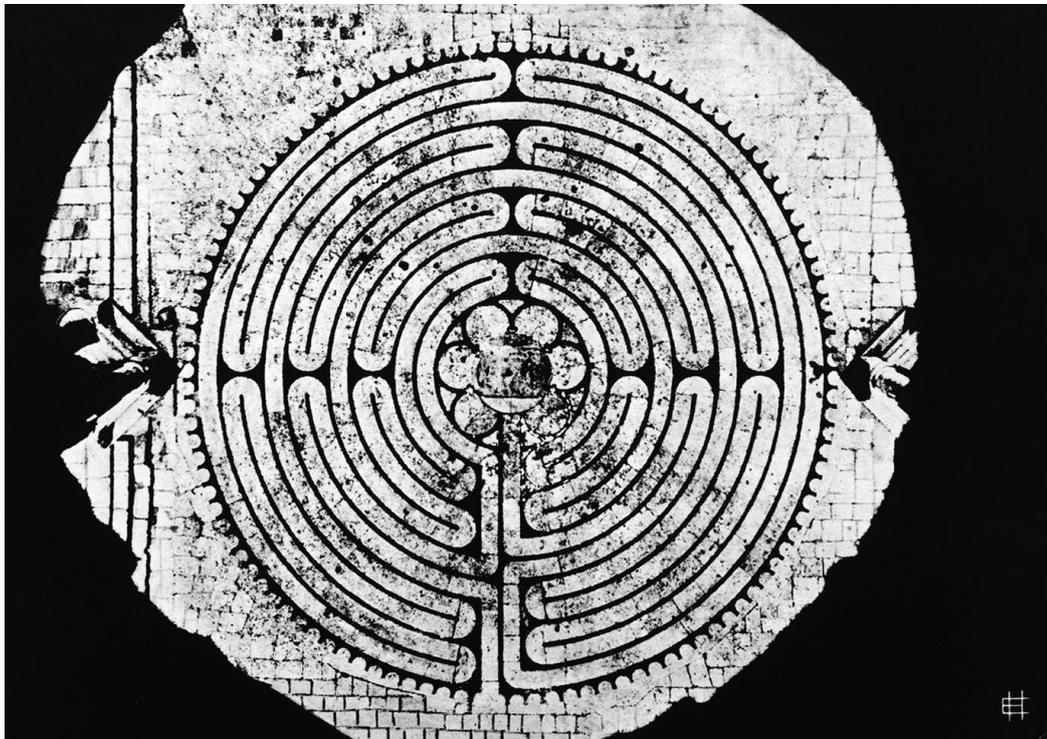


Barbara Pieper / Sylvia Weise

FELDENKRAIS®

Tasks, Activities, Development of a New Profession



Vocational Profile commissioned by
the German Feldenkrais Guild

Bibliothek der Feldenkrais-Gilde e.V. Nr. 12
Published by Karin Engels-Maurer and Christoph Görtz

Translated by Ilana Nevill

This is the English translation of:

Bibliothek der Feldenkrais-Gilde e.V. Nr. 12

Dieses Heft der Schriftenreihe der Feldenkrais-Gilde e.V. wird herausgegeben von Karin Engels-Maurer (Lohmar bei Köln) und Christoph Görtz (Paderborn).

© 1996 Barbara Pieper und Sylvia Weise

Dieses Werk ist urheberrechtlich geschützt. Alle Rechte, auch die der Übersetzung, des Nachdrucks und der Vervielfältigung als Ganzes oder von Teilen, vorbehalten.

Umschlagbild: Abbildung des Labyrinths der Kathedrale von Chartres

Abdruck mit freundlicher Genehmigung des Rektors der Kathedrale, M. le Recteur Legaux

Stuttgart 1996

Feldenkrais-Gilde e.V.

Asangstraße 144

D - 70329 Stuttgart

Druck: W. Kohlhammer, Untertürkheim

© Copyright 1996 by Barbara Pieper and Sylvia Weise. All rights reserved.

Translated by Ilana Nevill (Bath, UK)

Coverpicture: Maze of the Chartres Cathedral

Reprinted with kind permission of the Cathedral Minister, M. le Recteur Legaux

Contents

Foreword	v
Introduction	vii
1. Tasks and Activities.....	1
1.1 Tasks	1
1.1.1 General Tasks	1
1.1.2 The Scientific Background of the Feldenkrais Method	5
1.1.3 A Specific Approach to Learning through the Feldenkrais Method	7
1.2 Activities	10
1.2.1 Learning Procedures	10
1.2.2 Educational Strategies	13
1.2.3 Possible Results of the Feldenkrais Method	14
1.2.4 Target Groups	15
2. Training and Ongoing Professional Education (still in preparation, see Foreword)	17
3. Developments and Situation	19
3.1 Professional Situation	19
3.1.1 Development of the Profession	19
3.1.2 Professional Prospects	20
3.1.3 Areas of Activity	21
3.2 Earnings	22
4. Bibliography.....	23
4.1 Titles mentioned in the Text	23
4.2 Additional reading (Selection).....	25
The Authors, Publishers, and Translator.....	27

Foreword

The following text about tasks, activities, and professional development of the Feldenkrais Method presents a minimally revised version of a draft which was approved by the general assembly of the German Feldenkrais Guild meeting at Munich on October 5th 1996.

This constitutes the (provisional) outcome of a process that evolved over several years. The idea of providing the general public with a clearly comprehensible description of the activities involved in the teaching and practice of the Feldenkrais Method goes back to the foundation in 1985 of the Feldenkrais-Gilde (one of the two organisations representing Feldenkrais Practitioners in Germany). Nearly ten years passed before this idea took shape. In January 1995 twelve Feldenkrais colleagues from Germany and Austria got together to discuss the issue, collect and select material, and write up the outcome of this “brain-pool”. The result was presented to the Feldenkrais-Gilde general meeting in September 1995, but was thought not yet ready for publication.

Barbara Pieper and Sylvia Weise then produced a new draft on behalf of the Feldenkrais-Gilde. The executive committee welcomed the authors’ proposal that Michael Schründer from the Feldenkrais-Network e.V. (the association of Feldenkrais Practitioners trained by Mia Segal) should be asked to participate in this task. Michael’s ideas were particularly important because we felt that his contribution would reflect developments outside the Guild. Unfortunately personal reasons prevented him from co-authoring the present version of the text.

Barbara and Sylvia demonstrate critical awareness and sensitivity to the specific character of Feldenkrais work as compared with related professions, presenting a comprehensive, informative, and differentiated picture of this new professional field. They also integrate historical and sociological aspects, viewing the “Feldenkrais Method as a professional field” within the context of present social trends.

The differentiated approach adopted in the following text addresses requirements for information on the part of the general public, prospective and new Feldenkrais Practitioners, and institutions or “official” bodies.

Training and further education - normally included in vocational profiles - are omitted in this text. Work on that chapter is still in progress; this will be added to a later edition. Anybody interested in training opportunities and standards can make direct contact with the Feldenkrais-Gilde for further information. The profound understanding of the Feldenkrais Method provided by the text invites the reader to experience this approach to learning in practice. On request the Feldenkrais-Gilde will send directories listing addresses of members offering courses in *Awareness Through Movement*[®] and individual *Functional Integration*[®] lessons.

We would like to thank the members of the Feldenkrais-Gilde and all those who supported the executive committee in implementing the idea of a vocational profile.

Our special thanks go to the two authors, to colleagues in the “Vocational profile” project team, and to Michael Schründer.

Karin Engels-Maurer

Christoph Görtz

Introduction

- (1) Moshé Feldenkrais was a pioneer. The way he lived and thought did not accord with the conventions of his time (see 1.1.2). He himself would scarcely have hit on the idea of elucidating his learning method in terms of a *vocational profile* (*Berufsbild*, which is the normal and ‘official’ German way of describing approved professions). All such professional profiles are listed and appropriately characterized in the volumes of *Blätter zur Berufskunde* (*Vocational Information Sheets*) published by the Federal Labour Office at Nuremberg. The structuring of such texts is the same for all professional profiles, whether hairdressing, engineering, bakery, or teaching the Feldenkrais method. The description covers Tasks and Activities (Chapter 1), Training and Ongoing Professional Education (Chapter 2), and Development and Situation of the Profession (Chapter 3). Publication of a vocational profile in the officially required form constitutes a step towards **institutionalization** of the Feldenkrais Method in Germany. Nevertheless continuing freedom from all regulations would be closer to Moshé Feldenkrais’s way of thinking. We therefore understand and share some of the misgivings of our colleagues who were against a vocational profile.

However, we decided to go ahead with producing such a vocational profile - at the request and under the auspices of the Feldenkrais-Gilde e.V. - and hope that this contribution will encourage Feldenkrais colleagues to help create an institutional framework for our vocation. The Feldenkrais Method initially developed on the fringes of the educational system, the health service, and the arts since our society tends to tolerate pioneering work only in niches. However, as soon as a new occupation is pursued on a regular and paid basis, it is required to submit to regulation and control, especially in Germany. That is our situation today. In recent years the number of Feldenkrais Practitioners has continued to rise. Society makes ever greater demands on people’s capacity for continuous learning, and the demand for new forms of learning increases correspondingly. The health service is also rethinking its way of functioning. We are clearly experiencing a trend towards gradual integration of the Feldenkrais Method in existing structures. We therefore see this text as a step towards *self-direction*, which we all consider to be of central importance in Feldenkrais work. If we do not define our work, others will do that for us in their own way.

- (2) While writing this text we experienced **ambivalence** over a number of issues:
 - Is it at all feasible to describe an unconventional profession in conventional terms?
 - How can we present a vocation that both requires freedom for independent creative activity and at the same time seeks institutional integration within society?
 - A professional profile defines the respective activity more or less statically. Feldenkrais work, however, by its very nature aims at ongoing development. How can those requirements be combined?
 - How can a learning method be vocationally defined if its essential aspects cannot be confined to current professional categories? For example, there is a clear-cut distinction in Germany between professions concerned with teaching (Education) and those concerned with healing (Health).

We see a way out of this dilemma in current social developments. In Germany education, occupation, and labour market trends are increasingly drifting apart. Jobs are less and less what they used to be. They no longer constitute fixed reference-points securing work, income, and social status. Nowadays people’s lives tend to be characterized by a series of jobs, short-term participation in different projects, partial exploitation of qualifications, phases of unemployment, etc. Education and training, however, continue to be oriented towards vocational profiles, regardless of whether such jobs are still in demand on the labour market. Occupations continue to serve as ‘entrance tickets’ to gainful employment, but they are less important for individual biographies. At the same time changes are also occurring both within various occupations and in their relations with each other¹.

¹ A detailed presentation of this development, described as “‘the end’ of current forms of work” (Voß 1994:271), can be found in Beckenbach/Treack 1994.

In this situation we are employing the **form of the professional profile** in order to enable the Feldenkrais Method to gain social acceptance. We are aware of using a structural pattern that is on its way out yet continues to be socially valid. In other words: We are using a ‘currency’ which is still in circulation while at the same time preparing for a possible change². We therefore consider the present version of this vocational profile to be a starting-point, a contribution intended to encourage people to participate in discussion and further development of Feldenkrais work in Germany.

- (3) This text thus aims at presenting the Feldenkrais Method as a new professional activity within society. This requires that we define in what respect Feldenkrais work differs from other occupations and activities, i.e. **what is specific about this work**. It is not enough to say that Feldenkrais teachers ‘work with movement’. That also applies to sports instructors, physiotherapists, and body-oriented psychotherapists. Neither would it be sufficient to talk about teaching ‘awareness’. That happens elsewhere too, both within and outside specific occupations.

Feldenkrais work starts from the premise that *sensorimotor activity* is the appropriate means for all learning. Since that might not be immediately apparent to everyone, we have dealt with this connection more comprehensively. Special emphasis is given to the importance of awareness (see 1.1.1). Two other aspects are also discussed in greater detail: the scientific background of the Feldenkrais Method (see 1.1.2) and how *learning* is understood in the context of the method (see 1.1.3). In a separate section (1.2) we consider the learning procedures used in practice: *Awareness Through Movement*[®] (learning in groups) and *Functional Integration*[®] (individual work - see 1.2.1). We shall explain the respective educational strategies (see 1.2.2), what results may be expected (1.2.3), and the target groups for the Feldenkrais Method (1.2.4). This presentation of tasks and activities reveals that both theory and practice of those involved in teaching the Feldenkrais Method **cut across** existing occupations. Feldenkrais work thus constitutes an example of a **new, multifunctional form of vocational activity**, based on integration of a diversity of theoretical and practical aspects. It meets continuously growing social demands for flexibility and creativity in contents, organisational forms, and qualification profiles (see 3).

For instance:

- The work of Feldenkrais Practitioners extends into highly diverse social spheres - education, health systems, recreation, the arts, and sports (see 1.2.4 and 3.11).
- The possible results of Feldenkrais work affect different aspects of personality and everyday existence for those receiving (and giving!) Feldenkrais lessons.
- The common distinction between ‘intellectual’ and ‘manual’ work, and their different valuation, applies to neither Feldenkrais Practitioners nor their clients.
- In thought and practice Moshé Feldenkrais adhered to a forward-looking understanding of intelligent action where physical, mental, and psychological abilities and skills unite, allowing people to act responsibly in accordance with their intention and the situation in which they find themselves. Feldenkrais work makes it possible to explore, test, foster, and extend such behaviour in one and the same learning process.
- The participants in the learning process do not see this activity in terms of the usual teacher-pupil relationship. Learning takes place on a voluntary basis; it is self-directed and open-ended as far as results are concerned (see 1.1.3).

² For example, it is also conceivable that the Feldenkrais Method will gain social and governmental recognition within a more widely defined, broader vocational field as our colleague Michael Schründer (Berlin) advocates.

- (4) This publication is directed to different target groups:
- Firstly those who are dealing with the Feldenkrais Method on behalf of an ‘official body’. We are thinking in particular of **experts** representing public authorities, medical organisations, and health insurances. Following the prescribed framework of a vocational profile, this text does not include practical suggestions for readers to explore for themselves (see instead the relevant book references in Chapter 4).
 - The text also addresses the **general public**, i.e. those who would like to be informed about the Feldenkrais Method without at this point having to look at the books available. We will give readers an introduction to relevant concepts, theoretical background, learning procedures, and educational strategies. There is also discussion of how this new profession fits into present developments within society.
 - **Those who are already familiar with the Feldenkrais Method** may discover in this text aspects of their own personal experience, presented here more systematically, and begin to see that experience in a new light.

How to read this document: The text consists of a central argument and further elucidations (inset and thus easy to recognize). We had to accept that lengthy presentation does not conform with the format of the usual vocational profile. Repetitions (with cross-references) are intentional so that individual paragraphs can also be read separately.

- (5) **Our thanks** go to all those among our colleagues who - by giving us feedback in the form of questions, doubts, comments, objections, critical remarks, and suggestions - inspired us to ever-renewed attempts at formulation of the various versions of this text. We would particularly like to mention Michael Schründer who took part in discussions about structuring the text and checked the final version of the manuscript. Family and friends also supplied us with many good ideas. Special thanks go to Horst Weise who - to our great relief - took on the entire lay-out. Without his backing this text would not have appeared in its present form. Karin Maurer-Engels and Christoph Görtz, the two publishers, supported us in every possible respect. We would like to thank them and also Gerlinde Wieler from the Stuttgart administrative office of the Feldenkrais-Gilde e.V., who organised the production of this brochure so swiftly that it could still appear as planned in 1996.
- (6) Looking back we see the evolution of this text in terms of a movement which - like the convoluted path of a **labyrinth** - may have a beginning but then constantly disappears and takes detours without, however, losing track of its goal. The form of the labyrinth suggested to us a number of parallels with practical Feldenkrais work. For example, a Feldenkrais lesson taught in the context of a different group may take an entirely new direction, require detours, give rise to completely new questions. It looks as if everything is beginning afresh - or nearly afresh. We therefore feel that we are still on the way and consider this version of the vocational profile as a more or less haphazard interruption of a spiral production process which is essentially without end. Anyone who has written about the Feldenkrais Method may be equally familiar with these labyrinthine movements and the special benefits to be derived from the marriage of theory and practice - and, of course, from team work.

Barbara Pieper and Sylvia Weise

Gräfelfing/Hofheim, November 1996

1. Tasks and Activities

How to read this text: Inset passages in small print for optional reading present more detailed explanations.

The terms *Feldenkrais Practitioner* and *Student* refer to a relationship between ‘teacher’ and ‘learner’ that is specific to the Feldenkrais Method (see 1.1.3).

1.1 Tasks

1.1.1 General Tasks

The Feldenkrais Method provides a new answer to an old question: How can we learn to learn? This question becomes increasingly urgent at a time of accelerating change within modern societies (see 3.1.1). The Feldenkrais Practitioner focuses on a task which every human being has to master: our very nature predisposes (and forces) us to life-long learning so as to safeguard life and survival, both our own and that of future generations. Our biological make-up prepares us for such a task. Wo/man is in principle a social being dependent on and geared towards communication with others, thirsting for knowledge, willing and ready for action. A person’s development happens in interaction with her/his environment - not autonomously. From the moment of conception an individual is in contact with all the natural and social processes within the environment, experiencing her/himself in relation to them.

Capacity for Life-Long Learning: Human beings are born *prematurely in terms of physiology* (Portmann 1956:42seq). Their brains are not yet fully developed and their instincts are only rudimentary, i.e. the human relationship with the world can be described in terms of *world-openness* (see Berger/Luckmann 1967: 65 & 219). Our biological equipment is not pre-determined by particular environmental structures so this environment is not species-specific. We can exist under almost all kinds of circumstances. However, years of learning and nurturing are necessary before a human being is capable of self-maintenance, self-preservation, self-direction, and reproduction. During that time a reliable fund of automatic physical movements is acquired. These allow the developing human to get more or less automatically “into the proper position relative to gravity” (Feldenkrais 1949:54seq / *Antigravity Mechanism*, Feldenkrais 1949:49). The growing child learns to fashion a coherent inner world out of the initially chaotic world s/he meets externally. No other living creature has developed such an aptitude for learning in the course of evolution. However, the processes involved in this learning are not free from disruption and problems. Learning also needs to be learned.

Tasks - First Approximation: Feldenkrais work is concerned with the **question:** How can a person learn to organise in such a way that s/he becomes capable of acting in accordance with individual needs, desires, intentions, and the demands of a particular situation? How does a person learn to master ever new challenges which have to be coped with all the time? How does s/he acquire the ability - or regain a capacity - to continue functioning even under difficult circumstances such as disability, illness, or chronic pain?

The Feldenkrais Practitioner has the following tasks: S/he creates conditions for learning which support people’s efforts to find out for themselves how to

- develop confidence in innate capacities for self-direction (self-education) and independence (autonomy);
- acquire greater freedom of choice in action and thus extend ability to function in life;
- move effectively with ease and elegance, thus making it possible to implement intentions in everyday existence.

Systematic attention is given to the importance of gravity in behavioural contexts.

Learning through Perception and Movement (Concepts): In the Feldenkrais Method learning happens by way of perception and movement. Feldenkrais movements are not random but constitute purposefully structured sequences appropriate to the “order-seeking function of the nervous system” (Feldenkrais 1981:131). The following concepts will clarify why movement is a highly suitable means for learning: awareness, movement, differentiation (i.e. ability to discriminate), nervous system, sensory perception, sensorimotor activity, self-image, and kinaesthesia (see Pieper 1997).

Awareness (in contrast to *consciousness*) is central to the Feldenkrais Method. As long as I am not aware and thus do not know what I am doing, I am unable to do what I would like to do. For instance, as long as I am unaware of how my body is organised in walking, I will not be able to change. Feldenkrais's answer to the difficult question of how can I notice that I do not know what I am doing (for example, what prevents me from walking in a graceful, effortless way) is both amazingly simple and simultaneously complex: To know myself becomes possible if I devote mindful and patient attention to the way I move. Why?

For Feldenkrais **movement** is the key to life. "... a living organism moves and is never completely stationary before it is really dead" (Feldenkrais 1981:18). Movement is required in order to perceive differences within the constantly changing environment, starting with the distinction between inside (me) and outside (not me). Every living being thus has the capacity to perceive differences (**ability to discriminate**). From the immense *chaotic* abundance of ever-changing stimuli transmitted by the senses both from inside and outside the organism, it will choose those which are, or could become, relevant in terms of intentions and behaviour. Through movement it forms "stationary and repetitive events" (ibid.), thereby establishing and maintaining its own *order*. This is how behaviour comes about.

In more highly evolved living beings that task is fulfilled by the **nervous system**. During the course of evolution the human brain developed into a network of increasingly complex connections between *sensory* and *motor* neurons, characterized by an extraordinary degree of plasticity. The more intricate such *couplings* between **sensory perception** and control of action by way of movement, the greater the range of behaviour. "Thus, with a network of neurons coming between this coupling, the field of possible sensorimotor correlations of the organism is increased and the realm of behaviour is expanded" (Maturana/Varela 1988:163). Without the interaction of sensory perception and movement (**sensorimotor activity**) behaviour does not come into being. Sensorimotor activity thus plays a key role in behaviour (see also Weizsäcker 1947). It underlies every feeling, every thought, every activity.

The question of how movement can be employed for learning is central to many theories, methods, and techniques. Moshé Feldenkrais disagreed with widely-held ideas. His view was that learning is easy, efficient, and effective over the long term if it happens *from inside out*. Inner experience is therefore of crucial importance, constituting the yardstick of human behaviour. "We act in accordance with our self-image" (Feldenkrais 1987:3). "Each one of us speaks, moves, thinks, and feels in a different way, each according to the image of himself that he has built up over the years. In order to change our mode of action we must change the image of ourselves that we carry within us" (ibid:10). The **self-image** is thus the conceptual framework where physical, mental, and psychological aspects of human behaviour meet.

In concrete terms: Learning takes place when the student is aware of the following questions: How do I sense myself and how do I move? How are my feelings and thoughts reflected in the way I perceive and move? How do I habitually restrict my movements? In order to find answers the student applies, and at the same time trains, the capacity for sensing movement (**Kinaesthesia**). The more refined the student's ability to make distinctions, the more differentiated will be her/his self-image, and the more capable he or she will be of acting in accordance with intentions.

The concept of self-image encompasses four dimensions: **sensing, feeling, thinking, and movement**. Access to self-image is gained by inner experience of intentional action. Correction from outside, imitation, or purely mechanical intervention involving parts of the body are therefore not necessary. The concept of *self-image* is thus broader than that of *body-image*. Both conceptually and practically Moshé Feldenkrais consistently takes into account the unity of body, mind, and psyche.

Summary: The Feldenkrais Method is specifically designed for facilitating learning processes. Students are given an opportunity of directly experiencing how learning is learned. This involves careful observation of movement sequences and of their sensory, emotional, and mental dimensions. The Feldenkrais Method creates a supportive environment for people who wish to refine their power of discernment by developing sensorimotor competence. Capacity for discrimination very much helps better understanding of self-image and self-organisation in daily life according to that image ("awareness in action", Feldenkrais 1966:8). As a person becomes aware of what s/he is doing and how, new mobility (physical, mental, psychological) arises as if of its own accord. As self-imposed limitations are removed and new alternatives in thinking and acting open up, a person experiences greater autonomy and capacity for responsible action. The Feldenkrais Method is suitable for people from all age-groups, all walks of life and professional backgrounds. Previous experience is not required.

The Feldenkrais Method in Relation to other Professions: With the approach presented above the Feldenkrais Method extends into a highly diverse range of social involvements. As a new, multifunctional form of vocational activity, based on integration of a variety of theoretical and practical aspects, it **cuts across** the structure of existing vocations and meets growing demands for flexibility (see 3.1.1).

The Feldenkrais Practitioner is not concerned with body-work, physical education, or gymnastics. S/he does not offer behavioural or psycho-therapy. Nor does s/he dispense medical treatment. "... the whole procedure is that of adult re-education and not treatment. This should be, for it is a question of teaching and learning and not of disease and cure" (Feldenkrais 1949:163).

The Feldenkrais Method does not therefore aim at teaching specific movements as such - for instance, the correct way of moving from lying to sitting up. During a lesson students learn through exploration of movements, by way of a specific example (in this case the function of coming to sitting), how any **intention can be turned into action** - in a simpler, easier, more efficient, and aesthetically pleasing manner. Exploration of movement illustrates in exemplary fashion how to learn to answer such questions as: How do I know what I am doing and how I do it? Is what I am doing really what I think I am doing, or intended to do?

If during Feldenkrais lessons **physical difficulties** improve, disappear, or do not arise in the first place (prevention), this constitutes a fortunate side-effect accompanying changes in the student's experience and self-image. Franz Wurm (1995:272) speaks of a "logical by-product" of the learning process. The Feldenkrais Practitioner does not work with a student's definition of her/his particular problem, pain, illness, or disability but rather with self-image as the decisive factor in that person's actions.

Tasks - Second Approximation: Movement is the key to life. This realization is put to use by the Feldenkrais Method so as to unfold human capacity for learning. With that basic understanding in mind, the Practitioner's task can be described more precisely. However, the following consideration must be taken into account: The human nervous system works as a unity. Even the slightest change in some part of the organism will be registered and processed by other areas via innumerable neural connections, leading to response by way of reorganisation. In view of the brain's mode of operation (which can be described as *circular*, see 1.1.3), the Feldenkrais Practitioner's **tasks cannot be dealt with separately**. What is at issue here are three intimately interrelated levels within the same learning process.

A more precise Presentation of the Feldenkrais Practitioner's Tasks:

(1) Awareness, Self-Education, Autonomy, Responsibility

(Becoming more human): Each concrete learning step helps enable each of the senses “to have many modes of functioning [...] if we are to live, flower, and become happier as we grow wiser” (Feldenkrais 1981:118). The **task** involves unfolding human potential - starting with oneself by becoming aware of one's movements. Here Moshé Feldenkrais uses the terms *growth* and *maturity* - in the sense of “becoming more human”.

(2) Capacity for Taking Action

(Flexibility viewed metaphorically): Moshé Feldenkrais was interested in *flexible brains* not flexible bodies. He was concerned with adaptability in thinking, feeling, and action. Sensorimotor activity is important for the creation of neural connections within the brain, with new couplings forming throughout life at the synapses where nerve-cells join. So possibilities of neural action can be extended by refining (*differentiating*) perception and movement. Put more emphatically: “You find that the body is necessary to train the brain, otherwise differentiation cannot be performed” (cit. Ginsburg 1992:43). This is the way alternative forms of action are found. Freedom of choice makes it easier to learn how to overcome the *conditioned reflexes*, associated with anxiety, which are engraved in the muscular system. The **task** involves learning how to elucidate our capacity for action, how to improve and expand this capacity in order to meet new challenges in life.

(3) Efficacy/Efficiency and Ease of Movement in Everyday Existence

(Experiencing Flexibility): In his learning method Moshé Feldenkrais integrated the importance of gravity for behaviour. The student learns to develop better orientation and organisation within the dimensions of space and time. This includes elimination (in neurological terms: inhibition) of anything that habitually interferes with particular movements. As a result nervous impulses have a better chance of “arriving at their muscular destination in the right manner and strength” (Feldenkrais 1981:128) according to the initiator's intentions. Sensory stimuli and intentional motor activities are thus effectively linked (coupled) for a specific action (see Feldenkrais *ibid.*). This involves *neuronal reorganisation* or *neuro-muscular re-education*. The **task** is therefore to learn how intentional activities can become simpler and more direct, and thereby occur with greater ease. For example the student might look for ways of playing a musical instrument with less effort, of walking with more ease and grace, of being more comfortable in a wheelchair or at a desk, or wish to help her/himself by organising movements so that pain is no longer inevitable but can be avoided.

1.1.2 The Scientific Background of the Feldenkrais Method

The Feldenkrais Method creates specific learning conditions in order to meet such tasks (see 1.1.3). Moshé Feldenkrais's personality and the theoretical foundations of his work highlight what is special about the Feldenkrais approach to learning.

Moshé Feldenkrais, the Originator of the Method: Moshé Feldenkrais was born in Russia in 1904. As an adolescent he emigrated to Palestine where he earned a living as a construction worker and private tutor. He played football with great enthusiasm and practised Jiu-Jitsu (a form of unarmed self-defence).

In 1928 Feldenkrais went to Paris to study mechanical and electrical engineering. He also gained a PhD in applied physics at the Sorbonne and collaborated with Frédéric Joliot-Curie in atomic research. At that time Professor Jigoro Kano charged Feldenkrais with founding the *Judo Club de Paris* and in 1936 he became the first European to attain the Black Belt qualification. He began to teach and write books about Judo.

When the Germans invaded France in 1940, Feldenkrais escaped from Paris to England where the Allies employed him at a research centre for anti-submarine warfare based in Scotland. In his spare time he gave scientific lectures and taught Judo. Then an old knee injury began to get worse. In those days prospects for a successful operation were not very good, so Feldenkrais started to experiment on himself, studying the way he moved and systematically refining his kinaesthetic sense. He thus gradually taught himself to walk differently, i.e. more efficiently and without pain. The successful outcome of this exercise in self-education encouraged Feldenkrais to apply his discoveries amongst friends and acquaintances, gradually developing his approach to learning.

In 1951 Moshé Feldenkrais returned to Israel where he initially worked as head of the Israeli army's electronics unit. Soon, however, he devoted most of his time to the subject of learning, studying the connection between human development, learning, and movement - simultaneously researcher, practitioner, teacher, and learner. He wanted to transcend the established way of thinking in opposites (theory-practice, body-mind, Eastern-Western Tradition). Feldenkrais saw the patterns of thought embedded in language as being the greatest obstacle to thinking and acting in a way that was both integrated and integrating - and to writing about his work. Nevertheless, Moshé Feldenkrais, who basically remained a scientist all his life, did produce numerous publications on his learning method (bibliography in Czetczok 1995:27seq).

In 1968 he began teaching a first group of trainees in Israel. Two further training programmes followed in the USA. From the mid-seventies Feldenkrais received international acclaim for his work.

Moshé Feldenkrais died in 1984 in Israel.

Theoretical Foundations of Feldenkrais Work: Moshé Feldenkrais did not develop any theory serving to underpin his work. He was more interested in applying the discoveries of his many teachers. However, he tended to view their knowledge from a completely new angle and developed his own research in order to test practical applicability. "This kind of science [...] was careful and methodical" (Ginsburg 1995:8). Feldenkrais was way ahead of his time in both his scientific work and its practical application. For instance he did not consider "how we act and move, how we direct ourselves in general" (Feldenkrais 1981:125) in terms of "our habitual cause and effect pattern of viewing the world" (ibid.:122). He did not ask: What happens and what is the cause, but **how** does it happen and **what intention** is involved? He was interested in the course taken by an action. Feldenkrais thus understood posture as a behaviourally determined (dynamic) process and not as a (static) state. Questions about the *how* bring the observer into the picture. Feldenkrais incorporated into his learning method the epistemological paradigm shift that was taking place in physics. In self-observation the person involved contributes to changes in **what** s/he observes through **how** s/he observes. Feldenkrais was thus already thinking and experimenting in categories characteristic of systems theory and cybernetics. Above all, however, Feldenkrais explored the importance of gravity for behaviour and the structuring of learning processes.

Feldenkrais combined understanding and practical experience in Far-Eastern martial arts (Judo, Jiu-Jitsu) with knowledge derived from physics, mechanics, electro-technology, anatomy, and behavioural physiology. Emile Coué's philosophy of self-improvement caught his imagination. So did George I. Gurdjieff's teaching which advocates the development of self-knowledge as a life-long learning process. His research took into account the theories of neurophysiology, especially as put forward by Russian scientist Alexander Luria; Charles Darwin's theory of evolution; the behavioural research of Konrad Lorenz; and Jean Piaget's developmental psychology. He was aware of research results in biomechanics and movement sciences (for instance the work of Nicolai Bernstein). Feldenkrais also devoted close attention to approaches related to his own way of thinking, such as the work of Mathias F. Alexander (*Alexander Technique*), and of Elsa Gindler and Heinrich Jacoby (later elaborated by Charlotte Selver and promoted as *sensory awareness*). He took up ideas from systems theory (Gregory Bateson) and cybernetics (Heinz von Foerster) and adopted the metaphor of the brain as a hologram (Karl H. Pribram) because these notions accorded with his own research results. Fritz Perl's Gestalt Therapy made an impact on him, as did certain systemic approaches in psychotherapy, first and foremost Milton Erickson's hypnotherapy. Many of these approaches were gradually replacing more or less mechanical and causal concepts, involving stimulus-response thinking, by theories instead positing the interaction of system and environment in a circular process, or as Feldenkrais puts it: "the loop environment - sensation, nervous system, motor activity, environment and feedbacks from it" (Feldenkrais 1981:128).

As these concepts were further elucidated - especially in the cognitive sciences and neurobiology -, the notion of representation of the external world inside the brain (the world as **source** of experience) was abandoned. Nowadays working models - for instance in the research of Humberto Maturana and Francisco J. Varela - tend to propose that *a world is brought forth* (see Maturana/Varela 1988:26) through purposeful action on the part of the human being seen as a unitary system (the world as **result** of experience). Some of Moshé Feldenkrais's assumptions (dating back to the forties) about the functioning of the nervous system are thereby corroborated, such as his postulate of the brain's capacity for self-organisation, or his approach to behavioural research proceeding from the intentionally acting person. Varela calls this methodological approach "first person account" (Varela 1996:14seq).

Some results produced by the Feldenkrais Method (see 1.2.3) cannot as yet be sufficiently explained in terms of the current models in the neuro-, cognitive- and behavioural sciences (see in this context the work of Edward Reed 1982 and especially the research by Esther Thelen and Linda Smith, 1994). It should also be said that their extremely high level of abstraction makes practical application of these models more difficult. This may account for the growing interest in the results of phenomenological research and practice as have been presented by the Feldenkrais Method for the past 50 years (see Varela 1996:15).

Feldenkrais's Views about Humankind: Moshé Feldenkrais's personality and his background as a scientist are indicative of his notions about humanity. Feldenkrais believed "that learning is the most important thing for a human being" (Feldenkrais 1981:118). We are born with the capacity for learning. As human beings we do not just respond to life by way of reflex-action. Instead we act with purpose, proceeding by trial and error until we think we have found a solution which is satisfactory in terms of our intentions. Most important of all, however: We know (or could know) what we are doing at the time. Awareness gives us the freedom (and the responsibility) to make choices - for instance, whether to cling to a habit or to change it. Feldenkrais trusted in this capacity for self-direction. His work confirmed his image of humanity: Throughout life human beings are structurally geared towards learning; they are eager and motivated to experience new sensory stimulation (see also Affolter 1987).

1.1.3 A Specific Approach to Learning through the Feldenkrais Method

The method's goal is to enable people to take charge of their own learning (*Learning to learn*) and pursues this task in its own specific way. Feldenkrais Practitioners see their 'teaching' in terms of guiding students towards *organic learning* - in contrast to academic learning.

Organic Learning as opposed to Academic Learning: There are different ways of learning. Common to them all is that what is being learned and how it is learned depends on predisposition, education, and self-education. Organic learning happens by way of sensorimotor activity and is thus the foundation of all learning ("initial motor-sensory learning", Feldenkrais 1981a:31). In the case of academic learning - whether at school, during professional training, or on the job - the learning content is determined by society. This aims at development and furthering of analytical skills and capacity for abstraction. Organic learning is about experiencing (functional) interrelations and efficient use of the whole self by relying more or less directly on sensory orientation. This kind of learning precedes academic learning both phylogenetically and ontogenetically. In the case of organic learning the sequence of learning stages is (at least tendentially) preordained - first the child learns to walk, then to skate, not the other way round; how the steps take place is, however, left open.

Learning playfully: Initially the prerogative of small children, organic learning remains available to us throughout life. Such learning is self-motivated and relies on the senses, trusting them as a matter of course (see Alon 1990: 199seq). Organic learning is inspired by curiosity, pleasure, a sense of wonder, enjoyment of surprises, and the need for communication. Whatever the inspiration, "new senses of the self serve as organizing principles of development" (Stern 1985:19). In other words, relationships are not yet grasped in terms of language, logic, or linear thinking; instead they are comprehended as images and configurations. Neither does the bond between thought and speech as yet exist, even though words may already be understood (or be expected to be understood). This kind of childlike learning provides important guidelines for the Feldenkrais Method.

The child does not have a 'learning goal'. Its first actions are haphazard (global) and not yet deliberate. Learning, in this case, involves proceeding from undifferentiated forms of behaviour to more and more self-directed actions - allowing the child to pursue its intentions (more) purposefully until sufficient mastery makes them habitual (automatic). They thus become 'ingrained behaviour patterns'. This requires a great variety of experience involving both perception and movement (experimentation by way of trial and error and the elimination of mistakes). In the course of this process new possibilities for action arise (or can arise) quite spontaneously (see Feldenkrais 1981a:32). To begin with, the child does not know about the nature, cause, and purpose of its activity. "These movements, sensations, images, and spatio-temporal awarenesses gradually, and inexorably, coalesce in the nervous system into new neuromuscular gestalts" (Reese 1992:23). It seems as if the child is suddenly able to walk or understand the meaning of language. Little by little the child develops a system of behaviour which is sufficiently stable and flexible to cope with daily life and new demands.

Feldenkrais work proceeds according to this 'childlike logic' (see also 1.2). In playful experimentation with movement apparently accidental movements gradually blend as if of their own accord, forming purposeful, synergistic, and ultimately complex actions allowing several intentions to be pursued at the same time, as is, for instance, necessary when driving a car. Over time such actions become subject to an ever better and differentiated control. Reorganisation of behaviour happens in the same way as its original emergence: through sensorimotor activity.

Phylogensis and Ontogenesis of Movement: Organic learning is based on our innate capacity to act with discernment. In the course of an action a person compares, creates order, chooses, corrects, and establishes a relationship to both her/himself and the environment, using movement as the means for making distinctions and learning from that (see 1.1.1). In the context of Feldenkrais work, movements are therefore always seen in relation to the individual behaviour in which they are embedded (relevance of movement in terms of conduct). What is at issue here is not the functioning of individual joints or organs (cf. the medical concept of function). The **concept of function** underlying the Feldenkrais Practitioner's work thus refers to the student's purposeful action.

The repertoire of human movement is circumscribed by two interconnected conditions:

- (1) In phylogenesis **structurally innate** fundamental **human movement patterns** are inherited. These constitute the so-called basic functions - such as standing, walking, grasping, supporting oneself, sex, etc. - and are of importance for human existence and survival.
- (2) In the course of a person's life-history (ontogenesis), these functions take on individual characteristics. Every human being thus develops her/his own **personal movement organisation**. This can become so entrenched that it finally feels innate - as if such characteristically individual movements were absolutely unconnected with learned behaviour. At the same time the manner in which a person 'functions' (i.e. actualizes the range of movements inherent at birth) affects the structure of her/his organism. As time passes the person's thoughts, feelings, and physical structure will become more and more organised in accordance with her/his behaviour. We all tend to select those movements that agree with our self-image which in turn governs behaviour. Other alternatives atrophy.

Organic learning facilitates expansion and improvement of both range and quality of the individually acquired movement repertoire. This happens while the person consciously experiences how the muscular system constantly performs superfluous (*parasitic*) work which habitually interferes with economical functioning. Through such 'understanding via the senses' the variety and quality of the movement-potential inherent in the human structure reveals itself as if of its own accord. That is what is meant by sensorimotor re-organisation or re-education.

Systemic Thinking (Self-Organisation): Organic learning can also be described in terms of the categories used in systemic thinking. Cognition and action are here understood in the context of a selfregulating system: **What** I happen to perceive is determined by **how** I perform an action, and vice versa: **How** I perform an action depends on **what** I happen to perceive. Feldenkrais Practitioners are frequently confronted with examples of what is described as the human organism's *circular* mode of operation. The student learns to move differently by learning to perceive her/himself differently. Thanks to the new way of moving s/he can, in turn, perceive her/himself differently (Circularity in Sensorimotor Activity; see also von Weizsäcker's *Gestaltkreis*, 1947).

This systemic view (see also 1.1.2) is reflected in the way the Feldenkrais Practitioner deals with movement. The approach to movement is not reductionist. As a self-organising system the human organism always has to be seen in relation to behaviour (*functions*). It is therefore not perceived or examined as an aggregate of separate body parts. The assumption that parts of the body can be 'repaired' independently is not accepted either. The systemic approach does not treat physical restriction - for example a stiff knee - simply as a local problem. The guiding question instead is: how does the student's nervous system operate so as to produce the knee problem, and what purpose underlies that mode of operation?

Unlike the current approach in terms of cause and effect (why?; if *a* is the case, then *b* follows), systemic thinking leads to a new way of assessing perception and thereby to different **educational strategies** (see Goldfarb 1990). The Feldenkrais Practitioner pursues the question of how to establish appropriate learning conditions, allowing the student to actualise more innate potential for relying on the senses in orientation - especially the kinaesthetic sense. What "opportunities for experiencing" ("Erfahrungsgelegenheit" Jacoby 1987:18) can the student be offered so that s/he can discover independently how differences are perceived and how movement takes place, i.e. how can the student attain a greater degree of awareness with regard to the way s/he organises movement? Such understanding provides the student with means of discovering to what extent s/he is capable and willing to change the way s/he moves (and acts).

The Student-Teacher Relationship: During the process of organic learning student and teacher experiment and learn together in an open-ended research situation, as it is characteristic of 'field work'. Subject and outcome of a Feldenkrais lesson are thus not predetermined. The teacher respects the student's dignity, adapting voice, language, and general behaviour accordingly. The teacher's guiding principle in this relationship is to see the student as the person s/he is about to become, and to refrain from criticising or correcting the student's current state or posture. The teacher also abstains from imposing any advice on the student. The capacity for facilitating such a learning process make great demands on the Feldenkrais Practitioner's personality and professional training.

The Feldenkrais Practitioner trusts both the personal learning process and the possibilities of life-long learning. S/he needs to have explored her/his own movement-organisation and personal perceptual mode, and has to continue such experimentation. The practitioner thereby acquires the “necessary delicacy of touch and clarity of sensing” (Feldenkrais 1964:53), thinking, and feeling as prerequisites for work with others. Differentiation on the part of the practitioner is essential for establishing the kind of contact and interaction with the student that is specific to the Feldenkrais Method.

Summary of the learning-concept in the Feldenkrais Method: In order to learn in the organic mode (in contrast to its academic counterpart) exploration of movements in Feldenkrais lessons is self-motivated, pursued with **mindfulness** and **attention** (focused inwards), and (if possible) accompanied by a **sense of well-being**. What matters is willingness (or openness to that possibility) to become receptive to sense impressions, to register them, and to respond (“quality of sensation”, “Eindrucksqualität” Jacoby 1987:14). As a rule movements are done slowly. In this way even the smallest differences can be perceived (see Weber/Fechner Law). As a result movements can be performed in a more deliberate way, the degree of effort can be more easily regulated, and mistakes may, if necessary, be corrected (**cortical control**). The quality of the movements under investigation can thus be improved. Such **slowness** also has the advantage of allowing the student to observe partial aspects of a movement within the context of the overall action to which they belong, and thus understand them as *constitutional elements* within the function that is ultimately the focus of the experiment. Finally, time is required to discover how the learning process affects the self-image which is of such crucial importance for behaviour (see Feldenkrais 1966:8).

1.2 Activities

1.2.1 Learning Procedures

Feldenkrais work is always a voluntary enterprise. Feldenkrais lessons are not prescribed. As a rule students participate because they are interested - and only for as long as that continues to be the case. The Feldenkrais Practitioner awakens and fosters students' own motivation if they take lessons on somebody else's advice or recommendation. Two learning procedures are applied:

1. Awareness Through Movement®

- *Awareness through Movement* usually involves group classes with the students either lying on mats, kneeling, sitting on a chair or the floor, or standing. Students will often be engaged in investigating the transition from one position to another, for example, from lying on the back to lying face down, from lying to sitting, from sitting to standing. Many *Awareness through Movement* lessons take place lying on the floor so as to de-activate the antigravity muscles.
- During group classes the teacher verbally guides the students through a movement sequence. However, participants are not required to follow the instructions as precisely as possible. Instead the sequentially structured suggestions for movement constitute guidelines for the students' own exploration. During the search for personal solutions a variety of ideas connected with a particular movement-theme will present themselves to the learner. "What's new will arise of its own accord" (see also Walterspiel 1989) just as in children's play (see 1.1.3).
- During the class students are mainly engaged in observing themselves via their own movements. Generally there is time for exchanges of experience, questions and answers, either before and after the class or in the breaks. The Feldenkrais Practitioner may also invite the students to observe each other as they explore movement sequences. Students are often surprised to discover how much other participants' movements differ from their own. They tend to judge others by their own standards, considering their personal 'solution' to be 'normal'. Amazement about the great variety of possible organisations of movement helps them to identify their own habitual way of moving, encouraging experimentation with new possibilities. This experience relativises their personal way of perceiving since refinement of *self-perception (Proprioception)* is accompanied by a growing capacity to notice how others organise their movements (*Perception of Others*). In this way students learn to see and respect each other with all their differences.
- As a rule the Feldenkrais Practitioner refrains from demonstrating movements. Instead s/he facilitates the students' learning as a process which proceeds by way of kinaesthetic perception from *inside outwards* (see 1.1.1).
- The Feldenkrais Practitioner frequently switches "from instruction to description and inquiry" (Reese 1985:24). This "shift" is characteristic of Awareness through Movement lessons.
- The Feldenkrais Practitioner asks questions intended to stimulate and guide the students' sensorimotor attention and thereby expand their self-image.

For example: How does the student's body contact the floor and what changes can be observed in this respect as the lesson proceeds?

How do movements follow a specific trajectory through the body (*Chain of Motion*, see Goldfarb 1990)?

How is the relationship between movement and breathing experienced?

What differences can be noticed for example between the two sides of the body when movement exploration is restricted to just one side?

What inner attitude accompanies the experiencing of movements and what sensations, feelings, and thoughts are aroused (relating to greater or lesser ease of implementation and imagining, pleasurability, strangeness or familiarity, frustration etc.)?

- The Feldenkrais Practitioner encourages students to do movements slowly and take frequent rests.

All conscious acts consist of two phases which normally follow each other in very quick succession. The first is the preparatory phase (planning of movement), the second is performance of the action. “There is a minute time interval between the two which makes it possible to learn to inhibit or enhance the preparatory mobilisation by volition” (Feldenkrais 1964:56), i.e. to change the intended movement (see also 1.1.3 *Cortical Control*).

The Feldenkrais Practitioner frequently inserts pauses in instructions, giving students opportunities to stop and take a rest. They thus have a chance to begin a movement afresh and to notice changes - for instance in their contact with the floor.
- The Feldenkrais Practitioner invites students to investigate familiar and unfamiliar movements in a non-habitual position, and to explore one and the same movement process from different starting points (for instance: reaching with one hand towards the foot while lying on the back, on one side, sitting...)

This “continued novelty of situation” (Feldenkrais 1964:54) keeps the nervous system alert and arouses the student’s curiosity.
- The Feldenkrais Practitioner encourages students to perform movements using less and less effort (*economy of movement*). Students learn how each muscle can participate equally (relative to size) in an action; for example how to involve the strong muscles in the pelvic area correspondingly more than those in the upper arms (see Feldenkrais 1951:35-39).

This “gradual reduction of useless effort is necessary in order to increase kinaesthetic sensitivity without which a person cannot become self-regulating” (Feldenkrais: 1964:54 - Weber-Fechner Law). “Effective movement is effortless” (ibid.). Experience of ease thus serves as a yardstick for quality of movement. Hence what is important is not the movement as such (*what*) but the way it is performed (*how*).
- The Feldenkrais Practitioner employs voice and language in a differentiated way, choosing and employing words with care, paying special attention to vocal accentuation. Such an approach fosters a positive attitude in the students, characterised by care and self-respect.

The Feldenkrais Practitioner adapts instructions to the students’ kinaesthetic experience. S/he may thus occasionally take up some of the participants’ individual solutions and invite the whole group to explore them as interesting movement variations.

The Feldenkrais Practitioner verbally accompanies the learning process, i.e. instead of inviting students to place the elbow on the knee (goal oriented) s/he will ask them to move the elbow in the direction of the knee (process oriented), thus giving students a chance to perform the movement lightly and pleasurably. Only in this way will kinaesthetic sensibility be fostered as a prerequisite for allowing new movement-organisation to arise.
- Many *Awareness through Movement* lessons are based on motor development in infants and/or refer to movements involved in everyday functions (see 1.1.3).

2. **Functional Integration**[®]

- *Functional Integration* is the term used for individual lessons in the Feldenkrais Method (see Rywerant 1983). These are largely non-verbal. The student remains dressed and usually lies on a table specially adapted to Feldenkrais work. Individual lessons can, however, also be conducted while the student is sitting, standing, or walking. Different kinds of support material such as rollers, cushions, etc. may be used as required.
- *Functional Integration* is a form of tactile kinaesthetic communication, i.e. the Feldenkrais Practitioner uses her/his hands, gently touching and moving the student in order to give the learner an opportunity to observe self-organisation (actual state). In addition the student is enabled to establish “a new neuromuscular image of movement, which then becomes the basis of altered movement patterns in daily life” (Reese 1985:22). The student thus learns new and more efficient ways of self-organisation.
- The Feldenkrais Practitioner transposes the student’s description of her/his problem into categories making it accessible to movement work. The practitioner asks: How does the way this person moves give rise to that particular problem? The student thereby begins to perceive the problem of limited functioning within a context of activity which is subject to deliberate control through conscious observation of her/his own movements (see Goldfarb 1990).
- The Feldenkrais Practitioner does not override the student’s resistance, but instead takes up and reinforces the student’s present organisation of movement. This allows the student to notice and abandon unnecessary effort and tension.
- In this form of lesson student and teacher constitute a functional unity where perception and movement are linked through mutual feedback. The practitioner’s individual capacities (differentiated perception and organisation - see also 1.1.3) are of crucial importance in this kind of movement dialogue.

1.2.2 Educational Strategies

The Feldenkrais Practitioner can resort to a number of different strategies. S/he will employ them as required and with varying emphasis, for example:

- Reinforcing, constricting, and interrupting movement habits.
- Leaving the learning goal open. Students' attention thus shifts from the objective to the means and ways employed.
- Giving opportunities for discovering playful curiosity.
- Supporting 'mistakes' and detours. Indirect solutions thus become possible.
- Using relative conjugate movements such as having "a proximal (heavy) part moving relative to a stationary distal part" (Rywerent 1883:71) and vice versa.
- Visualization: moving in the imagination.
- Directing attention from details to the whole and back to details.
- Inviting students to notice differences and relationships (Sensorimotor attention).

1.2.3 Possible Results of the Feldenkrais Method

Feldenkrais work can lead to the following results:

- Improvement, Increase, Expansion, Promotion of
 - Self-confidence, (self-) acceptance, respect for others, autonomy, and responsibility
 - Aptitude for learning in all domains (*Learning to learn*)
 - Capacity for self-direction (ability to help oneself)
 - Capacity for taking action/Opening up of hitherto unavailable dimensions of perception and action
 - Ability to relate (Recognition and establishment of interrelationships)
 - Efficiency, perseverance, well-being, and vitality
 - Flexibility (physical, mental, psychological adaptability)
 - Orientation in space and time
 - Self-perception (Proprioception)
 - Kinaesthesia
 - Awareness and ability to notice how one organises movement (Expansion of self- and body-image)
 - Economy of movement (Interaction of body parts, co-ordination, adapting effort to the intended action, dealing with gravity, etc.)
 - Quality of movement (Precision and simplicity of movement sequences, elegance, harmony, gracefulness of movement)
 - Respiration (freer, more adaptable)
 - Erect posture (as a dynamic process related to action)
- Reduction/ gradual elimination of
 - Useless effort and unnecessary tension
 - Sensorimotor amnesia
 - Pain
- Changes of attitude to learning (From *I must learn* to *I can learn*)

1.2.4 Target Groups

As a learning method Feldenkrais work is suitable for everyone. Beneficiaries include people who want to improve their own quality of life, and/or become more efficient in their actions. The Feldenkrais Practitioner therefore works in a great variety of contexts (listed alphabetically):

- (1) The Arts
For example dance, music, theatre, singing
- (2) Education
Kindergarten, school, vocational school, college and university, special education, adult education, personal growth, youth work, care/education for the elderly
- (3) Health
Prevention and health education, rehabilitation, work with the disabled, psychosomatics, psychotherapy, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, prenatal care, geriatrics
- (4) Recreation
- (5) Social work, social education, rehabilitation
- (6) Sports
For example skiing, running, riding, golf, tennis
- (7) Work and Vocation
Communications, management, ergonomics

2. Training and Ongoing Professional Education (still in preparation, see Foreword)

3. Developments and Situation

3.1 Professional Situation

In 1987 graduates completed the first Feldenkrais Professional Training Programme to be held in Germany (following Israel and the USA see 1.1.2). Since then there have been more and more trainings in Germany, Europe, and elsewhere in the world. By 1996 there were about 1000 accredited Feldenkrais Practitioners in Germany. The Feldenkrais-Gilde e.V. was established in 1985 as the first German professional association. Membership is voluntary. The Guild is affiliated with the International Feldenkrais Federation (IFF). In 1988 Feldenkrais Practitioners trained by Mia Segal formed a second professional body, the *Feldenkrais-Network e.V.* .

3.1.1 Development of the Profession

According to experts we live in an “individualised risk society” (Beck 1992). Today, towards the end of the millennium, more and more people are challenged to demonstrate ability and willingness to forego the security of traditional ties - such as social and regional background -, taking their lives into their own hands and living them in a responsible way. The social norm of inner and outer mobility holds good even if the lived reality in no way corresponds to the degree of self-determination suggested by the currently available variety of opportunities. Progressive release from social ties and existential necessities still binding for grandparents goes hand in hand with restriction of newly-won freedoms (for instance, legal regulation, standardization - to some extent through the mass media -, narrowing of educational opportunities due to overcrowding of facilities, high unemployment). In such a situation it is natural that new professions should emerge with the declared purpose of training active efficiency and flexibility, and of raising the threshold for tolerance of frustration. This presents Feldenkrais Practitioners with a wealth of vocational possibilities. All the more so since they can offer a learning method - tailored to the brain’s way of functioning, involving the experience of consciously performed movements - which is capable of developing, improving, and refining ability to act efficiently.

With regard to the world of **gainful employment** that means the following: Professional qualifications tend to entail both increasing specialisation and broader ‘generalisation’. In demand are complex and integrated thinking, people with a wide range of educational backgrounds and inner resources, life-long learning, more flexible professional profiles and working hours, etc. The Feldenkrais Method is capable of refining special abilities and skills (for instance, improving differentiation in a particular field of activity) while at the same time contributing to people’s general personality development and ability to act effectively (leading towards greater maturity in terms of actualizing the nervous system’s potential, and more cultivated human qualities, see 1.1.1).

With regard to the **health system** that means: On the one hand the continuing cost explosion promotes trends towards individualisation. People begin to take greater responsibility for their own health. On the other hand this development is accompanied by a trend involving limitation of patients’ choices and restrictions on those working in health care. Health education is becoming ever more important in discussions about a new definition of the concept of health, thus bringing into focus new occupations which transcend conventional distinctions between educational and medical functions. As a profession whose multidisciplinary approach is geared towards the individual, promoting personal responsibility, unhampered by any need for additional equipment etc., Feldenkrais work can reckon with growing demand.

3.1.2 Professional Prospects

Feldenkrais Practitioners are finding that their professional prospects extend into ever more areas of activity (see 3.1.3), **cutting across** existing professional structures and divisions. Opportunities for *comprehensive and integrative thinking* are thus opening up. Areas of work which used to be viewed and treated separately (such as *healing* and *learning*) can be brought together in a new frame of reference. Present trends towards interdisciplinary co-operation are on the increase - largely because of considerations of cost-effectiveness. Feldenkrais work can be seen as a 'trend-setter' in that respect. It constitutes a new multifunctional form of professional activity based on integration of a diversity of theoretical and practical aspects (see also Pieper 1993). The Feldenkrais Method is particularly suited to that role since intermeshing of different disciplines characterises its basic make-up and intention - involving areas such as neuro-, movement, and cognitive sciences, psychology, sociology, medicine, physics, philosophy, sports, art, music etc. (see Theoretical Foundations 1.1.2).

Professional prospects vary widely depending on individual areas of work (see 3.1.3) and are to some extent determined by the Feldenkrais Practitioner's basic and additional qualifications. Such trends are likely to lead to growing demand in the educational, training, and health systems as well as in paid applications (see 3.1.1). The Feldenkrais Method aims primarily at promotion of flexibility, creativity, and innovation, and systematically develops such qualities in those who qualify to teach the method. Thus both the nature of their activities and personal development equip Feldenkrais Practitioners with abilities and skills corresponding to society's demands for flexibility and capacity for life-long learning.

3.1.3 Areas of Activity

Feldenkrais Practitioners possess many basic and extra qualifications. They can therefore be employed in a great variety of contexts. The majority of practitioners operate independently, doing full- or part-time paid work as a second job in different institutions (adult education centres, schools, clinics/hospitals). As yet only few Feldenkrais Practitioners are employed full-time by state or private institutions, but their number is growing. Areas of activity correspond to the target groups already mentioned (see 1.2.4). The field of scientific research holds out hardly more than initial opportunities. Present developments in the USA indicate a trend towards establishing the Feldenkrais Method in the context of movement- and cognitive sciences, and also towards seeking cooperation with the neurosciences (see 1.1.2). A similar development is anticipated and being promoted in Germany.

Distribution of Feldenkrais Practitioners in Germany is very uneven depending on where training programmes have taken place. Until now the number of practitioners is least in the East and greatest in the South of the country.

3.2 Earnings

Earnings differ greatly according to place of work and individual initiative. In fixed employment salaries still tend to depend on the Feldenkrais Practitioner's previous basic or extra qualifications. If the practitioner's work in different employment situations corresponds to teaching and psychotherapy, grouping in an equivalent salary category is sought.

4. Bibliography

4.1 Titles mentioned in the Text

- Affolter, Félice: *Wahrnehmung, Wirklichkeit und Sprache*, Neckar-Verlag, Villingen-Schwenningen 1987
- Alon, Ruthy: *Mindful Spontaneity. Moving in Tune with Nature. Lessons in the Feldenkrais Method*, Prism-Press, Bridport 1990
- Beck, Ulrich: *Risk Society. Towards a New Modernity*, Sage, London 1992
- Beckenbach, Niels / Treeck, Werner van (Hrsg.): *Umbrüche gesellschaftlicher Arbeit, Soziale Welt, Zeitschrift für sozialwissenschaftliche Forschung und Praxis, Sonderband 9/1994*
- Berger, Peter / Luckmann, Thomas: *The Social Construction of Reality. A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, Doubleday & Company, New York, Anchor Books edition: 1967
- Czetzok, Hans-Erich: *Die Feldenkrais-Methode. Bibliothek der Feldenkrais-Gilde e.V. Nr. 8*, Stuttgart/Bad Salzuflen 1995
- Feldenkrais, Moshé: *Body and Mature Behaviour. A Study of Anxiety, Sex, Gravitation and Learning*, Routledge and Kegan, London 1949 /International Universities Press Inc. New York 1950
- : *Higher Judo*, Frederick Warne & Co, London 1951
 - : *Mind and Body. Two Lectures delivered at the Copenhagen Congress of Functional Movement and Relaxation, Systematics - The Journal of the Institute for the Comparative Study of History, Philosophy and the Sciences; Vol.2, No. 1, June 1964, p. 47-61*
 - : *Image, Movement and Actor: Restoration of Potentiality (Interview)*, Tulane Drama Review, Vol. 10, No. 3, Spring 1966, translated and edited by Kelly Morris
 - : *The Elusive Obvious or Basic Feldenkrais*, Meta Publications, Cupertino 1981
 - : *Self-Fulfilment Through Organic Learning*, Journal of Holistic Health, Vol. 7, 1982 (Lecture delivered at the Mandala Conference, San Diego, 1981a)
 - : *Awareness Through Movement. Health Exercises for Personal Growth*, Penguin Books Ltd, Harmondsworth 1987
- Ginsburg, Carl: *The Roots of Functional Integration, Part I: Biology and Feldenkrais*, Feldenkrais Journal, Vol. 3/1987, p. 13-24; *Part II: Communication and Learning*, Feldenkrais Journal, Vol. 4/1988, p. 13-19; *Part III: The Shift in Thinking*, Vol.7/1992, p. 34-47
- : *Is there a Science of the Feldenkrais Magic? Keynote Address at the 1. European Feldenkrais Conference 1.-5. June 1995*, Report, International Feldenkrais Federation (IFF) 1996, p. 7-12
- Goldfarb, Lawrence Wm.: *Articulating Changes. Preliminary Notes to a Theory of Feldenkrais*, Feldenkrais Resources, Berkeley, c. 1990
- International Feldenkrais Federation (IFF) (ed.): *Report 1. European Feldenkrais Conference 1.-5. June 1995*, Heidelberg, Paris 1996
- Jacoby, Heinrich: *Jenseits von 'begabt' und 'unbegabt'. Zweckmäßige Fragestellung und zweckmäßiges Verhalten - Schlüssel für die Entfaltung des Menschen*, Christians, Hamburg 1987
- Maturana, Humberto R. / Varela, Francisco J.: *The Tree of Knowledge. The Biological Roots of Human Understanding*, New Science Library, Boston & London 1988
- Pieper, Barbara: *Lernen oder Heilen, ein Plädoyer für ein Verständnis von Feldenkrais als Lernmethode*, in *Feldenkrais-Forum 22/1993*, p. 40-46
- : *Subjektorientierung jenseits des Zaunes: Anregungen für die Praxis - Ideen aus der Praxis (Feldenkrais-Methode). Lecture at the Symposium Subjektorientierte Soziologie - Prozesse und Instanzen der Vermittlung von Individuen und Gesellschaftsstrukturen. Munich 12./13. July 1996 (published in Hans Pongratz/ G. Günther Voß: Subjektorientierte Soziologie. Leske und Budrich, Leverkusen 1997)*
- Portmann, Arthur: *Zoologie und das neue Bild des Menschen*, Hamburg 1st edition 1956 (English: *A Zoologist Looks at Human Kind*, Columbia University Press 1990)

- Reed, Edward: An Outline of a Theory of Action Systems, in Journal of Motor Behaviour 1982, 14, 2, p. 98-134
- Reese, Mark: Moshé Feldenkrais' Verbal Approach to Somatic Education: Parallels to Milton Erickson's Use of Language Somatics Autumn/Winter 1985/86, p. 21-31
- : Function: Realizing Intentions, in Feldenkrais Journal Vol. 7/1992, p. 14-20
- Rywerant, Yochanan: The Feldenkrais Method, Teaching by Handling, Harper & Row, Publishers, San Francisco 1983
- Stern, Daniel: The Interpersonal World of the Infant, A View from Psychoanalysis and Developmental Psychology, Basic Books, Inc. Publishers, New York 1985
- Thelen, Esther / Smith, Linda B.: A Dynamic Systems Approach to the Development of Cognition and Action, MIT Press 1994
- Varela, Francisco J.: Large Scale Integration in the Nervous System and Embodied Experience: Special Guest lecture at the 1. European Feldenkrais Conference 1.-5. June 1995, Heidelberg published in the Conference Report, International Feldenkrais Federation (IFF) 1996, p. 12-15
- Voß, G. Günther: Das Ende der Teilung von "Arbeit und Leben". An der Schwelle zu einem neuen Verhältnis von Betriebs- und Lebensführung, in: Beckenbach/van Treeck 1994, p. 269-294
- Walterspiel, Beatriz: Das Abenteuer der Bewegung. Die Feldenkrais Methode, Bewußtheit durch Bewegung-Lektionen auf Tonkassette, Kösel, Munich 1989
- Weizsäcker, Viktor von: Der Gestaltkreis. Theorie der Einheit von Wahrnehmen und Bewegen, George Thieme, Leipzig 1947 (6th edition 1996)
- Wurm, Franz: Afterword to Moshé Feldenkrais: Bewußtheit durch Bewegung, Insel, Frankfurt a.M. 1995, p. 241- 279

4.2 Additional reading (Selection)

- Feldenkrais, Moshé: The Forebrain: Sleep, Consciousness, Awareness and Learning, Interview with Edward Rosenfeld, Interface Journal, No. 3-4, 1976
- : The Potent Self. A Guide to Spontaneity, Harper & Row, Publishers, San Francisco 1985 (written in the 40s, published posthumously)
- Foerster, Heinz von: Ethik und Kybernetik zweiter Ordnung. Bibliothek der Feldenkrais-Gilde e.V. Nr.9, Stuttgart/Bad Salzuflen 1995. ("Ethics and Second-Order-Cybernetics", first published in: Rey, Y./Prieur,B.: Systèmes, Ethique, Perspectives en Thérapie Familiale, ESF Editeur, Paris 1991)
- Gruen, Arno: Lernen ohne Anstrengung - erstrebenswertes oder minderwertiges Ziel? In: Neue Zürcher Zeitung 5./6. July 1980 Reprinted in: Feldenkrais Forum Nr. 29/1996, p. 45-48
- Hanna, Thomas: Moshé Feldenkrais: The Silent Heritage in Somatics, Vol. V, No. 1 1984/84, p. 22-30
- : The Body of Life, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. New York 1980 Newell, Garet: Moshé Feldenkrais. A Biographic Sketch of his Early Years, Feldenkrais Journal, Vol. 7/1992
- Newell, Garet: Moshé Feldenkrais. A Biographical Sketch of his Early Years, Feldenkrais-Journal, Vol. 7/1992
- Pfeffer, Myriam: The Feldenkrais Method, Lecture given at the Congress of Somatherapy, Paris 1988, translated by Ilana Nevill, in: Feldenkrais Journal UK No. 3/Spring 1992
- Strauch, Ralph: The Reality Illusion. How You Make the World Your Experience, Station Will Press, Inc., Barrytown, New York 1983
- Triebel-Thome, Anna: Feldenkrais. Bewegung - ein Weg zum Selbst. Einführung in die Methode, Gräfe und Unzer, Munich 1989
- Wilhelm, Rainer: Feldenkrais, kurz und praktisch, Bauer, Freiburg i.B. 1996

The Authors, Publishers, and Translator

Karin Engels-Maurer

Feldenkrais Training 1989-1992 (Hamburg, Educational Director: Jerry Karzen); First degree in Art Education and Biology, Diploma in Sport Education and Therapy, 6 years involvement in an independent theatre group (acting and directing), at present working as a self-employed Feldenkrais Practitioner at Lohmar near Cologne; member of the Feldenkrais-Gilde executive committee from 1993-1996, delegate to the International Feldenkrais Federation (IFF) 1996.

Christoph Görtz

Feldenkrais Training 1988-1992 (Malmö I, Educational Director: Gaby Yaron), Diploma in Sport Education; working as a self-employed Feldenkrais Practitioner in Paderborn; Chairman of the Feldenkrais-Gilde executive committee since 1993; member of the the International Feldenkrais Federation (IFF) board of directors 1993-1996

Ilana Nevill

Feldenkrais Training 1986-1990 (London, Educational Directors: Anat Baniel, Russell Delman); Diplomas in Educational Science (Cologne 1974), Yoga, and Therapeutic Massage; editor of the Feldenkrais Journal UK and member of the British Feldenkrais Guild executive committee 1990-1993; works as a self-employed Feldenkrais Practitioner at Bath; certified by European Accreditation Training Board (Euro TAB) as an assistant trainer in 1996.

Barbara Pieper

Feldenkrais Training 1986-1989 (Munich II, Educational Director: Gaby Yaron); Diploma in Sociology, Ph.D. in Social Sciences; many years of teaching, research, and administration at Munich University; works as a self-employed Feldenkrais Practitioner at Gräfelfing near Munich; member of the extended board of the Feldenkrais-Gilde (regional representation for Bavaria) 1991-1993, replacement member of the International Feldenkrais Federation (IFF) mediation committee.

Sylvia Weise

Feldenkrais Training 1989-1992 (Neuss III, Educational Director: Chava Shelhav); physiotherapist, works as a self-employed Feldenkrais Practitioner at Hofheim near Frankfurt; member of the Feldenkrais-Gilde executive committee since 1996.

BB englische Fassung