the brightest ones may avoid reading. Teachers need to be alert to this as it could be symptomatic of an inherent reading difficulty resulting from an **attention dysfunction, language deficiency, learning disability, or a cognitive weakness**. If teachers suspect the possibility of the presence of any of these conditions, they must immediately recommend the child for consultation with a developmental pediatrician or a neuropsychologist for an evaluation. However, their work does not end there. How can teachers create positive literary experiences to hook kids on reading in spite of obstacles to learning?

Students with **attention issues** may not be able to stay focused long enough to learn their alphabet letter names and sounds which may delay reading development. They wiggle in their seats, get constantly distracted, and their minds wander. As they go through the primary grades, they are unable to sit for a prolonged period to finish a story or activities related to it. As you plan your lessons, keep in mind the limited attention span of this population. Use visuals to hold their interest. Consider using poetry and songs for reading as these are shorter. Those with attention issues usually have boundless energy, so involve body movement and dramatic play among your post reading activities. Reinforce good work habits. Reward students for completing that worksheet on letter sounds or for reading a book. Most importantly, choose books rich in illustrations and that match readers' interests.

Learners who have **language deficits** have limited vocabularies. They struggle with retrieving, learning, and remembering new words. They may have difficulty understanding oral and written discourse, especially as language increases in length and complexity. Sometimes, they can also be quite literal and concrete in their thinking that figures of speech and idioms escape them. Some of them may also struggle with expressing themselves in spoken and written form, even in their first language. As a result, their oral or written output is sparse and lacking in detail. It is not surprising to have students with language deficiencies who

are disinterested in reading. Because of their limited word knowledge, what they read does not make much sense to them. To scaffold their understanding of a story, spend time teaching vocabulary words, concepts, or abstract ideas prior to having them read a story. Rather than just having them look up words in the dictionary for meaning, explain words using pictures and realia whenever applicable. Have them act out words to ensure better retention. Use the vocabulary

words in the context these are used in the story. Once in a while, choose books with simple and straightforward language. If there are complicated sentence structures in a story during a read aloud, paraphrase using simpler sentences. Intermittently pause to allow students to ask questions about the story they are not clear about. To ensure success, guide students in answering *who, what, when, where, how, and why* questions which can be confusing for most of them. State comprehension questions in a brief and clear manner. Occasionally, students with language difficulties give inappropriate responses not because they do not know the answer, but because they

misunderstand questions. And since they may also have difficulty expressing themselves, provide them with multiple choice item tests which are often a fairer measure of what they know rather than tests with open ended questions.

Sometimes, children avoid books because it is too effortful for them to make meaning of those black squiggles on the page. And when they cannot read words in a fast and accurate manner, their comprehension suffers. When children with **word reading difficulties** go through school undetected, they develop negative attitudes towards reading because they read books beyond their level. To match students to their reading ability, ensure they can at least read 9 out of every 10 words on a page. Teach them strategies about book selection such as looking at the title, summary, and reviews on the back cover. Does the language appeal to them when they scan through the pages? Often, struggling readers are intimidated by small print and lengthy text. Because reading can be overwhelming, include poetry, fiction, and articles that deal with facts in a concise manner as part of your reading repertoire. 