

‘Weave’: The Feldenkrais Method as Choreographic Process

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This project report gives an insight into a choreographic research project, ‘Weave’, which was run during May 2009 at London Metropolitan University. ‘Weave’ was funded by ‘The Facility - Performance as Research Unit’ of the Performing Arts section of London Metropolitan University, as part of a series of research events entitled ‘Recording the Performance’. This report attempts something Moshe Feldenkrais (1904-1984), was deeply suspicious about; to transfer something concrete and practical into something abstract - language.

The work of Moshe Feldenkrais, and indeed this project, are rooted in experience, and like choreography itself, has its transformational potential through the experience of movement - embodied, enacted, and enworlded. But the work of Moshe Feldenkrais is linked to language, the biosemiotic, dynamic language of the living organism in its social environment, and through Feldenkrais’ huge oeuvre of ‘Awareness through Movement’ (ATM) lessons which are transmitted to the participant through verbal instruction. If indeed the first rule of the Feldenkrais Method is that ‘there is no rule’² then it must be a delight to try ‘to make the impossible possible’, to write about possible choreographic applications of an inter-subjective process that involves movement, sensing, feeling and thinking processes, which seems to me a choreographic process in itself.

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² Feldenkrais’ Zen-like rejection to adhere to one principle is found already in his early writings and forms a position that underpins the design of many of his ATM lessons. ‘I content that rigidity, whether physical or mental, i.e. the adherence to one principle to the utter exclusion of the opposite is contrary to the laws of life’ (Feldenkrais 2005; 18).

'Weave' forms part of a series of practical research projects, led by myself, which aims to investigate possible applications and resonances of the Feldenkrais Method within the context of performance making rather than performer training. It is the notion of 'embodied learning' which is at the heart of the work of Moshe Feldenkrais, that perhaps bridges the gap between training, performing, and performance making, and thus brings the Feldenkrais Method into a desired position to be researched, studied, experienced, applied and critiqued within the field of performing arts. Some research has been undertaken on the use of the Feldenkrais Method in the training of dancers, (Bober 2001, Fortin 2002, Long 2002, Kovic 2007). However, there has been little or no practical research into its use in choreographic process development. This is the focus of my own cross-disciplinary work. The current climate of changing demands on the dance practitioner towards reflective, self-generative, and socially-inclusive practice that bridges dance, health and education formed a key context of my research on the potential of The Feldenkrais Method as a resource for the dance maker.

My practice-based research profile emerged during my time as Senior Lecturer at Chichester University (1993-2002). My work at what was then UCC enabled me to begin to intertwine what at the beginning seemed to be two separate strands and interests: 'The Body in Performance' and 'Choreography in Context'. My research in 'The Body in Performance' was predominantly concerned with an outlook on the application of somatic processes within performance training and education. Subsequently this aspect of my research was reflected in the evolving curriculum design of the undergraduate dance provision at UCC during the 1990s, and led to my own training to become a practitioner of the Feldenkrais Method (Lewes 2003), partially funded by UCC.

The second aspect of my research profile 'Choreography in Context' emerged from a series of internationally performed dance works, most notably created in collaboration with writer/director Julia Pascal, which were mainly created outside of traditional dance making contexts - in cross disciplinary dance theatre - visual art contexts, within performed plays, in galleries, for the screen, or in site specific-out door contexts (large scale dance works with up to 250 performers in collaboration with choreographer Rosemary Lee during the

1990s). Those works included a broad range of collaborators and performers made up of professional dancers, actors, visual artists, non-dancers, and performers with disabilities. Within this context of the widening access of dance towards a diverse range of communities of performers my research interest of developing investigative, innovative and accessible modes of dance making and dance training and performance began to form.

I have been coordinating the syllabus for all practice-based modules on the MA Dance/Dance in Education at University of Limerick in Ireland since 1997 and have worked at London metropolitan University as Dance Coordinator for the BA Performing Arts since 2002. My own background as performer, performance maker, and educator led me to design a dance and movement based curriculum for the BA Performing Arts, which is rooted in reflective practice. The curriculum combines exploratory somatic practices (The Feldenkrais Method, LMA/Bartenieff Fundamentals, Yoga based experiential anatomy, Contact improvisation, Skinner Releasing Technique) with assessment and learning modes that highlight a 'dance making' perspective rooted in Central European modernist and US post-modern dance traditions.

In order to support student progress and my own understanding of applying the Feldenkrais Method as a resource for dance learning, I have worked extensively with evaluation and feedback forms which were concerned with students' self-perception and ability to transfer embodied knowledge, from laboratory-like ATM teaching and learning modes, to a variety of dance contexts. To my surprise, over the years, an overwhelming amount of students not only responded positively to questions regarding improved physical abilities and enhanced self-awareness, but highlighted a substantial increase in a growing confidence in developing creative, dance-making choices. My experiences within educational frameworks and a professional context of making dances in non-traditional contexts, including a site-specific work 'Urban Rituals' with 150 performers (and one dog!) in Hamburg, Germany in 2002, led me to a more formalised investigation into the application of the Feldenkrais Method as a choreographic resource.

At a time when contemporary choreographers work without codified signature styles, often in collaboration with their dancers, investigating a reflective, embodied process such as the Feldenkrais Method as part of an evolving somatically driven dance culture seemed timely to me - from the points of view of a performer/dance maker, dance-educator, and as a trained Feldenkrais practitioner. Goldfarb describes the role of the 'student' in process of a Feldenkrais lesson as *collaborative* (Goldfarb 1990, 149). Bales and Nettl-Fiol (2008) refer to the 'entrepreneurial dancer as the counterpart to the independent choreographer' within contemporary dance cultures that marks a general shift towards more eclectic modes of working collaboratively today. 'A growing number of choreographers are now moving away from the authoritarian mode and are acknowledging the contributions of their dancers' (Fortin, S. in Shapiro, S., 1998: 67). On her part, dance maker Gill Clarke visions the role of the dancer as 'facilitating experiences rather than delivering consumable goods' (Clarke; 2007).

My practice-based choreographic research was subsequently framed through support by 'The Facility', Chisenhale Dance Space London, and the Feldenkrais Guild of Germany who featured two projects during their annual national congress at Munich University in 2004, and during the 2nd European Feldenkrais Congress at Berlin Free University in 2005.³ I have subsequently run workshops applying the Feldenkrais Method within contemporary dance frameworks internationally, most recently at 'K3 German National Choreographic Centre' in Hamburg, Germany in July 2009 and at Tanzfabrik Berlin in January 2010. I am currently completing my practice-based PhD on 'The Art of Making Choices: Feldenkrais Method as a Resource for Dance Making' at London metropolitan University. The practice-led choreographic

3 Past practice based projects were concerned with: (a) how the Feldenkrais Method can serve as accessible resource for collaborative dance making with performers of mixed abilities; (b) how practices of embodiment and analysis inherent in the Feldenkrais Method can enhance the dance maker's ability to engage in investigative and reflective processes; (c) how 'imagined movement', a key strategy inherent in the Feldenkrais Method, can be transferred and de-constructed to digital program writing, and then re-constructed on to-be-animated objects; (d) questioned strategies towards learning and embodiment of dance vocabularies, and the choreographic application of investigative constructive strategies and devices inherent in the Feldenkrais Method; (e) drew from Feldenkrais' strategies towards 're-habitation', challenging body-uses of the performer and traditional modes of rehearsal strategies and character development; (f) focussed on probing Feldenkraisian de-familiarization strategies within dramatic dance contexts.

research project 'Weave' aimed to bring together a team of international contemporary dance makers and experienced somatic practitioners to investigate the use of the Feldenkrais Method as a resource within choreographic practices. The project, led by myself, included collaborations with three Feldenkrais colleagues who are all working within the field of dance or theatre, and with dance and theatre makers who have a specialist interest and expertise in somatic dance practices.⁴

The Feldenkrais Method was developed by Judo black-belt and nuclear physicist Dr. Moshe Feldenkrais and is regarded as one of the twentieth century's most influential body-learning systems within the field generally referred to as 'Somatics'.⁵ Based on a 'dynamic systems' understanding of movement behaviour, and aiming for a non-dualist perspective on learning, The Feldenkrais Method combines investigative strategies drawn from scientific methods with a focus on embodied self-awareness. Emphasising self-observation, Feldenkrais aims to foster an enhanced ability to make refined choices within chosen frameworks. Proposing a body-mind-environment unity the constructivist work of Moshe Feldenkrais explores practical dynamic possibilities of 'self imaging' (Beringer 2001) and of constructing a kinaesthetically empathic self through movement.

The specific aims of 'Weave' were multi-faceted : on the one hand this project sought to work through collaborative processes of networking between advanced somatically oriented dance makers, including qualified Feldenkrais, Body-Mind-Centering, and Pilates practitioners, thus placing the Feldenkrais Method in a fluid, discursive, trans-cultural field. On the other hand, a focus of the process was to probe a potential of Feldenkrais-based processes to intervene with, or to enhance choreographic processes with a specific focus on the re-working or extending of existing works. Here, the role of *questioning*

4 Feldenkrais Practitioners/ Dance Makers: Simonetta Alessandri, Thomas Kampe, Colin Poole, Victoria Worsley. Performers: Katsura Isobe, Stephanie Schober, (both certified Pilates practitioners); Alenka Herman, Lizzy Le Quesne, Adi Lerer, Ute Kanngiesser; Karin Potisk, Rahel Vonmoos (both certified practitioners of Body-Mind Centering) Lola Maury, Rohanna Eade, Valentina Golfieri, Zoe Solomons.

5 Thomas Hanna describes Somatics as "The art and science of the inner relational process between awareness, biological function, and environment, all three factors being understood as a synergetic whole" (Hanna, 1985, 1).

and *choice* as key topics and modes of transfer and facilitation of learning within the Feldenkrais Method were fore-grounded. Thirdly, the project, as part of a larger research trajectory, aimed to use choreographic knowledge and processes to re-interpret possibilities and understandings of The Feldenkrais Method within a current context of a 'cognitive turn' (Beringer 2006) in dance research, embracing a current tendency (Shusterman 2008, Noe 2009) to interpret 'consciousness' and 'mind' as inter-subjective, embodied and destabilised.

The week long practice based project probed selected topics of 'Awareness through Movement' lessons developed by Moshe Feldenkrais as a starting point for movement investigation, self and peer-observation, and as a resource for choreographic choice making. Our shared time in the studio



Weave Project: Dancer/Choreographer Alenka Herman. Photograph by Gigi Gigianello

consisted of verbally led Awareness through Movement lessons led by a team of trained Feldenkrais practitioners, improvisational and compositional tasks, and time for reflection, debate, and reflective peer support. Each participant either facilitated explorative sessions, or worked on either a solo dance or group piece. It emerged that most works that were created had an inter-subjective, 'extended' and relational focus: a questioning of 'self in a chosen environment', investigating responses to site-specific enquiries, or creating

performance in symbiotic relationship of the moving self to virtual, projected environments.

During the daily morning sessions we investigated strategies to access the mover's awareness and ability to participate in problem solving, in investigative, reflective, and constructive processes which are using movement, sensation, feeling, and thought as resource for choreographic enquiry. These are some of the questions that emerged throughout the process or served as starting point for practical investigation.⁶ Amann (2003) argues that somatic practices should be discussed within the field of 'transformative learning' and examines how somatic learning within or through the body contributes to the meaning making processes in the adult learner. How can the application and transfer of selected aspects of Feldenkrais Method, an educational approach and a key somatic practice, aid the empowerment of the choreographer, dancer, or learner? How can aspects of the work of Moshe Feldenkrais, who put the notion of 'choice' at the heart of his practices support the development of a capacity for choreographic decision making and judgement? How can the concept of 'dexterity', within a dance context, as "...an ability to quickly find a correct solution for a problem in any situation." (Bernstein, in Kovic 2007:2) be extended to the fostering of a 'choreographic dexterity' of the dance maker? How can the emphasis on a felt 'kinaesthetic empathy' within Feldenkrais based movement learning processes be transferred to aid the development of an enhanced 'Choreographic Empathy'. Drawing on Feldenkrais' non-dualist view on enacted cognition as 'body-mind-environment unity' (Feldenkrais, 1985), how can the role of the choreographer be re-envisioned as a facilitator of a 'Choreographic Environment'? Can somatic practices such as the Feldenkrais Method leading to an expanded choreographic reading, be affiliated to the interdisciplinary field of 'Biosemiotics'?

6 The process was documented with support of Marie Joy Clay in several stages. Stage 1: preparation and defining of project aims through email exchanges which include project proposals, discussions between participants, sharing of relevant literature and web links. Stage 2: The practical process made up of (a) the morning sessions: through notes by participants, notes taken by 'documenter' MJ Clay; photographs by invited photographer (b) rehearsals: through reflective journals based on questionnaire, photographs and drawings by 'documenter' MJ Clay (c) plenary: feeds into questionnaire; notes of 'documenter' MJ Clay. Stage 3: The performance, programme notes, photographs and DVD which includes filmed discussions.

Kalevi Kull (1999: 358) states that: 'Biosemiotics can be defined as the science of signs in living systems. A principal and distinctive characteristic of semiotic biology lays in the understanding that in living, entities do not interact like mechanical bodies, but rather as messages, the pieces of text. This means that the whole determinism is of another type. Semiotic interactions do not take the place of physical necessity (however not contradicting this, or as stated by W. Elsasser (1982): laws of quantum mechanics hold), but because some of the interactors have learned to do so (using the notion of 'learning' in a broad sense here).' In his early writings Feldenkrais talks about '...a functional unity between environment, mind, and body... the mind-body concept is an abstraction that grew into our language and our understanding.' (Feldenkrais, 2005: 149).

In her writings on Biosemiotics, Wheeler (2006) refers to 'contemporary developments in the biology of perception, of ways in which human species perception is both embodied and enworlded' (2006: 15). Feldenkrais' embodied concern with forming an awareness that leads to 'choice' is, perhaps, close to what Wheeler describes as 'semiotic freedom'. 'We are most free when the lives of our body-minds, which is to say our lives as phenomenologically whole creatures embodied in an environment which is really part of us, are socially and politically recognised' (2006:18). Ginsburg (2010) expands:

The stance taken here by Feldenkrais is hypothetical, and also operative. It is a working position, substantiated by the practical work he had been exploring for thirty years, and shared by a pioneering group of thinker-explorers of the twentieth century who were interested in finding practical ways of furthering human development. Among these people were F. Mathias Alexander, Heinrich Jacoby, Ida Rolf, Gerda Alexander, Elsa Gindler and her many students, Charlotte Selver, Emmi Pikler, Berta Bobath among them, and of course Feldenkrais, who was influenced by this movement through his contact with Jacoby, but also through his work in Judo and contact with oriental teachers.

Brief Description of Morning Sessions

During the daily two hour morning sessions, four different practitioners led Awareness through Movement lessons with subsequent transfer to dance improvisational situations or compositional tasks. The ATM lessons are taught

through verbal guidance, are non-corrective, and allow each participant to engage with given tasks at their own chosen speed. Each facilitator introduced different topics and working modes to the group. The description of each session is followed by excerpts from comments by dancer-choreographer Alenka Herman in response to each day's work.



Weave Project: Photograph by C. Kipp

Session One: I led the first session during which we explored ATM lesson involving lying on the side and reaching forward with arm and knee, leading into weight-shifting and rolling of torso. This lesson emphasised rotation in torso, but also highlighted synchronisation and coordination between torso and limbs, head and spine, between right and left half of self-organisation and allows the participant to change mode of movement organisation and vary movement choices within the given framework. The lesson was followed by an improvisation asking participants to follow emerging patterns; then, a focus was specifically brought onto movement initiation and core-distal coordination.⁷ Subsequently a series of problem setting strategies, 'constraints' used in Feldenkrais lessons (clasped hands, hands on head), were added into

⁷ I use LMA/ Bartenieff based terminology here, though during the lesson I use more metaphorical imagery such as 'driver/passenger' to support principles that are already explored in the ATM prior to improvisation.

the explorations to 'defamiliarize', and afterwards to extend new, experienced movement possibilities.⁸

The improvisation was less rational than how I usually feel when improvising, although I was aware of every movement. I felt more physical awareness, more sensing. I felt the brain dissipated around the body, so I could sense/think with my body and the body decided, not the mind. At the end of 1st day: My head feels strangely heavy and tired, as if I had been studying mathematics for hours. Although I am confused and undecided in my own research, I am somehow calm and relaxed due to Feldenkrais.

Session Two: Colin Poole led an ATM session on coordination of the eyes, highlighting the concept of 'imagined movement', a key strategy within the work of Moshe Feldenkrais who constructed much of his experiential philosophy around ideo-motoric principles. Ginsburg (in Feldenkrais 2005) comments on the influence of the work of Neurologist and Psychiatrist Paul Schilder (1886-1940) on 'Body Image' and 'Self Consciousness' and 'Spatial Image' on the work of Feldenkrais. Schilder (1999) sought to transgress the boundaries between Phenomenology, Psycho-Analysis, and Neuro- Pathology. Like Coue, and Erickson, who influenced Feldenkrais' thinking greatly, Schilder researched into hypnotism. For Schilder 'perception and action, impression and expression, thus form a unit, and insight and action become closely correlated to each other' (1999: 8). He saw his findings reflected in the 'pragmatism of James and instrumentalism of Dewey' (1999: 8). Dewey who over a period of 35 years studied with FM Alexander, coined the terms 'Body-Mind' (1929) or 'Mind-Body' (1928) to overcome a Cartesian dualism of body *versus* mind. Regarding growth, and improved 'experience as the central concept of philosophy and the body as it's organizing core' (Shusterman, in Bresler 2004: 51), Dewey championed self-directed learning and 'experiential learning' as visionary concepts that were to shape US twentieth century education. There are striking similarities between Feldenkrais' grappling with a dualist body-mind divide and Dewey's concerns. While Feldenkrais poses a 'functional unity between environment, mind, and body', Dewey asserts that;

⁸ I am greatly interested in the similarity of the theories of Victor Shklovski (1917) on perception and 'making strange', and strategies built into ATM lessons to heighten awareness and foster new movement possibilities in the learner.

the body-mind is not only simply the acknowledgement of the sensory input that goes to the brain, but is based on interaction of the subject with a complex and challenging environment' (Davidson in Bresler 2004: 198).

Central to Feldenkrais' practices was the premise that 'We act according to our self-image' (Feldenkrais 1990). It is this ability for 'Self Imaging' (Beringer 2001), rooted in an inter-subjective understanding of a person, that the design of ATM lessons aims to foster in the learner. Poole then led the group into eyes-closed explorations around creating an imagined environment; a conductor conducting and imagined orchestra; then a dancer responding to imagined sound; and a going back and forth between *creating* and *responding to* an imagined world.



**Dancer Katsura Isobe/ Musician Ute Kanngiesser.
Photograph by Gigi Gigianello**

The session was concluded with tasks regarding the setting of composed dance material on a partner, and the learning of peer created material, all done entirely through whole body touch interaction. This choreographic task challenged participants to align imagination and physical interaction in a highly dynamic context.

It feels now like everything I did in original solo is an alien element. I don't know exactly what the solo is about anymore. I only want to explore more. It's like I'm going around the original solo material in spiral with similar ideas without going directly into it, it is too set and intense. I'm afraid the set material will mix up what I think I am doing now, the feelings/sensations from these sessions and my explorations. It's like decisions are elusive, something I need to pull for its tail, and I am jumping from one theme to another. Maybe part of all this thinking is setting the right task. Instead of looking for answers, it is about finding the right question.

Session Three: Simonetta Alessandri led ATM lesson in 'side-saddle sitting', exploring side-bending and rotational potentials of the ribs in relation to head/tail organisation, and in relation to use of the arms. The ATM explorations were followed by an improvisation based on subjective kinaesthetic responses using internal sensation and newly acculturated movement patterns as key stimulus for dance development. These improvisations were followed by work based on 'Functional Integration'⁹ practices with a partner to highlight organisation of ribs through a non-interventional/ listening touch.

Feldenkrais (1964) gives an insight into his use of 'theme and variation' to support a learning of connectivity within body-organisation:

Another important feature of the group work is the continued novelty of situation that is maintained throughout the course. Once the novelty wears off, awareness is dulled and no learning takes place. If a configuration needs repetition, I teach it in tens and even hundreds of variations until they are mastered [...] All exercises are arranged to produce a neat change in sensation at the end of the lesson and usually a more or less lasting effect. This enables pupils to find connections between different parts of the body, as for instance between the left shoulder blade and the right hip joint, or between the eye muscle and the toes.

Goldfarb gives an insight into his circular, dynamic systems understanding on what Feldenkrais often called a process of 'dancing together'. 'The teacher's approach is to conjoin, to go with the habitual pattern of motion the student demonstrates in order to break the habituation without eliciting self correcting resistance' (1990: 155). He goes on to argue that 'The sensory-based method presented here, a systemic and dynamic approach, provides another path based on the central role of the nervous system plays in regulating movement and on the role that perception, especially kinaesthetic perception, plays in regulating the nervous system. Relating perception and action, giving voice to kinaesthetic experience, and affecting the feedback loop are central notions to this educational approach' (1990: 156).

⁹ 'Functional Integration' is a one to one non-verbal learning process as part of the Feldenkrais Method, utilising the same principles of assisted organic learning through hands-on dialogues, exploration, and discovery as in ATM lessons.

The Functional Integration partner work was then contrasted with a different mode of touch exploration which included a different tonus, more pin-pointed detailed and active hands-on intervention with hands on individual ribs. The subsequent individual improvisations focused on varying movement qualities while focussing on ribs and a switching from a 'global use' of volume of ribs to 'detailed' and small shifts in movement initiation and orientation in space. The lesson was concluded with a discussion where Alessandri gave an insight into her own choreographic process.

I thought about presence again, movement and performance, and everything that we are often told to do things one way, this is the right way. But why? And for me this was quite touching. We do have the freedom to move freely in any way, and the same goes for other things. I can be anyone in any way I like. This freedom allows me to grow. Today was the first time I went through the solo to the point where it now includes the original material. I found it very open and soft, it felt more organic to do that; much more than before.

Session Four: Victoria Worsley introduced ATM based on breathing, and responses to gravity using rolling from side to side activities. Gravitational and postural responses in standing were first extended into a 'feeling based' exploration, and then into walking and standing investigations that touched upon 'intentional movement' and 'emotional impulses', and centred around practices based on the works of Konstantin Stanislavski and Jerzy Grotowski.

I felt I went on a journey through the session. I could feel so clearly the difference on two sides of the body. Who lives here? This was her question that stayed with me for a long time... I realised and could feel how emotions, habits and tensions stay in the body, how much power they have to transform. There is a lot of work in undoing. The 'emotional walk' was a task that really helped me to work with emotion, and also it was so interesting to have such a simple movement so full of something. It helped me with my own material, in the solo, when I think of layering different ideas - and that can also be emotions or memories - in to one movement or movement idea. Working on emotions also helped when thinking about presence in my solo, I had something to communicate, through face as well, not just the body.

Session Five: On this last day I led other ATM lessons, with subsequent improvisations focussing on integration of three dimensional use of pelvis in relation to whole body movements. This combination of several ATM's highlighted Feldenkrais' strategies of 'proximal distal reversal' and 'variation

of movement initiation' within a series of proposed movement patterns. The first part of the lesson (lying on back) focussed on variations of mobilising and connecting the pelvis in relation to floor and global body organisation while using the leg as lever (with clasped hands on folded knee) and place of movement initiation. Pelvis and axial skeleton are mainly asked to respond in providing a fluid base for stabilisation and to adapt to suggested movements of



**Weave Project: Dancer/Choreographer: Karin Potisk.
Photograph by Gigi Gigianello**

the folded limbs in their flexion/extension/rotational contexts. Some focus is already placed on changes in movement initiation by 'changing driver and passenger' between leg and pelvis. This ATM was followed by an improvisation which focussed on dynamic observation of relationships between pelvis and limbs while playing with directional changes and weight-shifts within rolling into sitting activities.

The second part of the ATM process in sitting reverses the 'stability/mobility relationship' between pelvis: here, in side-saddle sitting learners are asked to mobilise and initiate from their pelvis directly, and three-dimensionally, while using legs for 'passive' responses to provide stability. The ATM was extended into focussing on use of the head in turning and looking up and down, to integrate movement range of pelvis into the whole body activity. The subsequent improvisations around the functions of level change, balance, and turning enhanced the focus on initiating movement from, and three-dimensional use of, the pelvis while feeding in an active use of the head and

looking at the world. This resulted in a rather 'sculptural' potential for a 'head/tail connection' movement vocabularies.

I felt that by the last day things fell into place with my solo by right amount. So it was an open exploration, informed by everything that was happening, but also had very clear structure and decisions I made as choreographer. I think most of the questions that I have been asking myself during the process such as; 'what is relevant?' 'why am I doing this?' 'why like this?' 'who told me this must be like that?', will stay with me in future. All of these questions help me to find more freedom. They are somehow liberating, even if I don't find the answers. The search is important, because in looking for answers I find more options. I also thought about my own teaching in future, and how to leave freedom when I teach [...] not to give answers but to ask questions. During the week I discovered so much information. I felt Feldenkrais opened many new things in my body and mind. The experience of the technique as well as the exchange with other participants created many new questions for me, about my process, the creative choreographic process, but also the never ending process of researching body and movement, as a dancer or a mover.

Notes:

Examples of some of the feedback left by other participants on the 'Weave' project in relation to rehearsal processes have been included below.

*The question of restriction came up many times in our classes and discussions – as we identified it as a thread throughout the Feldenkrais work: A tool to shine a light on your own habitual patterns, to see if you are restricting your own movements, i.e. through holding, a tension pattern... It invites us to find a way around restriction - usually by freeing up another part, allowing something else to move, or take over... This became very clear for me i.e. when placing one hand on the head - the head became a much more active limb. Cultivating an awareness of possibilities, of feeling the whole body as one – how to achieve the most easeful, pain-free and satisfying way to move one's body... "Psychologically most important seems the repeated message: try this, then try that – how does it feel? No right or wrong – you are able to judge. Feldenkrais offers a practice of making choices, a practice of listening to the body, and a practice of judgment. The way choice and judgment are achieved is through feeling, which is of course also essential to creating art. Feeling needs to be fine-tuned and practiced as well – building on training, skill, and experience, we use imagination and embodiment to feel our way forwards'. **Karin Fisher-Potisk***

*'For me, the whole week of WEAVE, including both ATM sessions and my own artistic practice, seemed to be about right and left, right half of the body and left half, right brain and left brain, intuition and logical thinking. I really could not let it go in ATM sessions (which I found easier in FI session since I was completely passive), but the sessions took me to some mental space where I don't go normally, where I felt calm or almost empty, things were much simpler and there were no need of words to explain. A vast open space, it was. The Feldenkrais Method definitely encouraged us to listen to our intuition, and that was the crucial approach we took for our artistic practice. After an ATM session, I felt less fear towards the unknown. It was easier for me to let my inner voice come out and to see the actual potential of it. Now and then, I ask myself a question: what is dance about? What does dance deal with? I am very thankful to the whole experience. It has revealed something I can passionately believe in. **Katsura Isobe***

*'The Feldenkrais sessions gave me a strong sense of awareness of the relationship of different parts of my body and their connectedness. The restrictive flow of everyday habits and how through the practice I can become aware again of the choices I have and my habits. The lessons had a natural impact on my own practice; when I came to work on the movement in my piece I gradually had more control of the decisions of how and when to move and if I move this part what will I project, what will my body say to the audience? One session we worked on the use of the eyes, and the mental and physical effect it had on the body; the work told us something about the relationship between what we envisaged to what is there in reality. In another session we worked on breath. I then took those specific elements and decided to work for a while on those different aspects in my piece – just being led by my eyes or the breath and what does it express. The format of the week was very helpful; the ATM lessons in the morning and the following improvisations set me off to experiment with my piece. The plenary sessions at the end of the day helped to have a closure to the day, share, listen, exchange impressions, which gave a focal point where you felt that you are not alone'. **Adi Lerer***

*'I found the FM gave me a connection to the poetry of movement and its pure functionality, which I work with. It interests me to be a real person on stage. In the classes itself I did not burst into wild movement investigations, but what I felt was a strong readiness to enter my own work. This was surprising. Connecting the morning experience with the solo I was making in the afternoon was a very inspiring aspect for my creative process. During sessions ideas/images would come up, structures for explorations, trust in the body and the mind ...all these to be 'used' in the afternoon. I worked with some of the 'instructions', as restriction, not achieving the goal, taking steps towards and away...'
Rahel VonMoos*

*'I very much appreciate that you allowed the space for the week to take different forms for different people, and for my experience to be fairly minimal. It makes me see that I need to make more time for this. But also that concentrated periods can be incredibly potent and have lasting uses. Sensations and imagery from it stays with me as a source, a goal, a stimulus. Feldenkrais helped me get a new and special sense of my body and its relationship to world. My work is all about this. I have discovered recently more about how I choreograph. It involves a process of going over and over, smudging and exploring and repeating until the precise form emerges. And the sources are body and the world. I need to be profoundly inside them. Then, after 'Weave', I worked a lot in the studio and found more precise form really emerging. **Lizzy Le Quesne***

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