



Why holistic literacy learning?

For the woman who has experienced trauma, engaging all aspects of the self in a creative learning process can support integration and connection within the whole person and so facilitate literacy learning. Dawna Markova draws attention to why these connections are so important:

Milton Erickson believed that people who are traumatized get stuck in one frame of reference, in one way of thinking about the world, themselves, and their difficulties. It is that “stuckness” that imprisons us, because it knocks us out of connection with our bodies and sense. We feel as if we have lost the spirit from our lives. (1994:35)

Engaging the whole person in creative learning processes can open possibilities for learners to move from the “stuck” place of trauma, and of being unable to read, and create more effective programming for literacy learning.

It is not sufficient in literacy to teach only to the mind of the literacy learner. Body, emotions and spirit can all play a part in preventing learning if they are ignored, or if they are addressed, in making it possible for all women to learn, perhaps more effectively than we have previously imagined possible for many literacy learners.