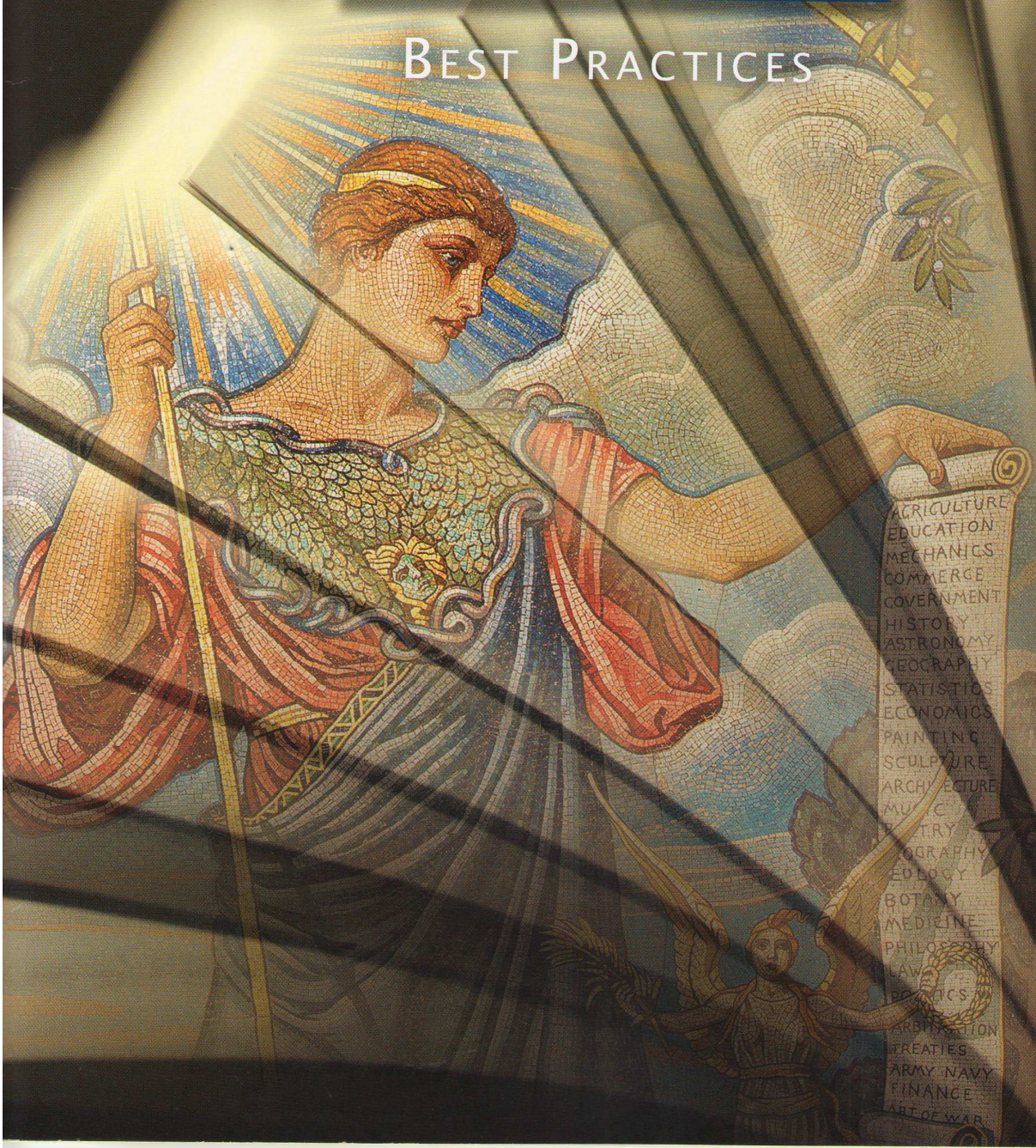


LIBRARY OF
CONGRESS
LITERACY AWARDS
2014

BEST PRACTICES



INCREASING MOTIVATION TO READ AND WRITE

To achieve competence in literacy, learners must be motivated to engage with written materials. Programs that demonstrate the value of reading and writing can increase participant engagement and maximize student development. There are many different ways to demonstrate the value of literacy to participants. These include addressing the “felt needs” of a community, promoting empowerment through writing and the use of person-centered planning techniques to set individual learning goals. Each of these methods engages learners with written materials by showing them the direct and immediate benefits to be gained through reading and writing.

Responsiveness to “felt needs” first arose in the context of community development.⁵ It refers to the practice of asking a community which deficiencies they perceive and then working to correct those deficiencies rather than extrinsically determining what is needed and supplying it. In a literacy context this involves determining which information and learning resources the community is interested in and then supplying materials or programming that responds to those needs. This practice can increase learners’ motivation to read because it uses written materials to provide solutions to community problems and demonstrates the usefulness of reading and writing skills.

STUDENTS BENEFIT MOST FROM LITERACY INSTRUCTION THAT BUILDS ON THEIR STRENGTHS AND SEEMS RELEVANT TO THEIR DAILY LIVES

The benefits of literacy can also be demonstrated by encouraging learners to write, empowering even those with low literacy to create and disseminate their work. This can be particularly important for adolescents, who have an increased need for autonomy, competence and encouragement.⁶ For these students to benefit from literacy instruction they must be engaged by reading and writing activities that build on their strengths and seem relevant to their daily experiences.

Organizations using person-centered planning techniques engage participants by working with them to identify and achieve individual goals.⁷ This allows participants to quickly implement their new skills in a practical context. Individual goals might include being able to read a bus map, write a letter to a grandchild or pass an exam for a promotion. Working directly toward these goals, rather than on a generalized reading curriculum, motivates learners to continue and gain the skills they need.



READ NEPAL

Rural Education and Development Nepal (READ Nepal) provides access to books by establishing community libraries in villages across Nepal. At least one supporting business enterprise is established in conjunction with each library to provide ongoing support for its activities. The profits from the supporting businesses are used to fund the library once the initial investment has been made. Each of the libraries has established sections to appeal to different types of users. They also act as host sites for literacy and development training for the village.

One of the programs implemented in the libraries is called the Practical Answers Program. This program collects questions on wide ranging topics such as law, health care and farming, and then creates print materials that answer these

questions in an accessible format. Because people are invested in getting the answers to their questions, they have direct incentive to read. In addition to offering literacy programs, READ Nepal partners with local service organizations to provide training on health issues, economic empowerment and job skills.



READ NEPAL

LOCATION:
Kathmandu, Nepal

SERVICE AREA:
Nepal

POPULATION SERVED:
Rural villagers

SCOPE:
55 libraries built,
4.3 million books
checked out

FOUNDED:
1992

