

REFLECTIONS AND PROPOSALS FOR: TRAINING DESIGN OF FELDENKRAIS® PROFESSIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMS

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Submitted to: Feldenkrais Community of trainings

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NOTE: THIS IS A DOCUMENT in-progress SUBMITTED TO OUR COLLEAGUES TO ENCOURAGE DIALOGUE. WE INVITE FEEDBACK AND FURTHER COMMENTS.

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Context

As the *Feldenkrais*® community is currently interested in reviewing the policy and efficiency of training programs we address ourselves here to process and content of training programs. Many reasons bring us to want to do this contribution at this point.

1-The training policy has been in action for a long time now and many models have developed over the years, in various educational plans. Though the circulation of trainers in training programs has permitted quite a bit of influence between educational plans, it seems that an explicit discussion of these educational plans could be helpful before reorienting our policies.

2- On what may seem like a completely other topic, in some countries and areas, there seems to be a strong feeling of frustration in the community of graduates in their ability to establish themselves in a "purely" Feldenkrais practice, whether it is a matter of starting a new practice or evolve a Feldenkrais practice from another profession. This phenomenon is difficult to measure, and it varies obviously from one place to another, also from one training program to another. This dissatisfaction is often and in great part attributed to the "faults and defects" of the

training programs. Whether this is true or not, there is in fact no way to compare and describe let alone evaluate the training programs' content and process. And the feeling of frustration is widespread in our community, and if we do not address it it will backlash against the work, as some signs seem to show already. The establishment of a practice is surely not a pure question of marketing and notoriety of the work. Let us look at the composition of training programs too.

3-Partly through the pressure of legislation in a variety of countries and states, partly in an attempt to mature in our own development, there is currently a lot of interest in the refinement of the process of *certification* and in the composition of "*competency-based*" training programs. Both of these intentions need to rest on a well described model of competence and on clearly defined contents and processes of training programs.

4-Finally, the *professional* question needs choice and clarification in our community. For example do we offer 'professional trainings' or 'trainings for professionals'? Does our profession stand on it's own, or does it take part in a broader disciplinary domain such as *Somatic Education*, *Movement Education*, *Movement Sciences* etc.

All of these questions will be considered in a different light if we clarify the nature of our work through the training process and content. Whether we have a distinct profession, and surely a distinct method, we need to clarify it's process and content, and eventually develop a common vocabulary. Much of this is implicit at this point. Our intent is to facilitate and continue the conversations between us in an attempt to make the implicit explicit, the explicit discussed and the discussed esthetically harmonized though differentiated. We surely do not intend to sanitize the training programs and make them standardized. But we profoundly believe in the on-going conversation among the training community.

A-THE PROCESS MODELS OF FPTP

Feldenkrais® Training Programs around the world vary a lot both in their content and process. Let us discuss here first the '*process-models*' i.e. the various ways that training programs approach the pedagogy of the preparation of future practitioners. There are few formal opportunities and mechanisms to compare, discuss and eventually evaluate the congruence let alone the efficiency of our different training models. Without going here into details and hopefully without caricaturizing too much the models, and being aware that few training programs reflect an only model, a few trends seem nevertheless easily identified in the profile of training programs. Our intent here is to qualify each model in order for the community to discuss what seems to us pedagogical options that are either implicit or explicit but deserve attention for our future steps. As each model is described and compared to its alternatives, it will probably be easy for our readers to identify the limits and problems created by each of the single model: the strengths of one become the limits of the other. Nevertheless, we distinguish here three trends of model:

a) The experiential-immersion model: Though everyone in the Feldenkrais community would agree with the relevance and primacy of experience over analysis and verbalization, this "experiential-immersion" model involves prolonged immersion in sensory-motor and awareness processes. The emphasis can be on the transformational-development changes available through the process of the training as well as the development of an expanded sensitivity and awareness for students. Self discovery is key, and intellectual questions are subjected in priority to an experiential analysis. The tendency is toward individual experience and working with a partner. In this model, the trainees' questions, their conceptual preoccupations are re-oriented in the domain of their experience. The priority is to develop self-reference and autonomous thinking. The training in the 'experiential-immersion' model is mostly a process of non-verbal research into self-perception and eventually a refinement of feeling skills through the contact of hands. These perceptual and feeling skills become the basis for professional intervention with others.

b) The experiential-expressive model: some programs, either early on or later as the years go by, propose to their trainees a process by which they not only

experience our material, but also learn to talk about it to express and match their experience with words, and compare it with the reports of the experience of other colleagues. This can be done around ATM and in FI, usually in small groups or duos, where the trainees learn to speak about their experience with one another, developing a common language to do that. That language is an emerging one, and is not "taught" by the trainers as such. And it is not necessarily discussed or harmonized in the whole group. But the participants come out of a purely non-verbal state of experience and begin to grow a skill and a language to express themselves and describe and understand the work.

c) The experience-and-analysis model: In this case, trainees are not only immersed in their experience but are also taught sometimes early on in the training years, certain models and language distinctions for analysis, observation, verbalization. Not only trainees are phenomenologically called upon, but also they have to learn to see, observe and study movement, analyze it and reflect on their process, their strategies as they teach. Reflection and analysis are encouraged, in order to formulate the implicit principles of ATM and FI lessons. There is an emphasis on creating a common professional explicit basis of reference that can be described and shared with other professionals. Such analytical models may arise partly from other disciplines, or be the result of some trainer's research. In training programs inspired mostly by this source, it is often expected that students can not only do the work but also identify and grow the concepts and ideas supporting the specifics of our method, understand the structure and the generative rules of ATM and FI.

B-The "modular" content of training programs

When analyzing the nature of our current training programs, it is relatively easy to identify the possible commonalities and the differences if we start to focus on the specifics of the contents proposed to the trainees in each program. We will use the word *"module"* to identify a certain unit of content of a training program. We actually propose here that we start relating to our contents in FPTP in this modular fashion. In the following paragraphs, we will draft a certain preliminary profile of modules for a training program, for example, "human movement development", "teaching skills for ATM", "Table manners for FI", "ATMs to be transferred to FIs" etc. etc. Again, our intent here is to not only reflect to the community the content of FPTP but to also propose to the community to start studying and composing and accrediting the training programs according to such a modular structure.

Lets us identify here some of the possible advantages of modular structure:

- With modular design, it will become easy to identify and compare the specific contents of training programs.
- The competency-based process will merge with the modular structure of training programs.
- The evaluation of the trainees' progression can be monitored all along.
- When trainees miss a segment and need to make up, they will need to make up the specifics or the module that they have missed.
- In a modular design, any of the previously identified training models can be implemented. But we could thus compare the programs and learn from each of them, eventually evaluate the quality of practice and competence of the graduates, according to both a description of content and process.
- Please note that modules can also overlap each other, and can be weaved with each other, they are not necessarily mutually exclusive or linear.
- Modular structures do not limit a trainer's creativity as such, they simply give a form and container. But yes, improvising what to teach on that day will become more difficult, as trainers could receive more and more precise mandates from educational directors, and educational directors would commit to teaching contents that are specific.

-As we develop modular designs for FFTP, we can also give ourselves a chance to grow cumulatively our expertise, not having to reinvent the wheel every time we compose a training program. Modules can be accompanied with reading lists, articles, video documents and multi-media resources. The exchange of content between training programs can be facilitated and thus encouraged.

-Finally, with modular teaching, we could maximize the resources in the community, as some of our colleagues have grown over the years an exceptional expertise on one or the other modules and we could even think of having some video library modules that could be travelling around the training programs, just like we have some of Moshe's ATMs and lectures and FIs travelling around.

The modular proposal does not resolve it all, obviously, but it can surely create a basis for the conversations and evaluations that we need urgently to do in the coming months and years. The modular structure clarifies the content aspects of our trainings. Yet the process aspects, as schematically described above will need discussion, comparison and evaluation. Modular structures actually allow all of the above process models. And the conversation and experiments can go on.

A preliminary list of modules for FPTP

(the order of appearance of each module is not organized as such)

- Ontogenic development (human development)
 - Phylogenetic development (evolution of movement and movement in animals)
 - ATM series:
 - standing on the head (Am)
 - extending arms overhead (San Fr)
 - classic lessons (ATM book, etc)
 - sitting on heels (Alex. Y)
 - sitting on chairs series (Alex. Y etc, etc)
 - Anatomy for movement (functional anatomy)
 - Movement analysis (Laban etc.)
 - The transfer of ATMs into FIs and the transfer of FIs into ATMs
 - Teaching of ATM skills (use of the voice, use of language, structures of ATM)
 - Introduction to working in pairs, trios, small groups for FI practices (feedback, non-judgmental observation etc)
 - Introduction to touch (intentions, qualities, feelings)
 - FI teaching skills (Table Manners, Floor Manners and Use of self in FI, interviewing skills and verbal contact in FI, strategies for FIs, listening to the voice in FI, opening, elaborating and closing lessons, the transfer of learning issue, the development of series of lessons)
 - Emotions and behavior and the Feldenkrais Method
 - Introduction to pathology as encountered frequently in a Feldenkrais practice (CP, back, stroke, MS, musculo-skeletal symptoms, 'psychological' breakdowns..)
 - Applications of our work in non-health domains: Arts, sports, education, business, corporate etc.
 - Breathing (physiology of and ATM series)
 - Posture and balance (acture, motor control, physiology)
 - Practice issues (ethics, business, community issues, history of the FM)
- This list needs obviously to be completed and discussed: please add to it or give us your comments.**

C- Towards A *Feldenkrais*® Lexicon

One of the possible occasions to create a synergetic conversation in our community of training would be to elaborate on the use of the concepts and terms serving the training designs. The following list gives examples of terms that we use in a variety of contexts, sometimes with a variety of meanings. Many of these words were part of Moshe's basic method. Other have emerged over the years. Here are a few of the terms that could start stimulating discussions and that we could agree eventually to use and in various countries translate in similar ways.

- Learning theme in a lesson
- The 'reported learning' (as expressed by a student)
- 'Needs' of a student compared to 'wants', or 'requests'
- Strategies, tactics, techniques in FI
- Movement of reference in ATM or FI (sometimes referred to as 'test')
- Meta-learning themes, compared to movement skills theme
- Pattern of mobilization
- Position as a conjunction of configuration of the joints and orientation in space (the word constellation is also used here)
- Reversibility
- Acture-posture
- Awareness
- Consciousness
- Attention
- Presence
- Function
- Integration
- Degrees of liberty or freedom
- Constraint
- Auxiliary movement
- Parasitic movement
- Movement skill
- Transition
- Comfort
- Neutral

- Connection
- Movement proposal (compared to movement instruction) in ATM
- Intention, orientation, synchronization, manipulation
- Feelings, sensations, perceptions
- Somatic education
- Movement education