

Editorial

Diverse Applications, Many Approaches: Editorial, *Feldenkrais Research Journal*, Volume 7

Cliff Smyth

Editor, *Feldenkrais Research Journal*

Contact: feldenkraisresearchjournal@gmail.com

Abstract

One of the biggest challenges of researching the Feldenkrais Method is the diversity of the ways it is applied: in the arts – for the development of insight, skill and expressive capacities; for health in chronic conditions and rehabilitation; and for learning that incorporates bodily experience in and with movement. And more.

The articles in this volume capture some of that breadth and the creative ways that researchers have found to study, document, measure, and report on what they have found. Individual research studies that explore the practice of the Method in situations as diverse as: enhanced movement and awareness for experienced pianists; the development of self-awareness and self-regulation among teenage women during the Covid-19 pandemic; addressing workplace stress for new teachers in a remote posting; and for urinary incontinence – a major but often hidden health and life challenge.

In addition, there is one piece of hypothesis and theory of ideas underlying Feldenkrais Method as a bodily self-learning practice, and a reflection on Feldenkrais Method for learning the practice of acting.

Finally, this volume includes important reviews of research into the Method to date.

Keywords

Feldenkrais, Feldenkrais Method, research, new research, research reviews, systematic review, scoping review, motor learning, motor coordination, translation, experienced pianists, music improvisation, workplace stress, urinary incontinence, learning embodiment, theatre training

Copyright ©: The copyright for this paper remains with the author(s).

Please cite: (First published in the) *Feldenkrais Research Journal*, volume 7; 2025.

Service marks: The terms Feldenkrais®, Feldenkrais Method®, Awareness Through Movement®, ATM®, Functional Integration®, and FI® are service marked terms of the International *Feldenkrais*® Federation (IFF) and Feldenkrais professional guilds and associations in many countries. In keeping with academic conventions, they will not be service marked in the entire text as may be required in nonacademic use, but only for the first and most prominent use of the terms. In recognition that these phrases are formal



terms referring to specific practices within the Method, and to the Method as a whole, capitalization of all the words in each term has been retained.

Diverse Applications, Many Approaches: Editorial, *Feldenkrais Research Journal*, Volume 7 (Revised January 2026)

Cliff Smyth

Editor, *Feldenkrais Research Journal*

In this Volume

Welcome to this volume of the *FRJ* on the theme of Researching Diverse Applications.

One of the biggest challenges of researching the Feldenkrais Method is the diversity of the ways it is applied: in the arts – for the development of insight, skill and expressive capacities; for health in chronic conditions and rehabilitation; and for learning that incorporates bodily experience in and with movement. And more.

The articles in this volume capture some of that breadth and the creative ways that researchers have found to study, document, measure, and report on what they have found. Individual research studies that explore the practice of the Method in situations as diverse as: enhanced movement and awareness for experienced pianists; the development of self-awareness and self-regulation among teenage women during the Covid-19 pandemic; addressing workplace stress for new teachers in a remote posting; and for urinary incontinence – a major but often hidden health and life challenge.

In addition, there is one piece of hypothesis and theory of ideas underlying Feldenkrais Method as a bodily self-learning practice, and a reflection on Feldenkrais Method for learning the practice of acting.

Finally, this volume includes important reviews of research into the Method to date. This includes a reprint of a 2015 systematic review of 20 empirical trials, and the first publication of a scoping review of 41 studies of the Feldenkrais Method for motor function – movement and balance.

This diversity of application points to the centrality of practice to any understanding of the Feldenkrais Method. The theoretical bases, and possible modes or mechanisms of action or change, are myriad, complex, and often intricately connected with the range of human learning and potential. Both can be seen to be grounded in the common practices which the Method utilizes. Addressing this range of application and questions of the relationship between practice,

ideas, and outcomes is part of the role of a journal for a professional field such as this one.

A challenge remains – and perhaps will remain for a long time, of how to study the direct outcomes and benefits of the practice, and the processes of the practice of Feldenkrais Method, and what it can mean in human life and development. The studies and reviews here include many of the ways that have been devised so far for identifying possible outcomes. They can serve as pointers for what may be research tools and strategies going forward that might be developed and reproduced, while also pointing to gaps that deserve attention.

As has been the case in some earlier volumes of this Journal, this Volume includes a number of reprints of articles originally published elsewhere. Many studies of the Feldenkrais Method are published in journals that are behind pay firewalls, not so easy to find, or were published some time ago, and therefore are not so easy to find. Republishing – especially with translations as well, has the virtue of gathering published research in this Journal and so helps achieve our educational goals.

Also reflecting diversity, is the fact that this volume is much engaged with translation. Translating and publishing important research is a challenge and a commitment for a small international professional community.

Translation

All the articles in this Volume have been translated into Spanish. This is a major achievement for the Journal and an important development of the growth and knowledge of the Method and practitioner community in Spanish speaking countries. Also, the hypothesis and theory and reflection on practice articles were translated from the French by the authors. In addition, a study of Feldenkrais Method and musical improvisation, available only in German in Volume 6, has now been translated into English and Spanish for this volume.

The *Feldenkrais Research Journal* Spanish Translation Group translated almost all of the articles in this volume. This is an exemplary project involving Feldenkrais Practitioners in several different countries. With a small amount of funding from the International Feldenkrais Federation, use of the new digital translation tools, and much volunteer work, the Spanish Translation Group have made a major contribution to the Journal and to the Feldenkrais Method. The group developed its own processes for making and checking the translations, discussing the language and ideas in the studies. Not only did they make the studies available to Spanish speakers, they have become a study group of practitioners engaging with the understanding of the Method and research for their professional communities. For example, they developed a glossary of terms not necessarily in common use in Spanish to best bring forward meanings in a consistent way – including across the diverse usage found in the Spanish speaking world. They are also organizing online events to introduce their practitioner communities to research ideas and information – live translating video materials created in

English.

As Editor I offer them much appreciation for their important contribution to the journal and their efforts to make research available to their communities.

The new scoping review of the research trials appears in four languages: English, German, French, and Spanish.

Finally, this volume includes our first translation into Chinese, with the publication of the research study of Feldenkrais and urinary incontinence in that language.

In this Volume: Original Research

This volume includes several reports of original research. As with many studies of the Method, they are often in the form of case reports or are pilot or proof-of-concept studies. They have the value of showing new ways and contexts in which people may benefit from Feldenkrais Method. They also explore new ways in which the Method can be documented and outcomes measured.

Movement and Awareness for Experienced Pianists: There is a growing literature about the use of Feldenkrais Method for developing skill and performance ability among pianists (see for example, [Alan Fraser in Volume 6 of this Journal](#)). In this Volume, Janice ChenJu Chiang contributes through her case report with its interesting study design and forms of collecting data in this study with experienced pianists. Supporting learning for artists who have already developed reasonably effective ways of moving and performing presents an interesting challenge. This study identified a range of perceived benefits for the participants enhancing many aspects of their practice and playing, and their bodily experience.

Apart from the series of Awareness Through Movement lessons provided in the program, “participant-chosen movement explorations” were included. That is, participants were encouraged to identify and use a movement and awareness sequence from a lesson or lessons which interested them, and to use that for their home practice. This is a learning strategy often adopted spontaneously by experienced students in Feldenkrais Method classes, or is recommended by their teacher-practitioner. In this context, it represents an innovation in research design which reflects real-life practice of the Method. Data gathering in this study encouraged self-observation by the participants in diaries. In another innovative element of the study design, Chiang invited participants to be recorded performing the same piece of music at the beginning and the end of the study. Participants were asked to identify aspects of their practice they would like to address, providing a basis for the participants to observe and comment on any perceived changes in their bodily organization and performance at the end of the study.

Feldenkrais Method and Mindfulness for Workplace Stress and Displacement: This innovative study involved schoolteachers dealing with workplace stress and burnout, particularly

involving early service teachers, many of whom have moved to the relatively remote location of the Northern Territory of Australia. The authors, Sue Erica Smith, Emma Schuberg Barnes, Jon Mason, and Julia Broome sought to “gain insight into the visceral tensions embodied in re-location, location, and the complex (and at times) alarming challenges faced by a beginning teacher in a middle school”. This research used narrative inquiry and participatory action research to explore participants’ responses to a program involving mindfulness meditation integrated with movement awareness in the form of the Feldenkrais Method. The authors and participants together sought to explore how such practices might help the new teachers cope more effectively within themselves, in their new situation, and in the classroom.

This paper has many virtues. One is that discussion of the literature, woven through the paper, provides a thorough overview of the rapidly expanding material on mindfulness and bodily awareness, including the emerging paradigm of mindful movement, and the relationship of those constructs to coping, well-being, and social development. In addition, the findings of the paper are presented in an innovative interleaving of reflexive texts from the participants and the facilitator-researchers. This includes an exemplifying narrative from one participant, descriptions of the intervention and research process, with reflections on the ideas, practices, and emerging outcomes from the project. It is an interesting exploration of how practices like Feldenkrais Method can be integral to processes of personal and social development. It is also the first study of Feldenkrais Method in relation to the experience of place – which the phenomenological literature would suggest may be an outcome of practices which involve movement and the development of bodily self-awareness.

Movement Quality and Music-Making Practice: We are pleased to publish in this Volume in English and Spanish this innovative study from Corinna Eikmeier, which [originally appeared in German in Volume 6](#) of this Journal. Working with students in a music conservatory, she set out to explore movement in music making – particularly movement involved in improvisation, and how Feldenkrais Method might be introduced into these processes, asking: Are there relationships between the structure of improvisation in music and Feldenkrais practice? Are there relationships also between movement in improvisation and possibilities for interpreting and playing classical music?

Eikmeier made use of a qualitative, heuristic approach, drawing on ideas from Gerhard Kleining and others (Kleining, 2001; Kleining and Witt, 2000), with additional principles from artistic research. It was an iterative, staged approach that involved openness to the definition and redefinition of the subject of the research, and the deliberate introduction of different perspectives. In addition, qualitative experiments were used which invite identifying essences of the subject, adding elements that can intensify the experience, substitutions and deliberate transformations. Data collection involved: (a) expert interviews, (b) reflection on improvisational aspects of Feldenkrais Method practice, (c) defining phenomena such as the ‘improvisational mode of action’, using a researcher journal, (d) identification of key learning principles or strategies from the Feldenkrais Method (e.g., balance, neutral position, quality of breathing,

reversibility), and (e) documentation and analysis of the outcomes of the various experimental, experiential labs. Eikmeier's analysis generated several significant insights into the *dissolution* of familiar bodily organization and boundaries between players that can provide a new basis for readiness for action in music making.

Feldenkrais Method and Wellbeing for Adolescent Dancers During the Covid-19

Pandemic: During the recent global pandemic many Feldenkrais classes, workshops, and programs had to move to an online format for the first time. This presented many challenges and new opportunities for the teaching of the Method, and opportunities to use the Method to address the many challenges to people's well-being in that time. Adolescents were particularly impacted by the lockdowns. Could Feldenkrais Method contribute to self-awareness, learning and self-regulation processes for this group? This study involved 20 young women involved in online skills-oriented dance classes, 10 of whom in addition experienced 10 weekly Awareness Through Movement lessons. Measures of motivation did not produce significant results, but there were measured tendencies toward greater interoceptive awareness and self-regulation among the intervention group. The pandemic itself may have been a confounding factor as the study identified that the young women in both groups also reported experiencing increased self-focus and felt-tension.

Authors, Claudia Mölders and Liliana Araújo, used a mixed measures research design, which included using established measures of motivation and bodily awareness. In addition, at various stages of the project, verbal and written reports of the participants' experiences were captured, along with participant drawings. These were analyzed thematically. This study is one of the first studies of Feldenkrais Method to use the Multidimensional Assessment of Interoceptive Awareness (MAIA) (Mehling et al, 2012; Mehling et al., 2018) which includes scales for the experience of body awareness, and has been used in many recent studies of interventions using awareness and movement. This study points to the value of using established measures and open qualitative data collection to document and understand the relevance and impact of Feldenkrais-based interventions in relation to specific and complex aspects of human development and experience.

Group Exercise for Improvement in Urinary Incontinence: Deborah Bowes' case report is on the use of a group program using Awareness Through Movement for women with mild to moderate incontinence. It is the first study published in English on the use of Feldenkrais Method for urinary incontinence. The measures of the extent and impact of incontinence indicated a reduction in frequency of episodes of incontinence and on the impact on quality of life for most participants.

As with many successful interventions using movement and awareness to address health concerns, the program also included health education and social support. Descriptions of the Awareness Through Movement lessons and topics for health education and group discussion are included in the article. The outcomes, based on the measures for urinary incontinence, along with the comments from participants, suggest that further research is warranted, perhaps

using more recent impact measures, and also the gathering of further qualitative data was recommended. As often is the case, the comments from participants point to wider benefits of the intervention, as well as to larger impacts of Feldenkrais-based programs in participants' lives.

In this Volume: Hypothesis and Theory/Reflections on Practice

Learning to embody: In her article, based on a talk prepared for educators, Stéphanie Ménasé makes the case for the Feldenkrais Method as an embodied process of learning and relearning, which draws on fundamental characteristics of the human nervous system. She highlights how characteristics of movements and specific learning strategies in both Awareness Through Movement and Functional Integration may stimulate useful differentiation and variation on neurological, sensory, functional, and experiential levels. She gives examples of the principles in action for people with bodily-based learning challenges. She draws on writings about the Method (Feldenkrais, Reese) and influences on its development (Schilder, Wertheimer), as well as neuroscience (Buzsáki), phenomenology (Merleau-Ponty), and their intersection (Varela, Thompson, and Rosch). As such, it is a condensed introduction to key aspects of the Method and its connection to a wider net of ideas that deserve further exploration.

Tools for the practice of acting: Drawing on her experience in acting and training actors, Julie-Kazuko Rahir undertook a “research project entitled ‘Theatre and Feldenkrais: Which tools from the Feldenkrais Method are most pertinent to an actor’s work?’” The paper presents eight *tools* for training actors. She began consulting the literature and well-known teachers in the field. Indeed, the article features an extensive list of resources on acting and the Feldenkrais Method in the French language, including links to articles and interviews. Working with actors in workshops in Western Switzerland, Lyon, and Montréal, and with support from the Swiss Feldenkrais Guild, she and her collaborators used arts research processes to explore if and how key Feldenkrais Method teaching-learning strategies may enhance the learning of the practice of acting. Drawing on many well identified strategies (e.g., variation, reversibility), she explicates and provides examples of specific ways and nuances of how they may be understood and used in actor training – giving examples and drawing on observations from theorists and practitioners in the field.

In this Volume: Literature Reviews

This volume of the *Feldenkrais Research Journal* features, for the first time, reviews of completed research into the Feldenkrais Method.

The effectiveness of the Feldenkrais Method: A systematic review of the evidence: This systematic review from Hillier and Worley was first published in 2015, with financial assistance from the International Feldenkrais Federation. This was the first review of completed research trials which used the Cochrane Review Collaborative’s processes and standards for evaluating the quality of medical research. The first reviews of research into the Feldenkrais Method relied

on the small number of available studies, and also made use of measures of trustworthiness and efficacy that, for example, are not appropriate for a method where the intervention cannot be blinded to participants. This review analyzed a robust 20 trials.

The authors note “meta-analyses were able to be performed with 7 [seven] studies, finding in favour of the FM for improving balance in ageing populations...” and “[s]ingle studies reported significant positive effects for reduced perceived effort and increased comfort, body image perception, and dexterity.” They concluded, “Further research is required; however, in the meantime, clinicians and professionals may promote the use of FM in populations interested in efficient physical performance and self-efficacy”. Read the paper for the rich detail of their methodology and findings.

We are glad to be able to reproduce this review, as, even when papers are not behind online firewalls or come out from behind them eventually, earlier published studies are sometimes missed in Internet searches which favor more recent publications. Locating this paper here in the *Feldenkrais Research Journal*, and also publishing it in Spanish, helps this important review be accessible to a wider audience on an ongoing basis.

The Effects of the Feldenkrais Method in the Area of Motor Functioning: A Scoping

Literature Review: This new review, completed by Nicola Zollinger in 2025, found 41 research trials into the application of the Feldenkrais Method to movement or motor aspects of human functioning, including motor learning and coordination, functional movement patterns, balance, range of motion, muscle tone, breathing, and posture. Participants included, for example, healthy or non-clinical populations, and older adults, as well as many with health specific conditions that affect human function and well-being. Characteristics of all the studies are presented, including populations, ages, eligibility, study duration and levels of intensity of the intervention, as well as models for identifying risk of bias and levels of evidence used in medical science. Each of the 41 studies is then briefly summarized, including main findings and identification of the risk of bias.

While a *systematic review* (such as Hillier and Worley, reprinted in this volume) has the value of identifying the quality of study on select criteria, and even to synthesize the statistical findings, sometimes details about studies are hard to discern, and some studies do not make the inclusion criteria at all. The advantage of a *scoping review* such as this, is that it includes all the studies on the topic that can be located, giving a broad view of the pattern and range of research attempted. A kind of catalogue of what was done so far in these 41 large and small, more effective and less effective, trials of Feldenkrais Method for motor function. Through the descriptions of each study, a reader may readily find a study of interest. For current and future researchers, these descriptions make it easy to identify the main characteristics of a study. Another very helpful inclusion is Appendix 2, which provides a complete list of measures used in these 41 trials.

To conclude, Zollinger provides a summary of the findings in a discussion section, and provides reflections on possible mechanisms of action for the Feldenkrais Method in this area of application, and recommendations for future research based on this review.

We are pleased to publish Zollinger's huge and thorough research, which was partly supported by the Swiss Feldenkrais Guild, and is published here in four languages.

Making a Contribution

This Volume of the Journal makes an important contribution to the continuing expansion of research and thinking about the Feldenkrais Method. Through these new and reprinted research studies, and through the two reviews of research done so far, one can get a sense of the breadth of the application of the Feldenkrais Method. Beyond this, the articles and reviews reveal many creative approaches to identifying benefits and possible modes of action of the practice. Looking over the arc of practice, research, and consideration of the Feldenkrais Method in this volume – and published elsewhere in recent years, we are able to discern some patterns and levels of contribution of Feldenkrais Method practice to human learning and expanding abilities, and to the enhancement of human being and well-being. There remains so much to be investigated, gaps in knowledge to be filled, practices to be described and analyzed, and much more, but I am glad for the contribution of this Journal through the work of many that is represented here.

Thanks

This volume of the *FRJ* had been a multiyear endeavor begun in the shadow of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has impacted work on a project like this as people have reviewed priorities. Notwithstanding many challenges, many people contributed and deserve thanks for their work, diligence, intelligence, and commitment, including:

- all the **authors** who did the huge work of the research and writing you find here
- all the **reviewers** of articles, who, because of the nature of peer-reviewing have to remain nameless, but who are essential to the functioning of the journal
- **The Feldenkrais Research Journal Spanish Translation Group**: María del Carmen Cortés, Lucía Porta, María Clara Reussi, Consuelo Maldonado Toral, and Rosa María Sánchez Cantú, who brought their skill, care, and commitment to the translation of this whole Volume
- **our additional translators and translation reviewers**: Anna Katherina Sanner, Amelia Febles Diaz, María Clara Reussi, and also Han Gao and Belinda He
- **Karol Connors** who acted as a **Co-Editor** for one of the articles: I appreciate her attention to quality and detail in the assessment and preparation of the paper for publications

- **JoAnne Page**, who is the **Administrative Editor** of the *FRJ* – doing the essential work of keeping the flow of editorial and publishing going, supporting me as Editor, and also is our **Text Editor** doing proofreading, citation checking, and Harvard formatting
- **Jessica Taylor Foster**, our **Designer** who formats articles for publication, and who created the beautiful montage of images that heads this volume
- Members of the **Editorial Team** who are available for consultation, ideas, and are many of the regular reviewers of articles
- The **member organizations of the International Feldenkrais Federation**, who provide funding toward the costs of this journal, and the **IFF Board members and staff** who support our work.

Thank you for reading. Please contact us with information about research you are doing, publication of research in other forums, and if you are interested in publication here.

Cliff Smyth
Editor

Revised December 2025

References

Kleining, G. (2001) Openness as a characteristic of exploratory research. In Hoock, C., and Böhm, J. M. (eds.) *Methodology of qualitative social research. Kontrapunkt*, 1, Münster Kontrapunkt, 27-36

Kleining G., and Witt, H. (2000) Qualitative Heuristic Research as a Discovery Methodology for Psychology and the Social Sciences: Rediscovering the method for introspection as an example. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung*, 1 (1)

Mehling, W.E., Price, C., Daubenmier, J. J., Acree, M., Bartmess, E., and Stewart, A. (2012) The multidimensional assessment of interoceptive awareness (MAIA). *PloS One*, 7 (11), e48230.

Mehling, W. E., Acree, M., Stewart, A., Silas, J., and Jones, A. (2018) The multidimensional assessment of interoceptive awareness, version 2 (MAIA-2). *PloS One*, 13 (12), e0208034.