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The *Feldenkrais Method* in the Voice and Speech Classroom:  
Intertwining Linklater Voice and the *Feldenkrais Method*

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts  
at Virginia Commonwealth University.

by

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Master of Fine Arts: Theatre Pedagogy  
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## **List of Abbreviations**

1. *The Feldenkrais Method*©: *FM* or *Feldenkrais*
2. *Awareness Through Movement*®: *ATM*
3. *Functional Integration*®: *FI*
4. VASTA: Voice and Speech Trainers Association
5. ATHE: Association for Theatre in Higher Education

## **Abstract**

### **INTEGRATING THE FELDENKRAIS METHOD INTO THE VOICE AND SPEECH CLASSROOM: INTERTWINING LINKLATER VOICE AND THE FELDENKRAIS METHOD**

By Janel R. Miley Knipple, MFA

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts  
at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Virginia Commonwealth University, 2018.

Major Director: Karen Kopryanski, Head of Voice and Speech, Assistant Professor  
Department of Theatre

Proprioception and kinesthetic awareness are important factors in actor training as performers strive to increase their physical and vocal prowess in order to respond to the demands of roles. The *Feldenkrais Method*, a somatic approach to learning that promotes greater awareness, has been utilized in actor training for decades; however, the historical details, measurable impact, and benefits of the *Feldenkrais Method* in this field have been largely undocumented. In this thesis, I will examine the history of the *Feldenkrais Method*, particularly considering interactions between theatre artists and Feldenkrais.



In addition, I will suggest new possibilities for creating a voice and speech curriculum that integrates the *Feldenkrais Method*, providing both historical precedents and current findings to support the efficacy of incorporating the *Feldenkrais Method* into actor voice and speech training. Referencing experiences of how the *Feldenkrais Method* and the Linklater Progression have worked together to improve my own acting and teaching, I will conclude with a strategy on incorporating the *Feldenkrais Method* into voice and speech training.

## Introduction

Actor training in the western world experienced a meteoric rise in the 20<sup>th</sup> century as Stanislavski's system of acting inspired other methods that are currently utilized in university and college theatre programs (Brestoff xiii, 58). This is true not only of acting systems but also of movement, voice and speech techniques, each of which strives to prepare students for the vocal, physical, emotional, and intellectual requirements of acting. While these modes of training had a profound impact on actor education during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we must not solely rely on these approaches as we seek to educate students in this new era.

Performance needs have altered as theatrical styles continue to be developed and the students themselves have changed. The stimuli that students are encountering is constantly evolving with new technological innovations. Because of these advancements, it is essential to continue revisiting and investigating techniques in order to increase an actor's ability to meet the demands of the stage and screen.

One way to deepen student understanding of these techniques is through somatic awareness work. By approaching each of the established training methods with attentiveness, an actor may better assimilate the ideas and principles of the techniques. While the *Feldenkrais Method* can augment Stanislavski's system of acting, Meisner's listening exercises, or other acting methods within the acting classroom, it also strongly reinforces and deepens the awareness work that is inherent in many voice training methods. Arthur Lessac, Cicely Berry, Catherine Fitzmaurice, Patsy Rodenburg, and Kristin Linklater all included awareness of body, breath, and voice in their approaches to voice training for actors. Building on this aspect of

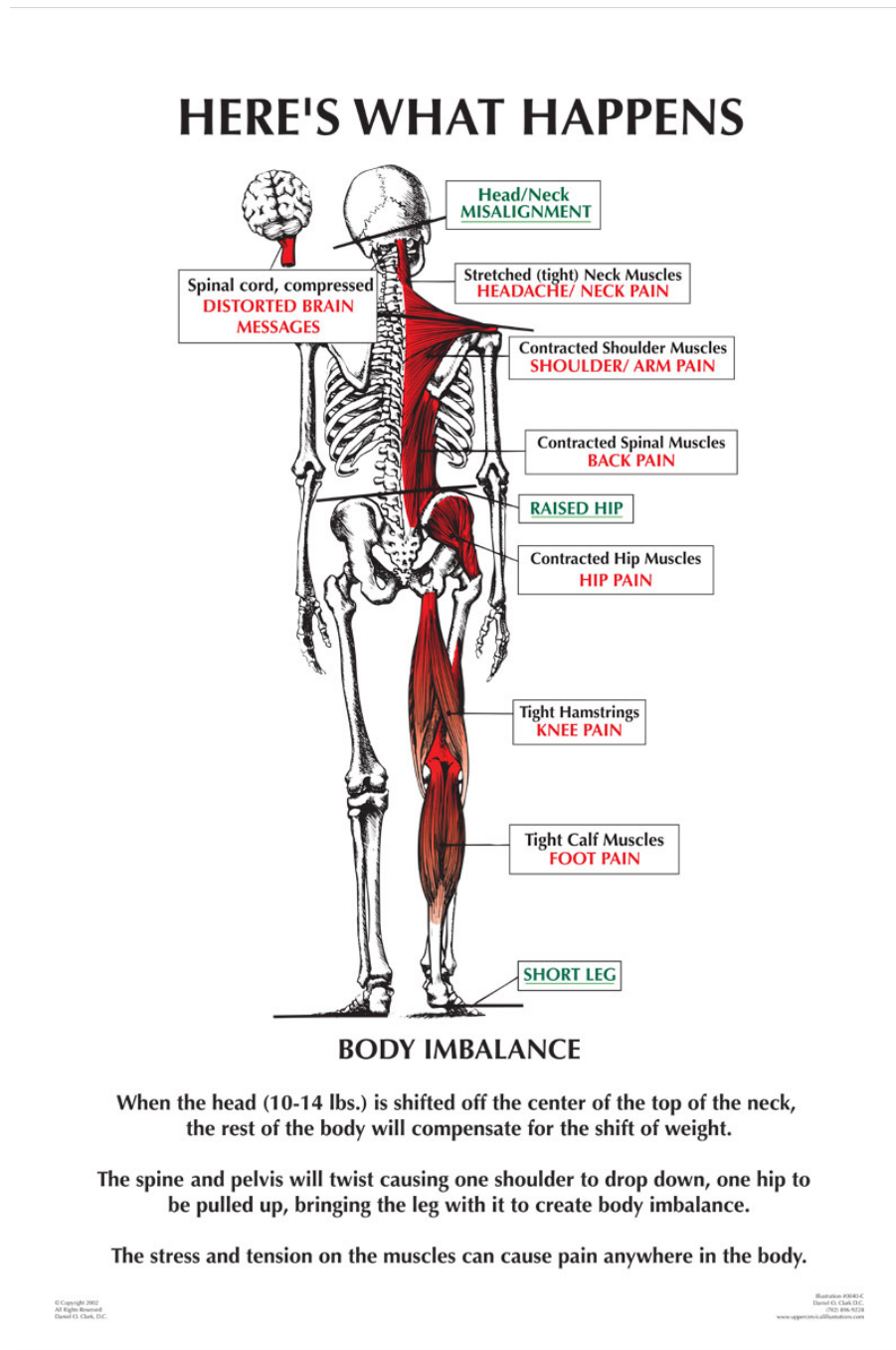
awareness within the various vocal pedagogies, the *Feldenkrais Method* allows students to find greater ease and deeper kinesthetic and proprioceptive awareness.

Awareness work begins with recognizing habits or patterns of being. As children, we begin to acquire our own ways of sitting, standing, and moving. In exploring objects as babies and toddlers, we may have learned to do everything with our dominant hand. This proclivity affects our physicality in how we hold ourselves and maneuver through space. During the early to middle stages of childhood development, a broken arm may create muscular tension in the shoulder or neck as we protect ourselves during the healing process. In late childhood and early adolescence, the addition of orthodontia may cause us to adjust the oral posture we use in speech. In addition to physical patterns, we also develop emotional behaviors as we determine how to interact with the world around us. Every new stage of development comes with greater challenges as we seek to overcome obstacles and conform to the expectations and requirements of society.

Excessive exposure to technology has created a current generation of students that are being shaped by the consumption of digital media (Bavelier et al. 692). With the increase of technological devices that students are utilizing on a frequent basis, there is a greater challenge in helping them develop the sensory awareness necessary for their theatrical craft. Technological influences exacerbate and create new patterns of behavior that may impinge an actor's ability to transform or move and speak with ease.

According to the American Optometric Association, an increase in exposure to digital technology may have a negative effect on vision and eye health ("21<sup>st</sup> Century Child"). As the eyes and "body posture, dynamics and structure" are interrelated, the act of looking at a digital device impacts the nervous, muscular, and skeletal systems, particularly by influencing the

positioning of the head (Grbevski Slide 22-23, Lawanont et al. 331). The figure below demonstrates how the entire body responds to a misalignment of the head and neck (Grbevski Slide 23).



**Figure 1**

In addition to the implications of technology on alignment and physical tension, there is also the possibility that vocal and communication skills might be affected. Dr. Mari Swingle, doctor of psychology, neurotherapist, and author of *i-minds: How Cell Phones, Computers, Gaming and Social Media are Changing Our Brains, Our Behavior and the Evolution of Our Species* notes that a “reliance on interactive technology” creates disengagement and a lack of dialogue with others, limiting the opportunities for children to “expand their vocabularies or learn some of the nuances of vocal inflection and tone” (Kates). As students are being exposed at younger and younger ages to phones, tablets, and computers, there is an increasing need for somatic education that promotes connection with self and others, particularly for students in the field of theatre.

Though I did not have access to the number of technological influences that students have today, I found that as I grew older, insecurities caused me to disconnect from myself and also from the people around me. When I was introduced to the *Feldenkrais Method* (FM) and the Linklater Progression at Shakespeare & Company in Lenox, MA, I discovered an easy connection with self and others that I had not experienced before, even as a child, as I learned to acknowledge those insecurities and choose other thought patterns.

For many years, in both my personal life and in my career as an actor, I felt constrained. This manifested itself in my acting through limited physical and vocal choices. I was working consistently but not growing in my craft or career. I knew that I was allowing tension to impact my acting but didn’t know where the tension was or how to address it.

Through a weekend workshop with Shakespeare & Company, I began to understand that I was holding a great deal of tension in my tongue. Until that training, I had not been aware that I could hold tension in my tongue. I had guessed that all of the tightness and vocal difficulties I

had been experiencing was entirely in my throat. When the instructor placed his fingers under my chin to massage my tongue root and observed that my tongue was like steel inside my mouth, I immediately recognized this as an area where I held a great deal of tension. I struggled to soften my tongue and found it to be a nearly impossible task. Because the tension was not only creating vocal issues in my acting but also causing me pain, I became interested in exploring training opportunities that might help me address this persistent tension.

Through the *Feldenkrais Method* lessons that I was taught during the conservatory program at Shakespeare & Company, I found that I was physically and emotionally bound by patterns of movement and thought. I had no previous knowledge of any somatic practice when I was introduced to the *Feldenkrais Method*. Our instructor presented the idea of unconsciously held tension by having us walk around the room and shake hands with each other. When we were directed to suspend our movement mid-introduction, we were able to begin observing our vocal, physical, and psychological habits and patterns. I found that when I needed to approach someone, I leaned back on my heels, hunched my shoulders, and scrunched the back of my neck so that I had to look up at the other person. I also held my breath, tightened my jaw, and stretched my lips into a forced grin. I noted in my journal that I felt this was indicative of my need to please but also to protect myself.

Immediately following this very revealing exercise in which we began to recognize the habits and patterns of tension that impact the way we interact with the world, our instructor led us through a classic *Awareness Through Movement* lesson. We were directed to lay on our mats and sense and feel our contact with the floor. Observing our ankles, feet, calves, knees, thighs, pelvic bone, spine, shoulders, neck, arms, hand, and head, we determined how they were or were

not resting on the ground. We were led through, what I would later discover, is a traditional body scan that begins each *ATM* lesson.

After the scan, we were instructed to lift our left arm with as minimal effort as possible, keeping the wrist and hand relaxed. Through a series of instructions, we explored this movement in greater detail by adding in movements of the shoulder, head, and pelvis. We often took breaks in between these movements so that we could rest and recognize any changes. In concluding the lesson, we once more observed our contact with the floor and noticed the differences. I found that even though we had primarily worked with the left side, my right side felt much easier and wider than it had at the beginning of the lesson with more of my right shoulder stretched out along the ground.

Through this awareness work, I learned not only about my patterns of unnecessary physical tension, I also began to recognize that I had other options and choices that I could be making in my patterns of thought. My physical tension and emotional/psychological blocks were tied together. I could trace these patterns back to my Kindergarten experience when my teacher called me a “worrywart” and a “crybaby” for expressing fear and pain. I quickly learned that showing emotions was wrong so I held my feelings in and tightened my body and held my breath to stop myself from crying. This realization of how and why my physical and emotional/psychological blocks were connected was the starting point for my personal journey of awareness work and examination. I found a method that I could use to begin addressing the difficulties I had encountered not only in my craft but also in my life. In the margins of my notes, I wrote down a quote that my instructor shared with us: “When you change your body, you change your mind. When you change your mind, you change your body.”

Because *FM* has been so valuable to me, I propose to bring those discoveries into my own teaching and curriculum as a way of addressing student physical and psychological habits that prevent them from acquiring new skills. In this thesis, I will suggest possibilities for intertwining *FM* with other training systems, using the Linklater Progression as an example, in order to deepen student understanding of the fundamentals of these methods, to recognize and let go of habits, and to embrace a self-learning model that will serve them in their careers as theatre practitioners.

As a theatre instructor with a focus on voice and speech, I am particularly interested in helping my students identify and address habits that might be preventing them from achieving their full potential. In voice and speech classes for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year BFA actors, I have taught the Linklater Progression, Rodenburg's voice work, and Rocco Dal Vera's vocal exercises. I have seen the effectiveness of these methods in helping students acquire the necessary skills for vocal production. I have also, however, seen the necessity of incorporating awareness work that might engage the students' understanding of their patterns of behavior on a deeper level. When I incorporated an *ATM* lesson on the jaw, tongue, and eyes into the Linklater Progression "freeing the channel" awareness work, many students were able to find deeper awareness and tension release in the jaw and tongue.

While the *Feldenkrais Method* was an effective methodology for me, the vocal skills that students must acquire for their acting careers cannot be instilled through this work alone. Bringing the somatic practice to established methods of voice and speech training can illuminate and strengthen the awareness work that is already present in these approaches. As I continue to gain classroom experience in teaching the accepted and respected approaches to voice and



speech training, I find myself wanting to provide students with greater opportunities for developing their own sense of awareness and autonomy.

Is it viable to blend traditional *Feldenkrais* lessons with other techniques in order to present more possibilities for deepened awareness? Will this hybrid approach create the conditions where students might experience a free voice and develop an ability to make specific and healthy vocal choices? Will it serve to create an environment where students feel empowered to participate in their own education to a greater extent than they may in a more traditional classroom?

In this paper, I will attempt to answer these questions by examining major voice methodologies with a focus on the work of Kristin Linklater, identifying the history and tenants of the *Feldenkrais Method*, and proposing the efficacy of a hybridization of the two. My goal in writing this thesis is to propose a way to bring the *Feldenkrais Method* into voice and speech training as a foundational tool. I will consider *Feldenkrais*/Linklater workshops in which I was the participant or trainer and examine the results of those sessions based on personal recordings and observations. Lastly, I will conclude with my thoughts on how the *Feldenkrais Method* might be integrated into voice and speech classrooms and why there is a necessity for this interplay.

## **Chapter 1**

### **Voice Training for Actors**

Formal voice and speech training for the actor can be traced back to the mid- to late nineteenth century. In 1865 Gustave Garcia joined the faculty at the Royal Academy of Music in London, England, focusing primarily on voice training for the actor (Berry 811). Sarah Thorne opened a school for actors in Margate, England that included voice courses as part of the curriculum (Chambers 809). In 1906, Elsie Fogarty founded the Central School of Speech Training and Dramatic Art. This school was instrumental in furthering voice training that focused on speaking rather than singing (Berry 811). These pioneers presented their work in England. The United States did not provide formal acting education (including voice and speech training) until after World War II, according to former Voice and Speech Trainers Association (VASTA) president Janet B. Rodgers (Gener; Meier, “Tremor” 53).

While there are many approaches to voice training for actors, Arthur Lessac, Patsy Rodenburg, Catherine Fitzmaurice, Cicely Berry, and Kristin Linklater are perhaps the most influential teachers, each having formulated and fine-tuned techniques or strategies to help performers develop their voices. While the methods presented by these “visionary innovators” each have their own unique tactics for unlocking an actor’s voice, there are some similarities between them (Gener).

The release of tension and connection to breath are foundational principles in every one of these methods. Arthur Lessac speaks of the “Original Voice” that is free to call out with no fear (Lessac). Patsy Rodenburg and Catherine Fitzmaurice both trained at the Central School of

Speech, along with Cicely Berry, and have built on the foundational principles of relaxation and breath as they established their own methodologies. Kristin Linklater focuses on breath and tension release in her teaching as well (Meier, “Tremor”).

Arthur Lessac promoted a muscular “state of release” in which one has the “sensation of repose and the readiness to spring alertly into action.” Habitual awareness is essential in finding this relaxed but ready position. Greater sensitivity leads to a greater range and increased vocal nuances (Lessac, *Use and Training* 48).

Lessac explained his approach to voice and speech training, which emphasized the necessity of sensations:

When you learn to experience the physical sensations of voice and speech with awareness and relaxed energy, and when these sensations become an integral part of your neuropsychophysical sensing devices that monitor other areas of emotional control and expression, you will acquire dynamic responses strong enough to overcome irrelevant responses that could undermine your performance.” (*Use and Training* 49)

Lessac created “kinesensics” as a way to explore awareness work. His philosophy is not dissimilar to Feldenkrais’ view on education. They both believed that “we teach ourselves,” which is accomplished by asking questions and learning through doing (*Use and Training* 250).

The whole body or “body-whole” must be considered in actor training. Lessac understood that many elements have to come together in the craft of acting: awareness, emotion, perception, movement, and voice must all be integrated and coordinated with language (*Use and Training* 3). To this end, Lessac designed a series of exercises with the goal of guiding an actor into a more holistic sense of self with an emphasis on “body wisdom” (*Use and Training* 8).

Patsy Rodenburg focuses on helping actors find their “natural voice” as opposed to the “habitual voice” (*The Right to Speak* 19). Rodenburg states that “any useless tension, anywhere in the body, can constrict the freedom of the voice...Everything is connected to everything else;

everything works with everything else” (*The Right to Speak* 20). She addresses the symptoms of what might cause blockages. From physical patterns of throat constriction and tongue tension to emotional habits of fear and manipulation, Rodenburg identifies areas that are preventing a voice from achieving the freedom necessary for acting (*The Right to Speak* 31-32).

Rodenburg, like many other voice practitioners, asserts that tension and stress are key factors in silencing or limiting the voice. They “can stop any speaker...from breathing, thinking, feeling and speaking” (*The Actor Speaks* 15). Rodenburg addresses tension with physical work and exercises in order to help actors:

1. To release all useless tensions which trap the breath and the voice;
2. To locate the real source of energy in order to support the voice and the word;
3. To find the vital ‘centre’ or the balance of the body which we can define as a state of readiness and a place of maximum physical and vocal freedom;
4. To enter into a heightened physical state that will carry and support a heightened dramatic text;
5. To transform or characterize the body but still stay free enough to use the voice;
6. To acquire status or ownership of the body and the space. We know long before someone speaks whether we will listen to him or her. We know as soon as an actor walks onto the stage whether he will engage us. (Rodenburg 14-15)

In *The Actor Speaks*, Rodenburg notes that students must commit to at least a full year of voice work before sensing any results. She begins with tension release and a focus on the body in her work with actors. Observing that babies cry, dogs bark, and birds sing with their whole selves, Rodenburg asserts that this same full body commitment must be present in speaking on stage (14). Rodenburg presents an anatomical check-list for actors to use in identifying tensions. Rodenburg recognizes the interconnection between all areas of the body. The voice—being located in the body—is affected by tension in any other parts of the physical self (*The Actor Speaks* 16).

Cicely Berry’s technique is based on four key issues: relaxation, breathing, verbal energy, and cadence (Berry 810). In her explanation of the necessity of relaxation, Berry recognizes that

nervous tension is part of the actor's life. She believes that actors must become aware of that tension in order to control it and use it in a positive way. Berry observes that "tension affects the voice adversely," which is why it is important to begin with relaxation exercises (810). In *The Voice and How to Use It: The Classic Guide to Speaking with Confidence*, Berry provides exercises to help readers and students discover awareness and relaxation.

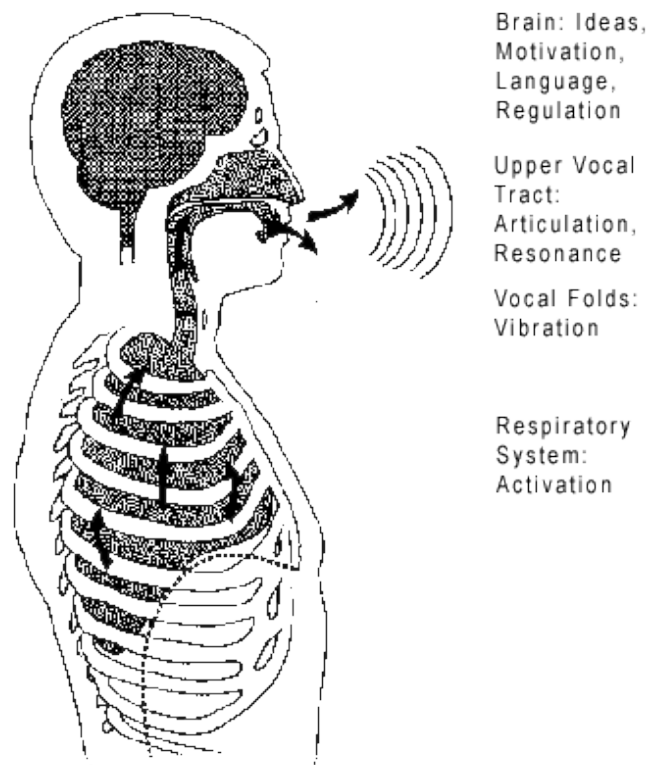
Catherine Fitzmaurice was influenced by her work with Wilhelm Reich, which is when she first encountered tremoring. According to Fitzmaurice, tremoring is "based on the autonomic nervous system rather than the central nervous system" (Meier, "Tremor"). Tremoring is part of the destructuring process, which is designed to remove habits – including habitual breath patterns. The restructuring process, defined as "an intended breath with the rhythm of thought" is the second aspect of Fitzmaurice Voicework ("Actor's Voice"). Fitzmaurice recognizes that in a lot of acting work, "There is such a sense of struggle and pain and tightness" (Meier, "Tremor"). Tremoring attempts to short-circuit patterns of tension and seeks to "give people a sense of ease in general" (Meier, "Tremor").

Kristin Linklater begins her progression with physical awareness, relaxation, and freeing the body. "The first step toward freeing the natural voice is to develop an ability to perceive habits and register new experiences" (*Freeing the Natural Voice* 31). While her focus is specifically on engaging the imagination through imagery, Linklater's goal is to help actors release tensions that obstruct vibrations and inhibit emotional expression.

The Linklater Progression takes actors through a series of exercises designed to help them identify ineffectual habits and develop an understanding of their voices. Linklater outlines the "mechanics of speaking" as:

1. There is an impulse in the motor cortex of the brain.
2. The impulse stimulates breath to enter and leave the body.

3. The outgoing breath makes contact with the vocal folds creating oscillations.
4. The oscillations create frequencies (vibrations).
5. The frequencies (vibrations) are amplified by resonators.
6. The resultant sound is articulated by the lips and tongue to form words. (*Freeing the Natural Voice* 13)



**Figure 2**

This process of communication is interrupted by habits, some of which may be consciously selected, though most are developed throughout life on a subconscious level. Linklater asserts that our behaviors are regulated by the habits we have acquired through outside influences during our childhood. Due to these influences, we learn to “follow secondary neurophysiological impulse routes in order to survive” (*Freeing the Natural Voice* 22). The Linklater Progression, laid out in a series of workdays, is designed to interrupt those patterns of redirecting or inhibiting our impulses and to return to the freedom of expression we had as

babies. As one moves through the progression, the conditions that impede our breath and vibrations are challenged and addressed.

All of the methods of vocal training for the actor highlighted above share relaxation and breath among their common denominators. While each system addresses the subject of how habits and/or tension affects breath and voice, a deeper approach to identifying and shifting patterns could serve to illuminate and enhance the work of these major voice practitioners. The *Feldenkrais Method* specifically explores patterns and habitual movements in-depth, making it a practical and valuable tool to use in conjunction with other methodologies.

## Chapter 2

### ***The Feldenkrais Method***

#### An Overview

The *Feldenkrais Method* was created by Moshe Feldenkrais, a Russian-born physicist, mechanical engineer, judo expert, and educator. While accounts vary regarding Feldenkrais' adventurous life, there is little discrepancy in the impetus for his exploration of movement. Moshe Feldenkrais sustained a knee injury while playing soccer. This injury and subsequent troubles with both knees made it difficult for Feldenkrais to walk without pain. As surgical techniques that could address his issues had yet to be developed, Feldenkrais chose instead to attempt to heal himself and find a solution to his injuries by embarking on a path of awareness work and self-examination.

With the rigor of a scientist, Feldenkrais began a study of functional anatomy, applied the laws of physics and motion to everyday human movement, and explored the process by which we originally acquire our most basic motor functions. He eventually came to a remarkable practical understanding: that learning is the primary ingredient in our formation. He thought that if he could understand how learning actually takes place, then he might be able to change old habit patterns and restore lost functions, such as his own ability to walk. (Zemach-Bersin xv)

Feldenkrais' discoveries increased his mobility and inspired his work, now defined as the *Feldenkrais Method*:

The *Feldenkrais Method* is a form of somatic education that uses gentle movement and directed attention to improve movement and enhance human functioning... [It] is based on principles of physics, biomechanics and an empirical understanding of learning and human development. By expanding the self-image through movement sequences that bring attention to the parts of the self that are out of awareness, the Method enables you to include more of yourself in your functioning movements. Students become more aware of their habitual neuromuscular patterns and rigidities and expand options for new ways of moving. ("What is the Feldenkrais Method")



*Feldenkrais* practitioner and university-trained actor Alan Questel contributed to *Movement for Actors*, noting his own experiences with the *Feldenkrais Method*. He has found that the somatic approach provides opportunities to move “beyond our self-imposed limitations and uncover...our untapped potentials” (Questel 53). This encourages creativity, expands the self-image, cultivates a “more embodied” or present actor, and helps in “tuning the [actor’s] instrument” (Questel 55-60).

## Principles

The *Feldenkrais Method*, as designed by Moshe Feldenkrais, focuses on the entire nervous system rather than looking only at symptoms of pain. It “works by improving the body’s underlying neuromuscular and skeletal organization” (Zemach-Bersin, “The Feldenkrais Method” 13). The mind-body connection is now accepted in the scientific field, but “few of us understand the profound connection between our habitual posture and psychological habit patterns” (Zemach-Bersin, “The Feldenkrais Method” 13). The method can provide opportunities for change and the understanding that we have options in changing our habits or patterns of thinking, posture, and movement.

Kristin Linklater participated in a workshop with Moshe Feldenkrais in 1971. Linklater describes Feldenkrais’ work as an opportunity to “establish or re-establish connections between the motor cortex and the musculature that have been short-circuited or re-routed by bad habits, tensions, and psychological or environmental influences, etc.” (“Body Training”). Linklater defines the goal of the method as an organized body that can move with “maximum efficiency” and “minimal efforts” (“Body Training”).

In *Discoveries and Recoveries from the Frontiers of Neuroplasticity*, Norman Doidge notes that Feldenkrais read books on neuroscience and developed his method from these readings

and from his own explorations. Feldenkrais observed that “no part of the body can be moved without all the others being affected,” a premise that led him to understand how one might utilize kinesthetic awareness as a means of healing. (Feldenkrais, *Body and Mature Behavior* 76).

Doidge classifies the principles that comprise the *Feldenkrais Method* as being related to his own stage of neurodifferentiation (168).

Doidge condensed the *Feldenkrais Method* principles into eleven core principles that he compiled from writings by Feldenkrais and the observations of his students:

1. The mind programs the functioning of the brain.
2. A brain cannot think without motor function.
3. Awareness of movement is the key to improving movement.
4. Differentiation—making the smallest possible sensory distinctions between movements—builds brain maps.
5. Differentiation is easiest to make when the stimulus is smallest.
6. Slowness of movement is the key to awareness, and awareness is the key to learning.
7. Reduce the effort whenever possible.
8. Errors are essential, and there is no right way to move, only better ways.
9. Random movements provide variation that leads to developmental breakthroughs.
10. Even the smallest movement in one part of the body involves the entire body.
11. Many movement problems, and the pain that goes with them, are caused by learned habit, not by abnormal structure. (169-176)

Many of the principles formulated by Feldenkrais have since been reaffirmed by the findings in the field of neuroscience. Through lab experiments with animal brain-mapping, neuroscientist Michael Merzenich established that “long-term neuroplastic change occurs most readily when a person or an animal pays close attention while learning” (Doidge 171). The elements of self-awareness and focused observation that are fundamental aspects of the *Feldenkrais Method* have the capability of creating permanent changes.

As a physicist, Moshe Feldenkrais understood and applied the Weber-Fechner principle, as employed in physiology, while formulating his approach. The theory postulates that “there is a constant ratio between the magnitude of a stimulus...and the change in that stimulus that is

needed for a person to notice a difference” (Zemach-Bersin xvi-xvii) or “the least perceptible difference in stimulus is a definite fraction of the stimulus already present” (Rywerant 16).

In a very elementary sense, the Weber-Fechner law asserts that if you are holding a thin piece of paper and a fly lands on that paper, you will feel the shift in weight to a greater extent than you would if you were carrying a piano and a fly landed on it. If you go slowly and make small movements, you will be able to better discern when and where you are making an unnecessary effort or straining to accomplish a task. This precept was the primary basis for Feldenkrais’ approach to movement. The encouragement for light, pleasurable, simple and easy movement is embedded in every *Feldenkrais* lesson.

There are two components of the *Feldenkrais Method: Functional Integration (FI)* and *Awareness Through Movement (ATM)* lessons. Most lessons are performed on specially designed tables or moving mats in order to provide a slight cushion over a hard surface, which enables the students to receive sensory feedback and notice minute differences.

*Functional Integration* is a hands-on approach in which a practitioner guides a student’s movements primarily through touch, observing habitual patterns and enabling the student to experience more effective paths for movement. This one-on-one technique allows the practitioner to shape the student’s kinesthetic understanding and address specific difficulties. As Feldenkrais was developing this particular technique, he had students begin *Functional Integration* lessons by resting on their backs since this took them out of the pull of gravity. Feldenkrais asserted that the nervous system reacts habitually to gravity’s influence making it almost impossible for one to feel a muscular change or re-educate the system while in a position that is impacted by this force (Doidge 176).

In *Functional Integration* lessons, Feldenkrais would sit by the student and interact through touch. His touch was not designed to force a movement or impress an agenda. Instead, Feldenkrais would move with the student and rarely spend time working directly with any parts of the body that were in pain. Unlike some other modalities, *Functional Integration* is not a localized approach, but rather a way of helping students find “a new integrated way of functioning” (Doidge 178). Feldenkrais referred to this approach as a way of “dancing with the brain” (Doidge 179).

In *Awareness Through Movement* lessons, students are led through a series of movements. Most sessions typically begin with the students resting on their backs, incorporating the same ideas that are within *Functional Integration* lessons. The verbal instructions often contain constraints in order to help students discover movement in places that they may not usually access. Students are prompted to move slowly, to make small movements, and to rest whenever needed. Feldenkrais’ goal in creating this approach was to provide the same benefits that a student might encounter in *Functional Integration* but designed for a larger number of people (Feldenkrais, “The Feldenkrais Method” from *Handbook*).

DrBonnie360, a company created by doctors and scientists to help individuals suffering from autoimmune diseases, highlighted the *Feldenkrais Method* on their website. While the drbonnie360.com article, “The Feldenkrais Method: Finding Your Personal Power to Reduce Chronic Pain,” acknowledges that more research must be done to confirm the possible bias in existing studies, it also recognizes that there is continued scientific support of the method. The group created an image that encapsulates the possible benefits of the *Feldenkrais Method* (Yourautoimmunityconnection):

# BENEFITS of FELDENKRAIS



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Designed by: Veronica Rosen

**Dr. Bonnie 360°**  
Business Development for Digital Health

Figure 3

Feldenkrais created over a thousand *Awareness Through Movement* lessons during his lifetime (Zemach-Bersin, “Description”). While varying in time, positions, and difficulty, the lessons were all rooted in his philosophy that one could learn best by enacting “the experience in which the human brain learned in the first place” (*Body Awareness* xiv). Feldenkrais spent time observing how children learned and moved while in the waiting room at his wife’s pediatric practice. He discovered that children were much more interested in the process of moving towards something than achieving an end result (Questel 54).

The field of neuroscience (the study of the nervous system) has rapidly progressed in recent years due to advances in imaging technology (Andy Hunter). Neuroplasticity, “the property of the brain that enables it to change its own structure and functioning in response to activity and mental experience,” or a living versus unchanging brain, is now an accepted concept in the scientific field (Doidge xiii). Feldenkrais understood this fact before it was confirmed by Eric Kandel, the 2000 Nobel Prize winner in Physiology or Medicine, who discovered that brains can be rewired. Kandel determined that the structure of the brain changes when a person learns or is introduced to a new experience (Turton).

The basic tenets of the *Feldenkrais Method* are fundamental in both *Awareness Through Movement* lessons and *Functional Integration*. By generating an atmosphere of exploration and playfulness, the instructor mitigates the fear of failure and enables students to become self-motivated learners. While this is useful in any theatre classroom, it is particularly useful in a voice and speech classroom where students must develop a greater awareness of self, releasing habitual tensions and fears that might be inhibiting full vocal expression.

The *Feldenkrais Method* addresses both mind and body, allowing a person to let go not only of physical tension but also the thought process that might be causing or contributing to that

tension. As a somatic method, it encourages deep awareness through exerting less effort. As a philosophy, it fosters self-acceptance through foregoing the need to prove oneself. Both of these are advantageous for young actors as they grow in their craft and develop as theatre artists.

Feldenkrais wanted people to have the opportunity to make choices more freely. While his method might provide corrective solutions, ultimately, his goal was to provide “learning that allows further growth of the structures and their functioning...lead[ing] to new and different ways of doing things” (*The Elusive Obvious* 35). According to Feldenkrais, if a person only knows one way to accomplish something, the only choice available is to act or not to act (*The Elusive Obvious* 35). He deduces that when an individual feels there is only one choice, it creates anxiety, which might make the enacting of that choice more difficult (*The Elusive Obvious* 54). This insight clarifies the struggles that students face in the classroom when they feel they must achieve one particular outcome in order to prove their talents as performers.

In his book, *Awareness Through Movement*, published initially in 1972, Feldenkrais illustrates the point that there is no limit to improvement by using the challenges an actor might face when suffering from “hoarseness.” As actors begin to recognize and reduce the unnecessary effort in their breathing, they may turn their attention to how they might improve their articulation, which causes them to become aware of additional work in the muscles of the tongue and jaw due to tension in the neck. Upon learning to reduce effort in all of these muscles, they may find that, in addition to an ease in speaking, there is an improvement in the use of the diaphragm and chest muscles and conclude that the unnecessary tension in the neck was connected to the “interference with the muscles of the chest, diaphragm, and front of the mouth” and distortion of the “breathing and speaking organs” (*Awareness Through Movement* 88). Continuing down this path of awareness may lead the actors to further discoveries of how they

stand and move through space, crucial knowledge for any performer (*Awareness Through Movement* 88).

If actors advance in this awareness work, they will recognize other areas of habitual tension. They will realize that they use their whole self in the production of sound and their self-image will expand. Feldenkrais asserts that, upon making all of these discoveries, actors find the full range of their voices, one of the primary aims of the voice and speech classroom. According to Feldenkrais, “What all of this means is that the total personality is involved in proper speech” (*Awareness Through Movement* 88).

Because the *Feldenkrais Method* allows people to clearly experience what they do in order to identify and alter unconscious habits, it is useful for creating new possibilities that students may not have imagined. FM focuses on “fundamentals of human functioning,” improving the inherent skeletal and neuromuscular organization and thereby makes various options and choices available (Worsley 3). This is a viable and valuable tool for actors.

As Feldenkrais asserted, “If you know what you’re doing, you can do what you want” (Pullen 2). While some of the patterns and habits that actors have can be an asset, they can also be problematic if an actor is not aware of them (Worsley 30). Once actors recognize their habits, they have the freedom to make choices. Though a pattern becomes more wired in through repetition, the Feldenkrais Method provides a rewiring, allowing the system to make new connections or find forgotten ones. This provides the actor with additional possibilities and available options in the execution of their craft.



## Chapter 3

### **The *Feldenkrais Method* in Performing Arts Training**

#### Historical Accounts

The *Feldenkrais Method* has been utilized in actor training for many years. Peter Brook's company, the Royal Shakespeare Company, and El Teatro Campesino are just a few of the theatre companies that have recognized the benefits of the *Feldenkrais Method* in actor training and performance.

In 1973, Peter Brook invited Feldenkrais to San Juan Bautista, California to lead a joint workshop for the members of El Teatro Campesino and his own company of actors as they were devising *The Conference of the Birds*. Dr. Frank Wildman, a renowned Feldenkrais trainer, was a dancer and participant in these workshops. In an interview with Victoria Worsley, Dr. Wildman recalled that Feldenkrais felt actors could most fully embody his method, as they have to address "the use of themselves in every way" (Worsley 3-4).

In a letter penned by Peter Brook (*see Appendix*), the distinguished director writes, "The very foundation of the work for every actor is their own body – and nothing is more concrete...In Moshe Feldenkrais, I have eventually met someone from a scientific background, who has an all-compassing master of his subject" ("Peter Brook"). Victoria Worsley's book *Feldenkrais for Actors: How to Do Less and Discover More* is the first text that focuses solely on how the *Feldenkrais Method* is being utilized in actor training. Worsley not only highlights how it's incorporated in theatre education, she also provides some sample lessons that she uses in her own classrooms.

Worsley primarily speaks to the somatic approach in acting and movement courses but also includes a chapter on voice training. According to Worsley, Feldenkrais focused on voice in almost half of the lessons he taught in his workshops at San Juan Bautista (206). While there are no recordings of the actual lessons from this workshop, a question and answer session was taped which provides some insight into how one might experience vocal growth through *Awareness Through Movement* lessons. This recording has been particularly useful in discovering Feldenkrais' understanding of the performer's voice and the ways in which his system might be able to benefit the actor during rehearsals and productions.

Feldenkrais often used students as examples in his recordings, a tendency that is evident in his Q&A at San Juan Bautista. He refers to Yoshi Oida, a longtime member of Peter Brook's company:

Yoshi has improved enormously. It is magnificent—And you can hear that their voices are incomparably stronger than when I first met them. The quality is an enormous improvement—Try to [think of] what you have to sing, don't sing it or do it. Think it mentally and sit there and do everything as if you are doing it. You will find improvement in the quality of the voice. Because it is a routine, there is no improvement. It's a routine. Anyway, try another piece mentally and you will be astonished to see another improvement—The next time they open their mouth, it will be different. There is no improvement in routine work. If I learn to listen and [make the sound] mentally, I remember what I've learned—like a little child that continues to remember and repeat. Start the learning and act of remembering so what you learn becomes yours from the start. When it stops being a routine, immediately afterward you will find a better production. ("Track 2")

In the San Juan Bautista recording, Feldenkrais expounds on how babies and children learn languages by remembering first and then exploring how to repeat the sounds. The idea of speaking and singing with attention is consistent with Feldenkrais' principles. Using kinesthetic imagination allows brings a heightened level of awareness and focus, which enriches the learning process. Feldenkrais' suggestion to use visualization—doing an action without physically performing it—as a means to improve has recently been substantiated in *Scientific American*

*Mind*. According to Harvard Medical School Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychiatry Dr. Srin Pillay,

Imagining allows us to remember and mentally rehearse our intended movements. In fact, visualizing movement changes how our brain networks are organized, creating more connections among different regions. It stimulates brain regions involved in rehearsal of movement, such as the putamen located in the forebrain, priming the brain and body for action so that we move more effectively. (Lohr)

In an interview with Richard Schechner, Feldenkrais addresses his overarching understanding of the work. Schechner asked, “So when you talk about movement, you’re working with the voice, the breath, the movement, the eyes, the ears—the total body organism. You must be working with the total mental organism too” (*Body and Mature Behavior* 99). Feldenkrais excitedly responded, “Absolutely! They are one. I am working with the *human* organism” (*Body and Mature Behavior* 99).

In his collaboration with Peter Brook at Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord in Paris, Feldenkrais had the opportunity to see how his method could impact the whole body and strengthen the mind-body connection for performing artists. During this time, Feldenkrais taught Monika Pagneux, the Movement Director for Peter Brook’s company (Igweonu 6). One of Europe’s most renowned movement teachers, Monika Pagneux introduced many artists to the *Feldenkrais Method* when she went on to work at Ecole Jacques LeCoq as a senior teacher of movement awareness. Pagneux included *FM* in her lessons, presenting *Feldenkrais* to a large number of performers at that institution (Hancock 161).

Feldenkrais also worked with the Habima Theatre in Israel and met with Lee Strasberg (*Embodied Wisdom* 94, 105). Feldenkrais understood the work of the actor and felt that potentiality was a key concept in training the performer. “When the actor is aware of his body,

his mouth, his eyes, his volitions, and has full contact between the outside and the inside, he can pick his own way” (Feldenkrais, *Embodied Wisdom* 106).

### Current Techniques of Integration

Accounts regarding the inclusion of the *Feldenkrais Method* in UK theatre training are well-documented. Kene Igweonu, Dianne Hancock, Dr. Richard Allen Cave, and Victoria Worsley have published works detailing the ways in which *Feldenkrais* is being integrated into UK higher education and actor training. A published report by Kene Igweonu, articles by Dianne Hancock and Dr. Richard Allen Cave (both included in the *Theatre, Dance and Performance Training* issue on Moshe Feldenkrais), and *Feldenkrais for Actors* by Victoria Worsley have highlighted the applications and benefits of the *Feldenkrais Method* for performers.

Kene Igweonu, Principal Lecturer in the School of Music and Performing Arts and Faculty Director of Knowledge Exchange for the Faculty Arts of Humanities at Canterbury Christ Church University in Canterbury, Kent, United Kingdom and former Lecturer in Performing Arts and Theatre Studies at Swansea Metropolitan University in Swansea, Wales, conducted a research project regarding the *Feldenkrais Method* when he was in his third year of a *Feldenkrais* training program (Igweonu 4). PALATINE, the Higher Education Academy Subject Centre for Dance, Drama and Music in the UK, awarded Igweonu with a PALATINE Development Award to support his research (Igweonu 2). With that funding, Igweonu wrote *Feldenkrais Method in Performer Training: Encouraging Curiosity and Experimentation*.

As part of his study, Igweonu interviewed practitioners involved with performer training and included a few of those answers in his report. Igweonu notes that “in choosing which *Awareness Through Movement* lesson to teach students of the performing arts, the practitioner must take the learning outcomes and the theme under exploration into account” (21). Igweonu

found that the somatic practice should be viewed as a “viable foundation of awareness on which different techniques can...be built” (21).

Though his study is lacking somewhat in content, as Igweonu did not include many of the answers to his interview questions, the information that he presents is a useful overview of *Feldenkrais* in higher education and actor training programs. Based on his discussions with practitioners, Igweonu suggests that lessons might be more effective in undergraduate training if truncated or split up into 15-20 minute sessions as opposed to the usual 45-minute *Feldenkrais* lessons (Igweonu 21-22). Igweonu also summarizes useful strategies that practitioners currently employ in teaching *FM* in the classroom:

1. Introduce relevant *Awareness Through Movement* lesson using appropriate ‘scaffolding’ technique such as peer observation and feedback.
2. Give enough time for discussion and peer feedback after each lesson. This includes encouraging students to use this time to record their experiences in their journals and logbooks. This is important as it encourages self-reflection and evaluation – skills which are extremely useful for students and performers in general.
3. Explore how lessons can lead to characterization or improvisation either as a direct creative stimulus or as a basis for exploring a given stimulus. It is important that lessons are made relevant to students in this way, particularly in the first year. However, it is equally important to teach and practice *Awareness Through Movement* as a vehicle for facilitating awareness, in which case it does not have to lead into improvisation or characterization but becomes a foundation on which other performance techniques can be built once awareness has been awakened and developed in the students. (Igweonu 22)

Igweonu found that many of the practitioners teaching the *Feldenkrais Method* in actor training were enthusiastic about the continuing advancement of the method’s inclusion in performing arts programs. Analyzing his interviews with the practitioners, Igweonu discovered some common themes:

1. *Feldenkrais* lessons are designed to enable students to develop a heightened awareness of themselves in stillness and in action.
2. The *Feldenkrais Method* must not be construed as a technique but as a foundation of awareness on which different techniques can be built.

3. The assessment framework for articulating the benefits of the Feldenkrais Method to students should not be performance based.
4. Reflective accounts are effective means of evaluating students learning in relation to the *Feldenkrais Method*. (Igweonu 32)

According to Igweonu, “the *Feldenkrais Method* has much to offer performing arts students as a heightened psycho-physical awareness and the ability to make intelligent movement choices can contribute immensely to their potential to succeed as creative practitioners and performers” (31). Overall, the piece provides a general introduction to the use of the method in performer training through *Awareness Through Movement* lessons while also acknowledging issues faced by practitioners utilizing the method in actor training.

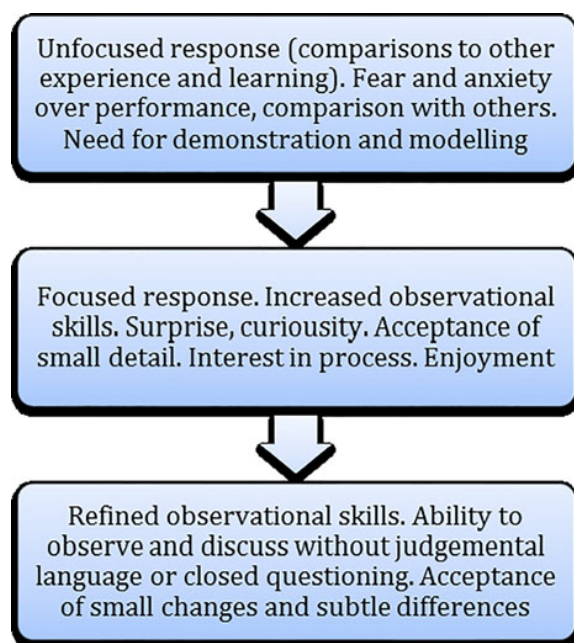
Dianne Hancock’s article, *Teaching the Feldenkrais Method in UK Higher Education Performer Training*, was included in *Theatre, Dance, and Performance Training* in 2015, five years after Igweonu’s study was released. Hancock’s conclusions build on the former findings of Igweonu, providing updated information and greater details regarding *FM* in higher education. One of Hancock’s observations is the fact that because Feldenkrais was a “multi-disciplinary polyglot,” his method can be applied to many different fields of study. Since the somatic practice is not specific to a particular industry, practitioners are responsible for integrating their own experiences with the work (163).

Hancock also discovered that there was a general consensus among practitioners in Higher Education that students needed to see the relevance of the somatic practice within their own fields of study. Daniele Sanderson, Deputy Director of the Birmingham School of Acting and *Feldenkrais* practitioner, spoke with Hancock about how she teaches the *Feldenkrais Method* to undergraduate and graduate actors.

Every time we are doing something in [undergraduate] class, I spend a lot of time aligning the principles of Feldenkrais to those of acting . . . when we’re talking about awareness or what you’re curious about and encouraging [students] to notice what happens and what is

going on in their bodies, then I will turn it into an investigation of what's an action and a re-action. For example, 'the action of this movement has a re-action, not necessarily where you think it's going to be'. So I will start to use vocabulary or align it where I think it is useful to [the Feldenkrais Method] . . . I will talk about voice practice and get them to see that nothing is in isolation; it has a correlation. (Hancock 164)

Through interviews with instructors and students in Higher Education, Hancock found that the *Feldenkrais Method* transforms the students' learning. She illustrates the development of awareness through this work (166):



**Figure 4**

Hancock concludes that the *Feldenkrais Method* can prepare students for the professional world by fostering self-reliance and resilience as they face the challenges inherent to the profession (172).

Dr. Richard Allen Cave wrote an article about his time working in the voice department with the Royal Shakespeare Company actors. Dr. Cave was brought in as an instructor in the Voice Department in the Artist Development Program at the Royal Shakespeare Company to help the actors deal with the challenges they were facing. With demanding schedules and the

requirement of moving between spaces with different house sizes, actors struggled with maintaining their stamina. They experienced tension in the jaw and throat, neck, shoulder, or back pain, and breathiness, causing them to strain and push when they performed. In his article, Dr. Cave mentions how he utilized the *Feldenkrais Method* to address those issues. He writes about his experiences with actors at large and ends the article with a specific case study with revered actor Greg Hicks. Dr. Cave speaks generally about his experience with the RSC actors:

[Actors] possess on the whole a remarkably heightened physical sensitivity, but each individual performer has her or his limits or blindspots, which *Feldenkrais* can help to open up and bring into the general range of awareness. (I am referring here principally to actors with some years of experience behind them, though the observation is to varying degrees true too to my knowledge of actors coming straight out of their training.) The blindspots are frequently habits which have resulted from an actor's losing touch with the reasons why he has learned to avail himself of a particular technique (vocal or physical) to achieve particular effects, so that the technique has become routine through continual repetition, and so lacks his full awareness in the doing. This way mannerism lies, especially regarding vocal inflection, phrasing and related issues, if the habit is not corrected through being brought into the actor's perception. (178)

While Cave is speaking largely about actors that have gone through some training, young actors also bring habits with them to the classroom, which they have acquired throughout their development. Introducing the *Feldenkrais Method* to students can help them recognize these patterns or "blindspots" earlier and provide an even greater awareness as they acquire the skills necessary for their craft.

As he began to work with the RSC actors, Dr. Cave encountered the time constraints of rehearsal calls and performances. A last-minute publicity appearance, understudy need, or rehearsal change would impact the amount of time that Dr. Cave had to work with the actors. In addition, he also found that though he was often working with actors one-on-one, in which case *Functional Integration (FI)* is typically used, the actors typically responded better to *Awareness Through Movement (ATM)* lessons. Due to these circumstances, Dr. Cave used the two aspects of



the *Feldenkrais Method* in a combined fashion. He blended *ATM* and *FI* lessons together to help the actors connect with the method while providing some space for the possibility of shortened lessons. Cave would weave *FI* elements into the *ATM* lessons. When an individual struggled to find a movement through verbal instruction, Cave used touch, as in a *Functional Integration* lesson, to assist the actor. Returning to the directions of the *ATM* lesson, Cave helped the actors discover that same movement “and the transitions into and out of it...so he or she fully understood where, how and why the body was responding as it was” (179).

With Greg Hicks, however, Dr. Cave found that the seasoned actor responded very well to the *FI* lessons, particularly in working with the spine (184-5). The practitioner chose to give Hicks the *FI* lessons in order to help the actor reach his goals faster. Also, Hick’s extensive training in capoeira had strengthened his spine and increased his flexibility, enabling Dr. Cave to more readily manipulate the processes. Because of Mr. Hicks own abilities and insights, Dr. Cave was able to help the actor achieve his desire to find a lower vocal register for his performance as King Lear (185-6).

Dr. Cave provided lessons for the experienced and trained actors at the RSC in order to assist them with problems of exhaustion and stress due to acting in multiple spaces in multiple shows during the same week. The rotating schedule placed a great demand on the actors’ bodies and voices. Dr. Cave was able to utilize his knowledge as an experienced practitioner to choose and tailor lessons for these actors. The students enrolled in actor training programs at universities may face the same challenge of an exhausting and taxing schedule due to classes, work, rehearsals, and performances.

Cave’s descriptions and experiences are particularly useful for curriculum development as he brings out both the challenges and successes in his work with the RSC actors. He found

that working with actors required an adjustment to the *Feldenkrais Method*. In addition to combining the usually silent *FI* lessons with *ATM*-style directions due to time constraints and actor preference, Cave recognized that the actors needed to discuss their experiences:

Just to sense a difference was not quite enough without bringing that sensory perception into full consciousness: most actors with whom I worked needed fully to understand what was happening in themselves to be comfortable with changes within their perception of how they were functioning bodily. For many this understanding was also necessary for when they might choose to recall such new degrees of awareness under the pressures of rehearsal or performance. It is not customary with *Feldenkrais* work outside training to discuss the objectives and results of lessons when they are concluded, whether *ATM* lessons or *FI* practice; rather, classes or individuals are left to assimilate what they have learned in their own time. Actors seemed to me to be in a special category: they recognized and delighted in changes within themselves, but invariably wanted to know the techniques they might deploy to recover that freshness, immediacy and ease again for themselves. At best, it was like giving them notes to take away for private, curious and focused inquiry, hopefully leading to further exploration. (179)

Cave found that in his interactions with the RSC actors, there was a need for dialogue surrounding the lesson's objectives and results. Igweonu and Hancock similarly found that this inclusion of discussion might be critical in undergraduate actor training as students tend to be focused on achievement and results (Igweonu 16, 20 and Hancock 165). Allowing opportunities for brief moments of *Functional Integration* and time for feedback and discussion would be beneficial in lesson planning for the classroom.

At the moment, *Feldenkrais* practitioners who are also theatre instructors present *Awareness Through Movement* lessons before or after voice and speech lessons from specific vocal methodologies. They may choose to do the *ATM* lesson "Spine Like a Chain" and then relate it to the physical awareness work on the spine from Linklater's work (Bakkensen, May and Zones). In the second half of my thesis, I will explore the following questions: Is there a way to weave *Feldenkrais* lessons into the voice work more effectively so that they become part of the lessons themselves as opposed to their own distinct lessons? Could this be beneficial in helping

students find deeper awareness and connections to the vocal methodologies that we are teaching them?

In their book, *Singing with Your Whole Self: The Feldenkrais Method and Voice*, *Feldenkrais* practitioner Samuel Nelson and Assistant Professor of Voice and Opera Heidelberg College at Elizabeth Blades-Zeller, D.M.A., explore the integration of the somatic practice. Nelson and Blades-Zeller focus on the singing rather than the speaking voice and have devised lessons that use *FM* to help singers recognize any unnecessary strain in breathing and vocalizing. Their short lessons can be modified to fit actor voice training as they address the same tensions and challenges that actors encounter in the body and vocal tract in speaking. They increase kinesthetic awareness and an understanding of excessive muscular tension, introducing new possibilities for more effectual skeletal positioning and reduced muscular strain (Nelson and Blades-Zeller). Instead of beginning and ending each lesson with singing, as suggested by Nelson and Blades-Zeller, the work can be modified to include speaking text before, during and after the lessons (158).

Though Nelson and Blades-Zeller do not look to Kristin Linklater's voice work for inspiration, they address similar challenges. In both *Singing with Your Whole Self* and Linklater's *Freeing the Natural Voice*, performers become "tune[d] into their own kinesthetic sensibilities," encouraging an open channel for breath and sound. Through the exercises, they learn more about unnecessary tension (12).

Feldenkrais promoted the idea of "healthy, powerful, easy, and pleasurable exertion," which he termed "eutony," stating that a lack of tension was not the goal of his method (*Embodied Wisdom* 101). As Cicely Berry noted, there will always be some tension in our bodies (810). Instead, a "directed and controlled tension with excessive strain eliminated" was the

desired result of his work (*Embodied Wisdom* 103). Nelson and Blades-Zeller clarify this idea, noting that “problems arise when tension is excessive, misplaced, or insufficient. If we use more tension than needed to perform...that performance will seem strained” and “manifest itself in our sound” (26).

Until recently, many universities and colleges have embraced a segmented learning model in theatre education with voice, movement, and acting being taught separately and “addressed separately in rehearsal and performance” (Lugering viii). Voice, movement, and acting are often taught as part of a foundational core in performance training but rarely overlap (Lugering viii, x). Some educators may bring voice into a movement class or movement into an acting class; however, each course is mostly compartmentalized in terms of curriculum. It is the responsibility of the young actors to assimilate everything that they are being taught, but many of them struggle with understanding how to accomplish this (Lugering vii).

Training programs, such as the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, the University of Tasmania, the University of Colorado, Boulder, California State University, Fullerton and the University of Dayton, are now providing integrated courses in movement and voice. These courses may serve students that have more difficulty in applying technique across disciplines. Because *Feldenkrais* is a somatic practice that can address movement and voice while increasing awareness, encouraging curiosity, and creating possibilities, it can help students more easily unify these disciplines and apply them to their acting.

As an increasing number of instructors are becoming certified practitioners — Hancock notes that “a recent informal survey revealed approximately 30 *Feldenkrais* teachers working in HE performer training institutions in the UK (Source: The Feldenkrais Guild UK 2014). At the time of Igweonu’s report, there were only 21 identified teachers who were teaching in HE

performer training – an increase of nearly 43% from 2010 to 2014”—the *Feldenkrais Method* is being explored and incorporated in exciting new ways in the voice classroom (162). While Feldenkrais’ work very clearly fits into the world of movement training in helping performers become more adept and efficient, it also translates to voice training for actors.

As the muscles required for breathing are also involved in any movement, when one improves, the other does as well. Any parts of the body that are habitually held or tightened may be needed for breath and sound. By expanding awareness, *Feldenkrais* lessons “lower the level of unnecessary tension, create more choice, invite...connection between voice, breath and how you use your whole self” (Worsley 207). In addition, the lessons can improve breathing, resonance, and clarity by helping students to identify and let go of “compulsive habits” that may be hindering breath and voice (Worsley 207).

## Chapter 4

### Linklater and *the Feldenkrais Method*

As mentioned in earlier chapters, Feldenkrais acknowledged the voice in the exploration of his work. In the chapter, “Voice and Breath,” Victoria Worsley notes that through an experience with laryngitis at the age of twelve, Feldenkrais began formulating an idea regarding the connection between the musculature and the mind. Though he was very young at the time, Feldenkrais came to the conclusion that there was nothing medically wrong with him that might cause laryngitis (Worsley 205). In his biography about Feldenkrais, Mark Reese writes, “He understood that those muscular contractions reflected a conflict between his desire to express himself and his fear of disapproval” (qtd. in Worsley 205).

Kristin Linklater’s “Chocolate-Chip Cookie Story” conveys a similar understanding of the cross-motivations in communication (20). In her book, *Freeing the Natural Voice*, Linklater tells the story of how a child longing for a cookie might inhibit the full vocal expression of their desires after being chastised by a guardian. Instead, the child learns to detach or diminish their voice in order to get what they want (21-22). Linklater recognizes, as Feldenkrais did, that through conditioning, a person acquires habits that might limit or deprive choice. A short-circuiting of impulse prevents freedom of expression and spontaneity (*Freeing* 19).

Feldenkrais studied how children encounter the world and learn more about their own movements. Children become absorbed in their actions so that they are aware but lacking in self-judgment. This ability to be curious and fully engaged without inward criticism is a skill that is

very useful for actors who are called upon to explore and create, listen to their scene partners, and entertain an audience without being hampered by self-consciousness (Worsley 78).

Linklater also looks to children in her exploration of the voice. She writes, “Every human being’s voice is forged and shaped by the emerging emotions of that human as a baby and then as a gradually more and more sentient child—think of the power and resilience of a baby’s crying voice or of a toddler’s tantrum voice” (“Art and Craft”). Linklater’s goal is to free the voice so that it might contain emotion and respond to primary impulses. The *Feldenkrais Method* can more fully provide the rewiring or re-establishing of connection with that first impulse for expression that Linklater seeks in her progression.

In a profession that might incite self-conscious thoughts and behaviors, *Feldenkrais* provides other options. As Victoria Worsley points out, “In an *ATM*... you are not being judged, don’t have to make anyone laugh, are not being scrutinized by colleagues or audience. All of this can help free you from your habitual way of coping” (84). Worsley goes on to say that an *ATM* lesson provides a safe space where risks, spontaneity, and discoveries are possible (85). If Worsley’s assertions are correct, the *Feldenkrais Method* might be useful for the young actors who express their feelings of insecurity and discomfort as they undertake performance training.

Any physical tension or fear experienced by the actor is discernible by the audience as they stand, talk, and move around the stage. The discomfort an actor might feel will be sensed or heard by an audience or casting director, causing the viewer to become uncomfortable or bored. It takes away from the actor’s presence, ultimately limiting the actor’s success (84).

I was first introduced to Feldenkrais’ work by instructor Corinna May, who taught the method in conjunction with the Linklater Progression while I was training at Shakespeare & Company in Lenox, MA. I had hit a wall in my acting career and was seeking training that might

help me move forward. The *Feldenkrais Method* helped me not only to acquire a much deeper sense of kinesthetic awareness and understanding of my physical habits, it also helped me to become more aware of how I was letting insecurities impact my thought patterns.

In 2013, Corinna May, a certified *Feldenkrais* practitioner and Designated Linklater Teacher, collaborated with trainer Arlyn Zones to create a workshop of Linklater and *Feldenkrais* lessons. The two instructors alternated between Linklater progression exercise and corresponding *Feldenkrais* lessons. A filmed recording of this workshop, available on DVD and MP4, is entitled *Voice, Breath & Posture: The Feldenkrais® Method & Linklater Technique*.

Corinna May, Tamala Bakkensen, and Arlyn Zones are just a few voice instructors and *Feldenkrais* practitioners who are exploring the connection between voice and the somatic practice of the *Feldenkrais Method*. Bakkensen approaches the combination of *Awareness Through Movement Lessons* and lessons from the Linklater Progression in a similar manner to May and Zones. Bakkensen's workshops allow participants to sample lessons from each method. The alternating approach to combining these techniques enhances the learning but may not be practical for the voice and speech classroom in higher education where time is at a premium.

May, Bakkensen, and Zones all begin their voice workshops with an *Awareness Through Movement* lessons that focus on the spine. Feldenkrais believed in the ability of the skeleton to counteract the pull of gravity so that the muscles would be free for movement. He used the term "acture" to encapsulate the idea of dynamic posture or posture in action (*Potent Self* 118). This foundational principle attests to how the *Feldenkrais Method* is pertinent to actors. Being capable of using their bodies in a variety of spaces in many different ways is fundamental to the actor's livelihood.



Linklater quotes Feldenkrais in her book *Freeing the Natural Voice* in Workday One. His understanding of posture and the spine informs her own technique. The influence of the *Feldenkrais Method* leads Linklater to focus first on the spine and skeleton in order to allow muscles to work “more economically” (*Freeing* 32).

Linklater participated in a workshop that Feldenkrais conducted in 1971. She later wrote an article that chronicled her appreciation for the method:

His exercises constitute this reshuffling process, and although his work is not aimed specifically at the actor, two areas seem particularly relevant to the actor's needs. One, obviously, is in the release of limiting, habitual tensions and the opening up of the body to receive new messages and respond to new impressions without new tensions. The other is in shifting physical controls from the forebrain (or 'new' brain) so that the reflex actions of the 'old' brain can organize the body on a level far deeper than we can legislate intellectually. This means that animal connections can be re-established between instinctive emotional impulses and muscles that reflexively react to them. To have immediate access to emotional sources and to allow emotional energy to flow unblocked through a free body demands some re-ordering of the brain's priorities. Feldenkrais offers a detailed road-map with which to explore one's territory and make conscious decisions about its use. (“Body Training”)

In my research and experimentation, I have focused specifically on finding ways to **combine** *Feldenkrais* lessons with Kristin Linklater’s progression. I have largely focused on this particular methodology due to Linklater’s own experience with the *Feldenkrais Method*. Because the Linklater Progression begins with an awareness of the spine, the work of Feldenkrais enhances Linklater’s. Worsley confirms my understanding of the deep connection between these two methods: “vocal systems like Kristin Linklater’s...are...very influenced by Feldenkrais” (Worsley 206). Worsley goes on to note that the Linklater voice work is often supported by the *Feldenkrais Method* (Worsley 206).

In her Spring 2018 workshop for The Linklater Center for Voice and Language, entitled “Voice and Feldenkrais,” designated Linklater teacher and certified Feldenkrais practitioner

Tamala Bakkensen presented a strong argument for why these two methods work so well together.

I think...the brilliance of both Moshé Feldenkrais and Kristin coming together are, for me, what allowed me to do the voice work of Kristin's. One of the things we do in *Feldenkrais* is just go slower and deeper and longer into really specific exploration...of those small preliminary things that we don't usually notice. For instance, simple things like rolling down the spine or lifting our pelvis...will get an instruction, "now lift your pelvis" or "now let's drop down your spine," but often there's not the time to really investigate what that is for us personally because we're so focused on the voice work or something else about ourselves. And so to be able to really delve into the specific parts of the progression and then look at, "How can we look at that really more specifically for the individual?"

Bakkensen recognized that Linklater and Feldenkrais share the same mission of finding what's in our way and preventing us from living up to our full potential. Because Linklater's work is physical, working on the Progression in tandem with the somatic practice of the *Feldenkrais Method* makes sense. She noted that in both of these methods there is an understanding that trusting and expressing the first impulse is "where your gold is." (Bakkensen)

### A Hybrid Technique

With a natural symbiosis between the Linklater Progression and the *Feldenkrais Method*, the two can easily merge to form a hybrid technique, making both approaches more practical and accessible for undergraduate students.

While *FM* is being used in various actor training programs, I have not yet found ways in which it is being joined with other methods to create a hybrid vocal technique. The practices of integration that I have heard about and experienced involve alternating *Awareness Through Movement* lessons with exercises from other voice and acting techniques - with adequate time, this can be an exciting and worthwhile endeavor in creating change and heightening awareness. When time is limited, however, a combined or fully integrated technique may provide the benefits of the *Feldenkrais Method* while still covering the necessary curricular materials.

With the goal of creating a hybridization between *FM* and the Linklater Progression, I chose to focus on lessons that seemed to be thematically related. Thinking carefully about my own experiences with Linklater's work and the *Feldenkrais Method*, I decided to start with the themes of the Linklater's Workdays, which provide a suggested timeline for the progression of exercises to help develop the voice fully. Considering those themes, ranging from physical awareness to breath to the resonating ladder, I selected *ATM* lessons that might illuminate or highlight aspects of the voice work presented in Linklater's book (*Freeing the Natural Voice* 27).

## Chapter 5

### Integrative Workshops and Lessons

#### Workshops

With a spirit of experimentation, I presented workshops and lessons intertwining *Feldenkrais* and the Linklater Progression at conferences and at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU). My conference workshops took place at the 2017 Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE) conference and at the Southeastern Theatre Conference (SETC) in March 2018. I also taught three *Awareness Through Movement* lessons at VCU for BA and BFA theater students. I have included the lessons from the conferences and the VCU classes, along with my thoughts regarding their reception.

#### VASTA at ATHE and SETC

I presented the following lesson at VASTA at ATHE Conference, 2017 in Las Vegas to a group of instructors and practitioners, revised it for SETC 2018, and am including the VASTA peer-review in my Appendix.

This lesson blends an *ATM* lesson from Nelson and Blades-Zeller, *Singing with Your Whole Self* and Kristin Linklater's "Throat Awareness" from *Workday Nine*. The directions to sigh out and release vibrations (on *haaaa* and *huuuuh*) and the language regarding the "unimpeded column" and "open chasm" come from Kristin Linklater's

book (#4 and #12-18). The directions involving the head, jaw, and eyes are taken from the *ATM* lesson.

### **Lesson A: Mini-ATM: Releasing and Opening – Neck and Throat, in Sitting**

- 1. Please come to sitting on the edge of your chair with your feet flat on the floor, shoulder width apart, directly below your knees. Rest your hands comfortably on your thighs.**
- 2. Begin to notice and become aware of your breathing.**
- 3. Turn your attention to your weight in the chair, the position of your spine, and the placement of your head.**
- 4. Without changing anything, sigh out on a *haaaaaa*. Speak a few lines of text or some words that you can later repeat.**
- 5. Move your head to look up. In this position, allow your mouth to drop open easily. You may feel your head go back a little further. Now allow your mouth to close while keeping your head in this new position if you can do so without straining. Repeat this movement slowly a few more times and notice if your head shifts positions during these repetitions. Can you do less? Notice if you are straining or holding the jaw in any way as you do this slow, small movement. Do not force any movements.**
- 6. In this position, picture an open column for breath and sound. Allow breath to drop into the pelvic floor and sigh out on a whispered *haaaa*.**
- 7. Bring your head back to what you might term neutral and pause for a moment. Thinking of that same unimpeded column, sigh out on a whispered *huuuuh*.**
- 8. Move your head to look down. Allow your mouth to slowly open and then close easily. You will probably feel your head drop down slightly when your mouth closes. Again, do not force any movements. Repeat this sequence slowly and gently 2 more times.**
- 9. Allow your head to float up to the neutral place and pause for a moment.**
- 10. Again, look up easily. Only do what is easy and pleasurable. Allowing your head to stay in this position, look down with your eyes only. Do this lightly so that you are not straining your eyes.**
- 11. Look up again with your eyes. Repeat the sequence slowly 2 more times, noticing if there is a change in the position of your head in space.**

12. **If you haven't already done so, allow your mouth to drop open.** Think of the tongue and jaw as part of the front of your body and the soft palate and upper jaw as part of the back. **Imagine a wide, open chasm between the front and back of your body at the bottom of which is a pool of vibrations. Release those vibrations on a haaaaa.** The throat is uninvolved as the sound impulse comes from the energy center below.
13. **Bring your head back to neutral, allow the jaw to hang loose and release vibrations on a huuuh.**
14. **Once more look down. Allow your head to stay in the position and look up only with your eyes. Look down with your eyes.** Does your head drop down a little further? **Repeat this sequence of movements slowly 2 more times.**
15. **Float your head to neutral and pause a moment.**
16. **Look up and down, moving your head gently and easily.** How much more range do you have now?
17. **Return to that neutral space and notice how you're sitting now.** Are there differences in your weight in the chair, the curve or arch in your spine? Do you notice any differences in your chest or where your head is sitting?
18. **Once again sigh out on a haaaaaaa. Repeat those few lines of text or words that you spoke at the start of the lesson. Notice the resonance and connection to breath.** What is the quality of the sound? The volume? The pitch? Do you feel that there is less work or effort in the tongue, jaw, or throat now?
19. **Is there more ease in how you form the words?**
20. **Come slowly to standing. In standing, notice if anything feels a little different – perhaps how the head or neck feels.** Explore how your head now moves as you walk around the room. **Whether standing or walking, repeat the lines of text.**

*Singing with Your Whole Self: The Feldenkrais Method and Voice – Mini-ATM: Releasing the Neck.* Nelson, Samuel H., and Elizabeth Blades-Zeller. Lanham: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2002. Print.

*Freeing the Natural Voice: Imagery and Art in the Practice of Voice and Language – Workday Nine, Throat Awareness.* Linklater, Kristin. Hollywood: Drama Publishers, 2006.

## ***Feldenkrais in the Voice Classroom***

I included this lesson in my Voice and Speech for the Actor I class for 2<sup>nd</sup>-year BFA actors. I incorporated it after teaching jaw and tongue exercises from Workdays Five and Six—*Freeing the Channel: Jaw Awareness* and *Tongue Awareness* to provide deepened awareness and the possibility of more tension release.

I combined a few *Awareness Through Movement* lessons to address the tongue and jaw while introducing the students to the idea that the eyes may play a role in any tension that is inhibiting the voice. If you were to segment the lesson, tongue awareness is #1-64, jaw plus tongue awareness is #65-91, and jaw, tongue, and eye awareness is #92-101. I integrated Kristin Linklater's tongue stretch into the tongue awareness section (#63) to help the students recall an exercise that they already learned during our class on "Workday Five –*Freeing the Channel: Tongue Awareness*" (*Freeing the Natural Voice*).

This was a successful lesson because students reported a softening in their tongue and jaw muscles that they had not yet found in our work together. They also expressed excitement over the discovery that their eyes were involved in their habitual patterns. I did need to truncate the lesson slightly to fit within the time constraints of the class.

### **Lesson B: Tongue, Jaw, and Eyes**

1. The muscles connecting your tongue and jaw are at work not only when you talk, eat, and swallow, but also when thinking, reading, and even watching TV. Through this lesson, you may find greater comfort and freedom in your tongue, jaw, throat.
2. **Please come onto your backs on your mats.**
3. **Please close your eyes.**
4. **Allow your breathing to be easy and relaxed as you lie comfortably.**

5. **Now bring your attention to your tongue.**
6. **Without using your hand, sense the tip of your tongue.** How far toward the back of your mouth can you feel the tongue? Feel the entire length of your tongue. Notice how wide it is. Tongues have a tapered shape. Can you feel it's narrower at the front and wider toward the back?
7. **Now slowly move the tip of your tongue to touch a tooth toward the back of the lower right side of your jaw.** Perhaps you can touch the wisdom tooth on the lower right side. If this is difficult, just touch any tooth on the lower right side of your jaw that is easy to touch and begin to explore it.
8. **Feel how the top of the tooth is not flat.** Some parts of the surface are lower than others, some parts are smooth, and other parts of the surface are rough.
9. **Feel where the tooth ends and then move the tip of your tongue to the next tooth closer to the front of your mouth. Feel the top of that tooth.** As you explore, relax your tongue and make the movements as easy and comfortable as possible. Allow your entire body to relax. **Feel where the second tooth begins and ends.**
10. **Move on to the next tooth. Explore the top of this tooth, feeling its contours** – how smooth, how rough, and where the edges lie.
11. **When you're ready, move on to the next tooth. One by one explore the top of each tooth of the lower jaw and feel the contours, textures, and ridges. Relax the rest of the body, letting go of tension.** Make the movement of your tongue as simple and relaxed as possible.
12. **Notice that the teeth at the front of the mouth are shaped differently than those toward the back.**
13. **As you proceed tooth by tooth exploring the left side of your lower jaw, relax your mouth and eyes.**
14. Notice how far open your mouth is as you move the tongue. You don't need to open very far, just enough to let the tongue explore the top of each tooth.
15. When you've explored the top surface of each tooth that you can reach easily, **rest.** Notice the sensations in your tongue and around your mouth.
16. **Now again beginning on the far-right side of the lower jaw, use the tip of your tongue to feel the inside surface of each tooth.** Begin with whichever tooth—closest to the wisdom tooth—you can reach easily without straining.



17. **Very slowly tooth by tooth, move your tongue toward the front and continue on until you've reached the inside surface of every tooth of the lower jaw that you can reach easily.**
18. As you do this, feel where in your mouth, jaw and rest of body you can let go of unnecessary effort. This effort creates tension and limits relaxation and flexibility of your mouth and jaw.
19. **Now stop and rest and let the tongue relax.** Can you feel a difference between the lower part of your mouth and the upper part of your mouth? Infants actively use the tongue to explore the mouth, lips, jaws, and teeth. It's through movement that children discover functions, purposes, and possibilities of their bodies. You're becoming reacquainted with the fundamental movements of your tongue in order to rediscover that comfort and ease of movement.
20. **Now move to the upper jaw. Move the tip of your tongue to the tooth as far back as you can comfortably reach.** It doesn't matter which tooth it is. Feel the texture of the bottom of that tooth.
21. Where does the tooth begin and end? Pay attention to the detail.
22. **Use your tongue to explore the bottom of each tooth, moving slowly from the right side to the left side of your upper jaw.**
23. If you're not breathing, you're working too hard.
24. **Slowly move the tongue around your mouth tooth by tooth, making the tongue movement as relaxed as possible.**
25. **Stop and rest.** Is your tongue relaxed or are you holding it in place? Let it relax completely.
26. **Now move to the tooth that you began with. Feel the inside surface of each tooth of the upper jaw. Feel where each tooth begins and ends. Feel from the bottom of the tooth to the top where it meets the gums.**
27. **Reduce the effort in your throat and jaw.**
28. **Now stop and rest.** The rest gives you an opportunity to observe changes in the mouth, jaw, and face.
29. **Now easily and comfortably put your tongue in between the lower lip and outside surface of the lower teeth.** With your tongue here, you can feel the underside of your tongue touching the outside surface of the teeth and the top surface of your tongue touching the inside of your lower lip.

30. **Slowly move your tongue along the outside of your teeth from the middle to the right side and then from the middle to the left side.** Keep the tongue in between the lower lip or cheek and the outside surface of your teeth. Explore slowly. Breathe easily.
31. **When you reach the last tooth on the left, move your tongue up. Start with the outside surface of the upper teeth on the far-left side.** Your mouth might need to open slightly. **Slowly feel the outside surface of each tooth.** Let your mouth and jaw relax. **Feel the edges where one tooth ends and the next begins.**
32. Can you let go of effort in your neck, jaw, and face?
33. **Stop and rest.**
34. **Combine the last 2 movements. Begin on the lower right side with your tongue between the inside of your right cheek and the outside of your lower right teeth. Feel the outside surface of each lower tooth, moving toward the front of your mouth. When your tongue reaches the tooth you can easily touch on the lower left side, move your tongue up to the outside surface of the upper left teeth. Make a circle with your tongue.**
35. **Make counterclockwise circles, starting with the outside surface of your lower teeth and then moving up to the outside surface of your upper teeth.**
36. **Stop and rest.**
37. **Exploring the palate from the front of your mouth where the upper gum ridge and the back of the upper teeth meet, move your tongue back and begin exploring the width of the palate, moving from the tooth that's as close to the wisdom tooth as you can reach on the right side of the upper jaw across to the corresponding tooth on the left side of your upper jaw.**
38. **Move your tongue from right to left and left to right across the hard palate toward the front of your mouth until you've felt the entirety of the hard palate.**
39. **Move your tongue up and down inside your mouth now from left to right from bottom to top, sensing how much space exists between the palate and the lower part of the mouth and jaw.**
40. **Slowly and gently open and close your mouth a few times.** Feel how much easier and smoother it is now.
41. **Now open mouth a little and leave it open.**
42. **Move your tongue out to touch the middle of the lower lip and bring it back in.**
43. **As you move the tongue out, notice if it's thin and pointed or wide.**

44. **Return your tongue to its resting position in your mouth.**
45. **Breathe easily.** Do the movement without strain.
46. Does your tongue extend past your lower lip onto chin?
47. **Bring your finger to where your tongue reaches easily.**
48. Don't strain—the tighter the jaw, the tighter the muscles and the bigger the effort.
49. **Now touch the middle of your upper lip with your tongue**
50. **Sense the difference.**
51. Is the tip of your tongue touching the upper lip? Is it pointy or wide?
52. **Flip-flop your tongue between the upper and lower lips. Bring your fingers to your jaw to make sure it's not moving.**
53. Notice any changes that occur when you bring your tongue up to touch the top lip as opposed to bringing your tongue down.
54. **Now touch the outside corner of your mouth on the right side.**
55. **Now with the tip of your tongue touch the corner of your mouth on the left side.**
56. **Notice how your mouth opens a little each time your tongue moves to the corners.**
57. Each time, reduce the effort around your mouth and jaw.
58. You've touched four points around your mouth.
59. **Now very slowly, move your tongue to connect these four points.**
60. Move slowly as if you wanted to moisten your lips with your tongue.
61. Go slowly. Some parts might be easier to access than others. See if you can reduce the effort and tension in those places where you feel any strain in order to make this a more uniform movement.
62. **Change the direction of the circle.** Does this feel the same or different? Reduce the effort in your jaw and neck.
63. **Place the tip of your tongue behind the back of your lower teeth and allow the middle of your tongue to roll forward and out of your mouth like a wave breaking over your bottom teeth.** Allow the back of your tongue to participate so that you're

gently stretching your whole tongue. Where can you reduce the tension in your neck and jaw?

64. **Please stop and rest. Notice how differently your jaw, neck, tongue and face feel now.**
65. Notice the position of your chin. Is it positioned more towards the center or slightly to one side or the other?
66. **Very slowly open and close your mouth a little bit.** Don't open very wide or close tightly. Do this in a way that is comfortable and easy.
67. **Rest for a moment.**
68. **As you begin the movement again, notice if it's smooth.** Find ways to relax and make less effort. Rest each time that you close your mouth. So, each time is a new movement, separate and distinct from the previous movement—not part of one continuous motion.
69. Relax your face, neck, throat, and tongue.
70. When you open your mouth, does your lower jaw move straight down or does it veer slightly to the right or left?
71. **Notice if your head moves back slightly as you open your mouth.** There is a change of contact between your head and the floor. Are you unnecessarily activating your neck and throat muscles? Open even less. See if you can relax your neck muscles completely.
72. **Now deliberately tilt your head back as you open the mouth slightly, so your chin moves away from your chest.**
73. **Breathe out as you open your mouth.**
74. **Notice how tilting the head makes it easier.** Imagine the tilting opens the mouth. Is it lighter and more comfortable? Think of the movement being small, gentle, effortless, and smooth.
75. Can you open and close your mouth without moving your head? Is it easier now to do this without tensing your neck muscles?
76. **Rest.** Allow your neck and jaw muscles to relax.
77. **Move your jaw to the right. This should be a very, very little movement.** Only do what is easy and return to the middle. **Put your right forefinger on your chin to feel this movement.** Does the distance between the upper and lower teeth change? Do you open and close your mouth slightly as you move to the right?

78. **Allow your breathing to be relaxed and easy.** Are you unnecessarily holding your breath? Are you tensing the muscles between the eyes or forehead?
79. **Rest** – What is the sensation in the right side of your jaw and neck vs. the left?
80. **Now allow your jaw to move very, very slightly to the left.** Is there a difference in movement between the right and left sides? Focus on how smooth and effortless you can make this movement, moving just 1/10<sup>th</sup> of an inch.
81. **Place your left forefinger on the chin.**
82. **Make your movement smaller and slower.**
83. **As slowly as possible move your jaw to the left.** Notice where to reduce the tension around your eyes, shoulders, and neck.
84. **Breathe easily and freely.**
85. **Rest.**
86. Many muscles around your mouth are connected to the neck. As a result, the muscles of the mouth, jaw, and neck have an influence on one another.
87. What is the sensation in your jaw and neck? Tension or fatigue indicate that you need to rest or make smaller and slower movements.
88. **Open your mouth, only doing what's easy.** Make each movement slower and lighter.
89. **Rest.**
90. **Open your jaw. Slowly move the jaw a small distance to the left then to the middle then back to the left. Do this a few times. Then bring the jaw back to its resting position.** Relax your tongue and throat as much as possible. Relax your arms, stomach, legs, face, and neck.
91. **Now rest and feel the weight of the jaw.**
92. **Bend your knees, place your feet on the floor shoulder width apart with knees pointed in the direction of the ceiling.**
93. **Sense the feeling around your eyes, forehead, mouth, and jaw.**
94. **With your eyes closed, slowly and gently move your tongue and jaw to the right as you look with your eyes to the left.** Make this a very small movement. **Return to the middle and repeat this movement a few more times.**

95. **Now allow your eyes to look to the right as you bring your tongue and chin very gently to the right.** Is this movement easier? Smoother?
96. Rest.
97. **Slowly and gently move your tongue and jaw to the left as you look with your eyes to the right.** Again, make this a very small movement. **Return to the middle and repeat the movement a few more times.**
98. **Now allow your eyes to look to the left as you bring your tongue and chin very gently to the left.** Is this movement simpler? Smoother?
99. **Rest. Feel the sensations around your face, eyes, and mouth.** How are you breathing?
100. **Slowly roll to one side and sit up.** Most of us hold the mouth more tightly closed than it needs to be. This creates tension in the jaw, neck, and head. In a healthy jaw, there should be small space between upper and lower teeth.
101. **Notice how your posture and movement have changed and improved.**

## **VCU Workshop for Mindfulness (Part One)**

The first lesson in a 2-part workshop for VCU students enrolled in a class on mindfulness, this *Awareness Through Movement* lesson focuses on the spine and imagery to inspire vibration.

This lesson comes from the *Awareness Through Movement* lesson, *Spine Like a Chain*. A classic *ATM* lesson, this particular iteration was taught in the 4<sup>th</sup> Baltimore *Feldenkrais* Training Program. Tamala Bakkensen taught a version of this (with the addition of the imagery that was influenced by Kristin Linklater – #54-66) at a *Feldenkrais*/Linklater workshop at the Linklater Voice Center in New York City during February 2018. I modified it by adding the touch of sound to the lifting of the pelvis and spine (#52-53).

### **Lesson C: Spine Like a Chain**

- 1. Lie on your back.**
- 2. Bend your knees, spread your feet.**
- 3. Slowly, push your feet against the floor, but only to tilt the last two vertebrae toward the floor.** Only do a little movement in order to feel more.
4. If you do too much right away, you'll feel the 5th lumbar will lift (the one closest to the sacrum).
- 5. Allow the upper edge of your pelvis to tilt towards the floor. Do this movement as you exhale and you'll find it's a little easier.**
- 6. Stop and rest for a moment.**
- 7. Bend your knees. Feet are shoulder width apart. As a result of pressing the feet into the floor, this time you'll lift the pelvis the tiniest bit away from the floor. Push the feet down into the floor.** It will probably be more effective if you think of your heels pressing so that you feel the sacrum lifts up away from the floor towards the ceiling. Go slowly. **Lift not just the sacrum but also the last few lumbar vertebrae.**

8. **Lift as you exhale. The order of this movement is that the sacrum lifts, then the 5th lumbar, then the 4th, and then the 3<sup>rd</sup>. Lower the spine back down towards the floor in the reverse order.** You may begin to notice that as one vertebra lifts, the one immediately above it pushes into the floor slightly.
9. **Rest whenever you need.**
10. We don't have sensory fibers in our bones. You're not feeling the bone itself, but thinking about each one makes it easier to sense the vertebra leaving the floor and returning to the floor. Think of your spine lifting one vertebra at a time and lowering one vertebra at a time.
11. Think of your spine like a string of pearls or a bicycle chain that you can lift easily from the floor.
12. **Stop and stretch out your legs and rest.**
13. **Observe the contact of your lower back with the floor.**
14. **Bend your knees and spread your feet shoulder-width apart.**
15. **Slowly lift your spine like a chain and lower your spine like a chain.** If you inhale when you do this movement, it makes the movement more difficult because your thoracic spine and chest stiffen.
16. **See if you can detect that as you lift your pelvis toward the ceiling, your chin comes a little closer to your throat and your lumbar spine flexes. The tailbone (or 5th lumbar) is closer to the ceiling than the 4th and the 4th closer than the 3<sup>rd</sup>.**
17. **Go slowly.** See where you can reduce the tension in the jaw, the tongue, and the soft palate.
18. Do you notice the cervical spine coming closer to the floor? Is it getting flatter or rounder?
19. Where can you reduce the effort in your arms, shoulders, and abdomen?
20. **Feel the area just below your neck.** Sense how much or how little those vertebrae are going down into the floor.
21. **Rest.**
22. You'll be able to lift the spine like a chain and more vertebra will come off the floor (in theory, you'll feel this movement all the way up to the top of your thoracic spine). **In order to do this movement, use your legs more effectively.**



- 23. Bend your knees, spread your feet shoulder-width apart.**
- 24. Lift and lower your spine.** Are you pushing against the floor more with one foot than the other?
- 25. Put your hands on the front of your pelvis.** Is the pelvis tilting more to one side than the other? Feel for yourself.
- 26. Just observe.** You're not trying to correct anything. Which side is lifting higher? **Intentionally push that foot more into the floor. Don't bother pushing the other foot.**
- 27. On the side that was lifting higher or coming more forward, intentionally lift that side by pressing more with that foot. Exaggerate the movement.** Does that create a rolling of the pelvis? Do you feel the pressing of your foot is happening more with the inside of the foot?
- 28. Intentionally lift one side of the pelvis more than the other side.**
- 29. Rest for a moment. Observe the side of the lower back that was being lifted more.** One might assume that the side of the pelvis that was lifting might now be tilting more with the lower back compressing more. But do you see that side of the back is actually closer to the floor now? This lifting motion of one side will actually make the movement more symmetrical now.
- 30. Bend your knees with your feet shoulder-width apart.**
- 31. Lift and lower your spine.**
- 32. Now purposefully and easily push with your non-habitual foot, moving your pelvis in the opposite direction.** You're becoming aware of details in yourself that are intrinsic to you and how you act in this world. You're becoming more aware of how your organization is woven with self. It affects the throat, the eyes, the shoulders.
- 33. Now press both of your feet into the floor.** Do you need to adjust your feet a little now so that the pressing down is generated more from the heels?
- 34. You'll find that one foot might be pressing more towards the outside or the inside. Just notice this.**
- 35. A few times, lift your pelvis as high as you can towards the ceiling, starting with your tailbone.**
- 36. Notice the pressure of your spine against the floor is going higher—up through the lower cervical spine perhaps, or through the upper thoracic vertebrae.**

- 37. Stop and rest. Observe your contact with the floor.**
- 38. Bend your knees, stand your feet.**
- 39. This time, lift the pelvis as high as you can.**
- 40. Observe how far up the spine you can feel the movement.** It's not a matter of doing anything with your head. Just reduce the effort so there's less and less parasitic muscular activity (not necessary to the action).
- 41. Rest. Observe the way your lower abdomen expands as you inhale.**
- 42. Bend your knees, stand your feet.**
- 43. Slowly a few times, raise your pelvis thinking of that idea of your spine like a chain.** Go slowly, easily, only doing what's comfortable. **As you lift your pelvis, your chin comes a little closer to your throat and your neck gets longer in the back.**
- 44.** The sixth and seventh cervical vertebra (the vertebra that comprises your lower neck), which are so essential for counterbalancing or equilibrium responses, are pushing down towards the floor.
- 45. Now interlace your hands behind your head and very slowly, as you lift your pelvis, lift your head, allowing your elbows to come in towards each other and support the movement of the head towards the ceiling. Go slowly.**
- 46. As you lift your spine like a chain from the floor, you also lift your head as if to look down between your legs. As the chain comes back to the floor, you lower your head, so the back of your head is resting on the floor.** You are now lifting your spine like a chain from the top down as opposed to from the bottom up.
- 47. When you come back to the floor, let your elbows return to the floor and when you lift your head, let your elbows come toward one another.**
- 48. Now begin lifting the spine like a chain from the bottom (starting with the sacrum).** As the chain goes back to the floor, you lift your head. **Slowly. Again, your elbows come toward one another as you lift your head.** It is as if the lifting of the head is helping you take the spine to the floor and the lifting of the pelvis helps you take the head back to the floor. Keep in mind that there's a pressing in the vertebra below or above the vertebra that is being lifted.
- 49. Bring your arms back down and do the simple movement of lifting the pelvis from the sacrum.** See if something feels easier. **Can you lift the pelvis a little higher now?**

- 50. Rest a moment.**
- 51. As you return to the movement of lifting your spine off the floor, think of each vertebra containing a little piece of your history.**
- 52. As each vertebra is lifted away from the floor, allow a light memory to escape on a small bubble of sound. Let this memory be a joyous or happy one.** Maybe it's a memory of a special gift you received or a vacation you had with loved ones. Can you allow those memories to enter the room on a light vibration?
- 53. Stretch out your legs, rest, and observe your contact with the floor.** Feel how similarly your shoulder blades are now lying on the floor and the way your lumbar vertebrae is resting now.
- 54. Think of “little you” before you needed to organize yourself in order to deal with those social things.** We adapt ourselves to survive around other kids that want to exile us for the way we talk, or stand, or even for our names. **Remember a formative person in your life that made a difference or was there for you in a way that others weren't.** This could be relative, but it doesn't need to be. Maybe it's a grandparent, a wonderful aunt, the lady next door.
- 55. See this person. Imagine this person. Sensory things might come to you— the way they look, what they wore, what they cooked, the way they sounded when they spoke to you.**
- 56. Create a clear, 3-dimensional version or image of this person. With your eyes closed, see this person in their full 3-dimensional self in the present space outside of you. And begin to breathe this person in. Find a way to breathe in their image, or the experience of them, into your middle or center – As if you've taken the 3-dimensional image – and they are whole in your thought, feeling, self.**
- 57. Feed in an impulse for a sigh of relief that touches this person. The feeling of the person is released from your middle and then out of your mouth on the unformed neutral touch of sound – “huh.”**
- 58. Breathe into your middle with the image of that person and touch on sound.** The image is of somebody formative that changed your life in a way that is still with you – that made you who you are now.
- 59. Touch sound as if the image of this person can come right onto sound without any breathiness.** Have the feeling of something bouncing so that it's lighter and more effortless—like the feeling you have when you think of this person. Light and easy. Simple.

60. **Maybe you think of this person's name as you touch sound.** It's as if you were going to say their name and the way they influenced you but it comes out on vibration.
61. **If this person were a gem, what kind of stone or gem would they be?** Ruby, sapphire, opal—as if the color, opaqueness, clarity represents them. **Allow the touch of sound out into the front of your mouth and then into the space above you.**
62. **More light is spreading into your world as you let out the wonderful, free, and simple image of this person. Breathe into the gem in your center and release it to the outside world without any effort.**
63. **Sigh out warmth and light from your middle.**
64. **Place a hand on your belly.** Can your belly stay soft? Let the world fill with warmth and light as if you were thanking them and telling them how they changed your world for the better.
65. **Place both hands on your belly. Move your fingers in toward your spine, jiggling sound vibrations out into space.**
66. **Slowly bend your knees, roll to your side into semi-fetal position and thank the person. And say your full name.**
67. **Come to sitting and slowly come to standing.**
68. Feel the difference in the length of your neck.
69. **Walk around and feel that your legs are lighter and your hip joints are freer.** Think of how the back of your feet were pressing down into the floor. See if you can relax your lower abdomen, jaw, and throat.

## **VCU Workshop for Mindfulness (Part Two)**

This was the second lesson in a 2-part workshop for VCU students enrolled in a course focused on the mind-body connection. Responses to this lesson are included in the results section.

This *Awareness Through Movement* lesson was taught by Bob Hunter during the 4<sup>th</sup> Baltimore *Feldenkrais* Training Program. I added the exploration of the hand and feet movements along with the tongue, lips, and mouth (#46, 47, 52). These instructions were inspired by exercises that I have been introduced to in voice classes and in my Linklater Progression training.

### **Lesson D: Classic Baby Rolls w/Baby Sounds**

- 1. Please lie on your back with your arms and legs long.**
- 2. Sense your contact with the floor. Sense the length of your right leg from your heel to your hip and the length of your left leg from your heel to your hip.**
- 3. Think of the length of your spine.** Think of your spine coming from your tailbone up to your head, the length of your right arm from your fingertips to your shoulder and the length of your left arm.
- 4. Stand your feet, bring your knees up over your chest. Have your knees apart comfortably.** Your feet are close to one another and your knees are comfortably apart.
- 5. Bend your elbows and dangle your hands in front of your face or mouth, the elbows out a bit to the side, your hands drooping down towards your mouth.**
- 6. Begin a little movement of rolling to your right.**
- 7. Come back to the middle and pause for a moment. Rest your feet on the floor.**
- 8. Return to the same position—your knees over the chest and hands dangling in front of your face.**
- 9. Bring your knees and elbows closer together.** Notice the difference in balance and reversibility and ease.

- 10. Allow them to separate until you find a sense of balance.**
- 11. Roll to the right and then to the left.**
- 12. And rest.**
- 13. Imagine that you are a small child or baby and think of your favorite toy.  
Imagine that this object is slightly above you to the right over your head.**
- 14. Roll to the right side with the idea of needing to look up and see your favorite toy.**
- 15. Continue coming back to the middle between movements.**
- 16. Look above your head to the right with your eyes each time you roll a little to the right to see your toy. You can alternate between keeping your eyes open and closed.**
- 17. Now as you roll to your right looking a little above your head and to the right, being interested in your imaginary toy, reach with your right hand a little in that direction. You see something interesting and you begin reaching for it.**
- 18. Each time, return to the center and pause.**
- 19. As you reach for the imaginary object, lengthen the right arm. Feel your ribs on the right. What happens as you roll and reach with your right hand?**
- 20. Rest whenever you need to. Just as a baby wouldn't strain, find a way to move with ease.**
- 21. In resting, notice any differences between your right side and left. Does one side feel longer than the other?**
- 22. Come back to the original position with your knees and elbows up. Again, imagine some amazing toy off to the right above your head, look towards it and begin reaching.**
- 23. It's totally reversible so you're not going to fall. You're like baby scientists studying gravity and finding ways to feel safe. Test your balance. Any moment you can reverse the movement and come back to the original position.**
- 24. Notice your ribs getting longer as you bring weight more to the right side.**
- 25. What if the object were moved so that it's now a little more above your head?  
How would you organize yourself to reach it?**

- 26. Allow your whole spine to arch more. The back of your head goes back more and you come more and more to your side in order to get to the object.**
- 27. Rest.** Moshe based a lot of *ATMs* on the way babies move. It's a universal thing for us to constantly investigate and explore when we are infants and toddlers. And that's exactly how we approach *ATM's*—being curious, investigating what's possible.
- 28. Bring up your knees and your elbows with hands dangling. See something again up over your head to the right and move as if you want to reach it.** Allow yourself to reach more and more above your head.
- 29. Notice that your right knee may be starting to get in the way of reaching higher and further.** What can you do with your right knee to make it easier to reach overhead? If you lengthen your arm, maybe it makes sense that you might lengthen your entire right side. **It might be easier to bring the right arm further if you bring your right knee down.** You may discover that as you go further and further to the right, you end up on your belly. And just as sensible babies discover, you need to raise your head to protect it. Just do what's easy and simple—rolling, lengthening, reversing the movement.
- 30. Return to your back to that same position you were in when you started. Notice the movement back to center.**
- 31. As you come onto your side and belly, notice something happens in the orientation of your pelvis.** When you're on your back, you're very flexed, but as you come to your side and start to lengthen, there's a transition from being flexed to being extended. Your pelvis participates in this flexing and extending. When you are on your back, you may notice that your belly is sunken. As you come to your side and move towards being on your belly, the stomach comes forward.
- 32. Come again to your back and rest.** Notice any changes or differences.
- 33. Bring your knees and elbows up. Now as you move to the right, notice what's happening as you're moving between flexion and extension. Your right elbow and knee move away from one another as you begin to roll. They move apart and then come toward one another again.** Can you track both?
- 34. Think of your hand and your foot moving away from each other. You reach up with your hand and down with your foot. When you come onto your back, think of bringing the elbow and knee together and looking downward as you flex. Be aware of where your elbow and knee are in space as you move from back to front.**
- 35. Rest.**

36. This lesson is to help you to know where you are in space. You can begin to become attentive and spatially aware. When a role requires that you must be in a complicated orientation to the space or ground, you can begin to learn how to do this during today's lesson.
37. **Bring your knees and elbows up again with your feet and hands hanging down. Move to the right in order to see how you move now. Roll all the way to your belly if it's easy and sense your foot going down while your hand goes up above your head.** See how you are able to move as you come back to the original position. **Bring your elbow and knee toward one another so that you are in a flexed position on your back.** Your hand and foot go away from one another as you roll over onto your stomach.
38. **Rest. Sense the difference between the two sides.** Where do you feel the support of the floor? What is your contact with the floor now?
39. **Bring your knees and elbows up.**
40. **Now IMAGINE going towards your left.** Can you think through what you did on the right side and imagine there's an object to your left and slightly overhead?
41. **Start with small movements to your left and then return to your back. Think it through carefully. Think more than you do.** As you imagine doing it, you're activating your whole nervous system. **See how clearly you can imagine doing the movement towards your left smoothly, effortlessly, easily. Think of your weight going more and more toward your left side and lengthening your whole left side as your arm lengthens up.** The movement should be totally reversible so do just a little – only what's easy and pleasurable. Imagine and then move a little at your own pace.
42. **Make it simpler and easier, so you don't interfere with the movement.**
43. **Rest.**
44. **Gradually roll between your belly and your back.**
45. **Rest and notice if you sense any differences in your contact with the floor.** Are there internal differences now as well? Do you feel wider? Shorter?
46. **Bring your knees and elbows up once more and allow yourself to explore moving your hands and feet as if you were a baby.**
47. **Begin to include your tongue and mouth in this exploration as you play with sounds like a baby or toddler would.**



- 48. Imagine the action of rolling onto your belly in one direction, coming back, rolling onto your belly in the other direction and coming back. Do this easily and simply.**
- 49. Slowly roll toward your right side. Move incrementally until you reach your belly.** You may discover something new as you go slowly. Your goal is not to reach your belly but to explore the movement.
- 50. Notice how your back arches just as a consequence of your belly coming forward.**
- 51. Being to roll to the left onto your belly, allowing yourself to flex and lengthen.**
- 52. If the movement feels smooth, roll quickly from left to right and right to left and begin to incorporate the baby sound explorations. If the movement feels difficult in any way, simply imagine you can go quickly.**
- 54. Rest.**
- 55. Bring your knees and elbows up again to the original position.** You began this lesson by imagining a toy above you. Continue to keep this image in mind as you explore these movements with your eyes open. Go in whichever direction you choose, and notice that you can look around the room as you're rolling. **You can lift your head to help you with this movement.**
- 56. Lift your head in flexion if you want to look at the wall between your knees.**
- 57. You can begin to see where you are rolling in the room as you keep your eyes open and your head and neck free.**
- 58. Rest.**
- 59. Bring your knees and your elbows up again. Begin to roll to your right and keep going in that direction so you roll across the room off of your mat. Be aware of your neighbors in space so that you aren't rolling into them.**
- 60. Go gently. Reverse the movement when you are about to run into the chairs, the wall, or your neighbor. Work as an ensemble.**
- 61. Now rest and notice your contact with the floor, the length of your spine, your arms, your legs.**
- 62. When you're ready, bend your knees, come to your side. Come to sitting and then to standing.** What has rolling around done for your standing and walking? **Notice the support you feel through your skeleton.** Your bones are holding you up.

**63. Where is your head oriented now?** What is it like now to scan the room and sense your place in the room, the space, your colleagues around you? **Walk around and see what it's like to move through the space now.**

Outcomes

Reactions to the lessons listed above were varied; some participants responded positively, finding new connections and ease, while others struggled with the challenge of deepening awareness. Because each group was extremely different in terms of age, experience, and group size, this was not surprising. As a *Feldenkrais* student, I saw a few classmates grow frustrated or angry during a lesson. These experiences prepared me for the possibility that *Feldenkrais* may bring up difficult emotions, particularly for students who are newer to the work. I was pleasantly surprised by some of the positive responses from my VCU students. I learned through the process of teaching the VCU students in the Mindfulness course that I could integrate more of the Linklater voice work into those particular lessons.

I feel that my most successful workshop was the one I presented at VASTA at ATHE. My group was comprised of ideal students—voice and speech instructors, many of whom were *Feldenkrais* practitioners or were at least familiar with the method. As willing and experienced students, they easily followed the lesson directions and prompts and were engaged in exploring during the lesson. While I'm sure that they were, in part, trying to determine whether or not they could take this lesson into their classrooms, they were attentive and eager participants.

I included the lesson from ATHE as part of a longer workshop at SETC. I had four students attend the 8:00 am Saturday session. This smaller, less experienced group helped me to realize the necessity of being able to adjust the lesson for the students in the room. I soon learned that this lesson, which was so successful at ATHE, needed more detailed directions when being presented to students with no *Feldenkrais* or Linklater experience.

This lesson needs to either stand alone or be built up to and upon when incorporated into a longer workshop. I aimed to incorporate it into my *Awareness Through Viewpoints* workshop, including it after an exploration of shape. I hoped that the focus on spine, neck, and jaw within this lesson would increase the students' kinesthetic awareness and a deepened understanding of shape. With the inclusion of breath and sound, I had hoped to lead students to an awareness of physical tension and the ways in which unnecessary holding in movement and shape can impact the voice. In the end, I discovered that I appreciate this lesson when presented on its own. This particular lesson needs a much stronger introduction and debrief when integrated into a movement workshop.

The jaw, tongue, and eye lesson that I incorporated into my Voice & Speech for the Actor I course was more effective and better accepted than I had anticipated. It can be difficult to introduce such deep awareness work to younger acting students, and this particular group had already been resistant to exploring awareness through the Linklater Progression. Perhaps the work we had already done within those exercises provided the necessary foundation for slower and more focused awareness work? Perhaps the addition of the eye movements astounded them? As mentioned earlier, many of the students discussed the eyes when expressing the discoveries that they had made during the lesson. I would readily include this lesson again in any voice and speech course; it allowed many students to soften their tongue and jaw muscles, recognize the connection between tongue and jaw tension, and notice the role that the eyes can play in habitual patterns.

In Part One of my workshop with the VCU Mindfulness for Actors students, I found that associating happy memories with sound was useful for some participants and very difficult for others. One student brought up the challenge of finding a happy childhood memory to release.

Perhaps the student was judging those memories, which resulted in second-guessing their choices and feeling self-conscious. In retrospect, this would have been a good opportunity to relate the ways in which we edit ourselves back to the *Feldenkrais Method* and to acting. Other students expressed appreciation for the memories that they were able to bring into the room. Overall, I found this particular lesson to be one that I might revisit but with some editing. The language I choose must be examined in case I do have students who associate childhood with trauma. In asking the students to remember “any happy moments” from their childhood, I did not take wholly unhappy childhood experiences into account. Providing other alternatives should address that issue.

In Part Two of my workshop with the VCU Mindfulness for Actors students, I had a variety of reactions. In this very small group of four, Students A and B were entirely engaged and invested in the lesson. Student C seemed to be paying attention but not entirely engaged as they would do one or two movements and then stop. Student D struggled with directions and was not able to fully embrace the *Feldenkrais* principles to do less, go slowly, and only do what is pleasurable and easy. I could see the strain in Student D’s legs and left arm and excessive holding in their movements.

In the debrief, Student C mentioned that the rocking motion of rolling like a baby was so comforting that it created a feeling of self-soothing. This sensation caused Student C to occasionally drop off into a semi-conscious state. Student D expressed frustration at the lesson, which was not surprising given their difficulties within the lesson. Student D had not struggled with the previous lesson, which leads me to believe that the rolling movement was the impetus for their reaction. Also, this lesson was more difficult and the directions more complex. These more challenging lessons can bring up feelings of frustration, confusion, or inadequacy.

Unfortunately, due to time constraints, I did not have much time to speak with Student D in order to unpack their reaction. I thanked the student for staying with the lesson in spite of their negative emotional response and presented them with the possibility that frustration can be a valuable learning opportunity. When a lesson prompts an extreme reaction, it can be very fruitful to examine why the lesson may have evoked that emotion.

Taken together, these outcomes convince me that using Linklater's language more extensively will help to create more balance between her technique and the *Feldenkrais Method*. Intensifying the vocal elements within these lessons will enhance their effectiveness, deepening the students' learning in the voice and speech classroom.

## Conclusion

I continue to explore how to bring the *Feldenkrais Method* into a pre-established curriculum. Where and when is it possible to bring a *Feldenkrais* lesson or principle into an exercise that already exists in the actor training canon? Will the exercise be more fully absorbed or efficacious with the integration of a method that leads to an increased sense of awareness? These questions continue to fuel my research in working with actors in rehearsals and classrooms.

The *Feldenkrais Method* has been extremely influential in my life; it has altered my understanding not only of movement and voice but also of myself as an artist and as an individual. As a theater artist, *FM* helped address the tension that held me back physically and vocally. This tension was a manifestation of the psychological and mental challenges I was facing as a performer. I see similar tensions in the young actors in my classrooms as they grapple with fear of failure and self-doubt. Because the *Feldenkrais Method* can enable one to let go of ineffective physical habits and find new patterns of thought, it provides the actors with a way to address those issues.

I have certainly found in my own experiences as a student, instructor, and practitioner that integrating *FM* with the Linklater Progression provides a greater understanding of voice and the tensions that can impede it. I, like many of my students, began to truly experience a softening of my tongue and jaw muscles through an *ATM* lesson. I have also seen the benefits of intertwining Linklater and *Feldenkrais* in working with the spine and exploring breath. These

successful outcomes encourage me to find more opportunities for an integrative and blended approach, creating a hybridization that enhances and deepens the students' understanding of themselves and the world around them. Just as there is no limit to the many ways that the *Feldenkrais Method* can be used to enhance actor voice training, there is also no limit to the learning.

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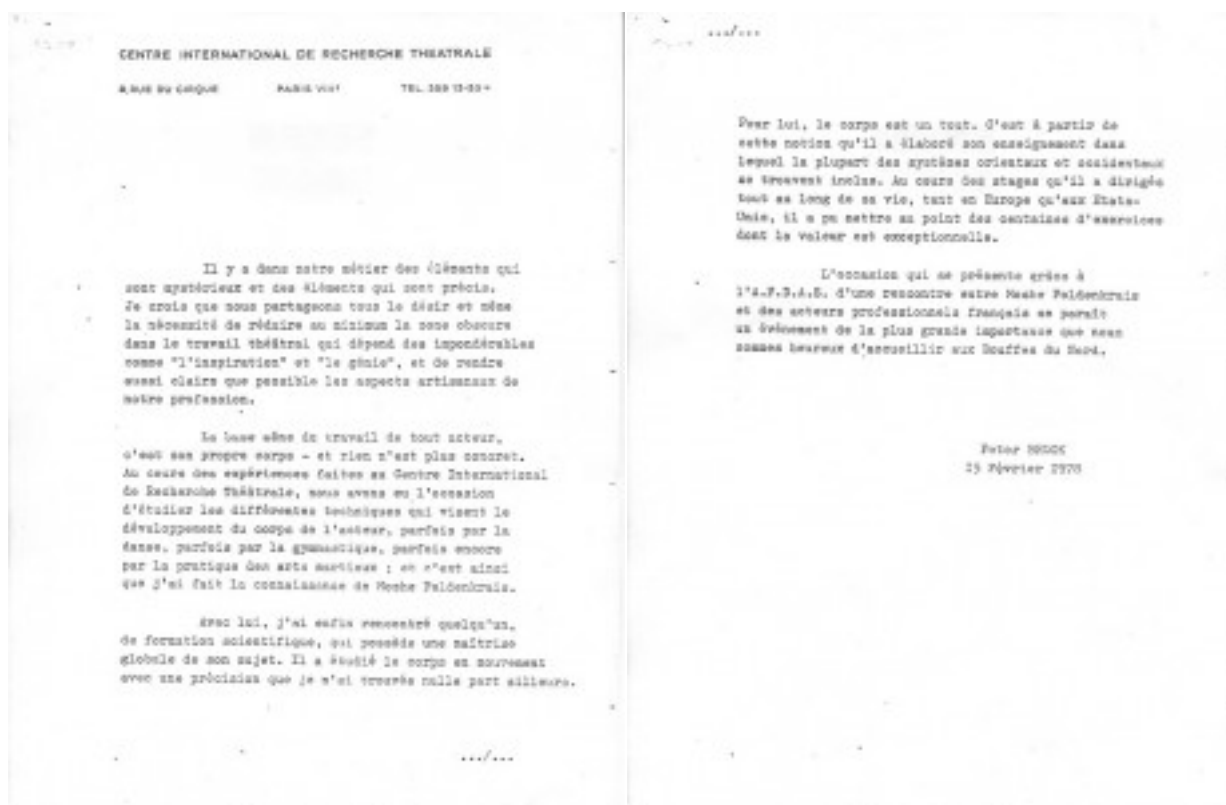
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## Appendix 1

### Letter by Peter Brook, 1978



### **English Translation of Letter by Peter Brook (from Google Translate)**

There are mysterious elements in our craft and elements that are precise. I believe we all share the desire and even the need to minimize the darkness in theatrical work that depends on imponderables such as inspiration and genius, and to make as clear as possible the craftsmanship of our profession.

The very basis of every actor's work is his own body - and nothing is more concrete. During the experiments made at the International Center for Theatrical Research, we had the opportunity to study the different techniques aimed at the development of the body of the actor, sometimes by dance, sometimes by gymnastics, sometimes by practice. martial arts; and that's how I met Moshe Feldenkrais.

With him, I finally meet someone, scientific training, who has a global mastery of his subject. He studied the moving body with a precision that I did not find anywhere else.

For him, the body is a whole. It is from this notion that he elaborated his teaching in which most of the Eastern and Western systems are included. During his lifelong internships, both in Europe and the United States, he has been able to develop hundreds of exercises of exceptional value.

The opportunity presented by A.F.D.A.S. a meeting between Moshe Feldenkrais and French professional actors seems to me an event of the greatest importance that we are happy to welcome to Bouffes de Nord.

## **Appendix 2**

Peer Review – VASTA at ATHE Conference, 2017



Attention:  
Review Committee

The following is a Peer Review written for **Janel Miley's** presentation at the 2017 ATHE Conference, *Spectacle: balancing education, theory, and praxis*. Miley is a Guild Certified Feldenkrais practitioner and has studied Linklater Voice at Shakespeare and Company in Lenox, Massachusetts. She is a graduate student at Virginia Commonwealth University, in the MFA Voice and Speech Pedagogy program and will be entering her final year of study in fall 2017.

On August 5<sup>th</sup> as part of the Voice and Speech Trainers Association (VASTA) Debut Panel, Miley shared her ideas and taught an integration exercise from her presentation, *Exploring the Feldenkrais Method through a vocal Awareness Through Movement lesson*. This presentation highlighted the efficacy of integrating the Feldenkrais Method into voice and speech training for actors, specifically when paired with the Linklater Voice Technique.

Miley began her presentation by referencing and describing the Linklater vocal progression. Miley displayed a clear understanding of her audience and acknowledged the voice practitioners in the room and their collective knowledge of this subject area.

She then inquired as to the audience's general knowledge of the Feldenkrais Method. As fewer people had exposure to this work, Miley offered a detailed description, noting how the method can help to diminish habitual patterns that can limit a person's movement and therefore, their breath/voice and acting work. Miley was extremely clear in her review of the two components of the Feldenkrais Method, Functional Integration and Awareness through Movement.

Miley went on to express that she finds the work of Feldenkrais and Linklater to be an excellent training pairing for the actor. She noted that both are useful for identifying tension and that both ask the actor to begin with an understanding of the spine and its influence on the body, breath and voice.

Miley then deftly led her audience through a combination of exercises from *Singing with your Whole Self: The Feldenkrais Method and Voice* by Samuel H. Nelson and *Freeing the Natural Voice* by Kristin Linklater. Miley was very clear and the lesson was well-directed—everyone was very engaged and clearly invested in the experience. I witnessed Miley checking in with participants and taking ownership of the room. Her prompts were very clear and it was evident she holds expertise in the subject area. After leading the exercise, Miley spoke about when might be ideal to use these two methods and what the benefits are to do so. She expressed a desire to integrate the two methodologies in her own work.

During the question and answer period, one audience member expressed that after the Feldenkrais/Linklater exercise, she felt more space in the back of neck and more forward resonance when speaking. Another said that she felt her jaw muscles to be more released. Both of these comments speak to the efficacy of Miley's integration exercise.

Overall, Miley's presentation was impressive. She had clear knowledge of and passion for the subject matter and excellent pedagogical skills.

If there is any more information I can provide, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at [kristi.dana@gmail.com](mailto:kristi.dana@gmail.com) or by phone at 646.831.3517.

Sincerely,



Kristi Dana

Visiting Assistant Professor (2017-2018)

Voice & Speech

Penn State University

Officer, ATHE Conference Planner for VASTA (2015 – 2017)

Early Career Leadership Awardee, VASTA (2016 – 2017)

MFA, Acting, Brooklyn College, CUNY

MA, Theatre Education, Emerson College

BA, Theatre Arts, Penn State University

Certified Teacher, Knight-Thompson Speechwork

Teacher, Miller Voice Method (mVm)

Certificate of Completion, Michael Chekhov Association (MICHA)



## Appendix 3

### Biographies

#### Tamala Bakkensen

Tamala Bakkensen is a New York-based Actor, Designated Linklater Teacher and *Feldenkrais* Practitioner®. She's on the faculty at the Linklater Center for Voice and Language and the Feldenkrais Institute of NY. She has taught courses in voice, movement and acting for HB Studios, School for Film and TV, Mary Baldwin College MFA, Art of Control at SUNY Purchase, UCSD, as well as classes and workshops throughout NYC. She is a member of Actor's Equity, the Voice and Speech Trainers Association, VASTA and The *Feldenkrais* Guild of North America®. ("Tamala Bakkenson")

#### Elizabeth Blades-Zeller

"Elizabeth Blades holds both Doctor of Musical Arts and Masters of Music degrees from the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, NY. She is currently adjunct associate professor of Music at Shenandoah University in Winchester, VA." Previous appointments were at Heidelberg University (Tiffin, OH) where she served as associate professor of Music, coordinator of Vocal Studies and director of Opera; and as a visiting professor of Music at Nazareth College, Rochester, NY (Nelson and Blades-Zeller). Blades is the coauthor of *Singing with Your Whole Self: The Feldenkrais Method and Voice* and the author of *A Spectrum of Voices Prominent American Voice Teachers Discuss the Teaching of Singing. (A Spectrum of Voices)*

#### Cicely Berry

Cicely Berry studied and taught at the Central School of Speech and Drama. She was the voice director for the Royal Shakespeare Company. She has worked with groups in prisons and schools and led workshops with practitioners such as Augusto Boal and Edward Bond. She is also a director and an author of several books, including *Voice and the Actor*, *Your Voice and How to Use It*, *The Actor and the Text*, and *Text in Action*. (Darnley, "Berry, Cicely")

#### DrBonnie360

DrBonnie360 (now known as Your Autoimmunity Connection) is a consulting firm and website that focuses on educating and empowering patients that need autoimmune care. Dr. Bonnie Feldman, DDS, MBA has "combined her expertise as a clinical dentist and Wall Street analyst to spearhead her current career as a digital health consultant &

autoimmune patient advocate.” Ellen M Martin is the other leading member of the DrBonnie360 team. Martin is the Managing Director of Life Sciences with Haddon Hill Group Inc. She has more than “three decades of experience in strategic and tactical communications for science and technology covers a wide range of fields...[and] has co-authored white papers, presentations and blog posts with DrBonnie360 on autoimmune disease, the microbiome, mobile health and big data in healthcare. (“Meet the Team”)

#### Peter Brook

Peter Brook is a renowned director; “one of the twentieth century’s most innovative and productive practitioners.” He was a co-director of the Royal Shakespeare Company during the 1960’s and founded his own international company based in Paris in the 1970’s. Brook has collaborated with many well-known and well-respected artists such as Alec Guinness, Orson Welles, John Gielgud, Laurence Olivier, and Glenda Jackson. “He has consistently fused uncompromising experimentation with showmanship and commercial acclaim.” (Williams)

#### Dr. Richard Allen Cave

Dr. Richard Allen Cave is Emeritus Professor of Drama and Theatre Arts at Royal Holloway University of London. He worked in the Voice Department in the Royal Shakespeare Company’s Artist Development Programme (ADP), [which] was instituted by Michael Boyd in 2003 until 2013. (Cave, Igweonu)

#### Rocco Dal Vera

Rocco Dal Vera [was] the Head of the division for Acting, Arts Administration, Dance, Musical Theatre, Opera and Theatre Design and Production at the University of Cincinnati’s College-Conservatory of Music, specializing in theatre voice and speech... He co-authored *Acting in Musical Theatre*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. with Joe Deer, [was] a columnist for *Dramatics Magazine* and *Teaching Theatre*, and [was] founding editor of *The Voice and Speech Review* (Barton and Dal Vera, Author Bio)

#### Norman Doidge

Norman Doidge, M.D., is a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst. He is on the research faculty at Columbia University’s Center for Psychoanalytic Training and Research in New York City and on the faculty of the University of Toronto’s department of psychiatry. His last book, *The Brain that Changes Itself*, was a New York Times bestseller with more than a million copies sold. He lives in Toronto. (Doidge i)

#### Gustav Fechner

Gustav Fechner was a German physicist and philosopher who was a key figure in the founding of psychophysics, the science concerned with quantitative relations between sensations and the stimuli producing them... he devised an equation to express the theory of the just-noticeable difference, advanced earlier by Ernst Heinrich Weber. (Encyclopaedia Britannica, “Gustav Fechner”)



#### Moshe Feldenkrais

Dr. Moshe Feldenkrais D.Sc., (1904-1984) was a distinguished scientist, physicist, and engineer. He earned his Doctorate of Science in physics from the Sorbonne and was a close associate of Nobel Prize Laureate Frederic Joliot-Curie at the Curie Institute in Paris, where they conducted research together. He was also a respected Judo instructor and author of many books. Living in England in the 1940's, Feldenkrais found himself unable to walk after suffering a serious injury. He began an intense exploration into the relationship between bodily movement, and healing, feeling, thinking, and learning. As a result, he restored his ability to walk and made revolutionary discoveries, culminating in the development of the method that now bears his name. ("The Feldenkrais Institute")

#### Catherine Fitzmaurice

Catherine Fitzmaurice is the founder of Fitzmaurice Voicework™. She has worked at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, the Juilliard School's Drama Division, Yale School of Drama, New York University, Harvard University, the Moscow Art Theatre, the Stratford Shakespearean Festival, the Guthrie Theatre, Lincoln Center, among others. ("Overview")

#### Elsie Fogerty

Elsie Fogerty was an educator and actress. She founded the Central School of Speech Training and Dramatic Art in 1906 at the Albert Hall, which later became the Central School of Speech and Drama. She "was a pioneer in voice training and speech therapy" and "had a profound influence on the theatre." (Adriana Hunter)

#### Dianne Hancock

Dianne Hancock trained at Central School of Speech and Drama, London and has worked extensively as a theatre practitioner before becoming a certified *Feldenkrais Practitioner* in 2010. In addition to writing and directing for theatre, she is editor of "F.I." *The Journal of the Feldenkrais Guild UK* and a regular contributor on articles and papers on *The Feldenkrais Method* and Performance. Dianne is currently Programme Leader for BA (Hons) Contemporary Performance Practice at University Centre, Doncaster. She teaches *The Feldenkrais Method* to undergraduate theatre and dance students at UCD, dance students at University of Lincoln and puppetry students from CSSD and London School of Puppetry. She is currently undertaking a Professional Doctorate study in *The Feldenkrais Method* and Creativity. ("Editorial Team")

#### Kene Igweonu

Kene Igweonu has a doctorate in drama and theatre from Royal Holloway, University of London, a postgraduate certificate in teaching (HE-Higher Education) also from Royal Holloway and an honors degree in performing arts from the University of Ilorin. Igweonu is Fellow of the Higher Education Academy and a qualified practitioner of the *Feldenkrais Method*. He was a founding Coordinator of the Centre for Innovative Performance Practice and Research at University of Wales Trinity Saint David (Swansea Metropolitan) and has taught at Royal Holloway and the University of Benin. Igweonu is currently Director of Enterprise (formerly Knowledge Exchange) for the Faculty of Arts and Humanities at Canterbury Christ Church University. ("Staff Profile")

#### Eric Kandel

Eric Kandel is an Austrian-born American neurobiologist who, with Arvid Carlsson and Paul Greengard, was awarded the Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine in 2000 for discovering the central role synapses play in memory and learning. Kandel's books include *The Age of Insight: The Quest to Understand the Unconscious in Art, Mind, and Brain: From Vienna 1900 to the Present* (2012) and his autobiography *In Search of Memory: The Emergence of a New Science of Mind* (2006). (Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Eric Kandel")

#### Arthur Lessac

Arthur Lessac was described by American Theatre magazine in 1999 as "one of the three or four most significant figures in modern American voice training." He attended the Eastman School of Music in Rochester...and earned a bachelor's and master's degrees in speech from NYU. In the 1930s, Lessac was a vocal coach for Broadway shows...He taught vocal technique to aspiring actors at the Stella Adler Theater Studio and to aspiring rabbis at the Jewish Theological Seminary. In the early 1960s, Lessac was asked to lead speech training for the young actors at the newly formed Lincoln Center Repertory Theater. (Variety Staff)

#### Kristin Linklater

Kristin Linklater trained with and later became a trainee teacher under Iris Warren at the London Academy of Music and Drama. Her books *Freeing the Natural Voice* and *Freeing Shakespeare's Voice* are widely used in voice training. (Darnley, "Linklater, Kristin")

#### Corinna May

Corinna May has been a Designated Linklater voice teacher for 12 years, a professional actress for 30 years, and is currently an assistant professor of Voice and Speech in the MFA program at Pace University. She completed the *Feldenkrais Guild* training five years ago and is a core member of Shakespeare & Company in Lenox, MA. Corinna is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Barnard College/Columbia University and Circle in the Square Theatre School's Professional Actor Training. ("Voice, Breath and Posture – Corinna May")

#### Michael Merzenich

Dr. Michael Merzenich, Ph.D. is a Professor Emeritus at the University of California at San Francisco, a member of both the National Academies of Science and the Institute of Medicine, and the co-founder of Scientific Learning and Posit Science. Often called "the father of brain plasticity," he is one of the scientists responsible for our current understanding of brain change across the lifespan. ("*Soft-Wired*")

#### Samuel Nelson

Samuel Nelson is a graduate of the Toronto Professional *Feldenkrais* Training Program (1987). He has offered Awareness Through Movement® classes to the public since 1985. Samuel held seminars on the Feldenkrais Method® each semester at the Eastman School of Music from 1987 to 2001. He has taught in the Dance Department at the University of Rochester as well as workshops with Physical Therapists and Equestrians. He is a co-author of *Singing with Your Whole Self: The Feldenkrais Method and Voice*, Scarecrow Press, 2002. ("Samuel Nelson")

#### Yoshi Oida

[Yoshi Oida] is...an international performer, a movie actor, opera director and reinterpreter of classic texts. He started his career with rigorous noh and kabuki training, and eventually moved to Paris where he [worked with] Peter Brook...As one of the only non-white actors in Brook's embryonic International Centre for Theatre Research, he made a huge contribution to Brook's theatre. [Oida is the author of] *An Actor Adrift* and *The Invisible Actor*, the companion piece to Brook's *The Empty Space*. (Ellis)

#### Monika Pagneux

Monika Pagneux studied modern dance and theatre with Mary Wigman and mime with E'tienne Decroux, the corporeal mime teacher recommended to her by Marcel Marceau. She also trained with Decroux. Pagneux studied theatre at E'cole Internationale de The'a'tre Jacques Lecoq, where she subsequently taught movement for 15 years. She worked with Peter Brook, ran an international theatre training studio with Philippe Gaulier in Paris for 15 years, followed by workshops in London for 10 years while also leading masterclasses around the world, including teaching in Japan every year for three years. From 2007 to 2013 [Pagneux] led pedagogy masterclasses in Barcelona. [She met] Dr. Moshe Feldenkrais in the early 1970s [and] subsequently learned from him over five summers for three or four weeks at a time in Paris. (Yen and Battersby)

#### Alan Questel

Alan S. Questel trained directly with Dr. Feldenkrais in Amherst. Since that time, he has lectured and taught at hospitals, colleges and *Feldenkrais* Professional Training Programs throughout the world...An actor before becoming interested in the *Feldenkrais Method*, Alan worked and toured with Jerzy Grotowski and Paul Sills (Second City, Chicago and Story Theatre). ("Alan Questel")

#### Patsy Rodenburg

Patsy Rodenburg is the Director of Voice at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama (26 years) and until recently at the Royal National Theatre (16 years). She trained in Voice Studies at the Central School of Speech and Drama...Previously, Patsy was in residence with the Royal Shakespeare Company for nine years and also works with The Royal Court Theater, Donmar and Almeida Theater, London. She has also worked extensively with many of the great world theaters including the Moscow Art Theatre, Complicite, Cheek by Jowl, and Comedie-Francaise. ("Biography")

#### Janet B. Rodgers

Janet B. Rodgers was Professor Emerita of Theatre at Virginia Commonwealth University where she taught for 25 years and created the first MFA with an emphasis in Voice and Speech Pedagogy in the USA and, for seven years, was Head of Performance. Rodgers taught at the Boston Conservatory of Music and was a principal actress with The Boston Shakespeare Company and Boston's Lyric Stage as well as performing Off-Broadway at La Mama Theatre. She has dialect coached over 120 theatre and film productions. She was recognized as 'Distinguished Member' for her many years of leadership in the international Voice and Speech Trainers Association (VASTA) and also received the 'Distinguished Teaching Award' from VCU's School of the Arts. ("Rodgers")

#### Daniele Sanderson

A member of Equity and the *Feldenkrais* Guild. Danièle began teaching at Birmingham School of Acting in 1999 as a freelance director and was invited to join the full-time staff in 2001 as the course director for the post-graduate degree in acting. In 2004, she was appointed course director for the BA in Acting and in 2006 become the Deputy Director of BSA. Since the school became part of Royal Birmingham Conservatoire in 2017 Danièle has become Director of Undergraduate Studies for Acting as well as continuing as course director for the BA Acting. (“Danièle Sanderson”)

#### Richard Schechner

Richard Schechner, one of the founders of Performance Studies, is a performance theorist, theater director, author, editor of *The Drama Review* and the *Enactments* book series, and Professor Emeritus of Performance Studies at NYU. He founded The Performance Group and East Coast Artists. His theatre productions include *Dionysus in 69*, *Commune*, *The Tooth of Crime*, *Mother Courage and Her Children*, *Seneca's Oedipus*, *Faust/gastronome*, *Three Sisters*, *Hamlet*, *The Oresteia*, *YokastaS*, *Swimming to Spalding*, and *Imagining O*. His books include *Public Domain*, *Environmental Theater*, *Performance Theory*, *The Future of Ritual*, *Between Theater and Anthropology*, *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, and *Performed Imaginaries*. As of 2014, his books have been translated into 17 languages. He has been awarded numerous fellowships including Guggenheim, NEH, ACLS, and fellowships at Dartmouth, Cornell, Yale, Princeton, and the Central School of Speech and Drama, London. (“Richard Schechner”)

#### Dr. Mari Swingle

Dr. Mari Swingle is a neurotherapist and behavioral specialist who practices at the highly-regarded Swingle Clinic in Vancouver, BC. She holds an MA and Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology, an MA in Language Education, a BA in Visual Arts, and has won numerous awards for her post-doctoral work on the effects of i-technology on brain function. [Swingle] is the author of *i-Minds: How Cell Phones, Computers, Gaming and Social Media Are Changing Our Brains, Our Behavior, and the Evolution of Our Species*. Dr. Mari [Swingle] is a 2015 Winner of a Federation of Associations of Brain and Behavioral Sciences (FABBS) Early Career Impact Award. (“A Successful Neurotherapist Shares Her Story”)

#### Sarah Thorne

Sarah Thorne (1837-99) was an accomplished actress and manageress who owned the Theatre Royal in Margate, England. She opened her own drama school in 1885 attached to the Theatre Royal where students trained in mime, gesture, movement, stage combat, voice production and dialects. (Rogers)

#### Ernst Weber

Ernst Heinrich Weber (1795-1878) German anatomist and physiologist whose fundamental studies of the sense of touch introduced a concept—that of the just-noticeable difference, the smallest difference perceivable between two similar stimuli—that is important to psychology and sensory physiology. Weber’s empirical observations were expressed

mathematically by Gustav Theodor Fechner, who called his formulation Weber's law. (Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Ernst Heinrich Weber")

#### Dr. Frank Wildman

Frank Wildman, author, speaker, and educator, is recognized as a pioneering advocate for the *Feldenkrais* Method. Frank studied for more than a decade with...Dr. Moshe Feldenkrais. Frank conducted the first accredited *Feldenkrais Practitioner* Training after Dr. Feldenkrais' death in 1984. He is the past president of the *Feldenkrais Guild of North America* and formulated the Standards of Practice, which today serve as the defining guidelines for the Feldenkrais Method internationally. ("Frank Wildman")

#### Victoria Worsley

Victoria Worsley trained with renowned European movement and performance teachers Philippe Gaulier and Monika Pagneux. She was an actor and occasional Movement Director for 20 years, most notably in the place where new writing and visual/physical theatre connect, but also acted in television and film. She re-trained as a *Feldenkrais* teacher 2003-7. She has taught regularly at a number of drama schools over the last 10 years including Oxford School of Drama and Mountview and has taught workshops at the Actors Centre, ROH and for a variety of theatre companies as well as coaching individual actors. Her book *Feldenkrais for Actors, How to Do Less and Discover More* was commissioned by Nick Hern Books and published by them in 2016. ("Victoria Worsley")

#### Arlyn Zones

Arlyn Zones graduated from Dr. Feldenkrais' last training program in 1983 and has been practicing the Method for over 30 years. She received her Trainer's designation in 1994. She first began studying the Linklater Method in 1972 as part of an actor's training program. [She created a curriculum] focusing on the voice has been included in nearly all of *Feldenkrais* Resources trainings in San Diego & New York, as well as numerous trainings in Australia. Zones has an MA in Theater Arts. ("Voice, Breath and Posture – Arlyn Zones")

## **Vita**

Janel Renee Miley Knipple was born on July 6, 1978, in Washington County, Maryland, and is an American citizen. She graduated from Heritage Academy, Hagerstown, Maryland in 1996. She received her a dual Bachelor of Arts degree in Theatre and English from Messiah College, Grantham, Pennsylvania in 2000. After graduation, she worked in theatre education, administration, and performance at regional theatre companies, including Baltimore Centerstage, Shakespeare & Company, and Shakespeare Theatre Company. She also taught Voice for the Actor at Messiah College and West Virginia University. She received her Master of Fine Arts degree in Theatre Pedagogy from Virginia Commonwealth University in 2018. While at VCU she taught Introduction to Stage Performance, Acting I and II, and Voice and Speech I and II. She is a member of Actor's Equity Association. She became a Guild Certified *Feldenkrais* Practitioner in 2016.