Awareness Perception Presence :
Inquiring into forming a body of work

TEAK MA Dance Pedagogy

Thesis

6 April 2009

Malcolm Manning

Töölöntorinkatu 9 A 15

00260 Helsinki

+358 50 365 0860

www. movetolearn.com

malcolm_manning@movetolearn.com

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i. Introduction

This thesis is centred on a body of somatic movement work that I have been developing for the last four and a half years under the name *Awareness Perception Presence – Somatic Movement Practice As "Invisible Technique (APP)*. The decision to offer this course marked a significant shift for me as a teacher. Rather than simply teaching forms that I had been taught and making them increasingly my own through the act of teaching them, I felt like I was for the first time embarking on developing my own body of work.

Though much of content is derived from two forms of somatic movement education that I have a particular affinity for, the Feldenkrais Method and experiential anatomy, it is supplemented by material that I have either picked up from my study of other somatic disciplines or else invented myself. What marks it out as my own is not so much the content as the form in which I bring it all together and the manner in which I teach it.

This thesis is the written component of a period research into the process of developing of this work. My hope is that in the act of researching it, I might gain insights and make connections that could support the ongoing development of this work, and my teaching practice in general. I also hope, by virtue of the form and context of a thesis, to share something of my process of development with others and in doing so invite dialogue.

ii. Research methods

The nature of somatic movement work is paradoxical in that while the experience of the work is utterly concrete, that experience is at the same time highly subjective. This subjectivity is foregrounded both in participants as they engage in exploring the work, and in myself in the role of teacher. The body of knowledge that the participant uncovers through the work is their own, just as the body of knowledge from which I teach is mine.

In considering a research methodology to employ, the subjective and holistic nature of the work points towards a qualitative approach. The closest model that I found for this is reflexive inquiry since it recognises that teaching is in itself an act of research, and one which is rooted in the personal, both in terms of subjective observation and autobiographical reflection.

> *The better we understand ourselves as teachers, the better we understand ourselves as persons, and vice versa. Because we see the practice of teaching as an expression as who we are as individuals – that is an autobiographical expression – we assert that to understand teaching in its complex, dynamic and multidimensional forms, we need to engage in ongoing autobiographical inquiry. (Cole & Knowles, 2000; p15)*

My field of inquiry is wide-ranging: at its core is this body of work that I call Awareness Perception Presence that could be said to fall into the category of somatic movement exploration; it is enacted through me as I teach it, which suggests self-examination; and in teaching it, it touches others, which suggests dialogue.

At the same time, my inquiry, or at least this tangible result of it, is bound by the form of words on a page. This begs many questions, made especially acute by attempting to employ this form to frame a somatic inquiry. What is possible and useful to share via this medium? What is lost along the way? What do written words do? For the writer, in the act of writing them? For the reader, in the act of reading them? As a somatic practitioner, these issues of language are not trivial, but to tackle them more thoroughly would require stepping into another discipline, or at least into another medium. Since the former is not my desire here, and the latter is not permissible, I lay that subject aside for later consideration, and just signpost it as an area of concern that I am aware of, struggle with and question as I go.

iii. Overview

In **part one**, in order to give a context for my work, I introduce the concept of somatics and the somatic practices that I have direct experience of and which form the basis of all my work. In **part two**, I give a personal account of how my experience of somatic practices affected my life and set me on the path that led me to become a somatic movement educator. In **part three**, I trace the origins of my teaching practice, noting and attempting to detail the influences of some of my teachers and of the Feldenkrais Method on my development as a teacher.

In **part four**, I describe the thinking behind my initial offering of APP and map out the various lines of interest that I seek to address through it and in doing so give an account of how the form developed to its present state. In **part five**, I detail five basic classes that I arrived at and taught in many places as well as giving a detailed description of a single class as an example so that the reader might get a better idea of what they might be like. And in **part six**, I enter into dialogue with responses of course participants to two distinctly different instances of teaching these classes.

In **part seven**, I summarise and evaluate for myself both this process of development and this process of reflection on it, and look forward to how I could further develop the work and myself as a teacher of it.

Part One : Somatic sources

In drawing a first circle around the process by which I arrived at the body of work that I call Awareness Perception Presence (APP), I would like to outline the context from which it emerged and into which I would place it. That context has come to be known as somatics. *Here I will attempt to clarify what is meant by the term and introduce briefly the various somatic practices that have informed my practice as a movement researcher and teacher. While somatics is a broad category covering many fields, my experience of individual somatic disciplines is largely within the field of dance and movement studies. Finally, I will describe how these individual disciplines could be subsumed under a wider category of somatic movement exploration, the importance of the role of the individual practitioner and the genesis of my impulse towards offering broad-based movement exploration classes drawing on the full breadth of my experience, the classes which became APP.*

I should say right at the beginning that somatics is not a term that I particularly like, and it was with a certain reluctance that I started to apply it to what I do. I don't like it because I feel it sounds too grand and too obscure. I consider a more accurate description for myself would simply be a movement teacher. But not everyone appreciates the fundamental role of movement in our lives. I have discovered that this description is also too vague, even if it is an easier starting point from which to answer people that I meet who ask me what I do. If there's time and space, then by showing and describing some funny walks people get some insight into the fundamental connection of movement to our lived experience. Somatics does however, perfectly describe my area of interest and so I adopted it. And I have to admit that people tend to be more impressed (and confused) when I describe myself as a somatic movement educator, and sometimes that can be useful too.

1.1 Somatics

"Soma" is simply a Greek word for the living body. Somatics was a term first introduced by Thomas Hanna (1928-1990) when he founded *The Somatics Magazine : Journal Of The Bodily Arts And Sciences* in 1977. The word *somatics* designates an approach to working with the body where it is experienced from within rather than objectified from without. The implication is that when the body is experienced from within, then the body and mind are not separated but experienced as a whole.

In Hanna's own words:

> *Somatics is the field which studies the* soma*: namely the body as perceived from within by first-person perception. When a human being is observed from the outside — ie, from a third-person viewpoint — the phenomenon of a human body is perceived. But, when this same human being is observed from the first-person viewpoint*

> *of his (sic) own proprioceptive senses, a categorically different phenomenon is perceived: the human soma.* (quoted in Johnson, 1995; p341)

The field of somatics is vast and spans many areas of study: health, education, performing arts, psychology and philosophy to name but a few. Many individual disciplines can be described as somatic in approach: the Alexander Technique, Rosen Therapy, Rolfing, Feldenkrais Method, Body-Mind Centering, the work of Elsa Gindler, Mabel Todd, Ideokinesis, Authentic Movement, Classical Osteopathy, Eutony, Reichian Therapy as well as many non-western disciplines such as Qi Gong, Aikido, some forms of yoga and meditation. What unites them is a holistic, first-person view of body and mind (Johnson, 1995).

However, the simple description of these disciplines as somatic is not enough in itself. To use the word somatic also suggests an approach to practising and teaching them. It is possible to present the forms inherent in any of these disciplines in a very non-somatic fashion. Conversely, it would also be possible to present a non-somatic discipline somatically. In this way, the manner in which any particular teacher presents their work is as important as the content when considering whether a particular instance could rightfully qualify as somatic. So the application of the term somatic to any concrete instance of practice can best be regarded as indicative of intent rather than absolute.

We in the west have a tendency to experience mind as something located in our heads. To redress this imbalance, many of these disciplines offer ways to experience mind through the body, and hence as a property of the whole self. I believe that we can all benefit from deepening our own somatic experience: when we think with our whole selves then we have more information with which to make decisions and to act.

1.2 The Feldenkrais Method

The Feldenkrais method is a somatic educational system developed by Moshe Feldenkrais (1904-1984) which offers to improve the quality, range and comfort with which we move. Since we are moving every moment of our lives, then through improving movement, the method aims to improve all that we do. It also concerns itself with learning. More specifically, learning how to learn. It employs a pedagogical process that applies not only to learning new movements, but to any new skill (Feldenkrais, 1972).

The method is taught in two forms: in group Awareness Through Movement (ATM) classes and one-to-one Functional Integration (FI) lessons. In both cases we are invited to engage in a pleasurable and playful process through which, simply by paying attention to physical sensations that attend movement, we develop a fuller and fuller perception of

ourselves in action. In exploring the method, we gain in flexibility and strength not through stretching or exerting ourselves. Instead, we work slowly and gently, in a way that educates our whole selves to move in a better coordinated, more efficient and graceful way. The more we aware become of how we are moving, the more efficient our movement becomes. As a result, we find we ourselves increasingly able to let go of unnecessary habits and holding patterns that we have accumulated over our lives, moving instead in response to the present situation. Feldenkrais called these holding patterns parasitic movements (Feldenkrais, 1999; p18) in that they attach themselves to and live off our intended movements, degrading them in the process. He described the process that he developed as one of, "weeding out these parasitic movements" (Feldenkrais 2002; p185). Improvements then become spontaneously useful and available in everyday life.

While the classes are not necessarily physically demanding, the challenge in them is to pay attention to ourselves as we move. Immediately after a class or lesson, besides moving easier and more pleasurably, we often notice ourselves feeling more alive, relaxed and at peace with ourselves, taller and lighter, able to breathe more freely, and/or more centred and balanced. The subjective experience is very personal and can depend on the specific themes that a particular class addresses, but the preceding list gives some idea of the kind of feelings that can result. Once the immediate effects of a particular session have faded over the following hours or days, everyday movements often become easier and more pleasurable, sometimes in unexpected and dramatic ways. I've heard people who experienced nothing particularly dramatic in a class report, for example, being able to reach the top shelf while shopping for the first time ever, or being able to look around to reverse a car without discomfort for the first time since they can remember.

There are several thousand different original ATM classes by Feldenkrais that are documented[1] and they also form the basis for one-to-one Functional Integration (FI) lessons. Each class explores a particular functional relationship in movement. Over time, the classes fit together like an endless holographic jigsaw puzzle that, as we explore it, leads to a fuller and fuller perceptual experience of ourselves in movement and in life.

1.3 Experiential anatomy

While the Feldenkrais Method is a specific body of work that requires a completion of certified training programme in order to be able to teach it, experiential anatomy is a generic term that denotes a particular approach to making use of anatomical information. In contrast to medical anatomy, where the emphasis is on learning the names and locations

of different anatomical structures in order to locate them in another person, in experiential anatomy the emphasis is first on locating the structures within ourselves through noticing our inner sensations. This is often done through movement: by directly sensing the movement of the structure at rest, for example the movement of the diaphragm in breathing; by attempting to sense the structure in question by moving oneself; or through the touch and guided movement of another. One we recognise the structures in ourselves, then it is possible to find them in others.

The process involves going back and forth between examining pictures in anatomy books and three-dimensional models of the structures to be located, and then, with that information in mind, attempting to locate the structures within ourselves. By paying attention to ourselves in this way, we develop a clearer self-image which can lead to improvements in how we move. We move according to ideas that we have about ourselves. Often ideas that we picked up from others, these ideas inform our self image. For example, many of us don't experience our chest as a place with a great deal of movement potential. In the English language it is the location of the rib cage, and a cage is most often a rigid metal construction designed to keep wild animals from escaping. However, when we look at its anatomical structure, we discover that it is full of potential for articulation. Not only does it contain a large area of soft cartilage that surrounds the breastbone, and not only is the breastbone in fact five separate bones, four of which are said to fuse together sometime between puberty and the mid-twenties (Gray, 1918; fig 119), but in the whole chest area including the spine and rib cage but excluding the shoulder girdle there are around 100-120 joints.

That it is unclear exactly how many joints there are in the chest area, since anatomy books sometimes differ in what they say, is an interesting point. It is worth remembering that medical anatomy in based upon cutting apart dead bodies, the word anatomy derives via Latin from the Greek *ana*- 'up' and *tomia* 'cutting' (from *temnein* 'to cut'), literally *cutting up* (New Oxford American Dictionary, 2005). Some structures change rapidly upon death, and so their living form cannot readily be discovered from cutting apart a dead body. The thymus gland, which until the last 20-30 years was considered to cease functioning and shrivel up after puberty, is a case in point. It is now accepted to play an integral role in the body's immune system (Anastasiadis & Ratnatunga, 2007; p4):

> *"... the standard teaching was that the thymus gland had no function at all in the adult, a delusion fostered by the fact that during autopsy the thymus was usually found to be quite small and atrophied. This is because the thymus gland, in response to acute stress*

> *such as an infection, can shrivel to half its size in twenty-four hours." (Diamond, 1978; p8)*

In exploring our anatomy experientially, we are not concerned with the currently accepted objective scientific truth so much as how we subjectively experience our own living body. And this experience changes over time, both as our understanding of ourselves deepens and as our bodies pass through time.

I have made an ongoing study of experiential anatomy within the discipline of Body Mind Centering (see below), in studying Movement Shiatsu (see below) and with specialist teachers of experiential anatomy such as Andrea Olsen And Caryn McHose (Olsen & McHose, 1991). Experiential anatomy is also occupied a central role in the Feldenkrais four-year professional training which I undertook in order to become a certified teacher of the method.

1.4 Other somatic sources

While the Feldenkrais Method and experiential anatomy feature most prominently in the APP classes that are the subject of this thesis, there are many other somatic disciplines that I studied in some depth and which are significant resources in forming and teaching APP, both in terms of material that I borrow and adapt from them and as models of how to teach. My experiences of them also contributed to the forming of the body of knowledge from which I teach.

Below I give brief descriptions of them and indicate something of their value to me in my own research and teaching.

1.4.1 Contact Improvisation

Contact improvisation is an improvisational dance form conceived by Steve Paxton that has it roots in the early history of what has come to be known as post-modern dance (Banes, 1987). It is a way of dancing playfully with a partner, grounded in physical sensation, which investigates how a dance can develop through sharing a shifting point of contact. It has been variously described as "an art sport", "a game or two with two winners" and "a physical conversation".[2] Contact dances can range from meditative to acrobatic, from using little or light touch to sending weight through a partner's body to fly.

The language of the body is sensation and in contact improvisation our sensation is always our guide in giving weight and receiving support, making and breaking contact, rolling and sliding, steering momentum, taking control of and resolving falls, lifting and being lifted. Dancing contact improvisation both requires and nurtures a relaxed, open

and curious state. It is a form that I have a long and sustained association with, both as a practitioner and a teacher, and through it I feel I have gained an ease and facility for moving and sensing movement, both alone and with others, that I carry with me throughout my life. Its ongoing practise has been a major contributor to the development of my body of knowledge.[3]

1.4.2 Movement Improvisation

Improvisation is a term which means many different things to many different people. In the world of jazz music, the ability to improvise is treasured as a skill. At the other end of the scale, improvisation is held to be the natural refuge of the lazy and ill-prepared. Viewed from yet another angle, this same ill-preparedness can re-cast the improviser in a heroic light. In many action movies the hero/heroine, presented with an unprecedented and seemingly insurmountable situation, is forced to improvise a solution.

Improvisation is also simply mundane. It is ever present. In a conversation I overheard between two participants entering one of my classes midway through a three-week intensive improvisation workshop: "It's like we're improvising all the time. I mean, when I got up this morning, I knew I was coming here, but I didn't know exactly how I'd get here. And I didn't know that we'd meet on the way. And even if I did, then I'd have had no way of predicting what we'd be talking about right now."[4]

Improvisation can be practised as a performance mode in itself or used as a tool to generate material. At its root, improvisation has something to do with creativity. No matter how codified and set the performance of a task has become, from weaving a basket to baking a cake, from playing a song to dancing a ballet, someone at some point "improvised" what later became set as the pattern, the recipe, the tune or the choreography. It was improvised into being. Improvisation is then the process of investigation that results in the making of a composition. One could even say that the act of improvising is *the act of making a composition*. This perhaps is a clue as to why improvisation might be interesting to explore as a performance mode in itself and why some performers of dance improvisation even prefer to refer to their work as Instant Composition.[5]

For the dancer, the field of study is their relationship to their own body (their instrument) and the compositional relationships to their environment and others co-existing within it. To study improvisation is to enter into the open-ended process of fine-tuning the perception of these internal and external relationships. If composition can be summed up as choosing how to combine different elements, then our perception is what presents us

with the elements from which to choose. The more fine-grained the perception, the more distinct elements we can choose from and the more subtlety we can employ in combining them.

From the virtuoso performer of improvisation through to all of us as we make our way through our days, the twin threads connecting these different enactions of improvisation are perception and choice making. The study of improvisation is the study of perception and choice making and, in the widest sense, improvisation is simply a life skill, and this is the viewpoint from which I have both studied[6] and taught it.

It is through improvisation that I personally choose to take the work of somatic movement exploration into art making. (Manning 2009)

1.4.3 Authentic Movement

Authentic Movement is a rich and complex dialogical process which evolves from a collection of simple structures where one person moves with eyes closed and another takes the role of a witness to the mover. As a mover, our task is to listen to our inner impulses and follow them into movement. The feeling is more of being moved than of moving. As a witness, our task is twofold: to listen with our eyes and whole body to the mover, and to listen to our own internal experience of witnessing. During a session, we exchange roles so that we get a chance to experience both what it is to be a mover and to be a witness.

In moving, we may find the process maps out familiar inner spaces and movement patterns and qualities. It may then unfold to explore less familiar inner spaces and movements. In witnessing, a parallel process occurs as we recognise and explore the inner spaces that we witness from. As both mover and witness we can write, draw and talk as a way of reflecting on our experience after each instance of moving. By alternating roles we begin to understand the possibilities and pitfalls inherent in each.

The practice of authentic movement builds our ability to be present to ourselves as we act and to others as we observe. Over time, we can come to internalise the role of the witness and therefore witness ourselves as we move. By attempting to separate and examine what it is to move and what it is to witness movement, the work lends clarity to these processes in any situation; in movement classes, in watching and making performance work, and in life.

I have found it supportive as a teacher to have practised authentic movement,[7] since through it I have learned that I cannot *know* what is going on inside anyone else (includ-

ing participants), but can only *interpret* their movement and more general behaviour through the filter of my own experience of myself.

1.4.4 Body Mind Centering

Body Mind Centering (BMC) is an experiential study developed by Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen which explores how we embody ourselves through the experiential application of anatomical, physiological, psycho-physical and developmental principles. It promotes an understanding of how the mind is expressed through the body and the body through the mind. BMC is a creative process in which we learn to meet and recognise ourselves and others through the exploration of embodiment. Each person is both the student and the subject matter. The principles and techniques are taught in the context of self-discovery and openness. We learn to engage ourselves and others non-judgementally starting at the place where we are and where others are.

Like the Feldenkrais Method, to become a certified teacher of BMC requires a prolonged period of training. I am not a certified practitioner, but have undertaken many hours and days of studies with many different teachers.[8] To a far greater extent than the Feldenkrais Method, it overlaps other disciplines in both material and approach, so although I make no claims to be a certified teacher, I do employ some of what I learned from my experience of it in my own teaching. There is a deep historical connection for example between BMC and contact improvisation; in looking for more somatic models of the body, early practitioners of contact improvisation found much that was useful in the work of Cohen.[9]

1.4.5 The work of Elsa Gindler

Elsa Gindler is not so well known but has had an enormous impact on the emerging field of somatics (Johnson, 1995; p3-74). She was a pioneer who worked in Berlin during in the first half of the 20th century. Her work emphasised sensory awareness, play, and human development. It was never named as such, partly because of the difficulty of working through the Nazi period, and partly because of her simple reluctance to name what she did; the closest she got was to refer to it sometimes as ,"human work". All the documentation of her work was burned in the closing days WWII, another reason she is little known. Through her students however, the work continued and had a profound influence of many other somatic forms.

I was lucky to find Eva Schmale, a teacher in direct lineage via Elfriede Hengstenberg (Strub, 1985) to Gindler,[10] and took a number of workshops. I found the work to be very

deep and simple and it marked itself out especially through its total lack of explanation or explicit theoretical background. We had our experience and we lived it and that was it. I found this simple and direct engagement inspirational.

1.4.6 Release Technique and Ideokinesis

Release technique, as I understand it, is a dance technique where we learn to move according to the laws of physics rather than the laws of aesthetics, in a relaxed and easy way which works with our anatomy rather than against it. The term was first coined by Mary Fulkerson, who was a member of Steve Paxton's initial group of contact improvisers and went on to teach with him at Dartington College, UK. The term "release technique" was never copyrighted, has since passed into general use and now means many different things to many different people.

As in Fulkerson's work, many of the postmodern release techniques build on the anatomical understanding and the use of images to improve our understanding of it known as Ideokinesis that leads back to the seminal work by Mabel Todd (Todd, 1937) via Barbara Clark (Matt & Clark, 1993), John Rolland (Rolland, 1987) and Andre Bernard (Bernard et al, 2006). Although what I do follows this spirit, and I consider that what I do draws on this lineage, I don't use either term explicitly. There is also an intimate link between the origins of contact improvisation and release technique, indeed in the UK there are still some who refer to contact improvisation as, "contact release". [11]

1.4.7 Developmental Movement

The study of developmental movement as a subject is a part of many different disciplines, both somatic and otherwise. My experience has been exclusively within the field of somatics. In some somatic disciplines, it is mentioned more explicitly than in others. For example, in BMC it is studied as a form in itself while in Feldenkrais many of the movement patterns are developmental in nature, although the words themselves are rarely if ever mentioned.

Broadly speaking, as we learn to move as babies and children, we go through many distinct phases of movement co-ordination. By recognising in ourselves (and in others) which of the phases we favour and which are weaker or absent altogether, we can go back and fill in the gaps and expand our movement possibilities.[12]

In APP, I make particular use of my recent studies with Caryn McHose that have focused on the evolutionary aspects of both developmental movement and anatomy (McHose & Frank, 2006).

1.4.8 Movement Shiatsu

Shiatsu works with the idea that vital energy flows through the body in pathways known as meridians. Application of pressure and stretching along these pathways our body's innate healing ability is stimulated. Bill Palmer is one of a small group of practitioners who introduced shiatsu into the UK in the 1970s. Movement shiatsu is his synthesis of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), developmental movement therapy and body-based psychotherapy.

Movement shiatsu links how posture develops in early life and to the development of personality. Unbalanced posture can lead to structural weakness, bad circulation and physical disease but also our posture mirrors how we feel emotionally and how we cope with life issues. Counselling is an integral part of the therapy because this process of postural change challenges our feelings about ourselves but movement shiatsu does not aim to be a form of psychotherapy. It rather acknowledges and helps people to integrate the emotional side of postural change. In contrast to more common forms of shiatsu, it is theoretically based on traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) rather than the Five Elements system since the relationship of the meridians to developmental movement is clearer.

I studied with Palmer for two years of his three year practitioner programme. I left the training mainly because I was not ready to make the step to working one-to-one with people at that time. However, his teaching of anatomy and his insights into developmental movement have proved to be a valuable resource for my ongoing research and teaching.

1.4.9 Qi Gong

Qi gong, as I was taught by Zhixing Wang, emphasised whole humans (body, mind and spirit) as being truly high-technology, and our responsibility, if we chose to accept it, is to develop our ability to use ourselves for good. I found his material had some things in common with authentic movement. We would often first explore holding certain positions or simple movements, working with an image and at the same time tracking our sensations, and then we would move freely following our inner impulses that arose after the formal exercise. We would continually, oscillate between set exercises and free movement, taking time to sense any changes in ourselves in standing in between.

I found much in his teaching that I recognised from my own movement studies and experienced much that was beyond my understanding. The subject is vast and its presentation very particular to each teacher. I only scratched the surface with Zhixing by visiting

weekend courses for about a year. I had to stop taking Zhixing's classes when I moved to Finland.

1.5 Somatic movement exploration as a general approach

What unites all of the above disciplines for me is the notion that movement is not so much something to be taught as something to be explored, that I can become more expert in it by studying and discovering myself in movement, rather than by trying to imitate someone else. What they each create the possibility for, and in doing so mark themselves out as somatic, is having an ongoing dialogue with oneself as a moving subject. Collectively, my experience of them represents the source upon which I draw whenever I teach and whatever I teach.

One further source which deserves a mention here is my experience of being at the School For New Dance Development (SNDO)[13] in Amsterdam (1993-95). It was there that I first that I first encountered the term exploration class. Credits for all practical classes and workshops at the SNDO fell under the following four categories – exploration, technique, improvisation and composition – with graduation depending on fulfilling the required number of credits for each. It was made explicit that the categories connected and overlapped. One basic way of grouping them was that of exploration and technique as being concerned with the skills of dan*cing* while improvisation and composition as being concerned with the skills of creating and performing dan*ces*.

In the SNDO, much of the material for exploration classes came from BMC, but not exclusively. We had Alexander technique, Laban Bartenieff Fundamentals and some explorative voice workshops, as well as release technique classes, improvisation and contact improvisation which included somatic movement exploration components. More interesting, and very often more inspiring however, were people who came to lead classes who were following their own personal line of inquiry rather than any particular method or technique – for example, Steve Paxton, Julyen Hamilton, Deborah Hay, Suprapto Suryodarmo. So for me, the concept of a broad-based somatic exploration motivated and resourced primarily from personal inquiry has its origins here.

There is another experience which prompted me to consider the primary importance of personal inquiry. When I was about to leave Bristol to live in Amsterdam, I asked my Feldenkrais teacher (Shelagh O'Neill[14]) if she knew anyone I could continue studying Feldenkrais with when I went there. She said she didn't know anyone, but that in choosing what to study then what was most important was the teacher and not the method. She

put it like this: “If you have the choice between an un-grounded, un-centred, un-present Feldenkrais teacher and a grounded, centred and present aerobics teacher, then better go and study aerobics.” In this anecdote was seeded the idea, which my experience has confirmed, that experience, engagement in a personal process of discovery and embodiment (in the sense of “walking your talk” or “practising what you preach”), makes for a deeper experience as a participant than the particular discipline or paper qualifications of a particular teacher. And finally, I mention also the often repeated words of advice from other teachers of mine (David Zambrano,[15] Julyen Hamilton,[16] Nancy Stark Smith[17]) that can be paraphrased as follows: to get better at what you are doing then teach it, teach what you are interested in learning.

This represents the larger context in which I was inspired to present the general somatic exploration class that I call APP based on my own interests, experience and personal line of inquiry, rather than simply offering to teach Feldenkrais ATMs or experiential anatomy as separate recognisable forms. Looking back, it seems obvious now that this combination of Feldenkrais ATMs with experiential anatomy, together with whatever else I’d picked up from wherever else along the way, would come together to form the basis of my teaching these APP movement exploration classes. This was how I developed the body of knowledge that I have accumulated over the last two decades. My intention in offering APP was to find a suitable form in which to teach freely from my own body of knowledge.

Now, the first circling is complete and I hope you have a clearer impression of the somatic terrain that I tread. That it is something to do with careful attention to first person experience of both our internal an external worlds. That you as a reader are not abstract to me. That even if I may not know you, and we are displaced in time, I acknowledge, and ask you to acknowledge, your lived experience as you read this. It can’t help but colour your experience of this text.

I wonder if you are reading this onscreen or on paper? I wonder if it’s late or early? What the weather is like? If you are feeling tired or fresh? If you are comfortable or uncomfortable? I wonder what sounds you can hear? What you can smell? What you can see if you look up from the page? I wonder if there is some taste in your mouth? I wonder what your somatic experience is right now? I wonder if the term makes more sense to you?

Part Two : Relation to somatics

We circle around again. This time I would like to acquaint you, the reader, more with me, the writer, researcher and teacher. I would like to describe to you how the practices I outlined above fell into my life and helped to form me and inform my way of being in the world. About my own relation to somatics. And I'd like to explain at little about my self-educative process.

2.1 Personal history

Things didn't start very well for me physically. A couple of weeks after a traumatic forceps delivery, I suffered an eye infection that spread causing me to bleed from my ears, nose and eyes, and I was readmitted to hospital. My head started to swell up and, besides swabs from my facial orifices, I had a spinal tap in my lower lumbar to take a sample of my spinal fluid to check for an infection. Not a bad idea I guess, but in the mid-1960s the prevailing belief was that babies didn't feel pain, so I was probably not given an anaesthetic. I've since heard that even with an anaesthetic, a spinal tap is extremely painful. I recovered but it wasn't a happy start.

Later, as I began to walk, I developed extreme "knock-knees" (*Genu valgum*) with both my knees turning inward dramatically. Since the 1980s, it has been regarded as a self-righting defect that can be aided by physiotherapy, only requiring corrective surgical intervention if the problem persists beyond puberty. I endured however the fashionable solution in the 1960s which was to put me in callipers by day and bind my legs together in a half-plaster cast with a steel rod down the middle by night. Of course, I didn't like this very much and in order to curb my violent reactions against this treatment, I was given sedatives, one of which was actually an antidepressant with sedative side effects. I was also given laxatives to regulate my bowel movements as it was difficult to go to the toilet wearing all that paraphernalia. At the end of this treatment, which went on for about 18 months between the ages of three and five, I was told I had, "perfectly straight legs".

As an adolescent I loved to play sport. I played rugby and cricket for my school and town teams, football for my school, and badminton for my county and I was not far off playing for my country. The problem was that I kept injuring myself. Shoulder and groin injuries kept interrupting my progress and a major back injury when I was 14 brought my sporting activity to a halt altogether.

I was finally told by a consultant that there was nothing they could do for me and I should lead a "sedentary life". I asked what that meant and was told: "Don't move too much, avoid lifting things, and never try to lift anything heavy." I took that advice, as a

teen my interests were changing anyway, though I continued to suffer pain in my back intermittently.

By 1989 when I was 24, this intermittent pain had become chronic and it got to a point where I couldn't sleep at night because of it. When I was 14, I'd had some success in reducing the pain by going to see an osteopath and, not being too keen on doctors (though somewhat ironically I had earlier flirted with the idea of becoming one), I again turned to osteopathy for help. When I first presented myself, I was given a diagnosis that read like a shopping list: an unusual three-curve scoliosis (resulting from a twist and a half untwist of my spine), major kyphosis, a couple of fused vertebra at the base of my spine and a fibrotic lump running down the inside of my right shoulder blade next to my spine that stuck out half an inch. I started to go fortnightly to the osteopath, determined to sort this out somehow, receiving painful deep-tissue massage to disperse the fibrosis as well as the usual cracking and crunching. Besides the treatments, I was also given exercises to do, which I did. Unusually. I was later told by osteopaths that I got to know that they give these exercises with near zero expectation that people will actually do them. But I was desperate.

I was also advised to start swimming. My initial reaction was: "No Way! The doctors said that'll only make it worse." The response was: "Try it at least! You might find it's the opposite. It could help to move, because …" This simple advice, in effect the permission to move long denied my through the power of the consultant physician's pronouncement, or at least permission to try, changed my life. Swimming did of course help. I taught myself to swim and I became obsessional, swimming every lunchtime. At that time, I was working as a freelance journalist working in many different buildings so I used to joke I was swimming around London.

After about a year of this, the osteopaths suggested that I take up a sport especially since I'd enjoyed them so much as an adolescent. My good memories of sport were tainted with that of competition; the higher the level, the worse it had got. My joy was always in playing sport, not necessarily in winning. A friend of mine told me about a place called Circus Space[18], then located in North London. I went along and found what to me seemed to be a big playground for adults. Besides the obligatory jugglers, there were wires to walk, trampolines, unicycles, big balls to walk on and trapezes of all sorts. I first took a general evening class where you could do a bit of everything including acro-balance and basic tumbling skills. I loved it. Something inside me that had been dormant

for a long time woke up. Within a few months I was spending all my evenings there. After a year, I was beginning to go there to train in the day. My body came alive and I felt like it started to come back to me. That I was coming back to myself.

That I had a flair for the physicality was not in doubt. Something of the old sporting prowess had persisted. (In my old county badminton team, I was not consistently the best, but regarded by the less competitively minded as the nicest to watch, "like a dancer" in fact). But I was very shy and there were circus performances to be made. I took a short course in mime and physical theatre and discovered that I enjoyed performing too. It also opened my eyes to the function of theatre within society.

In 1991, I ended up on a full-time Circus and Performing Arts course at Fooltime (now Circomedia[19]) in Bristol, UK. I continued to see an osteopath weekly or fortnightly. During a movement class, a teacher[20] offered an exercise that seemed to touch the core of my being. I asked what it was and was told it was a Feldenkrais exercise. I looked for a Feldenkrais teacher and found one giving classes half an hour's walk from my house. What I didn't realise was that there were only four practising teachers in the UK at the time.

My body seemed to drink up that information and transform with it. It began my interest in working with awareness as a tool for change in the body, broadly speaking, working with the idea of re-patterning my neuromuscular system. A practical explanation of this switch in thinking, is the story of how I gave up my dependence on osteopathy. With Feldenkrais, we usually explore very small and slow movements with lots of awareness and experience the effects of all sorts of subtle variations on the theme of the class. Without really having to do very much, our bodies recognise the potential for easier and more efficient movement.

At the end of a class we stand up and feel the, sometimes dramatic, changes that have occurred, and then walk off into the world and see what stays with us. When I went to train at the circus school after a class, all sorts of movements got much easier. I got more flexible without stretching, stronger without having to do repetitious "muscle building" exercises, and my posture began to improve significantly. One immediate effect of the Feldenkrais classes was that when I came to walk home afterwards, I'd often feel my bones clunking into new positions. What I think was causing this was that I was changing the organisational pattern of the tone of my muscles.

I remember the osteopath was at the top of a couple of flights of stairs and on one occasion I remember him cracking my spine back into place which was a great relief, but it

cracked back out of place immediately afterwards on the way down the stairs. I realised that working on the overall tone of my muscles through my nervous system brought more lasting effects. The more I gained awareness through Feldenkrais classes, the easier I found it to "wriggle intelligently" on my floor to crack my bones back into place myself. The last couple of times I saw the osteopath, I just got him to look at my back and tell me what he saw. He was amazed. There was no question about it, Feldenkrais was giving me the power to sort myself out at my own pace.

One thing that did happen a lot in those early days was that I started to recall lots of uncomfortable memories from my childhood and saw a counsellor to deal with this fall-out. Through this powerful first-hand experience of the "bodymind" in action, I appreciated how much working with the body could affect the whole of my being. This appreciation grew to underpin all my future somatic explorations, both as a student and later as a teacher.

These days when I move, this troubled movement history is barely visible, though from the inside there's always something else to learn. It's as if my ability to sense imbalances in my body has become much more finely tuned. As awareness grows, travelling an inch can feel like a mile. I bring all this experience to bear when I teach movement and my basic premise, as this account reveals, is that if I can do this then anyone can.

2.2 Education as a dancer and somatic practitioner

In the beginning of the summer in 1992, after my first year at the circus school during which I had discovered Feldenkrais and contact improvisation, I took a two-week dance improvisation workshop in Bristol with Mary Fulkerson and a group of students that she had brought with her from the European Dance Development Centre (EDDC) in Arnhem. Fulkerson had founded both the SNDO, Amsterdam, and then the EDDC.[21] I felt I had found my home, both in the work and in the milieu that surrounded it. What I was learning through the Feldenkrais method and contact improvisation was increasingly at odds with the demands of many of my circus skills teachers, while it complemented much of what we explored in the theatre and performance-based classes.[22] In studying with Fulkerson, I found an environment where somatics explicitly supported the exploration of performance. I left the workshop convinced that my next move should be to attend the EDDC and was invited to come and audition for the EDDC the following year.

Later that summer I attended the Physical State International summer school in Manchester where I took many dance and somatic workshops, including my first with two

BMC teachers.[23] I also met students there from the SNDO who invited me to come and visit them in Amsterdam. Over the course of the following year, I took many workshops in contact improvisation, dance improvisation and BMC, while I continued to research at the circus school where I was given time, some classes and studio space in exchange for helping out at the school. I also visited both the Dutch schools. I failed the audition for EDDC, but in the sorry-but-you-didn't-get-in speech I was very inspired by what Eva Karczag said about how she had failed to get into many educations, that sometimes it was an advantage *not* to be in an education and that if we really wanted it then we could find the work through other routes. I really wanted it.

I moved to Amsterdam in the Autumn of 1993 at the age of 28, and besides continuing to take classes there, I was also asked to dance in student pieces at the SNDO. It soon became clear that my only way to study in the school was as a guest student since by then I'd done so much Feldenkrais and BMC that I was too experienced and too old to apply for the four-year course, but I had never actually taken a dance technique class and so was too inexperienced to join the two-year course. I was a guest student for three semesters and this give me a wonderful opportunity to construct my own course. I would have a meeting with one of the directors at the beginning of each semester to discuss my study plan, choose which classes and workshops to take, and then I was left to get on with it. The school was an exceptionally creative environment and there was much else besides the classes and workshops to get involved in; seeing and making performances, contact improvisation jams and study groups. I also took authentic movement classes outside the school once a week. This represented a very rich and intense period of learning for me.

I returned to the UK in early 1995, and continued to take workshops on a regular basis with teachers who inspired me. I saw this as a continuation of the process of self-education. The workshops were mostly in mainland Europe and, as I travelled, I built up a loose network of peers who I would meet again and again in these workshops. As time passed, I was also invited by some of these people to come and do projects, and then later to teach. When I wasn't abroad, I went back to work part-time as a production journalist to earn money and I started to teach my own classes in Bristol in 1996. I was able to continue studying the Feldenkrais Method with Shelagh O'Neill and during this period I also studied Movement Shiatsu.

By 2000, I was growing more and more frustrated that while I was able to find some teaching abroad, the dance educations in the UK that I contacted were not interested in

giving me work. When I explained what I did, although it was often initially greeted by enthusiasm, I would then seemingly inevitably be asked if I'd be interested in teaching a ballet or contemporary class, neither of which I was capable of. It had begun to seem like all I came back to the UK for was to sleep, earn money and teach my evening classes. I wanted to be more engaged in the work and it was clear to me that to do that I should go somewhere else where I could find support within a community of peers.

In my parallel career in publishing, I had become more involved in book and magazine design and in 2001 I got a large contract to redesign a recycling industry magazine and produce the first six monthly issues. After the initial redesign that required a lot of consultation, there was a possibility for me to continue the work over the internet. This created an opportunity to move abroad without cutting off my immediate supply of income. An opportunity to get involved as a teacher with the dance education in Outokumpu, Finland, arose through my connection with Pia Lindy, someone whom I had got to know and work with during my time at the SNDO, and I saw in this the possibility to transition to working full-time with movement. I moved to Finland in September 2001.

This period of self-education in dance through studying with others had diminished over the years as I got more project and teaching offers and moving to Finland brought it to a close. I focused instead on integrating what I had learned through performing, teaching and continuing to research in the studio. The publishing job that I took with me paid sufficiently well that I was for the first time able to consider taking a Feldenkrais professional training and I began one in the summer of 2002, ending in the summer of 2005 Now I found myself developing an identity as a dance teacher and I was able to make the transition to supporting myself financially through my teaching as I was invited to teach more and more in Finland, and also abroad. My ongoing education in these years was oriented solely towards the Feldenkrais Method.

When I qualified as a teacher of Feldenkrais Awareness Through Movement (ATM) classes in 2004,[24] although it was very gratifying to finally teach ATM and I appreciated the integrity of the classes, I felt I had more to offer from my wider background to the students that I was encountering. I began to explore juxtaposing ATMs with other movement forms which I taught. I did this in different situations, both in public workshops and educational institutions, and alongside many forms: authentic movement, experiential anatomy, contact improvisation, movement exploration and improvisation.

In recent years, I developed an interest in teaching broadly-based somatic exploration classes in which I draw on all the forms of somatic education that I have experienced. I have evolved two contexts in which I do this, one I call BodySchool[25] which is directed more to the general public, and the other is APP which is directed more towards performing artists. Although the practical structure and delivery is different in each case, the material is much the same and my experience of teaching one feeds and influences the other. Here it is the development of APP which is the focus.

Part Three : Learning to teach

One final circle before we land finally on APP. This time I attempt to trace my development as a teacher, for this too is something has an important bearing on the forming of APP. As I have pointed out before, how we communicate says as much about us as what we communicate. My way into teaching was not by way of a formal education. It was more organic. It emerged from practice modelled on my teachers.

3.1 Learning and teaching, education and pedagogy

Reflecting on my role as a teacher, I find myself confronting and having to situate myself in relationship to the terms learning and teaching, pedagogy and education. My deepest urge is towards clarity and simplicity in the use of language and it is interesting to note my organic reaction to the terms. The one that I like the best and feel most clear about using is learning. What is meant by teaching is more mysterious and more open for discussion. I simply use that term to describe the act of giving a class, if not necessarily what I find myself doing in a class. Education suggests to me a system or framework in which learning can happen and as such is quite neutral. The term pedagogy I feel an instinctive aversion towards since it speaks to me of abstraction and the need for aggrandisement.[26] After taking stock initially of these gut reactions, I have found subsequent etymological analysis of the terms to have helped to clarify my relationship to them.

To learn, according to the New Oxford American Dictionary (2005; as all definitions in this thesis) is defined as, "to gain or acquire knowledge of skill in (something) by study, experience, or being taught". It has its origins in the Old English *leornian* which interestingly in Middle English also means to teach. It is still sometimes used in that way, although considered a mark of unsophistication, as in, "can you learn me how to ride a bike". In my experience, young children sometimes use this form which is suggestive to me of the primacy of learning over teaching. Learn is of West Germanic origin and is related to the German word *lernen* and also to lore, as in folklore, which is defined as, "a body of traditions and knowledge on a subject or held by a particular group, typically passed from person to person by word of mouth". To me, this connection between learn and lore evokes the experiential aspect of learning as an embodied or somatic act in that it speaks of a "body of… knowledge" and the direct transmission of that knowledge as happening "person to person". It also leaves open how the knowledge is to be "passed".

The neurological basis for learning is the formation of new synaptic connections between neurons (Blakeslee, 2007). It follows that ultimately any act of learning happens

inside of and is governed by the individual who learns and cannot be otherwise. So, when we come to examine what it is to teach, we need to be circumspect.

To teach is defined variously as: "to show or explain to someone how to do something, to give information about or instruction in a subject or skill; to encourage someone to accept something as a fact or principle; to cause (someone) to learn or understand something; induce someone by example or punishment to do or not to do something." The part of the definition that most clearly matches what I feel myself to be attempting to do while teaching is, "to cause (someone) to learn or understand something". That begs the question, how to cause someone to learn something?

The word teach is of Germanic origin and derives from the Old English *tæcan* meaning to show, present or point out, and is related to the word token, "a thing serving as a visible or tangible representation of something abstract". To teach is always an indirect process since it is the learner who does the learning. The best a teacher can do is to point towards what they wish to teach, to give a representation of it. To return to the neurological model, we can go further by saying that it is through having an experience that learning occurs. The act of teaching then could said to be the act of setting up an experience from which someone could learn something, or creating the conditions for learning to happen.

Education is defined as, "the process of receiving or giving systematic instruction", and has its roots in the word educe meaning to "bring out or develop" from Latin *educere* "lead out". Education evokes for me an act of supporting learning on an ongoing basis. In this respect, I have experienced two formal somatic educations. At the SNDO as guest student, which placed me on the margins of an already unconventional education, and the Feldenkrais Method professional training. I also consider my ongoing study through choosing to take workshops with teachers who attracted me as a form of self-education.

Pedagogy is defined as, "the method and practice of teaching, especially as an academic subject or theoretical concept", and derives via French *pédagogie* from the Greek *paidagõgia* meaning "the office of a pedagogue". A pedagogue is defined as, "a teacher, especially a strict or pedantic one". Pedantic is the adjectival form of pedant: "a person who is excessively concerned with minor details and rules or with displaying academic learning." Until now, the concept of pedagogy has been the furthest removed from my experience as a learner and teacher of movement. My instinctive negative reaction to the term springs from my prejudice against academia,[27] based on my repeated observation that many academics seem to readily disconnect from the practices that are the objects of

their study and that academic research can all too easily slip into a self-referential web of abstract theories and concepts. In the words of Alan Watts (2002): “A person who thinks all the time has nothing to think about except thoughts. He (sic) looses touch with reality and lives in a world of illusions.” In its more positive and neutral sense of a, “method and practice of teaching”, I see that a pedagogy emerges from practice. It rests implicitly in all acts of teaching, and in this current context, I am curious to tease out through self-reflection what my own personal pedagogy could be and how I arrived at it.

3.2 Learning to teach and teaching to learn

I began teaching in Bristol, UK in 1996 after leaving the SNDO. I did so with the encouragement of one of my contact improvisation teachers, Nancy Stark Smith, who suggested that if I wanted to get better at the form, then I should try teaching it. More specifically, to learn the most I should teach beginners. I thus entered into teaching fully-primed to approach it as both personal research and a privileged form of learning.

That year, I took a break from dancing contact improvisation with my peers in Europe, setting up and teaching workshops and weekly classes in Bristol, UK. The following year, when I met up and danced with my peers again, my dancing had developed significantly and many people asked who I had been studying with to improve so rapidly. My answer was “beginners”. The reason for my improvement I think was in having to recognise what it was that I was doing in order to attempt to teach it, and by watching others attempting to do it, constructing or modifying exercises in which they might have an experience of what I was trying to teach, learning through trial and error what kind of guidance I gave during exercises could help people to improve.

From this experience was born my passion for and curiosity about the art of teaching. I consider myself to be a self-taught teacher by which I mean that I had no formal systematic education as a teacher until entering this MA course by which time I had already taught for 12 years. My skills as a teacher grew and were recognised in that I was invited to teach in festivals, dance centres and dance educations. This included instances of teaching on teacher educations where my approach to teaching was presented as a progressive model for students.

These skills, of course, did not develop in a vacuum. Looking back, I would liken the acquisition of my teaching skills to something like an apprenticeship. Traditionally, an apprentice learns their trade by working daily alongside a skilled practitioner (a master) who instructs and guides their development. The apprentice/master model is associated with

manual skills and is often opposed to (and held in lower esteem than) more academic modes of learning. It could be characterised as learning directly by doing, in dialogue with a master (mentor), on a need-to-know basis. In other words, embodied learning that emerges out of direct engagement in the task and out of dialogue between learner and mentor in the moment of learning. This is opposed to learning organised according to a system that is created *a priori;* a system separated both spatially and temporally from the moment of learning. In embodied learning, the theoretical framework within which the skills are exercised emerges alongside, and develops out of, the practise of learning and doing them. As such, it seems to me to be the more appropriate mode, if not the only mode, by which to acquire the skills to teach somatics.[28] I find it notable that the word apprentice has its roots in the Old English sense of the word apprehend, meaning "to grasp, to get hold of (physically or mentally)" and is reflected also in the contemporary French word for learn, *apprendre*.

In my own case, rather than working on daily basis with a single teacher, I am learning my trade by modelling myself on my many teachers, through direct experience of the act of teaching, ongoing self-reflection and self-evaluation of these experiences, and ongoing dialogue with some of those who come to classes. I was able to check in with my teachers as I returned to study with them which I did on a regular basis earlier, and when I meet them again now. I am continually "grasping" teaching through doing it, devoid until now of any conscious systematic theoretical pedagogical framework, though I find my practice is riddled with implicit theories and concepts which I will now try to uncover.

3.3 Six teachers that I model my teaching on

I think I owe the success that I've had as a teacher to the teachers that I have had and, in the absence of formal training, used as models to base my teaching on. While there have been many, I have chosen to reflect on six who I consider to be the most significant for me in my development as a teacher and in doing so hope to draw out some of their practices that served as models for mine.

All of them are dancers, though each in their concern for the expression of the mind through the body could also be described as embodying a somatic approach to dance. The forms of dance that they practise have been categorised variously as new dance, post-modern dance and latterly simply as part the canon of contemporary dance (Banes, 1987; Benoit, 1998). One of the things that marked them out as such was a reassessment of the role of the body in dance and performance (Steinman, 1995) and hence they can also be

described as somatic in nature. Since the forms were innovative, so too were the methods employed to teach them (for example, Koteen & Smith, 2008; p38). When I started to teach in 1996, it was contact improvisation, improvisation and authentic movement that I taught most often and not movement exploration. However, the classes were very explorative in nature and included a lot of somatic information to support the exploration of the forms.

3.3.1 Nancy Stark Smith

I count Nancy Stark Smith as my principle teacher of contact improvisation and it was her encouragement to teach it that set me on the path to become a movement teacher. I still teach some of the physical skills that I learned in her workshops and which formed the basis of most of the material that I taught in my early contact improvisation classes.

A connection that she makes in her work which I have made great use of is that when trying to teach certain technical skills, bringing the state of being of the student into line with the state required for the skill is as important as focusing on the technical details themselves; the two go hand in hand and without one the other is not possible. She would also encourage us to work in a relaxed way so that we could stay in touch with the inner sensation as we moved both alone and in contact with a partner. “Sensation is the language of the body,” and “tension masks sensation,” were refrains that she uttered repeatedly. And in learning new skills she offered the image of “planting seeds”, saying that just having one clear experience of something was enough to plant a seed of understanding that would grow in time. That if we are lucky enough to have such an experience, then not to try to repeat it immediately and, if we do, then not to be surprised or disappointed if it doesn’t work so easily this time. It takes time for the seed to grow.

There is of course much more that I learned from her in terms of content, but one of the most fundamental resources for me as a developing teacher that I received through studying with her was the ability to dialogue in a group. One aspect of her work, unnamed during my period of extensive study with her but subsequently called the Underscore (Koteen & Smith, 2008), is a frame within which to practice contact improvisation together as a group. It can also be employed as a frame of reference while teaching, which is in fact the context in which Nancy began to develop it. It consists of a number of “phases”, some of which are things that we can pay attention to while dancing in a group and others are activities that either happen spontaneously or can be chosen consciously.[29] In part, it functions like a map of perceptions and activities that we are likely to encounter

in dancing together as a group and, like a map, can be used as a set of reference points to which we can orientate ourselves, both during the practice and in reflecting on it afterwards.

One important activity is talking in a circle, which when practised in the Underscore, happens both before and after moving together. Besides the Underscore, talking together in a circle was a regular feature throughout Nancy's workshops. In these circles, and especially through Nancy's guiding of them, I learned a lot about working in a group and I don't think I would have had the confidence or the skills to lead groups without these experiences. She was always clear that we should speak from where we are, that the talking should be rooted in our experience and not spiral off into abstraction or speculation. We learned this both through speaking ourselves and through listening to each other speak. If things got too abstract, then we would take five minutes "body time" where we would all be silent and do some physical practice to reconnect to a fuller perception of ourselves.

In listening to others, we were encouraged to listen also to ourselves, tracking shifts of meaning as they occurred inside us, tracking our ongoing experience in relation to what we were hearing, so that when our turn to speak did arrive, we spoke what we needed to say *now* and not what we were thinking of saying when we had arrived first arrived in the circle. What became very tangible through this practice was the phenomenon of group intelligence, that others might speak our thoughts for us and that what others said might help move our thoughts along. In this way the dialogue was very vital, in the senses both of being alive and of being essential to the functioning of the group.

This practice of talking together was also a practice of listening to and seeing each other. In many ways, *how* we say things is as important as *what* we say, as is *how* we listen as much as *what* we hear. Attending to this would create in atmosphere of curiosity and trust that fed back into our dancing together, and also into how the group would function socially outside of the studio. This was especially noticeable in residential workshops. As an individual, I think that the result of this dialogue practice was to learn to stay in touch with myself in the presence of others, while also being open to new thoughts and inspirations as a result of interactions with others. In a group where everyone is practising that, the results can be very powerful. From the period that I studied most intensively, 1994-2000, there was a group of regular participants that formed who I consider to be my peers. We are still in regular contact, many of them have also gone on to become

respected teachers, and we try to meet once a year to dance and live together for five days or so. I think this is testimony to the strength of the practise.

3.3.2 Steve Paxton

I met and studied with Steve Paxton for the first time in London in November 1996. I spent a month in total with him, taking all three workshops that he taught on that visit. In two, he taught contact improvisation and in the other, his material for the spine; two inter-related but distinct areas of study.

In one of the contact workshops, there was a woman with a circus background who had come to try one of my contact classes in Bristol but clearly hadn't been satisfied. I was surprised to see her at the workshop initially, but on reflection it made sense since here was the originator and widely acknowledge grand master of the form; surely he would teach the best "moves". In my classes, I was teaching contact improvisation how I'd been taught, in a non-goal oriented fashion with an emphasis on developing the ability to sense what is going on in the body as we move. My classes were slow and, since I was working with beginners, I hadn't attempted to teach any high-flying tricks.

By the second day, this circus woman came up to me and said: "You're not mad are you?" She went on to explain that she had thought that my classes seemed too easy and too slow and, if anything, studying with Steve now made my classes seemed fast. She had been focusing on the physical skills and had missed the inner dialogue of sensation which, although taught in a slow and gentle fashion, was also challenging, if in another way. As someone just beginning to teach, I found it reassuring to find my approach with its emphasis on sensation validated. Sometime later, she returned to my classes and she still dances contact improvisation.

What I found most striking upon meeting Steve was his presence which I would describe as solid, humble, relaxed, straightforward, curious and matter-of-fact. I took inspiration from his attention to the details that can be revealed by asking simple and obvious questions of seemingly simple and straightforward actions such as walking and standing. I also took inspiration from the fact that what he was presenting was his ongoing research rather than his final conclusions. One day he said: "I've been studying walking for about 30 years now and I still don't understand it." What emerges through this embodied research can then be applied to increasingly more complex forms of movement: "It could be said that, from the adaptability of our walk, dancing is possible."[30] In the classes, there was never any sense of hurry and time seemed to balloon in them. An hour on the clock

could seem like two or three subjectively. Like Julyen Hamilton, he also made connections to a wide range of other disciplines and the classes sometimes veered towards philosophy and wider life issues.

One experience that stands out was that one day, immediately after lunch, he asked us to lie on the floor and pay attention to this, and then pay attention to that, and so on. The instructions became less and less frequent, until he fell asleep and started to snore gently. After about an 40 minutes, he stirred and seamlessly picked up the instructions from where he had left off. The experience engendered a deep state of relaxation from which deepened the exploration that followed. What I took from this was the courage in class to do anything that served the needs of the exploration, no matter how unconventional. What also pervaded his classes was a dry wit and humour that served to undercut any urge to take things too seriously.

3.3.3 Julyen Hamilton

Julyen Hamilton is an improviser with a high reputation as a both a teacher and as a performer. I took many workshops with him from 1994-98 and returned to take a workshop in 2008. In the earlier workshops, the morning class would be focused on technique and the afternoon on composition. The techniques class was further divided into an opening half in which we would explore some aspect of the body and a closing half in which we would dance a series of combinations. In the exploration period, we would often work through touch with each other in partners before going on to explore our movement alone. Julyen always made explicit the role that what we had just explored could play in the combinations that followed, although which combinations we'd do depended on what we'd just explored and how much time was left. Many of the combinations were challenging, but the palette from which he drew them was unchanging throughout this time and, from reports from others who'd taken his workshops, for some time beyond. This meant that you could over the course of many workshops, drop into the feeling of them as you got to know them. In the afternoons, we'd study composition and this would again be linked back explicitly to the themes from the morning.

Julyen's workshops were highly structured. And not just the workshops overall, but the exercises would often consist of long progressions that proceeded through many clear stages. They were given amid a sea of information that was drawn from many sources and I appreciated the way he related what we were exploring to other contexts and how he employed references from other contexts to throw light on the issues that were were ex-

ploring. Sometimes it could feel more like a philosophy, design, or anthropology class, than a dance class. While the combinations were identical from workshop to workshop, the exploration and improvisation/composition exercises varied considerably. Elements were repeated, but in different combinations, and to different ends.

While the workshops were highly structured, there was always the freedom within them to have our own experience and learn from it. Julyen would repeat often that we were free to use any of his exercises in our own teaching but on one condition, that we improved them. This gave permission not only to repeat exercises, but to develop and vary them, hinting that there was more to be discovered and encouraging ongoing inquiry. What I took away from studying with him were many concrete exercises together with the inspiration to explore them alone and create my own variations. I admired and attempted to emulate his intricate structuring of exercises in my own teaching.

One final memory that stands out from one of the first workshops that I took with him. Not being a technically trained dancer, I used to struggle with remembering the combinations. During one class in which I felt like I was doing very badly he came up to me and whispered in my ear: “Do you see that woman over there, she’s doing it right wrong. But you, you’re doing it wrong right. So don’t compare yourself to her and keep going. You’re doing fine.” From this I got the the idea that it was not the results that mattered but my own process that was the most important element.

It was interesting to return to his teaching after a ten-year break. The highly structured explorations and combinations were gone from the mornings while the afternoons remained much the same as I had remembered. The mornings now took the form of what I can best describe as a participatory lecture. What I mean by this was that he would oscillate between talking, demonstrating and suggesting things that we could explore and we were free to decide how we wanted to participate in any moment: to watch. or listen or write or try something out. This was uncannily validating since I went to this workshop directly from teaching at my first newly formed APP workshop at TanzQuartier Wien where I had settled on a lecture/demo/dialogue form for the first third of my class.

3.3.4 Simone Forti

The first time that I studied with Simone Forti was in 1997 at Contredanse in Brussels. Tony Blair was newly elected and I travelled to the workshop on the train through the Eurotunnel on the morning of Lady Diana’s death. A memorable journey. Simone also has a great reputation as a performer and as a teacher so I arrived at the workshop excited and

full of expectations. My memory is that what I encountered at first was a little disappointing. For all her experience, she seemed to be unsure of the material that she was teaching. She was full of questions, both for herself and for us as participants.

Often she would introduce exercises by saying: "Well, let's just try this out and see how it goes." And sometimes things worked out and sometimes they didn't. We were working a lot with solo improvisations and would watch each other go one-by-one, which in a group of 16-20 takes a long time. She would often modify the parameters of the exercise after watching a few people try it out and sometimes we either ran out of time, or else abandoned the exercise before everyone had a chance to try it. Around halfway through the workshop, there was an afternoon when an exercise went very far off course. The parameters were not clear to start with, and with each person who went up interpreting them differently, it got less and less clear as it progressed. There was a lot of frustration. Yet we persisted. And in persisting it got worse. As a group, we ended the day on a downbeat note but Simone seemed unperturbed, if deep in thought, merely suggesting that it was maybe time to stop and have some tea. Next day we picked up with something different and from that point the workshop went very well. (I later experienced similar moments around the middle other workshops when a session would seem to fail spectacularly. I wondered if she was employing this deliberately, unconsciously or if it was just coincidence.)

Overall it was a very rich experience and I left it feeling very inspired and excited. What stands out is my experience of my journey home. As I got on the train as it left Brussels, I remember this feeling of immense gratitude that Simone had taught me so much, had given me so much, during the two weeks of the workshop. After sitting for a while with this feeling, I began to review what she'd taught me. I found it disconcerting to realise that I wasn't really able to recall anything very much beyond some simple warm-up exercises, a few exercise structures and one or two sage words. I remember feeling very troubled that this mental list that I'd come up with couldn't account for this feeling of gratitude that I felt. So I took out my notebook and tried to figure out what she'd taught me from my notes. Reviewing them, it slowly dawned on me some way further into the journey that, while she hadn't really taught me very much, what she had done was led me to my own questions. The learning was all mine and my feeling of gratitude was for not for what she had taught me, but for what I had learned in her presence.

In the days, weeks and months that followed, as a returned to my own studio exploration and teaching, I came to realise that she had also taught me a lot. But what she had taught me was not specific skills so much as about process. She had done so through sharing her own questions and her own line of inquiry; through making exercises up to answer the questions that emerged out of the group dialogue; through modifying them as we went along to try to get them to work. In doing so she exhibited an enormous amount of patience, she accepted failure as a gift as much as success, and was not afraid of making herself vulnerable through making her teaching process transparent, even in the moments where she got lost and confused.

In describing the rough-edged character of the workshop, I was at the same time aware that she embodied a lot of experience. This was confirmed when I saw here perform live for the first time one evening after the workshop. She is virtuoso improviser. Two further things stand out from my experience studying with her. One was something that she said about performing improvisation which could apply to much else, including teaching: "While we wish to create magic, we can't count on it to arrive. What we can do is show our work." The other was in 2000, when I met her at a party in Paris. I was really unhappy with my work as a dancer and teacher. I felt stuck and couldn't see a way forward. I was seriously close to giving up and looking for something else to put my energy into. As we talked, I asked her if she'd ever felt like giving up and she replied, of course, many times. Then I said: "Yes, but I've had *two* really bad years in a row now." Her reply was: "Only *two* bad years?" That made me smile, then as now, and has since served to help me through many low moments.

3.3.5 Kirstie Simson

To study with Kirstie Simson, who teaches both contact improvisation and improvisation, was, like with Simone Forti, initially a disconcerting experience. Based on her reputation, I again arrived with expectations that were not met in a way that I could have imagined. Her classes were somewhat chaotic, often with no clear transitions from exercise to exercise, and the classes themselves didn't often end clearly, so much as fade out. Her instructions were vague and I imagined then as now that if I looked at a transcript of one of her classes, there would be little sense in what she had said that I could make use of.

What makes her classes work however is her sheer presence. When she walks through the studio door, something in the air seems to change. While some teachers watch classes as they proceed, Kirstie often dances her way through them, sometimes seeming oblivious

to what is going on around her. I remember an instance where someone was struggling with the material she proposed. Rather than stopping and attempting to explain it better, Kirstie just started dancing with them. It was remarkable to watch the change grew in the person she was dancing with.

The only way I can categorise her way of teaching would be to describe it as pure transmission. In subsequent workshops, freed from my initial expectations, I grew to appreciate her manner of teaching very much. From her it became very clear that how we embody what we teach has as much bearing as the actual content of the instruction.

3.3.6 David Zambrano

David Zambrano is a student of Simone Forti and developed his own technique called Flying Low Technique which is very popular worldwide. I first had the opportunity to study with him at the SNDO, taking three classes per week for 14 weeks. When I told a friend at the time that I would take his class, she said I'd love it, describing him as like a rubber ball who could bounce off all the surfaces of the studio. It was an accurate description. The technique consists of a lot of high-energy patterns that focus on transitioning into and out of the floor. It's not uncommon for those coming to his classes for the first time to leave the classes covered in bruises, although the technique itself is very soft when executed well. I found it very inspiring to hear him describe that the origins of the technique were in his explorations on how to get efficiently in and out of the floor while suffering from a knee injury that severely compromised his possibilities for movement. This had an obvious resonance for me and with it reinforced the idea that in working with the limitations imposed by injury (or any other condition that imposes a limitation), it is possible to benefit by working with the limitation.

In his teaching of the classes, I drew inspiration from the way in which he played with doing the patterns at first very very slowly with lots of attention to detail, then speeding them up more and more, until we were doing them "very, very fast". So fast that there was no time to pay attention to detail and no alternative but to enter the flow and trust that the had learned something in doing it slowly. I became very interested in this oscillation between these two modes of moving and continue to work with this as a principal, if not always in relation to speed.

David also likes to have fun and his classes are full of humour which lightens the mood. On reflection, I think that this is not only a by-product of his personality but essential to the act of learning the material, which when he does it looks very easy, but in prac-

tise isn't. This evokes for me the Feldenkrais method where we are looking to move easily and efficiently and the impulse to "try harder" when confronted with difficulty takes us away from our goal of easy efficient movement. I think that David's humour works to generate a state of body-mind that supports the learning of his patterns possible.

In teaching his set patterns, there is an ongoing necessity for correction and it is interesting that he does it by first honouring the students' way of doing whatever they are doing before giving his correction. He does it be saying things like: "I like very much what you are doing, but that's not what we're doing right now." I have found this approach very useful on many occasions, the message behind it being, what you are doing is not wrong, it's just not we are doing and probably not what you think you are doing, and if you can identify the difference between the two, then you'll have two different ways of doing similar things and not one.

3.4 Reverse-engineering pedagogical principals

My reflections above are brief, based on my own memory and are my own construction. They do not necessarily represent accurate accounts of what each teacher has to offer as pedagogical models. Nonetheless, there are a number of themes which stand out and I recognise that I either took account of, practised or made regular use of as I developed my own style of teaching, though of course the extent of each depends on the subject and the context in which I am teaching.

In listing and restating them in my own terms below, through an act of reverse engineering, I feel I have arrived at a first approximation of what my pedagogical principals might look like:

> learning – *is a result of the student's experience – my job is to try to set up experiences through which students can learn – learning takes time and one clear experience is enough to sow a seed of learning from which something more can later grow*
>
> dialogue: *to try to establish a dialogue internally with ourselves and where possible between everyone in the group that I am teaching – to maintain a dialogue with myself while teaching*
>
> embodiment – *to teach what I feel I know myself*
>
> transmission – *to be aware that how I act in a class is as important as what I teach – to be aware that my presence can support people's learning implicitly as much as what I may offer explicitly*

research – *to explore the unknown from a place of embodiment – to make that process transparent to students and invite them to join that process of research – to invite curiosity*

transparency – *to make as explicit as possible my own process of putting a class together, mistakes, confusion and discomfort included – aware that students may learn as much from my process as the material that I am presenting itself*

tracking – *to do what seems necessary in any moment and to be alert to how that constantly changes over time – not to push an agenda but to follow the agenda that arises out of dialogue*

states – *to be aware when teaching technical skills that successful execution depends as much on the state of a person's being as on their physical understanding of what is required*

privilege process over goals – *even when teaching technical skill where there is an inescapable goal present, successful performance of the skill, to de-emphasise the goal and emphasise the process as much as possible – for example, by alerting students to the useful alternative movements that are inherent in their "mistakes" or by pointing out that we never really get "it" since there's always the possibility to improve "it"*

conscious vs. unconscious – *to work around the boundary of conscious/unconscious performance of actions – that once learned slowly and consciously, skills become available without needing to think about them*

working with limitations – *to realise that limitations can create the conditions for something new to be learned – this helps both in constructing exercises and in discovering ways to profit from rather than suffer with any injuries or restrictions that I or others may have*

structure & variation – *to construct and employ exercises in which a clear structure is created in which students can have their own experience – to stay alert to the possibility to discover variations*

relaxation – *to encourage a relaxed atmosphere so that students do not feel under any pressure to learn something in particular – by staying relaxed we are able to sense more as we move*

simplicity – *to keep things as simple as possible since in exploring simple things we most easily meet ourselves in the act of doing them*

humour – *to do what I can to keep the atmosphere light and easy where learning can be pleasurable and fun*

contextualisation – *to relate what we explore in class to the wider context of the world, and to bring knowledge or information from a wide range of sources into class – to make connections, bridges, between class work and life*

3.5 The Feldenkrais Method as pedagogy

What is conspicuous by its absence from my account above of how I formed my pedagogy, the elephant in the room so to speak, is the part that the Feldenkrais Method that played in it. Unlike the dance forms referred to above, only certified teachers can teach Feldenkrais ATM classes, and the classes are in any case often so complex that it would be impossible for a non-trained teacher to attempt to teach them and do them justice. It was clear when I started teaching that, although I had a lot of experience of the method and had benefited significantly from it, there was no way that I would attempt to teach it without being trained first. At the time, I consciously made use of some of the principals that I encountered through it, many of which also seemed to coincided with what I picked up from the teachers mentioned above. In retrospect however, I recognise that its influence permeated my classes more deeply than I had imagined.

When I took the Feldenkrais professional training I found myself in an unusual position of already having 11 years practice of the method behind me; of the others on my training, the next most experienced person had three years' prior experience. The teacher who I had studied with previously and still regard as my primary teacher of the method is Shelagh O'Neill. In the years before entering the training, despite my repeated requests, she never attempted to teach me about the method but stuck clearly to teaching me through the method itself. Although sometimes frustrating at the time, I was later very grateful since when I did enter the training, I experienced both from the inside and by way of comments from the trainers from the outside, that I was already unconsciously embodying the method in many ways. Most interestingly, I realised that in my teaching of movement, I had already been employing many of the tools that were introduced as part of the Feldenkrais training.

The Feldenkrais Method is notoriously difficult to explain. In one respect, it seems to be clearly focused on movement and the body, and many people are drawn to it, like I was, since they are seeking to improve how they move. And Feldenkrais, of course, was interested in movement, he was a keen footballer and was responsible for introducing judo to the West.[31] His aim in his ATM classes was, "to improve ability... to turn the impossible into the possible, the difficult into the easy, and the easy into the pleasant" (1972; p75). However, this "ability" in his thinking is not exclusive to movement. It is more general and far-reaching. One of Feldenkrais' principal insights was that whatever we do, we do with the whole of ourselves. He described the component parts as action

(movement), feeling (emotion), thinking and sensation. No matter whether we agree with his categorisation of the parts or not, his insistence that we always act as a whole implies that then if we improve the ability of any one component, then we improve the function of the whole and we can benefit from that improvement in every aspect of our lives (Feldenkrais, 1972; p31-32). He likened this process to tuning an instrument, and in tuning ourselves we ready ourselves to play life. Movement was the mode and awareness the tool through which he sought to achieve this tuning. Feldenkrais frequently summed up the value of paying attention to ourselves very simply: "If you know what you do, you can do what you want,"(Alon, 1996; p215) He also expressed it inversely: how can you do what you want, if you don't know what you are doing?

For Feldenkrais, improvement was always evidence of an act of learning (1981; p7). In order to learn to move better, we need to be able to notice the unfolding differences in sensory feedback as we move, and in order to notice these differences we need to move with awareness, hence he called his classes Awareness Through Movement. At the root of his model was a proposition that: "We act in accordance with our self-image."(p3) Our self-image is learned, and therefore it is liable to change through acts of learning. What works against learning when it is goal oriented is that, once we have achieved the goal, we tend to settle into a way of doing it that we could call a habit. "Our self image is essentially smaller than it might be, for it is built up only of the group of (nerve) cells that we have used" (1972; p15). While habits have their positive aspects, like brushing our teeth, they also tend to mitigate against further learning. While this may not be problematic in the short term, in the longer term if we are not using ourselves efficiently then we can cause wear which may eventually show up as pain or injury. And of course, the conditions of life may change and challenge our habits. Feldenkrais saw learning as a way to adapt to new conditions, as a way of getting out of trouble when our habits no longer serve us and as a way to continually improve ourselves. "Man's life is a continuous process, and the improvement is needed in the quality of the process, not in his properties or disposition." (1972; p33). In order to improve the quality of the process, his method ultimately centres on learning how to learn.

In his writing, he jumps frequently from learning in the concrete sense of learning movement or a specific movement skill, to learning in a more general sense of its application in all areas of life. While maybe disconcerting for a reader not very familiar with the method, it makes sense, given the explanation above, that much of what we learn through

movement is transferable to other contexts. In 1975, Feldenkrais published a series of audio recordings of ten basic ATMs to accompany his book entitled *Awareness Through Movement* (1972). Included with the audio recording was a small ten-page booklet entitled *Learn How To Learn* (1975) in which he suggests how to approach the recorded ATM classes. I didn't discover this booklet until I had entered my training. Reviewing them I think gives an insight into the pedagogical system behind the method.

> Do everything very slowly – *"I do not intend to 'teach' you, but to enable you to learn at your own rate of understanding and doing. Time is the most important means of learning ... No one can learn when hurried and hustled." Feldenkrais explains how efficient movement comes through weeding out superfluous exertions, and in order to do that we need to take time to perceive ourselves in movement.*
>
> Look for the pleasant sensation – *When we move with pleasure then breath is full and there is a sense of moving effortlessly. He suggests that new skills will arrive as a reward for moving with attention and that it is less important to learn new feats of skill than to master the way to learn new skills.*
>
> Do not "try" to do nicely – *"Trying hard means that somehow a person knows that unless he makes a greater effort and applies himself harder he will not achieve his goals." Typically, we tend to exert more effort when beginning to learn something new in, "(our) ambition not to feel or appear inadequate to (ourselves)". While the extra effort may convince us that we are trying hard, it takes us in the opposite direction from the graceful, effortless movements of the masterful mover. He suggests: "Learn to do well, but do not try."*
>
> Do not try to do "nicely" – *"An act becomes nice when we do nothing but the act. Everything we do over and above that, or short of it, destroys harmony." He suggests that we focus on doing the action as simply as possibly.*
>
> Insist on easy light movement – *"We are taught that trying hard is a virtue in life, and we're misled into believing that trying hard is also a virtue when learning." He goes on to state that: "Learning takes place through our nervous system, which is so structured as to detect and select, from among our trails and errors, the more effective trial." And that: "We sense differences and select the good from the useless: that is, we differentiate."*
>
> It is easier to tell differences when the movement is light – *The less effort that we make as we move, the smaller the differences that we can distinguish. This is known as The Weber-Fechner law which states that the smallest noticeable difference in stimulus is roughly proportional to the intensity of the stimulus. In Feldenkrais' formulation: "The lighter the effort we make, the faster is our learning of any skill ... We stop improving when we sense no difference in the effort made."*

Life and learning are not the same thing – *Life requires enormous efforts sometimes when we need to be able to act swiftly and powerfully, occasionally at great risk to ourselves. Feldenkrais proposes that by learning to move more efficiently, when we are called upon to exert ourselves fully then we find ourselves better equipped to meet life's challenges: "Learning must be slow and varied in effort until the parasitic efforts are weeded out; then we have little difficulty in acting fast, and powerfully."*

Why bother to be so efficient – *Because energy that is not transformed into movement, results in wear and tear of the muscles, ligaments, joints and internal organs. "So long as we are young, the healing and recovery powers of our bodies are sufficient to repair the damage caused by our inefficient efforts... But these powers slow ... If we have not learned efficient action, we are in for aches and pains and for a growing inability to do what we would like to do."*

Do not concentrate – *"Do not concentrate if concentration means to you directing your attention to one particular important point to the utmost of your ability." Feldenkrais likens this to a basketball player. He points out that the best players keep their attention fluid and mobile, continuously tracking the changing situation on the court. "Do not concentrate but, rather, attend well to the entire situation, your body and your surroundings by scanning the whole sufficiently to become aware of any change or difference, concentrating just enough to perceive it."*

We do not say at the start what the final stage will be – *When we are motivated to achieve a goal then we, "go all out to achieve it... regardless of what it costs us to do so". The result is often the expenditure of excess and unnecessary effort. "By reducing the urge to achieve, and attending also to the means of achieving, we learn easier." He suggests that in achieving, "we lose the incentive for learning and therefore accept a lower level (of performance) than the potential that we are endowed with." By shifting the focus from the goal to the process, we can continually improve the process, achieving a higher and higher level of performance.*

Do a little less than you can – *By not going to the limit of your ability while learning, the focus stays on the process and not the end result. Also, by stopping before you reach your limit, you are aware that it could always be possible to do more and are therefore encouraged to continue to learn. By avoiding the stress of approaching your limit, what you do remains pleasurable. Another incentive to persist with the learning.*

Never overcome pain if for some reason you feel it – *In a similar way to avoiding going to the limits of possibility, it is also good to avoid any movements which are painful. To move only in the area where there is no pain.*

3.6 Towards a personal pedagogy

In returning to Feldenkrais' *Learn To Learn* and summarising it the present context, I find it interesting to notice the areas of overlap that there are between the list I derived earlier

from the reflection on my dance teachers who I modelled my early teaching practice on and this list of suggestions from Feldenkrais on how to approach his ATM classes with a view to learning how to learn. Taken together, these two lists point towards what I could begin to consider as my own personal pedagogy. I certainly recognise in these lists the manner of my teaching.

It is hard to disentangle the influences of my dance teachers and the Feldenkrais Method on my own teaching practice. Maybe I view(ed) my experience of the dance teachers that I mention through the lens of my experience of the Feldenkrais Method, while at the same time I maybe look(ed) at the Feldenkrais Method through the filter of these dance teachers. And while I have emphasised the role of the teachers, there is also much that is inherent in the forms that I describe.

That I could systematise my pedagogy further in words would of course be possible, but to my mind it could never fully convey the richness or complexity that I experience of the act of teaching, nor what lies behind it, the pedagogy in action so to speak. At best, I could point out more details. What would be missing would be the connections that are made in the act of teaching and which are never entirely stable since they are made and remade through the act of teaching. What I have done I think is sufficient to paint a picture where the absence of detail can perhaps point to a richer experience beyond the representation which the viewer, in this case the reader, can fill in as best they can based on their own experience.

3.7 Teaching from a body of knowledge

Before ending this section, it might help to clarify what I mean by teaching from a body of knowledge. Throughout my time at the SNDO and for some years afterwards, I never took notes from classes that I attended. This was partly inspired by Feldenkrais who was reputed to have strongly discouraged his students from taking notes. His rational was that in taking notes about movement classes, the message that we are giving ourselves is that we don't trust ourselves to remember what we note down. I also felt from my own observation of others that the act of writing down notes in class distracts from being fully present with what is happening. I chose to trust that if I had understood something in a class, then I would remember it, and to maximise my chances of understanding something, then the best option would be to try to give my full presence to it. Towards the end of the 1990s, I started to take notes after classes, both reflecting on what I had learned and, now as a teacher myself, finding it useful to write down exercise structures as a resource for teach-

ing. I also have a practice of taking copious notes after my own classes. But, while my attitude towards note-taking has changed, the example below serves as an indication of how the body itself is a repository of knowledge.

What I remember, is watching a contact improvisation class that I was teaching, noticing that something wasn't working and wondering what kind of intervention might be needed. After some moments, seemingly out of nowhere, I remembered an exercise from a class that I had taken five years previously at the SNDO, hadn't found particularly special at the time and hadn't thought of since. The memory arrived as if through all my senses. Not only did I remember the exercise in enough detail to teach it, but I remembered tone of voice of the teacher, the time of year, the clothes that I was wearing, that a window was open, the light and most of all the smell of the studio. This exercise seemed to be exactly what was needed in this moment so I stopped the participants and offered it and it worked. What was remarkable to me was the vividness of the memory that arrived in that moment, and how it had returned unbidden just when I needed it.

Feldenkrais points towards a similar type of experience when explaining what he meant by organic learning, the process of the development of this body of knowledge:

> *When thinking in words, even subliminally, we are logical and think in familiar patterns, in categories that we have thought, dreamed, read, heard or said sometime before. Learning to think in patterns of relationships, in sensations divorced from the fixity of words, allows us to find hidden resources and the ability to make new patterns, to carry over patterns of relationship from one discipline to another. (*1981)

Reporting this experience above can maybe give some idea of what I mean by teaching from a body of knowledge. In many ways less dramatic, I find this kind of experience is often repeated in teaching. A more general experience that might be easier to relate to is this feeling when I am sick or run down that my body strongly calls for certain types of foods. It's not a thought but something more visceral. Sometime I have found myself reaching for something without having made a conscious choice. And I know I am not alone in this. This again would be an example of acting from the body of knowledge.

Part Four : How Awareness Perception Presence emerged as a form

Now we finally approach the core of this thesis. In this section I seek to give some insight into how and why I assembled the different elements that have come to feature in the APP courses that I teach. I also trace how the form of presentation that has evolved.

4.1 Groundwork for Awareness Perception Presence

Below is the course description for APP. In brief, the work aims to give performing artists an opportunity to explore themselves somatically, noticing how shifts in their perception of themselves can in turn effect both their perceptions of each other, and of the world around them. My hope in offering this work is that through their engagement with the process that I offer, participants may acquire some tools, insights, sensations, perceptions that might enhance various aspects of their work: performance presence, range of movement, characterisation, and general learning skills.

> Awareness Perception Presence : somatic practice as "invisible technique"
>
> *I like to describe the application of somatic movement practices to the performing arts as a kind of "invisible technique". What I mean by that is that while they do not necessarily teach any material that you could perform, they can have a big effect on how you perform (performance presence) and the ability to learn new skills. I am particularly interested in how the seemingly internal changes that result are mirrored in the way we perceive the world around us and how the world perceives us.*
>
> *In these "Awareness Perception Presence" classes, we will work with the Feldenkrais Method and Experiential Anatomy as well as related material that highlights how the enhanced self-awareness and perception that emerges from exploring these somatic techniques can support performance presence.*

4.1.1 Clarification of terms

Before going further, I would like to clarify what I mean when I refer to the terms awareness, perception and presence, and how I see the interrelationship between them. Given first that nobody understands consciousness and therefore what the terms objectively refer to, and second, that in dictionaries the words are often defined in terms of each other, I have tried to distil their meaning for me in relation to the work that I am researching.

> Awareness *is knowing that something is going on. According to the New Oxford American Dictionary (2005): "having knowledge or perception of a situation or fact."*

> Perception *is the ability to organise sensations into knowledge about oneself or the environment. While sensations are raw data, perception is the organisation of that data into information about our internal and external environment. From the dictionary again: "the ability to see, hear, or become aware of something through the senses," or more specifically, "the neurophysiological processes, including memory, by which an organism becomes aware of and interprets external stimuli."*
>
> Presence *is about being where one is: "the state or fact of existing, occurring, or being present in a place or thing."*

For me I see their interconnection as follows: the more aware we are of physical sensation then, since sensation is always now, the stronger our presence in the present, as opposed to being lost in our thoughts, remembering the past or imagining the future. Perception is the organisation of sensation into information about the environment in which we are situated. The more we are able to perceive about the environment in which we are situated (both internally and externally), the more informed our choices in relation to it in any moment can be. To move we need to perceive, and to perceive we need to move. Movement and perception are inextricably linked.

4.1.2 Interests

I love to move. I am fascinated by how I move and how others move, by how I and others learn to move and even more so by what we learn in learning to move. I see movement as fundamental to life. Movement is how life expresses itself. Even in stillness there is huge world of movement inside: heart pumping, lungs emptying and filling, reflex movements of balance, thoughts arising. Absence of movement signals death, but even in death the process of decay, and through it the breakdown of the rigid boundary between self and the world, is again expressed though movement, though not self-directed or self-sustaining. Ashes to ashes, dust to dust. We are forever carried along in a moving universe.

My entry into a dialogue with the field of somatics was motivated by a desire to improve my relationship with my body and my ability to move. Given that I work mainly in the field of the performing arts, these too are often the prime reasons for being booked to teach in educational institutions and for participants to sign up for my courses. As I explored different somatic disciplines, my interest expanded from simply noticing how the experiences that I was invited to engage in changed my perception of myself and improved my ability to move. I began to notice more and more how they changed my per-

ception of the world around me, how others perceived me and I them. After noticing this in myself, I began to notice it in others.

I can give a couple of concrete examples. After standing up at the end of a one-sided Feldenkrais ATM class, I felt like the world on one side of me was huge and limitless while the world on the other side of me was much smaller and limited. And again, this time after teaching an ATM, when one participant who I had hardly noticed at the beginning of the class stood up at the end, she appeared to me to take up much more space (that the only way I can describe it) than anyone else in the room. Checking in with her afterwards, she reported a shift in the way her shoulders were organised, and also a new and unfamiliar feeling of awareness of what was behind and above her. What is interesting to me and somewhat mysterious is that, while I had also observed the way in which her shoulders were organised differently and this was a recordable fact, I have no way of accounting for the feeling that I had of her occupying more space, although the two phenomena seemed linked, if in no other way than that they had both changed as a result of the exploration that had proceeded before.

One final example of this phenomenon is the first time I saw someone who later became a significant teacher for me.[32] I was leaning over a balcony, looking down over the foyer of the venue which was crowded with people waiting for the opening session of a conference to begin. One woman stood out from the crowd, partly because of her very clear looking blue eyes and partly because she appeared to be standing significantly taller than everyone else. When I arrived the next day in her workshop, which was in a large studio that was very crowded, she still appeared from afar to be tall. At some point I went over to ask her a question and as I approached her I found myself towering above her.

These examples I think serve to illustrate how awareness, perception and presence are linked, and how their quality is something that can not only be felt from within but can also be recognised from outside by others.

4.1.3 Intentions

My intention in APP is to teach elements of the somatic movement practices in which I have some experience in order to address issues of awareness, perception and presence in a way which might be of particular relevance to the work and life of professional and student performing artists. Movement is the vehicle by which I do that. The opportunity to move, to explore movement and the possibility (promise even) to improve one's ability to move is often the main interest, focus and motivation for dancers and actors attending

these courses. Movement, and the physical body which enacts it, is tangible (literally, perceptible by touch) and that for me is its appeal.

Movement is intimately tied to perception. Without movement, more specifically without a history of movement, perception is unthinkable (Noë 2004). One could go further and say that perception and movement are different aspects of the same phenomena (Noë 2004. Cohen, 1993; p114-118). In order to perceive the world, we need to explore it and to explore it we need to move through it. Similarly, in the act of moving, we constantly receive and organise information about the world we are moving through. Our way of moving through the world is then intimately tied to how we perceive it. And not just the world, but also ourselves and all those others we find in it. These relationships lie at the core of what I am seeking to address.

Self-perception is not significant simply as a moment-by-moment mechanism, but contributes to a history, and to some extent proposes a future by its role in forming our self-image which in turn forms the basis for much of our actions and reactions (Feldenkrais, 1972; p10-24). More specifically, we are investigating experientially the realms of body image and body schema (Gallagher, 2005), and it is by way of the moment-by-moment nature of conscious self-perception (awareness) that we are able to modify them (Feldenkrais, 1981).

Through working with movement and perception, we are contacting the whole self. What can develop through engaging in movement exploration is a deeper relationship with and knowledge of the self. Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, the originator of Body Mind Centering (BMC), expressed the significance of movement and its potential as a mode of inquiry into the nature of the self as follows:

> *Our body moves as our mind moves. The qualities of any movement are a manifestation of how mind is expressing through the body at the moment. Changes in movement qualities indicate that the mind has shifted focus in the body. Conversely, when we direct the mind or attention to different areas of the body and initiate movement from those areas, we change the quality of our movement. So we find that movement can be a way to observe the expression of mind through the body, and it can also be a way to affect changes in the body-mind relationship.* (1993; p1)

Living consciously in the present, attending moment-by-moment to perception of the self and of the world, is the universal prerogative of the baby. While seemingly helpless and unsophisticated in their explorations, in fact babies and toddlers reign supreme in the field of learning. We never repeat in later life the rate and intensity of learning that we ex-

perience in these so-called “formative years” during which we learn to move around in and manipulate the world around us, and gain entry through the acquisition of language to the culture into which we are born (Stokes, 2002). A characteristic of this type of learning that many somatic disciplines, the Feldenkrais Method and BMC among them, attempt to replicate is total absorption in the perception of the present moment and mobilisation as a result of inner curiosity rather than outward demands or goals.

The reason that this mode of learning works so effectively works is that the quality of the plasticity of the brain that allows the infant to learn so fast is in fact maintained throughout our lives (Blakeslee, 2007). What is lost in later life is not the the ability to learn somatically, it is rather the desire to make use of it in order to continue to learn and adapt to our circumstances (Feldenkrais, 1972). To summarise, exploring movement somatically opens up issues beyond movement itself, fundamental human issues of identity, communication and learning (Feldenkrais, 1972). In APP, while movement is the hook by which I catch many participants attention, the real interest for me is how exploring movement somatically necessarily addresses issues of awareness, perception and presence which I regard as key issues for performers, as indeed they are for everyone.

4.1.4 Material

What was clear from the start is that both the Feldenkrais Method and experiential anatomy would be at the core of these classes. The Feldenkrais Method would, as I explained earlier, be present whether I chose to present ATM classes or not. As a way of approaching movement and understanding the self, it is in my bones. A reasonable question at this point would be, if I consider ATM to be such a powerful mode of somatic movement education, then why did I not simply choose to teach ATM classes?

One answer is that I do. And I get a certain amount of pleasure from that. But another answer lies in the accounts of my background (personally, educationally and as a teacher). While the method has been extremely important, central even, to my development, what I think I have experienced, learned from and can offer to others, is the relationship of the Feldenkrais Method to other somatic disciplines and to the performing arts, dance in particular.

I have also gained a lot from my study of experiential anatomy. While it doesn’t feature in the usual one-hour ATM classes presented to the public, it played an important role in my training as a Feldenkrais teacher and I think that prior to that I benefited from studying them both alongside each other.[33] That experiential anatomy and ATM are complemen-

tary was something that I knew from experience, and finding it in the training served merely as confirmation. In a nutshell, the experience of ATM is enriched by anatomical self-understanding, and anatomical self-understanding is enriched by the experience of ATM. Just as I was encouraged to teach contact improvisation by Nancy Stark Smith, I similarly received encouragement to teach experiential anatomy from Andrea Olsen and Caryn McHose. I did so in movement exploration classes for many years, but when I qualified to teach ATM,[34] it was a natural progression to teach them alongside each other.

As is clear from my background, much of what I learned from the Feldenkrais Method was applied in my study of dance and performance, specifically movement exploration and improvisation which I both view essentially as a study of perception (Manning, 2009). So, in presenting APP as a course for performing artists and addressing issues of awareness perception and presence, it seemed obvious to offer explicit links to the study of movement directed towards performance and include my study of dance and performance as resource upon which I could also draw for material for APP, alongside the other somatic practices that I have experience of.

4.2 Early attempts at presenting Awareness Perception Presence

For the first three and a half years (August 2004 to January 2008) of teaching APP, the frame in which I offered the course was most often as a two-week workshop in an educational institution, always to a closed group of performing arts students. The class time was often three to four hours a day. Having so much time gave me the luxury to experiment. In one of the institutions (TEAK), the courses have been offered as part of a free-choice programme (electives) and many students returned again and again. And in another, in the dance department of North Karelia College, Outokumpu, the course is part of the class schedule and I also get two opportunities to teach it to each year group as they progress through the education. This gives me the chance to get to know participants and follow their interests as they develop over a number of years.

When I offered the first APP course, I had no real idea beforehand how all the material would come together in the moment of teaching it: what exactly I would choose to offer and what form the course would take overall. I knew that I wanted Feldenkrais ATMs and experiential anatomy to feature heavily. I had exercises and information that I had picked up, both from other somatic disciplines, as noted above, as well as from other seemingly unrelated situations, that could also be useful and relevant. I had the idea that I might develop some new exercises to illustrate points or explore concepts that I'd been exposed to

through my reading on cognition and neuroscience to which I had turned for some wider perspective on issues of awareness perception and presence. And I knew that, whatever I did, I would do so in dialogue participants. I went into the first classes as unclear about what we would be doing in them as the participants, but from a different perspective.

4.2.1 Teaching as an improvisational act

As stated above, the classes seemed very loose and uncertain, but what I also brought to the situation was my body of knowledge, literally, together with the skills and confidence developed as an inveterate improviser. With the exception of Feldenkrais ATMs, in all that I teach I rarely make detailed class plans, certainly never written down. I rather have an idea, concept or theme that I plan to explore and maybe an exercise or exploration with which to start, though I am ready to discard that if something better occurs in the moment.

I have learned to trust the body of knowledge that I developed as the result of my studies and research, and carry with me everywhere I go. I am in the habit of tracking participants' interests and following my own, adapting to the mood and energy level of individuals, the group as a whole, and myself, as they shift from moment to moment. Of course, I have built up a repertoire of exercises, but my focus is not so much on teaching them as continuing to explore them. I don't feel like the material that I teach is external to me, I feel rather that the knowledge is simply there within me. In the act of teaching, it organises itself in response to the situation, often in new and surprising ways. The body of knowledge that the student uncovers is their own, just as the body of knowledge from which I teach is mine.

4.2.2 Dialogue as a structural element

Drawing on my previous experience, I had trust that the structure of the courses would emerge through dialogue. But where before the subject of the class would give the frame for what would develop in it, an improvisation or contact improvisation class for example, here it was up to me to define the limits and create the frame myself. I'm not so sure that I always did that successfully, but then again, I'm not so sure that it was necessary, at least in an institutional setting with a closed group. I think there is a place for and value to open-ended research. And this is very much how it was to proceed.

I would arrive with a theme (like feet) and some specific questions that I was interested in exploring together: How do I make use of my feet? Where do they begin anatomically?" And what do my feet mean to me? I would also have some specific ATM classes

prepared that seemed to me to shed some light on those questions, or at least give some experiences that could offer up clues, as well as explorative exercises from experiential anatomy. I would begin each course with a talking circle where first I would share my interests and questions, and then I'd invite everyone to contribute their own interests and questions, together with any personal anecdotes, perspectives, desires or anything else that seemed relevant. Very often people would also include stories of injuries or functional difficulties that they were seeking solutions for. I wanted to give participants time to speak of and from their own experiences, to open up a dialogue among us all. The atmosphere that I was aiming to generate was one of collective research which I saw myself responsible for facilitating.

I felt myself taking on the role of guide in the sense that I had amassed considerable experience of these kinds of explorations. I knew the terrain. Metaphorically, I like the image of guide in the sense of someone who has explored a terrain, knows certain landmarks in it and can use those landmarks to help participants to orients themselves in it. At the same time, the guide recognises that they have not trodden every inch of the ground and that those they guide may discover things along the way that the guide hasn't yet discovered. The metaphor however is limited in that, while as humans we share similar anatomy, thoughts (a shared culture, language, etc), emotions (happiness, sadness, anger, etc.) and sensations (hot, cold, pain, etc), we are all unique and everyone's terrain is their's only to explore.

After this initial dialogue, we would shift back and forth between practical explorations and our talking circle where we could check in and share discoveries, difficulties and further questions that arose. I would of course have material ready to offer, not planned exactly, but available. I would be working on my own outside of class hours so its experience would be fresh in my system. I would have a range of ATMs prepared. Sometimes I would proceed with the practical explorations that I had imagined, but I was equally ready to do something else instead in response to our circle dialogues. This alternating pattern was one of activity and reflection and, if anything, dialogue came to organise the form of these classes.

4.2.3 Reference actions

Another feature that emerged was the frequent use of what I call reference actions. The concept of scanning oneself for sensation in a reference action is present in both the Feldenkrais Method and Qi Gong. The mode of exploration in both cases is first simply to

check in with oneself to notice the sensation of the initial state of being (or a particular detail of it), to explore something, and then return to the reference action to check in to see if and how the sensation has changed. In a way, this parallels the use of the talking circles for the group, an alternating pattern of activity and reflection.

Reference actions could be simply lying down on the floor and noticing the sensation of how one makes contact with it, sitting or standing in which case there is the sensation of balancing in an upright position in gravity, or a movement such as walking or reaching above ourselves. By establishing points of reference and returning to them often, we can subjectively measure or sample our state as it changes over time. With experience, the ability to differentiate between states becomes more and more refined. The process of differentiating through subjective sensation is similar to that of a wine tasting. As the palate develops the ability to sense difference, so does the ability to identify the variety, area and year of production of the wine with greater and greater precision. We are seeking to become connoisseurs of our own sensations.

In my experience, the perceptions that we organise most readily from the sensations that we notice when returning to reference actions, and often in many somatic practices we are directed towards, are those of ourselves. In other words, how I have changed. In these courses, I also encouraged participants to notice how the world around us may have appeared to have changed (the studio might feel bigger or smaller, we might notice the floor or the ceiling more, the world behind or in front of us might feel bigger, etc). And finally, I encouraged them to observe and notice changes in each other (someone might look like they take up more or less space, might look more or less connected to their environment, more or less open). Some of the changes might be recognised and named in these somewhat vague, qualitative, terms. Others are observable phenomena, the angle of the head for example.

Checking these references can be employed before and after a particular exploration, at the beginning and at the end of a class, or from day to day over the course of the workshop. My own practice has involved integrating these reference points into my life. In teaching APP, I came to realise that what I believe I have done is open up a dialogical relationship with myself through sensation. Once I had been able to enunciate that for myself, how to open this kind of relationship emerged as a central theme of these courses. I emphasised that through returning to the reference points, one can sense physically, sometimes before the arrival of thought or emotion, whether one is having a good day or

a bad day. My experience of the trajectory through this explorative somatic work is not that “the only way is up”. Although in the longer term, I feel myself more organised and harmonious through the work, it is permeated by ups and downs. Some are more momentary while others are longer lasting. Cycles within cycles.

Alongside developing this ability to observe myself, I have also acquired a palette of activities or tools, that I can employ to shift my present state towards something more favourable. Such tools are what I hoped participants might also pick up from these classes, both from things I offered and by noticing or devising them for themselves. They could then use these tools to support their learning in other classes, their creative devising processes, in preparation for rehearsal and performance, and in their lives.

4.2.4 Summing up

To recap, the structure of these workshops was both highly dialogical, improvisational and made frequent use of reference points. The long class times and the closed groups enabled me to experiment with both form and content. In terms of form, since the group was closed, then each day’s class could pick up from where we left off the day before. The overall form of the courses were that of long journeys, with no demand other than to pitch up at the end of each day and begin again the next. In terms of content, while all of the elements were always present, the balance of content within the individual courses varied. Sometimes I included more ATMs, sometimes more experiential anatomy and hands-on work in partners, and other times I offered more extended guided or free explorations, sometimes with music and sometimes not. On a couple of occasions in the summer, we spent a day or two working outside.

The feedback that I got from participants was positive. People returning didn’t find the changing form and content disturbing. I imagine that, despite the changing form and content, they appreciated that there was at least some consistency in what I was exploring. I know from conversations that they enjoyed the anything-can-happen research atmosphere. And I enjoyed it too. Very often I would discover new material in the act of teaching. But it was also demanding and tiring. The more I did it the more I found myself organising the material, spiralling in on what seemed most important and essential for me.

4.3 Emergence of the concept of single idea classes

When I was first asked to teach APP at TanzQuartier Wien (TQW) for two weeks in January 2008 as part of its ongoing training programme for professional dancers, I was pre-

sented with the challenge of making the work function coherently not only as a 12-class course for those that might attend every day, but also as a drop-in class for those whose schedules would only allow them to attend a few classes. An additional constraint was that the classes would only be two hours. It was obvious then that each class needed to function as a coherent whole. What followed from that was the concept of what I called "single idea classes". Very simply, each class should present a single idea in the form of a process which offers the conceptual information and physical reference point or points, a complementary ATM, and the possibility to integrate through free exploration.

Once the single class idea arrived as a concept to work with, during this first two-week engagement at TanzQuartier I experimented freely with exactly how to do it, checking in with regular participants after class for their feedback. Although the form that I arrived at looks very obvious to me with hindsight, it took some time to figure out how much anatomical and background information to give, how much time to spend on exploring reference actions and how long to spend on the ATM. I had a tendency sometimes to give too much information or to spend too much time on the ATM so that there was only a very short time left for self-exploration at the end. The feedback that I got was that this free time to explore was very valuable to people. Now when I teach, I try to get people up from the ATM with a full 30 minutes left for returning to the reference actions, self exploration and finishing up. I also learned that it was better to make the ATM last around 45 minutes rather than a full hour. Normally in an hour-long class there is 5-10 minutes at the beginning resting on the floor and scanning oneself for sensation. This functions as a reference so that we can notice any changes before and after. At first I would include this out of habit, but then I came to realise that, in embedding the ATM in a web of reference actions, it wasn't necessary to perform scans lying on the floor. This saved time for the initial section of the class during which I gave out a lot of information and guided us through reference actions, which I also got the feedback that people found important.

The form that I arrived at is as follows with the time divided roughly 45 minutes, 45 minutes, 30 minutes for a two hour class:

1. Initial Guided Exploration/Lecture/Dialogue

arriving through the references of walking and standing

class specific reference positions or actions

anatomical information referenced in books and looking at a life sized model skeleton

dialogue with participants about the class idea

2. Feldenkrais Awareness Through Movement (ATM) Class

aims to clarify the reference positions or actions

gives and opportunity to explore in depth details of the class idea

generates a particular state of self-awareness

3. Self-Directed Exploration

returning to class specific reference positions or actions to notice differences

free exploration with class specific reference positions or actions as a starting point

returning to the references of walking and standing

In this drop-in situation where the group was not stable, in combination with the time constraint and to a certain extent the culture of the "professional dance class",[35] I opted to curtail the dialogical nature of the earlier workshops. I will explore this implications of this further in **part six**, where I evaluate the responses that I got from interviewing participants who attended APP classes, and also in **part seven**, where I reflect back over the whole process of development and consider how to continue it. For now I would add merely that the dialogical flavour was maintained in the initial presentation of the class idea and by making myself available after class to individuals or small groups of those who didn't need to rush off immediately.

From this teaching period at Tanzquartier where I had taught 12 classes, I took five classes that focused on the torso and repeated them later many times in different contexts. This marked a significant turning point for me, both in my teaching in general and in relation to the APP work, in that for the first time in my career, I have been teaching what could be described as set classes. By that I mean classes where the both form and content is repeatable. In **part five**, I describe the content of these classes, but first I will discuss in more detail some themes which emerged during this earlier phase of development of the work and which informed the organisation of the new form of the single idea class.

4.3.1 How to integrate change

After a Feldenkrais ATM classes, in common with many somatic explorations, a change is often felt. This change is variously perceived as a shift in alignment (the way the body is organising in gravity), or feeling heavier or lighter, or just feeling different. This simple feeling of difference is perhaps the most interesting since it could refer to a shift in how

one moves (movement feels different), physical sensation (the body feels different), the way one feels one is thinking (a change in the quality of decision making processes), or the emotions (feeling emotions differently). More often than not, it is experienced as all of these things together. Simply a way of being that feels different. Sometimes we don't quite feel like ourselves, or in extreme cases, we feel like someone else. After the experience that led to this feeling is over, the feeling of change diminishes to the point where one feels back to normal again. This prompts two questions. What happens to this change? And more interesting and often challenging still, how can we bring any pleasing feelings of change into our lives, both professionally and generally? How can we make use of this change?

One answer to what happens to the change is that it is forgotten, it is experienced but not integrated and, once it passes, it persists as nothing but a vague memory, although one that may resurface under some circumstances at a later date. In this way, while the experience may not be wasted, it is not actively made use of. Another part of the answer is that when a change is easily accepted into our way of being, a change that we are ready for, then it becomes part of ourselves and in doing so we no longer feel different.

Changes that we take in to our way of being are particularly hard to track, especially over the longer term. We may notice that some activities become easier, though we may not feel ourselves as being different for the reasons mentioned. One way we get feedback about how we are changing is from other people, how they experience us. My own experience includes many occasions when I felt like nothing much had changed but others around me noticed big changes. One dramatic example that I can give is when I met someone at a party who I used to share a large house with eight years previously, before I began working with somatics. After talking for around ten minutes, I asked him if he remembered me? He didn't. When I insisted that he did, then he became quite disturbed, until I gave the address of the house that we had shared. He took a moment to look me up and down before replying: "It *is* you. You look much more relaxed."

Another way to integrate change is to nurture it. While the feeling of change that accompanies the kind of reorganisation that can occur as a result of somatic exploration can be very noticeable, it is nonetheless delicate. We are working in the domain of neurological repatterning, literally making new connections in our nervous system, and it must be remembered it is an organic structure. Unlike a computer, where a new way of functioning is simply a matter of inserting new code, the nervous system takes time to grow and

strengthen new connections. The image is more like a plant laying down new roots. They take time to establish themselves and in the early moments are delicate and vulnerable. In the Feldenkrais Method we are taught to encourage people not to transition abruptly to another mode of activity, especially one which is stressful, for under stress we all tend to resort to habitual ways of functioning in which make use of older and more established neurological pathways. The longer we can live in these new connections the stronger they become, and the more chance they have of establishing themselves and persisting in being available in all areas of our lives.

One way in which changes that result after ATM classes are often perceived is in terms of feeling more open. Our movement feels easier and our potential range of movement feels and is often greater. However, this openness needs to be treated with respect if we want to benefit from the change in the longer term. In exploring any newly perceived openness and increased range in our movement, it can be very tempting to push it to the limits of what is possible: to move large and fast with this joyful sense of ease. When approaching the edges of what is possible, some part of us senses danger coming and, under this stress, we return to older habitual patterns of movement and the change is lost.

Taken to extremes, we can even cause ourselves harm. In my first year of working with the Feldenkrais Method while I was studying trapeze at the circus school, I did one class which left me feeling wonderfully open in my shoulders and arms. I went directly from the class to practise trapeze and found many things had become much easier and more pleasurable. Until I went too far. I caused an injury which kept me away from the trapeze for the next six weeks. And I am not unique in having this experience. In the studio one day, I came across a participant from one of the early APP courses who had also come to some weekend Feldenkrais workshops that I had offered. One of his feet was heavily bandaged so I asked him how he'd injured himself. Gesturing to his chest, he said that after the last Feldenkrais workshop he'd felt so good that he'd come into the studio to dance and it had been great, so much freedom in movement, but then he had pulled a muscle in his chest. So I asked about the foot. He replied that after the workshop before, he'd come into the studio and injured a ligament in his foot doing pirouettes. The pirouettes had been great at the time though!

I am aware that for many participants, my classes are just a part of their busy daily schedule, maybe even going on to situations where they are required to exert themselves fully. So in developing APP further, I came to realise that, in order to maximise the bene-

fits and to protect participants from injury, I needed to build into the classes an opportunity to integrate any changes that took place. I did this in two ways, by building a rich framework of varied reference actions and by giving time towards the end of each class for self-directed exploration.

4.3.2 Expanding on reference actions

One way to integrate change, which we are again taught in Feldenkrais Method training, is to explore reference actions at the beginning and end of ATM classes, actions either specific to the ATM or the more general action of walking. But, since ATM classes typically last one hour, there is not much time to integrate, maybe five minutes at the beginning and five minutes at the end.

A phenomenon that I have noticed often in teaching ATM is people asking after the class what they can do at home. I imagine for many, and have heard explicitly from some, that they want to get the feeling from after the class back again. The structure of ATM is usually too complicated for someone to repeat alone themselves, especially if they have never done the class before. One answer is to say, do what you remember and improvise with it. But it is not the movements that create the feeling. It is the way a teacher guides the participants' awareness while exploring the movements that makes the difference.

As APP developed, I gave more time to the exploration of a complex web of reference actions surrounding an ATM. In doing so I hoped to achieve an number of different things, not least to let the reference actions become a site of learning and interest in themselves. In paying attention to walking and standing, there is an enormous amount of different sensations to become aware of, each new detail offering the potential to perceive ourselves more fully in action. A lot of these particular sensations and my general interested in walking and standing is rooted in my periods of study with Steve Paxton who stated in a workshop in 1996: "I've been studying walking for over 30 years now and I still don't understand it." In each class, I offer new details to pay attention to and I choose details that I think might be affected by the experience of the ATM. In going into walking and standing in such detail, it is not just the details that I hope I am creating the possibility for participants to learn about, but it is also this way of paying attention to ourselves.

Many people have a tendency to concentrate in order to sense a detail, but what I encourage is not to try so hard to grasp the sensation but instead to pay attention and wait for the sensation to arrive. It is much lighter and more pleasurable. Concentration suggests tightening and reduction. Think of concentrated fruit juice. One participant referred me to

Krishnamurti who writes at length and about the difference that I was trying to elucidate. He writes that: "Concentration implies... a restriction, a limitation; it is a narrowing, exclusive process." (1991; p199). And: "The moment your mind says, 'I must have that,' there is concentration, which means that you are no longer in the state of attention." (p200) After reading Krishnamurti, I condensed his argument to a phrase that I now repeat often in class: "Concentration is the opposite of awareness, so don't concentrate, be aware."

While hopefully fostering the interest in and ability to pay attention to these simple references of standing and walking, I think there is also a potential limitation in using them alone as references in that they are so familiar. Another type of reference that I try to introduce are simple but unfamiliar reference actions. In the classes detailed in **part five**, I used what are known as serpentine movements (undulations through the spine) sourced from Steve Paxton's *Material For The Spine* (2008). Movements like these are simple in form but complex in both execution and accompanying sensations. To most they are novel movements, they don't have a history. They offer the possibility to learn something new, and by exploring them both before and after an ATM, we can experience how the ATM can help to clarify the movement and in doing so can make learning them easier.

They represent a challenge to attempt to perfect, and thus we can enter into a long term dialogue with them, and they are easy to remember, so people can repeat them at after class on their own. In introducing them I can also employ, and in doing offer as tools, some of the strategies that Feldenkrais employed in ATM and taught. For example: by changing the point of initiation from the head to the tail, when we come back again to the head initiated movement is becomes easier; and by exploring the serpentine in one plane, then switching to another, when we come back to the first it is easier.

Other forms of reference actions that I employ are not so much movements as explorations. These tend to be finely delimited. Examples include: exploring how changing the position of the head in standing changes the weight distribution through the feet, the image is of the head talking to the feet; or exploring how to initiate movement from either end of the breastbone, the image is of the breastbone as a small spine in front.

And finally there are references that are more perceptual, from simply noticing how the room appears to us, to more complex actions where the focus is on our perception of both ourselves and our surrounding environment. For example, I like to stand in a big circle and walk forwards towards the centre of the circle and then walk backwards away

from the centre to where we started. I contrast this with walking away from the wall behind us and then walking backwards towards the wall we started from. The movement is outwardly the same, we always face the centre of the circle in both, but the feeling and the appearance, since we can see the whole group as we do it ourselves, is very different.

In teaching APP, all of the above types of reference actions can be explored before an ATM and enhanced if necessary by anatomical information. They can then form the basis for self-directed exploration after the ATM.

4.3.3 Self-directed exploration

In self-directed exploration after an ATM, I give participants 20-30 minutes to explore their own movement independently. Often when people come to stand up at the end of the ATM, people report feeling a little bit strange. What is often visible to me is that people are standing differently, something has changed in the way they are organising themselves in the field of gravity. I encourage them to try to live inside this feeling for a while, to take it as an invitation to experience themselves and also the world around them a little differently. To maximise the benefit from the class, I suggest that during the exploration they should do whatever they do gently, at least at first. The metaphor that I use to explain this is that it's a bit like getting your car back from the garage after the brakes and clutch are replaced; it's definitely still your car, but it drives differently, better maybe, but you need to take care while you get used to the new feel and let the brakes and clutch settle.

I suggest beginning the exploration with eyes closed and returning to one of the reference actions from before the ATM as a starting point. At some point, it might be interesting to open our eyes and include an awareness of the environment that surrounds us, noticing how this might influence us. And finally, if exploring the theme opens a door to some other movement that interests us, we can feel free to follow that for as long as it is interesting, with an option to return to the theme or else move on to something else. In suggesting these as a possible directions that our self-directed exploration can take, I emphasise that there's no need to do them all, or do them in sequence. Simply resting is also an option. What I hope for is that we are all interested in what we are exploring.

Then I play some music and let people explore for around 20-25 minutes. We end the class by transitioning to walking and standing, sensing any differences from when we walked in.

Part Five : Five classes on the torso

This is it. The classes themselves. A set of five classes that I have repeated six times. I decided to keep repeating them partly as an experiment to see how it would be to teach set classes, and partly it was just a relief during this busy period of my life not to keep on creating new ones. The result has been that I've polished them, getting a clearer image of what they are each time.

First, I introduce the series of classes as a whole, the theme. Then I give brief synopses of the five classes highlighting the major areas covered in each. Mostly. Included after the synopsis of the first class in the series are step-by-step notes so that the reader can get a feel for what one of these classes might be like if they haven't done one. (Videos of the self-directed exploration parts of the classes are available on request.)

5.1 Introduction

In these five classes, I choose to focus on the torso and head. I find the area of the head and torso to be fundamental in considering human movement since in evolutionary terms it is much older than the limbs. I call this the "fish body" in the manner of my teachers (McHose & Frank 2006). In the extreme, one could say that the head and torso are necessarily present in a living human whereas the limbs are not.

In some forms of dance and dance training there is the idea that the arms and legs should somehow be articulated independently of the torso. I even had one Finnish student who had been taught to hold the torso in place as if it were a box. She was suffering a lot of pain in the hips and shoulders, I believe as a result. My experience of dancing, watching people dance and teaching people dance is that the greater the ability to articulate the torso, the greater the sense of grace, aliveness and presence in movement.

My aim in these classes is to offer the participants an opportunity to experience a more intimate relationship, both perceptually and conceptually, with the "fish body". To encourage them to evaluate for themselves any effects on their movement through or perceptions of the world.

5.2 Class one : Turning in the vertical axis

In the first class, we explore how the body aligns in the vertical axis. How the flow of weight downwards through the bones is met by an equal and opposite force called support which flows upwards. The more aligned the bones can be, the less muscular effort is involved in standing. This alignment changes unconsciously according to our mood (Todd, 1937; Bernard et al. 2006; Franklin, 1996). We discover how standing is a dynamic activity. Besides the flow of weight and support, there are also the unconscious re-

flex actions which work to keep us aligned efficiently (Paxton, 2008). The more we are able to trust ourselves to these reflexes, the less effort it is to stand. The vertical axis appears to me in sensation clearer the better able I am to align myself.[36]

Not only are humans the only animals to spend the greater part of our active lives in this vertical orientation, but we are the only animals to turn around this axis. The unique curved structure of our spine allows us to do this (McHose & Frank, 2006; p100). In standing, the real structure of our spine comes into some kind of alignment with this virtual vertical axis. I show the more central position of the weight bearing bodies of the vertebrae relative to the spinous processes which we feel along our back surfaces and also how the structure of the vertebral facets affect rotation along the spine. For many people who have never looked at anatomical structure before, it is comes as a surprise how far towards the centre axis the weight bearing part of the spine is (Rolland, 1987, p67; Olsen & McHose, 1991, p50), and how the ability of the lumber spine to rotate is far less than that of the thoracic spine. (Calais-Germain, B. 1993 p49-61) Turning is introduced as one of the components of walking. We also explore how many different ways one could initiate turning in standing, and how each looks and feels a little different.

After exploring turning in the vertical axis, first in detail through an ATM and later in the self-directed exploration, there is a tendency to perceive oneself as taller and the world more in terms of up and down.

What follows is a detailed step-by-step account of this two hour class and it is in this account that we arrive at the centre of our spiral. An instance of teaching.

5.2.1 Initial guided exploration (30-45 mins)

> *1. walking – feeling the feet on the floor – noticing the action of the feet – noticing how the feet are walking – how the ankles are walking – how the knees are walking – the hip joints – the two halves of the pelvis - how the tail walks – the vertebrae of the lower back walk – the middle back – the lower breastbone – the vertebrae of the upper back – the upper part of the breastbone – the shoulders – the arms – the hands – the base of the neck – the head – the eyes – noticing how the floor moves as we walk – how the floor is walking with us – the walls – the ceiling – the other people in the studio – how the whole world walks with us as we walk*
>
> *2. standing – the practice is to notice how relaxed can we be in standing without falling over? – noticing how standing still is not still but is full of movement – observing how the body knows how to stand – without interfering, noticing how we experience moments of being in balance, falling off balance, and how the reflexes fire to bring us back to balance without conscious direction*

We consider how weight is not something that we posses but is something that passes through us dynamically, streaming down our bones continuously, and gives us the direction down. How this downward force is balanced by an equal and opposite counter-force (Newton's Third Law Of Motion) which I call *support* coming in through the feet and exiting through the top of the head, giving us the direction up.

We look for an alignment of the bones which allows us to stand with minimum muscular effort, stacking them up like children's building blocks. This is not something to force or try too hard at, since efforting takes us away from relaxed standing. We are not looking to get it right, or be perfect, but opening up a dialogue with the sensation of standing so that we can track it from day to day, becoming aware of how it changes daily.

> *3. walking – noticing how it feels different after watching ourselves stand – seeing if we can begin to track the action of the spine in walking – noticing where we first focus – where along the spine it is easy to bring the attention and where it is not*
>
> *4. looking at the skeleton – noticing the bodies of the spine – how they sit in front of that part of the spine that we can touch – how in the chest area they rest inside the chest cavity – thinking of the vertebrae like frying pans, the handle being like the processes and the pan like the vertebral bodies – how the bodies do the work of transmitting the forces while the processes provide the attachments for the muscles which move the vertebrae*
>
> *5. standing – shifting the weight forwards and backwards, looking for the position where it feels like the bodies can do their work of transmitting the upwards and downwards forces easiest – clarifying this place by sensing when it could be better – when the weight comes too far backwards or forwards and we feel the musculature at the front or the back of the body called into action to support us – sensing how mobility is compromised in these positions, how we stiffen up*
>
> *6. walking – sensing the action of the spine in walking – noticing any if it is clearer now after attending to the bodies of the vertebrae – noticing the turning/twisting action of the spine in walking*
>
> *7. standing – noticing the sense of there being a virtual centre axis that divides the body left and right, front and back – sensing the relationship between the axis and the spine – beginning to explore looking a little to one side and the other – letting the rest of the body follow to support this – turning around this vertical axis – the idea is to maintain this sense of the vertical axis while turning*
>
> *8. looking at an image of the vertical axis – noticing how the axis is shown as forward of the spine – how the only front of the lumber (lower back) and cervical (neck) touch the axis*

9. standing – noticing if having looked at the image changes the sensation of the vertical axis – if it makes it clearer – this axis is not real but is more like the sum of all the different vectors of forces passing through all the bones of the body – sometime I feel it thin like a cord, sometimes more wide like a pipe

10. walking – noticing how we take the vertical axis with us as we walk – how we are at home in the vertical axis – this is unique to humans – noticing any sense of turning around the vertical axis in walking – noticing the difference between sensing the vertical axis and the spine in walking

11. standing – exploring turning from the eyes again – where along the spine do we feel we get most rotation? – more specifically, do we get more rotation through the lumbar or thoracic (chest) vertebrae?

The group is split roughly 60:40 in favour of the thoracic spine. We gather around the skeleton to have a look. I explain that from the structure of the facets of the thoracic vs. lumbar, it is clear that turning in the lumbar spine is more restricted due to the roughly sagittal orientation of the facets. In the text books (Calais-Germain,1993; p49-61), there is said to be less than 1° rotation between lumbar vertebrae while there is around 3° rotation in the thoracic spine. That makes 5 x 1° = 5° maximum rotation in the lumbar spine while there is 12 x 3° = 36° rotation in the thoracic spine. This can seem counterintuitive since it makes some sense to imagine that the rib attachments to the spine might inhibit rotation

The facets of the cervical (neck) region are generally similar to that to of thorax but allow even more rotation – around 6 x 8° = 48° in total.

We also look at the configuration of the joints of the skull and the top of the neck (occipital condyles, atlas and axis). How the "yes" movement of the head (articulation of the occipital condyles on the atlas) can be sensed to be happening slightly above the "no" movement (articulation of the atlas on the axis). The "no" movement affords around 40° rotation

12. standing – exploring small "yes" and "no" movements of the head – making small movements and alternating between one and the other in order to sense how these occur at slightly different levels in the spine

13. focusing on the side-to-side "no" movement – staying organised around the vertical axis – thinking of initiating from the eyes as if they were the top vertebra of the spine – letting the turning grow and begin to spread down the spine to involve more and more vertebra – sensing the rotation in different parts of the spine – noticing how it might be easier to turn to one side then the other

14. without loosing the organisation around the vertical axis, beginning to come into a gentle rhythmic swinging from side to side – exploring how it is different to initiate this turning from different parts of the body: eyes, nose, shoulders, arms, hands, top of the breastbone, spine between the shoulders, bottom of the breastbone, lumbar spine (belly centre), tail, hip joints, knees, ankles, soles of the feet – noticing how each different initiation feels and looks a little different – many different ways of doing this simple looking movement when we look into it in detail

15. noticing how some people shift the axis from side to side in this movement while others leave it central – more variation – exploring shifting the axis to the back foot in turning – noticing how this suggests one kind of turn – exploring shifting the axis to the front foot in turning – noticing how this suggests another kind of turn – exploring leaving the axis central – again realising how many different ways there are of doing this seemingly simple movement

16. simply standing and noticing the sense of the vertical axis now

17. walking – again noticing how we talk the vertical axis with us as we walk – noticing any sense of turning around the vertical axis in walking – exaggerating it for a while – like marching – then returning to a "normal" walk – noticing the difference between sensing the vertical axis and the spine in walking – if it is getting any clearer now

5.2.2 Feldenkrais ATM class (45 mins)

Turning Around The Centre Axis Lying On The Back – This ATM is built up from simple movements of turning the head, pelvis, shoulder girdle and eyes. The class begins and ends with the simple reference movement of rolling the head left and right. As it progresses it explores more and more complex co-ordinations, particularly those involving differentiated movements of the eyes which are very challenging for everyone.

The reorganisation that takes place in this class is often expressed as a clearer sensation of the vertical axis, feeling taller, lighter or heavier, greater ease in turning, smoother walking. I find this a great class to teach to a group where not everyone is familiar with the Feldenkrais Method. The simple component movements are pleasurable in themselves and can be used to introduce various principles of the method:

- *move as much as is comfortable not as much as you can : by making movements well within the range of what is possible for us and beginning to explore the question what is comfortable we can move without stress and strain – the more relaxed we are when moving the more we are able to listen to ourselves as we move – to notice the sensations that pass through our whole selves while moving*
- *if you are looking to feel a connection between two widely separate parts, for example between the head and tail in this class, then try moving smaller and listening deeper rather than making the movement bigger to force a mechanical connection –*

in the method we look to move with greater and greater ease – grace one could say – it is this graceful quality that separates the great sports stars (Usain Bolt), dancers (Fred Astaire), etc, from the rest – trying harder then takes us in the opposite direction from that quality which we seek to enhance

- *to take rests whenever you need them and to work with the movements whenever they interest you – as soon as a movement becomes tiring, mechanical or simply boring then stop and have a rest – in the method it's not often the movements that are tiring but the act of paying attention while moving – there is nothing to be gained in the method from repeating movements mindlessly – it is all about moving mindfully – likewise if a rest is called but you are deeply interested in something then continue – the idea is that the spoken instructions are a guide to an exploration of an idea rather than orders to be followed*
- *if you start to feel more open in the rests between movement explorations, sometimes strangely so, then try to be with this feeling and avoid stretching or shaking yourself out – this feeling of more openness is one of the signs that something is reorganising within oneself – the feeling of change, particularly when standing at the end of a class can be quite disorientating – the feeling of change will pass but one of the best ways to benefit from the ATM is to try to live inside the change for as long as possible after the ATM – and one way to disperse the feeling is to stretch or shake out which will bring you back to a more familiar pattern of organisation – try to take any new/strange/different sensations as an invitation to experience yourself, and hence the world around you, differently*

One final point that I find comes up again and again with everyone, but is especially strong in dancers, is the assumption that one ought to be symmetrical. Most Feldenkrais ATMs begin with a moment lying on the back scanning oneself for sensation. I often notice people correcting how they lie on the floor in order to make themselves lie more symmetrically. Often there is feeling that something is wrong because we assume that if all is well, then we should lie symmetrically. Some even feel guilty or bad for not being symmetrical.

It is important to realise that while we all, dancers especially, strive for functional symmetry, this is not our natural starting point. We are all fundamentally asymmetrical, both in our structure and everyday function. The way our internal organs are arranged is asymmetrical, the most commonly recognised being the heart which is set a little to the left side in most people. And we are nearly all right- or left-handed, truly ambidextrous people are extremely rare. So asymmetry is our starting point and there's no need to feel bad about it.

The Feldenkrais method works through becoming more and more aware of what we are doing. Feldenkrais often summed up his method by saying, “if you know what you are doing then you can do what you want”. Asymmetry is a simple fact of life. Trying to correct it consciously only adds another layer of unnecessary muscle activity. Truly interesting and useful change that can occur with the method is that which occurs unconsciously, in other words, when our systems self-correct themselves

5.2.3 Self-directed exploration (45 mins)

When people come to stand up at the end of the ATM, everyone feels like some change has taken place. Some spontaneously begin to gently explore turning around the axis and I encourage the rest to follow. We come into walking, noticing both the vertical axis and the spine in walking. For many, the walking is more fluid, easier and lighter. I recall a dance teacher saying that “if you can walk you can dance” and offer my take on it which would be, “if you can walk better then you can dance better”.

Many people also feel strange. Not quite themselves. I show a selection of walks initiated from different parts of the body, each suggesting a different personality that we each read easily and instantly, demonstrating how we all recognise organically that personality and posture, mind and body, are intimately linked.

Before giving time for personal exploration I offer the following general guidelines for self-directed exploration:

- *whatever you do, do it gently – to maximise the benefit from the ATM it is good to work inside the feeling rather than try to explore at the edges – to go to the edge of what you feel is possible, even though in this open state you may feel like more is possible than normal, will at best quickly dissipate this feeling and at worst leave you open to injury – going to the edge of what is possible, one’s system may “tighten up” or “brace itself” in order to protect and the feeling of change is lost – or if this doesn’t happen then there’s the possibility to injure oneself*
- *It’s a bit like getting your car back from the garage after the brakes and clutch are replaced. It’s definitely still your car, but it drives differently and you need to take care while you get used to how it feels now.*
- *begin eyes closed exploring the theme – in this case turning around the axis – spend some time gently exploring the theme of the class*
- *open eyes exploring the theme – allowing yourself to be more conscious of the space around you, notice how this adds information to the exploration of the theme – now you can see what others are doing feel free to borrow movements – no need to do what anyone else is doing*

- *if exploring the theme opens a door to some other movement that interests you then follow that – after exploring the theme for a while some other movement may suggest itself, feel free to follow that with an option to return to the theme or else move on to something else – the important thing is that you are interested in what you are exploring*

We end the class by walking again, exaggerating the turning in walking then returning to a "normal" walk (much laughter at this suggestion since walking is different for most).

And then finally in standing, I ask how we would choose to divide the world in two after exploring this vertical axis and the near instant response is into up and down.

5.3 Class two : Side-to-side serpentine

The second class introduces the concept of the "fish body". Anatomically I show how the "fish body" (the axial skeleton) forms the core of the body and how in evolutionary terms this is a far older structure than the upper or lower limbs (Shubin, 2008). I talk a little about how this is represented in different cultures, particularly in relation to the spine (McHose & Frank, 2006).

I show a little more of the structure of the ribcage and thoracic spine, pointing out that there are 100-120 joints in the thoracic region which creates the possibility of a wide range of different movements, many more than most people assume. We look at the different ranges of side-bending along the spine and how fixed patterns of holding in the chest can create apparent differences in leg length that show up in walking, standing and lying on the side.

We explore two side-bending movements, both of which can be done with the image of simply using the legs to get the earth away so the spine is free to move as it did in the ocean. The "fish swish" is initiated by imagining a filmy fish tail as an extension of the spine, moving it side-to-side, and sensing how the movement travels up the torso (Olsen & McHose, 1991). The side-to-side serpentine (Paxton, 2008) is initiated from the top of the head which travels in a figure-of eight pathway through space, while the the spine below receives the movement of the head, passing it downward and moves alternately through C- and S-shaped sideways curves as a result. Experimenting with initiating a similar movement from the tail, often improves the head-initiated version.

This side-to-side movement of the spine is a component in walking (Paxton, 2008). The ATM class explores in detail opening and closing different areas along the sides of the ribs. Towards the end, it relates these movements to the head and the legs, and also to the

shoulders and hips. After the ATM, people spontaneously begin exploring the “fish swish” and the side-to-side serpentine reporting it to be softer and lighter now, as is walking.

After the self-directed exploration people clearly report perceiving themselves as wider and deeper and the world predominantly in terms of left and right.

5.4 Class three : Sagittal serpentine

This class recaps the turning and side-to-side movements of the spine in standing and walking and introduces the final plane of the sagittally organised movement of the spine. The sagittal movements of the spine in walking are the most difficult to identify initially, partly, I think, because both our perception in this plane (what the eyes can see in front and what we can’t see behind) and our movements in it (towards and away from things) are so familiar.

This sagittal flexion/extension of the spine in walking is a source of a lot of power. This becomes clearer as we walk faster or run, and even clearer when we jump. We look at the how the ribs join to the spine, curving back behind the spine before looping back forwards to meet the spine. The resulting angle that the ribs make with the spine, together with the two points of articulation with the spine that each rib enjoys, are once more a revelation to many.

We explore three different sagittally organised movements. The first is the “bounce” in which we fold every joint in the body a little, then push the earth away to come back to standing. In this movement one can practice full-body flexion and the image of pushing the earth away to return to standing can be a revolutionary experience for people who are used to pulling themselves upright.

The mammalian “whale tail” movement is initiated by imagining a powerful whale tail as an extension of the spine, moving it forwards and backwards, sensing how the movement travels up the torso. The sagittal serpentine is initiated from the top of the head which travels in a figure-of eight pathway through space, while the the spine below receives the movement of the head, passing it downward and moves alternately through C- and S-shaped sagittal curves as a result. Experimenting with initiating a similar movement from the tail, often improves the head-initiated version.

The ATM explores the sagittal curves of the spine in detail, revealing the head-tail connection through the spine, the relationship of the curves of the neck and lower back, and the complex sequencing required throughout the spine in rolling up and down the spine on the back.

After the self-directed exploration people clearly report perceiving the world predominantly in terms of front and back.

5.5 Class four : Breastbone

Each of the first three classes explores movements of the torso in one of the three planes. Before explicitly exploring combining the three planes, I have found it useful to work with the area of the front of the chest which, anatomically at least is a complete mystery to most people. With so much work on the spine in the first three classes, working with the front of the chest brings a feeling of three dimensionality that further strengthens the perception of the vertical axis.

Experientially, many people underestimate the length of their breastbones when asked for the first time, many by a considerable amount, and at least one in every group I've taught by a spectacular amount. Anatomically, the idea that the breastbone has a joint, let alone the four joints that we have until puberty, or the three that persist until our mid-twenties, is a revelation. Also to consider that the bony ribs do not join directly with the breastbone but it is their cartilaginous extensions that surround it. The message is once more that the front of the chest is jointed, flexible and full of potential movement.

The ATM both serves to locate and connect the breastbone to both the shoulders and hips, and more distally to the arms and legs. The ATM also introduces the possibility of initiating movements from the breastbone. In the self-directed exploration we explore the possibility of initiating movements either end of the breastbone.

After the self-directed exploration people once again commonly report perceiving the world predominantly in terms of front and back and themselves as having more depth.

5.6 Class five : Pelvic clock and exploring the head-tail-feet connection

This final class of this five-part series first recaps the movements that were introduced in the individual explorations of the three planes and the breastbone, as well as going into more detail about how to differentiate the fish body from the legs.

We then explore compound serpentine movements on the diagonals which while appearing simple are actually quite challenging for many, no matter what their level of physical training because of the novel articulation that they ask of the chest.

Finally there is a sequence that relates first the head to the feet and then the head to the tail – the image is of the head and tail (or feet) talking to each other while the rest of the

body allows the conversation to pass through it unhindered, as if transparent. In particular the chest area.

After the ATM which explores circling the head and tail in detail, the chest appears for many more “transparent” in their self-directed exploration and the resulting perception of the world around them more fully three dimensional.

Part Six : Dialogues with participants

This section centres on two dialogues that took place with people to whom I taught the five classes detailed above in part four. My interest was to discover what people were getting from these classes and my hope was that I would through this I would gain information that would allow me to develop the classes further.

6.1 TanzQuartier Wien November 2008

6.1.1 Introduction

Vienna has a busy and very international dance scene with TanzQuartier Wien (TQW)[37] and the ImpulsTanz[38] festival at the core. TQW offers an ongoing training programme including professional dance morning classes. I chose to take five weekday classes for the subject of my study. Although the classes were presented in a drop-in format, some people came to most or all of the classes. Each class averaged 22 people and I invited 12 people who took part in four or five of the classes to have a dialogue for one hour following the last class.

What was interesting to me was that many people remarked that that they would like to come, that there was a desire and perhaps a need to talk about what they were discovering in the classes. It was also clear to me, and to them I think, that in this drop-in structure and with the limit of a two-hour class, the structure couldn't work with an ending dialogue together. To sit in a circle each day and hear from everyone would take too long and the changing composition of the group might limit some people's ability to share their deeper impressions. My compromise was to make myself available to people after class and people took advantage of this, alone or in small groups. It wasn't the same, and wasn't as effective as sitting together and listening to each other in class time, but it did go some way towards meeting this need. I'll go into this further in my summing up.

I should also add that the TQW morning classes for the two week period prior to my arrival had been given by a Feldenkrais practitioner and a dancer/choreographer who came to my classes. Many of the people in my classes had also been in those.

I was very curious what attracted people to the APP classes and what they were getting from them. Nine people showed up for the Friday dialogue which took place an hour after the class ended so people had a little time to reflect before we met. I began by asking my questions so that they knew what I was interested in finding out: "What did you learn? What experiences stand out?"; "How are you able to use what you learned?" and, for those who had taken Feldenkrais ATM classes before, "Does the Feldenkrais component

work differently in the context that I offer, and if so then how?“ Then I let the dialogue run its course for 60 minutes. I listened and tried to not comment or steer them too much. We also established a convention that if people resonated with what one person was saying then they could show that through a hand gesture. The conversation was recorded on video so that I could see that.

6.1.2 Dialogue

What I have chosen to do is to present an edited version (corrected for English) of the dialogue as it flowed since I found it impossible to extract quotes grouped around specific topics. Instead, I will comment on some of the issues that their words stimulate in me.

Before going into the dialogue, I think it is also interesting to name the participants and give a little information about their backgrounds as they described themselves: Agnes is trained as a classical dancer, danced ballet 10 years, now teaching ballet and hip-hop; Andrea is a performance artist, makes her own work and also dances for choreographers; Anja: studies dance and yoga; Benjamin is a classically trained dancer, performer, also studies Tai Chi and Qi Gong; Cecilia is training as dancer at Salzburg Experimental Academy of Dance[39] (SEAD); George is dancer, choreographer, teacher, collaborates with a Feldenkrais practitioner which influences his work; Isolde is a dancer, performer, shiatsu practitioner; Lena is an actor interested in embodiment; Martin is a contact dancer.

> Me: *What did you learn? What experiences stand out? How are you using what you learned?*
>
> George*: I was leading the morning classes with two weeks previously with my Feldenkrais partner so this week worked as a continuation of that* (many people echo that). *Your work is more detailed. The anatomy and videos helped to make it deeper and clearer, more scientific. I liked the way you used the skeleton, looking at it from different angles and encouraging us to handle it.*
>
> *I feel more awareness of the inside volume of my ribcage. I was never aware before of how the ribs curve backwards before joining the spine. I liked the images that you showed and being aware of these while doing the movement work gave a new focus.*
>
> Benjamin*: The image of the breastbone as a second spine. Finding a dialogue between it and the real spine helped me to find the centre between.*
>
> Andrea*: I arrived that day exhausted and in pain. After working with the image of the breastbone and second spine, coupled with doing less less less, I left the class not in pain. It looks and is simple but I can’t do this by myself.*

That people find relief from pain through these classes is something that I hear often from participants. Feldenkrais suggested that what is method offers is the possibility for people to learn their way out of a way of a pattern of function that causes pain. For me this brings up the topic of therapy which I will go into further when it comes up again later in the dialogue. It takes time to build up this relationship with ourselves. I think that part of what I am teaching is how to enter into that dialogue with ourselves and our environment. It took me a long time to establish it and even then it's never certain. Good days and bad days. The work is to notice it when I lose it. In the moment when I do notice it, then it begins to re-establish itself.

> Agnes*: I did the two weeks before too. I come from ballet where upper body is held stiff. It's amazing to feel all these little parts and work a little on them each day. And to work from the inside, without mirrors or a teacher telling you you have to put it this way or that way. It's interesting to find a new way of walking every day.*
>
> *And I found it interesting to teach a class this week. I started to become more aware of the other bodies too. And to feel sometimes what's missing in them in a different way. I had the recipe before to correct them. Now I can see them in a different way. I can encourage them to be more aware of what they are doing now because I have felt it on myself.*

What Agnes reported matches my own experience that when I begin to understand something in myself, then I begin to be able to see it in others. I was very happy to hear that she had been able to bring her experiences from the class into her teaching in this way. To me this speaks of her acquisition of somatic experiential knowledge, rather than simply repeating exercises or information that I might have given in class.

> Isolde*: I had an injury around my shoulder a few weeks before . Yesterday it came back in a good way in that I felt I'd been ignoring it somehow. I had frozen it out of my awareness. But yesterday I was able to work with it again.*
>
> *It makes a huge difference what words you use. I love the images that you give in your class. I had another experience with another teacher which didn't work but your poetic images work for me. The fish and the whale movements bring movements to parts of my body that I forgot that I had.*
>
> Anja*: I love the fish body image too. It's such a beautiful multi-layered thing to work with. I worked with you in January and I can talk more about that. Physically what I discovered then, and what became important for my work, is that I got a feeling for my sides. People talk a lot about front and back which on its own can be a bit flat.*

> *There also came these diagonal connections, front and back. Everybody talks about this but I never really felt it before. In your class, I got some steps further in feeling what that really means and through that I got a better sense of my centre.*
>
> *Also, all the serpentine movements of the spine left me feeling my hip joints free in a different way to before. The work with the sternum this week was great but I need more time to get into this part of myself more deeply. This was hard work and really challenging to stay with that this week.*

Another thing that has happened a lot in my APP classes is people saying that, "everybody talks about this, but I never really felt it before". The "this" has been many different things, sometimes things that I hadn't mentioned in class, never thought about particularly and maybe never experienced myself. What I think allows people to make such discoveries for themselves is that I am creating an opportunity for people to learn directly through their own sensation and action.

One simple practice that I do in most classes is to ask people to stand and sense their vertical axis as best they can, to notice where it is in the middle and begin to shift it a little towards one foot and then back to centre, and then towards the other foot and back to the centre, and to keep repeating this. I ask them to shift a little less to each side every time until they arrive back in the centre, zeroing in on the centre. The centre that they now arrive at is often reported as "more central" or "clearer". What they have done is swapped out a habit or idea of centre for a fresh centre arrived at through an exploration of their sensation in the present moment. I think that by playing with many similar such explorations, people acquire the tools to direct their own explorations that lead them to these everybody-talks-about-this-but-I-never-really-felt-it-before type discoveries.

> Andrea*: What I like about your teaching is how you give space to the place of not knowing, or weirdness. To be suspended between a memory of how something was and something new, or when there's some reorientation or restructuring or new connections. That's essential. Not expecting something, but accepting something that we don't know. It gives me back the responsibility for what is happening in the class.*
>
> Agnes*: What's very important for me is that I learned to shift the focus from one place to another when something is not working or I want a different outcome. That's extremely helpful when I'm dancing, and when I'm teaching. This flexibility brings amazing outcomes.*
>
> Lena*: I enjoyed finding interest in the simple things, like standing and walking. I find this thing of being interested is to do with being present. You don't have to do anything except keep your interest going. It's a childlike state of always being occupied in a way.*

> *I don't mean that in a reductive way but as an increased awareness of the senses. It's something about being human. The work celebrates being human.*

Lena made clear the connection between interest and presence. I notice that what I find interesting to watch in performance (and in life) is when a performer is interested in what they are doing rather than either trying to do something interesting or make themselves look interesting. I was also very happy that she said that the work celebrates being human as for me this for me connects what I do to the work of Elsa Gindler somehow. I feel like I am honouring my lineage in my work.

> Cecilia*: I started to see my body more like a city with these images like lamps lighting up different parts of it. Playing with the sternum-coccyx relationship helped me to feel my centre a bit more. The images helped me to play with the organisation of my alignment. I was working a lot with my alignment and how it really is.*
>
> *In a lot of classes teachers come up and move it to where they think it should be. In this class I could just listen to how it is and what's going on in my body. My body is a bit crooked (everybody laughs in recognition) and it doesn't really look like how a contemporary dancer should look like. And that's always been so frustrating. But now I'm starting to feel like I'm finding myself.*

The recognition in the whole group in Cecilia's comment about her body being "a bit crooked" and not fitting to the ideals of a contemporary dancer is revealing and goes to the heart of my artistic interest in this work, why I present this class for performers in general and dancers in particular. I have written about this at more length elsewhere (Manning, 2009) but briefly put, since a dancer's body is their instrument then it makes sense that they could develop a more intimate relationship with it. I believe that working somatically with themselves offers a progressive way of developing this relationship while some more traditional dance techniques can at worst serve to alienate the dancer from their own sensations. Having a more holistic and intimate relationship with ourselves can not only promote more healthy use of ourselves as dancers and so prolong our dancing lives (many of my teachers are actively dancing towards their seventies), but it can also offer a resource in making dances since it is the sole use of the self that makes dance in particular and performance in general unique as art forms.

> George - *It's fascinating how even these scientific examples cannot be taken for granted as the truth. What comes out in your classes is that in the end it is our own self-awareness that creates the skeleton for us functionally. When going to doctors, for example, there's often this fixed attitude that we know what's what. Here in these classes we have this information as reference points, but you make it clear that these truths are relative truths and that makes me happy (everyone agrees).*

Cecilia*: Listening to what's going on creates so much movement. Not necessarily big movements but many.*

Agnes*: Something that you say is to do the movement without trying to do it right and it will organise itself. You can struggle years to have this perfect form but then you let go for a few minutes and it comes from itself. Even very complicated forms.*

Me*: Do the Feldenkrais ATMs work differently in the context that I offer them and if so then how?*

Andrea*: The spinal movements give me a reference to check in, to revisit, like landmarks so that I can notice changes, letting go of the idea that it should always get better. Your class is different from other Feldenkrais teachers in that you begin the class with more movement, standing and walking and these other spinal movements and at the end there is time to explore. It's very different from simply walking out at the end after lying down for so long. Then you're out on the street with your heavy bag on your back. It's also nice to learn in those classes, but in your classes it's very pleasurable to have this time to move and as dancers we can discover a lot of things in this time.*

George*: This question of how to integrate the change (from Feldenkrais ATMs) came up last week. As dancers, often we go on to other situations where we move. But the change is also developing in the break between classes, or when we sleep. I have a strange vision that there's no everyday life. When I teach, I notice that the students often have this very strict class-break-class rhythm. I get frustrated because it's a very old scholastic way of looking at learning. The Feldenkrais method offers a new vision of learning itself, besides the somatic approach, in the sense of learning how to deal with learning.*

Martin*: You show information and then the Feldenkrais invites me to find things for myself. And I had a difficulty trying to integrate these different modes of information. I would prefer to stay on this Feldenkrais level. I'm not able to deal with these different kinds of languages at the same time.*

I was surprised that Martin had difficulty integrating the anatomical information and the images that I use to explain it. He is the only person to have come to every one of the classes that I have taught at TQW, so they must be working for him on some level. When I asked him about it later, he said that he felt that the difference was one of being given the freedom to explore for himself in the Feldenkrais ATMs while some pressure to get things right in showing some of the reference actions and anatomical information. Our dialogue continues.

Isolde*: For me it's the opposite. The images and the visual information from looking at the skeleton, pictures and videos really support the Feldenkrais classes. And I feel you give lots of freedom for people to adapt the classes to their own needs.*

Anja*: In a Feldenkrais class, I really need a clear structure and a calm atmosphere. The teacher creates this with their language. I've experienced teachers who make it very clear and some not, where I leave it very confused. I personally like your language in class, both during the Feldenkrais ATM and the bits before and after. There are many layers and it gives me a lot of good information.*

Andrea*: I think you are clear about how you are. You attitude towards Feldenkrais is not dogmatic and that creates a certain space and quality where it's very easy to be with myself. It comes through your language, the tone of your voice and your pace. I feel like you are quite connected to yourself.*

Lena*:… and also your sense of humour. That it's not all so serious and important (people all agree). Because of that, then there's more space to actually learn something. Humour adds a certain fluidity. It originally meant liquid and it suggests flow. It creates flow between people. There's a lightness too. Joyfulness. Pleasure.*

Anja*: For me that connects to learning in a different way. That there's a playfulness in the way of being which opens up more possibilities. Traditional learning is very serious and it's very clear what is right and what isn't.*

This comment was very useful for me since until Lena made it, I hadn't realised the importance of my sense of humour in trying to create a light, joyful, pleasurable atmosphere in class. Reflecting on this, I came to realise that not only can it be a powerful tool to aid learning, but it also parallels the quality of movement and attention that I seek to bring people towards. It is part of my character, but I think I unconsciously took the impulse to use it pedagogically from my experience of many of my teachers: Steve Paxton has a very funny dry sense of humour; David Zambrano has a more bouncy sense of humour that pervades his classes; and creating a light easy atmosphere where pleasure plays the role of a guide is part of the pedagogical frame of the Feldenkrais method. (Feldenkrais, 1972)

George*: Your classes are an example of creative learning. It is rare even in artistic education programmes. And I find this inspiring and this is something I take with me beyond the purely somatic.*

Isolde*: The work with the tail gives great freedom to my lower body. Very often I hold down there and I had a sacral injury. Letting go of that creates space and I'll take that into my daily life.*

Benjamin*: I had to check in the mirror to see if there is really a tail there or not. I think it could be easy to bring many things into everyday life since they can be done so small and invisibly. When I come out of a ballet or capoeira class I cannot really do what I learn there in the normal social context.*

It's interesting for me how to keep this freedom in different situations. In this work, you can make the movements smaller and smaller until it's just in the spine and then open it out so it gets bigger. There's choice.

Agnes*: I have a strange experience with a ballet class of adult beginners. They tell me I'm too relaxed and want more pressure. How can I help them understand there is a different way to do things? Not only the structures create expectations but the students arrive with expectations. They feel disappointed that I'm so relaxed and I don't know what to do with that (many echo this). I can't force them to be relaxed (laughs)*

To me this speaks of a larger work to be done. I find the "no pain, no gain" attitude disturbing, not only in people's relationships to their own bodies, but towards each other and towards the environment. Interestingly, Feldenkrais defined violence as: "the imposition of one persons ideal upon another"[40] and this can also apply when one imposes another persons ideals upon oneself, which, especially when expressed through the Protestant work ethic, is I think at the root of the "no pain, no gain" attitude. Ideals are by definition abstract ideas and therefore not rooted in sensory reality. It is this disconnection between abstract ideas and physical reality that somatics offers a counter to (see Abram, 1997 and Olsen, 2002). A small step towards this might be to attempt to re-educate people who come to dance classes recreationally, such as those attending Agnes' class. It depend of course on whether their motivation is to get a "good work-out" or to learn to dance better.

I wonder if the power of anecdotes might help in the way that I use them in class. In similar circumstances I have asked people what makes the best dancers or sports people the best. We can all agree that what makes the best the best is that they make what they do look effortless compared to all their contemporaries. Think of Fred Astaire or Usain Bolt. So trying hard, making an effort, actually takes us in the opposite direction from which we want to go which is towards being better at what we do, towards gracefulness, towards a state of grace. Once people agree on that conceptually, then we can try to do some things to help people towards that graceful quality in movement.

Lena*: The work we did on shaking hands from the back or the front surface. I can use this as a way to build characters, through exploring their posture. Not as something static, but as something that moves. And from that place to notice how they see the world, how they meet the world. There's so much that can come out from these small details.*

While when I have taught APP at TEAK, I often get actors in the classes, in this context Lena was the only one. What she expressed here about how she could apply her experi-

ence here in working with characters was exactly what I had hoped people could take from these classes.

> Isolde*: There's so much I can take and use, not only at the movement level but at a psychological level. Like what we did yesterday about moving towards or moving away from things. I can remind myself that I can use this on a psychological level. I don't know if you mean it like this, but I feel like you are also giving information at a spiritual level if people want it. I hear it and I like it.*

Since my vision in this work is not only holistic with regards to the body but also with regards to our environment, then Isolde's comment about spirituality doesn't surprise me. It's not something that I feel ready to write at length about but I do see a connection between our alignment around the vertical axis, spirituality and morality. When in cathedrals or temples, I feel invited to align myself upwards. The connection is there in the language, a fine-upstanding citizen for example. Though as with Feldenkrais, I would see more the clear passage of weight through the skeleton as as indicative of a quite and graceful state of consciousness, than any particular outward form. This way of thinking means grace is not limited to those with common physiques. All we can do is make the best use of what we have.

The Chinese character for human can be deciphered as "between heaven and earth" and humans are the only animals to organise themselves around a vertical axis. As a species, we have not fully evolved into this vertical axis as evidenced by the amount of back pain that we experience: the lifetime prevalence of back pain in European countries has been estimated at anything between 59 to 90 percent (Hermans, 2000).

What takes us out of good alignment is excess muscular effort and it is this excess muscular tension that some spiritual teachers suggests correspond with what we might call our ego. As formulated by Alan Watts: "The sensation that corresponds to the image of ourselves is a chronic muscular tension which has absolutely no useful function whatsoever" (Watts, 2002; p88). And an ego-less state of being is one description of the state of grace to which many religious practices aspire.

> Cecilia*: I feel like it's similar to meditation. It's mental work not emotional or … like yesterday when we touched the sternum... it was very emotional for me but it was about the bones and not that. As a student I found a way to cut it out*
>
> Isolde*: You don't have to. I cried yesterday when I touched my sternum (people echo this). It's where the heart meridian is, so sure it can bring up feelings. I often get tears when there's some release (again people echo)*

> Me*: I get very emotional when I watch people explore moving from the breastbone. There are traps in language. You do what you do with the whole of yourself . So being touched emotionally can be part of the experience. Why not?*
>
> Anja*: I found myself getting very emotional but I didn't want to go into my drama. I'm not ignoring it, but I'm not going into it. That's what makes it hard work. To resist going into the drama and to stay with the sensation.*
>
> Me*: The context is an open morning class for professional dancers. So there's less talking, less circles and less opportunity to share. In other contexts with a closed group, then that creates the time and the safety to bring up these issues. I think that's something that's missing from this open class form. Even so, these are movement classes and not therapy.*

As mentioned earlier, people often find in these classes relief from pains that they walked in with. And here the question arises of what to do with emotions that arise. Sometimes people explicitly ask whether what I am doing is therapy. My reply is that while what we are doing maybe be therapeutic, they are intended as movement classes. At the same time I acknowledge that the work, just as it did in me when I started it, can bring up emotions and memories that we might need support in dealing with.

I point out, just as my Feldenkrais teacher did when I started exploring the method, that I am not qualified to help with this and if it's really bothering someone then they could seek professional help. At the same time, in the earlier more dialogical form sitting in the circle talking together often, I found it useful to raise these kind of reactions as a possibility. And sometimes people had some tears or uncontrollable laughter. By giving the possibility to express or share that emotions might be coming up I think meant that people didn't feel quite so alone with them. I think that it is good to acknowledge that it is a part of the work.

One thing I learned from authentic movement was when emotions arise strongly then it can be useful to "turn the volume down". In other words, without resisting the emotion or the movements that come along with it, just try to make it smaller and pay attention instead to where the movements are coming from rather than, as Anja put, going into the drama of the situation. In this open class situation then, how to support participants' emotional experience of the work remains a question for me. One thing is that performers attending these kinds of classes are used to working with the body and that it can become emotional is hopefully no surprise to them. However, that also depends on what kind of experience and training they may have had. What occurs to me is to mention it in passing

in open classes and trust that if people need some advice, then they will come to talk to me after class.

> Isolde*: It's very tempting to go and make big movements in the exploration time at the end of the class. I feel it's helpful that you keep on saying saying keep it small and stay with the material.*
>
> *Last time you came, I went over the edge you describe and hurt myself. On the one hand, the work we do is so inspiring and it's exciting to move at the end with all that information, but on the other, it's been good this time to try and keep the feeling inside me and focus on that.*

6.2 Outokumpu December 2008

6.2.1 Introduction

This was the second time that I had taught APP to this year group studying on the Movement And Performance Research dance education programme at the North Karelia College, Outokumpu. In contrast to the TQW classes, this was a closed group. The first time was in their first year and this time it was at the end of their third year. So the first time I had taught them I was doing it the old dialogical way, while this time I presented the new single idea classes. The first time I taught them the classes were three hours each but this second time the classes were just two hours 15 minutes which I thought suited the three-part classes. My questions were similar: What did you learn? What experiences stand out? And how are you able to use what you learned? Since this group had done one of the early dialogically-structured classes with me, I also asked how does this structure work for you compared with what we did before?

The responses are a bit different in character from the TQW dialogue which I think is a reflection of the fact that this dialogue took place immediately after class and lasted just 30 minutes. It reads more like a catalogue of physical sensations which suggests to me that they are still in the class somehow and not reflecting on it yet. Still I feel it is useful to include this dialogue and, just as before, will present an edited version (corrected for English) of it as it flowed and comment on some of the issues that the participant's words stimulate in me. (In this dialogue I have changed the names since I didn't get permission to use them but I did so in a way to indicate the gender of the participant.)

6.2.2 Dialogue

In this group too, when I asked if it would be possible to stay a little longer one day after class to talk, then there was a lot of enthusiasm for that, with many of the participants say-

ing that, although they had enjoyed the classes, they were too short and they missed spending more time talking together.

> Ann*: Something happened even if I didn't feel like I was able to concentrate well. I was surprised how much I was able to notice even if I felt lost and not able to follow what was happening.*

This confirmed for me to me that it is not necessary to concentrate to benefit from the classes and it was good for this to be voiced in the group. This is exactly the kind of comment that I think would be very helpful to hear in a dialogue after each class, since its enunciation by one person might be echoed by others who had considered it, and might also cause it to rise to consciousness in others who hadn't thought of it. In this way, end-of-class dialogue can harness the intelligence of the group to stimulate everyone's further learning process, my own included.

> Bob*: For me it's good to be doing Feldenkrais in combination with these other things. It's nice to dance/move after the Feldenkrais, to be able to use what was learned in the Feldenkrais directly. Simple and basic things.*
>
> Ann*: It was good to work with the torso. I found more space and felt more accurate while moving. There was more stability in standing even if it was moving, and I was feeling the connection of the torso to the legs.*
>
> Bob*: I felt more grounded in my legs but would like to explore the legs more.*
>
> Carol*: For me it was a relief not to have to use the arms. I discovered how much movement there is in the torso. And how small things can make such a huge difference. It was funny in the pelvis clock class when you said to move the knee. I couldn't at first but then I found out how I could move it from the torso. It's strange how the brain works sometimes.*
>
> Doris*: It was good to discover that the breastbone has so many joints. I found a lot of movement there, especially how to move from the front of the torso and how it worked together with the spine. Often we only think of the spine.*
>
> Eve: *I experienced a huge difference between my state before and after class. Before I was feeling unbalanced with a big difference between the two sides. After I was feeling much more in balance. It's great how the small details give keys to understand the connections. It's a lot to digest in the body and the mind. Today I felt a clarity of sensation of the spine that I'd never felt before. Yesterday, connecting the arms to the breastbone, I felt how long my arms are. The feeling of the opening and closing was both emotional and physical. I found great connections.*

Again, raising the subject of the emotional connection to physical exploration would again be a valuable topic for group discussion.

Frank: *Yesterday, I found a connection from the sternum to the feet and through it I felt more grounded than ever. Feet melting into the ground from the breastbone*

Ann: *The torso gives so much support for standing. I find balance through it. I think that this could help me in technique classes.*

Eve: *It was great to arrive slowly through walking each day, slowly coming into more and more detail with each class.*

Gill: *I found the pelvic clock difficult and heavy but standing after it felt so good. Grounded and Heavy. The class really affected the front of the chest and now I feel that opening spreading out through my arms. I thought I would feel something in the pelvis, but it's more in the chest. It's delicious to discover the tiny weight shifts in the feet in standing. I also discovered movements initiated by the breath.*

Helen: *The pelvic clock class was tough. I found it physically painful and got angry which surprising because I can normally stretch like that. I've not been moving so much lately.*

Me: *I think I need to build in more conversation in class but you could have asked for help?*

Helen: *It was my problem.*

Me: *Still I could have helped you out.*

Eve*: I had a session with an osteopath as I had problem with sacrum/SI joint. She said it was maybe something with the chest. Now in this pelvic clock class, I understood what the osteopath was talking about.*

Frank: *I have the same thing with the SI but for me I feel this connection with my neck. I also found it difficult to do this class. How to relax into the pain.*

In my experience, pain is one of those words, like love, which can refer to a wide range of very different experiences and we each have a very unique and individual relationship to them. In the classes, I specifically direct people not to do anything that causes them pain, but I know from my own personal experience that it's not so black and white. There are many different types of pain from acute disabling pain to dull chronic aches that we get used to working with, from growing pains that accompany some opening in the body, to pains that accompany injuries that during recovery suggest limits within which to move. My experience is that by staying present with oneself and noticing the quality of the pain, we can have direct knowledge of whether a pain can be worked with, or whether it is telling us not to work at all. Again what I am describing is a dialogical relationship with our own sensations.

Even when our pain is clearly warning us to stop doing something, it can be difficult to succumb to its message. As in the earlier dialogue, we find ourselves confronting in these moments our pervasive cultural attitude of "no pain, no gain". And again, from personal experience, it can be hard to miss out on a variation from an ATM, or to take the invitation to adapt it to our own learning needs, when surrounded with others for whom it is not an issue. Being able to listen to ourselves and act in whatever way we need to ensure our comfort is a skill in itself, one that sustained practise of the Feldenkrais Method supports, takes time to acquire and which we can always be refining.

In this specific case, if Helen had asked for help during the class then I could have shown her how to use rolled up mats under her knees to relieve the pain while still being able to do the class. More generally, again I feel confronted with the significant role of end-of-class dialogue since a lot can be learned by everyone from raising issues like this.

> Gill: *The repeating structure of the week and the class is good base to notice what's going on in me more clearly. I notice what my mood is, how focused or not I am.*
>
> Ann: *I found it easier to get in through the walking, to remember and find again what I had picked up from previous days.*
>
> Bob: *I like that it is very calm in the class. That it's possible to come in and out and follow what I need. Never pushing myself*
>
> Helen: *I could do an aerobics class and not feel exhausted, but in these classes and with these small movements I can really feel how exhausted I feel afterwards.*

There seemed to be near universal agreement and plenty of laughter. This makes a lot of sense to me since the classes do demand a lot of attention. The model that I work with in common with many somatic disciplines as well as contemporary neuroscience (Blakeslee, 2007) is that in paying full attention to what one is doing, particularly physical sensations, while exploring a novel task, one is quite literally growing new neurological connections in the brain. And this requires energy; the nervous system consumes as much as 60 percent of the energy we absorb from our food (Juhan, 1991). In short, I take post-class fatigue as evidence that learning is happening on a organic level.

> Gill: *It would be nice to have one or two classes per week to be able to integrate the discoveries into the other things we do.*
>
> Frank: *From the first workshop, I picked up a certain approach that I've made use of. I've invented my own movements since I can't remember exactly what I did. Something with small movements and imagining movements.*

Gill: *Re-patterning gives me hope that I can do something new. Every class has an effect which stays and develops, maybe not consciously, but I notice it from time to time.*

Doris: *Some things that you had said have come back to me throughout the year that I've found it really helpful.*

Part Seven : Summing up

In this section, I look back over the whole trajectory of the development of APP and this process of reflection through writing about it. I look forward to how I can apply what I have learned in the future.

7.1 Looking backwards

In attempting to sum up this thesis, there are two distinct sets of issues which arise for me. One is about the process of the reflexive inquiry that I have made and the other is what I can usefully take from it and feed back into my teaching of this work.

7.1.1 On the process of reflexive inquiry

As I stated in the introduction to the research methods, I struggle with the analysis in the form of words on a page of somatic movement practice. Looking back over the preceding pages, I notice that the form that emerged was not a linear one, but more resembled a spiralling in on what lies at the heart of the inquiry, namely the classes themselves. First I took a broad circle around the different somatic practices that I had experienced, then around my relationship to them, next around the evolution of my teaching practice, then around the forming of the APP work, and through the five basic classes themselves arrived in a single instance of the class before presenting dialogues with participants. In the act of circling around the subject, some information is repeated in each context, but from a different vantage point each time. This gave me multiple opportunities to reflect on their significance: on reading these pages, you notice repeated references to the same events come up in the text. In the act of writing, it reflects sitting and writing at different moments, different places, different moods, different times of day, etc. Each individual reference, born in a unique somatically attended moment, has a different flavour and the combination of these flavour contributes to a fuller taste I think. And don't we dancers love repetition? Especially, we improvisers who enjoy our repeating motifs played out a little differently each time.

Overall, I have found it useful to set down my reflections. As I write this summary, I am teaching APP again for two weeks at TQW and I am noticing that my teaching of it is being informed by some of what I have discovered through this process. In some ways, I fear that this process has been somewhat reductionist. I am conscious that much detail has been lost. However I have found trust that in the writing process, the detail that has made it onto the page is the detail that was most relevant in this moment, that which needed to

be written and reflected on now. I have learned that to reflect on the process is different to attempt to represent it. If I did this again in a year, then no doubt it would be different, and not just in the reporting of whatever the current practice happens to be, but also in the recollection of the history that lies behind it.

I am wary of trying to draw things together neatly at the close because the work that these words refer to is not closed. It is an ongoing process that is only ultimately only fulfilled in the act of teaching. In particular, I have resisted attempting to systematise my pedagogy, opting instead to make a rough inventory of it which I find to be revealing and useful, particularly in its openness to later additions and revisions. In stating this, I realise that this might also be seen as a postponement of achieving a goal, but it is precisely through this that I feel I have created for myself the possibility to drop into the reflexive process in a way that mirrors my style of teaching.

I like the image of my teaching practice as something akin to an apprenticeship in that it augments itself on a need-to-know basis. I am aware that in teaching the work right now, I am discovering what I need to know, and that there is a lifetime's worth of things ahead of me that I will need to know still. And some of them are maybe better described as things that I need to remember. Lessons that I have yet to learn. The process is not a simple cumulative one.

While it has been interesting to reflect on the formation of my practice of teaching APP in this form, a question that I am left with is what form might serve further research into the material that is uncovered in the practice itself? For that is what is paradoxically least represented in this text and where my greatest interest lies. A form which serves the words best to promote truly interconnected reflection. For one thing, my words like to be spoken as much as written and read. And they enjoy the company of pictures, both still and moving. I feel drawn towards 21st century electronic media which offer the power of the hyperlink in a multimedia environment. The possibility to construct a web of associated words and images would I think suit my way of thinking better. I wonder how it might also serve reflexive inquiry. If it could be used as both a generative research tool and as a medium through which to share that results of that inquiry.

In the dance world, one model might be Steve Paxton's *Material For The Spine* DVD ROM (2008) in which he presents, contextualises, critiques and shares his insights into his research through an indexed collection of lectures, demonstrations, classes, commentaries, animations and interviews – around 4.5 hours of material in different formats. His re-

search is both rigourous and idiosyncratic. For example, there is a video of him standing on a glass table filmed from below and all we can see are the weight shifts of the feet in contact with the glass as they adapt to the body's small dance of standing above. While simple, it is I think a work of genius. When I saw it for the first time, it was if I could feel the connections growing in my brain. I saw something that I'd studied and built up an intimate relationship with over 18 years, but through my internal sensation only. In the act of seeing it for the first time, I understood more not only about standing, but about understanding. My physical sensation was of a flood of visual information feeding into the neurological learning loop. And the funny thing is that I got it, through Steve's virtual eye. Standing under him, I understood something about understanding.

But the model which inspires me most is, paradoxically, a book. *The Art of Looking Sideways* by Alan Fletcher. Described on the inner cover as: "A primer in visual intelligence, an exploration of the workings of the eye, the hand, the brain and the imagination ... concerned with the interplay between the verbal and the visual, and the limitless resources of the human mind." (Fletcher, 2001) What I find remarkable about this book is that it fulfils this promise as much by its design, its form, as by its content. I don't so much read it or look at it, as experience and engage with it. It's full of information, but the design creates an experience equal in importance to the content itself. Medium as message and message as medium. Of course, Fletcher is a graphic designer, but while his art lives on the page, it seems to fully acknowledge, engage and activate his reader experientially. As Einstein said: "Learning is experience. Everything else is just information."[41]

7.1.2 On the development of Awareness Perception Presence

Looking back through this text, I am struck by how all the elements that find expression through teaching APP intertwine: how the material that I teach and the manner in which I teach it cannot be separated from my personal, educational and teaching history. This is not a new thought for me, what is new is to attempt to tease out the themes on the page. They stubbornly resist separating themselves out neatly and it is interesting to see how this plays out on the page.

That the direction of the development has been to move towards a set repeatable form for the classes is a little ironic given my propensity towards improvisation and resistance towards set structures. That I view structures that bind forms with some suspicion is perhaps understandable given my early childhood history of being bound myself. This tendency was much more marked earlier in my adult life. One of many small turning points

was in a workshop at the SNDO in 1994 with Claire McDonald where we worked with the body as a source in performance making. I struggled to structure and fix my material. Something that I had devised involved putting shirts on clothes hangers. Claire went some way to defuse my fears that a fixed structure would somehow diminish my material by suggesting that a structure could instead function like a clothes hanger; that it could be something that I could simply use to hang my material on so as to see it better.

The issue of structure has been recurrent in my life, as a performer and as a teacher. I find myself in near constant dialogue with structure, tending to edge away from it by default, this tendency lessening over the years. Contributing to that has been my study of improvisation where I have discovered the value of setting limits in the form of scores stimulates rather than stifles creativity. The following mind experiment illustrates how it might work. Think of two children. Give one the keys to the biggest toy shop in the world and the other a yo-yo. In the first moment the child with the yo-yo is hugely disappointed. But come back some hours later and the child with the yo-yo, after passing through the initial disappointment, will have taught themselves some cool tricks with the yo-yo while the child in the toy shop will probably still be wandering around figuring out what to play with. They will most probably have not engaged deeply with any particular toy.

When I think of the Feldenkrais Method, with its intricate ordering of instructions, yet total freedom to explore within the limits these set, I realise that it is functioning in a similar way. Like a score. And my experience of it over the years has on refection I think also contributed to my growing ease with structure. The method has also given me many tools that I make use of both consciously and unconsciously. I recognise that I am employing much of the method's approach to learning in devising my own material while also taking it in my own direction. An ongoing project is to continue to investigate the Feldenkrais Method, both as a pedagogy and in the specific material that it explores.

As I stated a couple of times in the text, I feel that it is the person as much as the discipline within which they operate that informs their approach. In this case, it is worth remembering that Moshe Feldenkrais was a man not a method. Consequently, whatever he did, he did it the Feldenkrais way. He was curious by nature and he explored endlessly.[42] When he died, in common with many such innovators, a portion of his work was identified and then systematised to be passed on. His body of knowledge vanished with him. He wouldn't have stopped exploring so why should we?

I clearly acknowledge the debt that I owe Feldenkrais in the forming of my own work, and more especially Shelagh O'Neill with whom I studied the method nearly exclusively for 11 years before entering the training and after. For me the method is as much about her and her personal embodiment of it as it is about Feldenkrais himself who I never met. For me, in this somatic work especially, lineage is a major factor in locating individual practice in relation to the larger more abstractly defined bodies of work. The human embodied dimension, recalled in the etymological connection of the word learn to lore, as in folklore, defined as, "a body of traditions and knowledge on a subject or held by a particular group, typically passed from person to person by word of mouth". A further area of research that suggests itself is into how knowledge is "passed from person to person" which takes into account this somatic, first-person to first-person, dimension.

Finally, I am left to consider the richness of sources that unite in this body of work that I call APP. I notice that I am troubled sometimes when these classes are referred to as Feldenkrais classes, or myself as a Feldenkrais teacher. The sources are much wider than Feldenkrais alone, yet I acknowledge that in constructing the material that I call my own and include in the classes, I am employing much that I learned of and through the method. Instead, I could maybe take it as a compliment that the classes are read by some as being contiguous with the method. I wonder what Feldenkrais himself would make of them, and more practically, I wonder what the Feldenkrais world which I have drifted away from might make of it. Another project would be to go back into that world to get more feedback from members of it.

7.2 Looking forwards

What jumps out most clearly as a potential growing point of APP is to explore further the role of dialogue within it. In coming up with the single idea class structure, I was able to find a way to clarify the presentation of the work in general and come up with a way of presenting it in an open drop-in class format. While the dialogical nature of the classes is diminished, I feel that there is something to be gained from repeating the form daily as the familiarity of it creates a degree of comfort in the sense of participants knowing what to expect.

In a situation where there is a closed group, then it is possible simply to add a moment of dialogue together. If class length is sufficient, then at the end of every class, and if class length is not sufficient, then to give over a specific class or classes mainly or wholly to dialogue depending on the length of the course.

In a drop-in class situation, I am not yet clear. This morning I taught a Saturday class at TQW. The Saturday classes happen an hour later, they are less well attended, and the brief for them is different in that the idea is to offer more individualised teaching that refers back to the weekday classes. I began the class today by sitting in a circle and talking. In the dialogue that followed, people shared a lot of personal insights and questions which I think was useful, both for the participants as well as for myself, and out of which I constructed the class.

Opening up the dialogue in this way served to confirm how much is left unsaid and unshared in these drop-in classes, something that I am acutely aware of while teaching them. What was missing from this Saturday class was the opportunity for self-directed exploration at the end. Ironically, in Friday's class I allowed a little more time for dialogue at the beginning which meant that the self-exploration at the end was shortened to just 15 minutes. That drew, if not complaints, then disappointment from many. Ultimately, it is a time constraint. The ideal situation would be to teach longer classes. In the absence of the ideal, it is something to experiment with and not something to be fixed, something to be solved and resolved anew in each fresh instance of teaching the work.

After arriving at the form of the single idea class for APP, I continue to fill it with new material, letting the body of work grow organically. Coming up with set repeatable single idea classes has created an unexpected comfort for me in teaching this work. While I enjoy the creativity of improvising a class out of dialogue, I feel relieved of the pressure of having to do it *every* time. I see the possibility to continue to both create new classes and repeat established ones, and vary the form of the classes, while staying within the boundaries of a movement exploration class that is recognisable as APP, both to myself and to participants. In this way the concept of APP has become the hanger that I can hang my work on so it can better be seen. A structure that I am ready to embrace without fear.

It is a warm sunny afternoon in Vienna. I am making final corrections to this text before submitting it. This morning I taught a new class. Something that built from the feet to connect with the legs, the torso and the head. At that end of the class, I checked in with Martin, asking how he was dealing with integrating the anatomical information with the Feldenkrais that I was teaching. He said he was over his difficulty. When I asked what changed, he said that he'd stopped looking for Feldenkrais in the classes. I was happy for us both.

Appendix

Teachers that I studied with

The Feldenkrais Method : The teacher who I have the longest association with is Shelagh O'Neill who I first took classes with. She is one of the most experienced UK teachers. On my training, the course director was Elizabeth Beringer, the assistant trainers were Anke Feldmann and Cathie Krieger, and guest trainers were Arlyn Zones, Carole Kress, Clive Smyth, David Zemach-Bersin, Jerry Karzen, Kajetan Schamesberger, Lea Wolgensinger, Mark Reese, Myriam Pfeffer, Olena Nitefor, Paul Newton, and Scott Clarke.

Experiential anatomy : Caryn McHose, Andrea Olsen, Bill Palmer, Olena Nitefor and many others listed here elsewhere.

Contact improvisation : Steve Paxton, Nancy Stark Smith, Danny Lepkopf, Karen Nelson, Kirstie Simson, Andrew Harwood, Ray Chung, Louise Richards, Natanja den Boeft, Xjamal Zanthia, Laurie Booth, and many others.

Movement Improvisation : Julyen Hamilton and Simone Forti are the two biggest influences on my practice and teaching improvisation. I also studied with Katie Duck, David Zambrano, Kirstie Simson, Steve Paxton, Chris Aiken, Lisa Nelson, Christie Svane, Felice Wolfzahn, Pauline De Groot, Bo Madvig, Chris Aitkin.

Authentic Movement : Felice Wolfzahn, Andrea Olsen and in other contexts like BMC classes.

Body Mind Centering (BMC) : Cathie Caraker, Erika Berland, Wendel Beavers, David Beadle, Linda Hartley, Patricia Bardi, Trude Cone, Naomi Duveen, Jacques van Eijden, Margot Rijven, Clover Catskill, Mette Anne Bruhn, Catherine Hossenlopp.

The Work Of Elsa Gindler : I was lucky enough to study with Eva Schmale who received her training through a line connected through Elfriede Hengstenberg, one of Gindler's students and also with Amos Hetz.

Release Technique : I've taken too many "release technique" classes to name all the teachers I've studied with, and like I said some were more "release" than others. I have to mention Mary Fulkerson who through some workshops in 1992 introduced me to the world of Post-Modern Dance and who is also credited with naming "release technique".

Developmental Movement : While any movement can be analysed in terms of developmental patterns, I have studied them most explicitly in my work with BMC, with Andrea Olsen and Caryn McHose, and most especially with Wendell Beavers.

Movement Shiatsu : Bill Palmer.

Qi Gong : Zhixing Wang.

Awareness Perception Presence courses

Hosted by Dance Organisations and Festivals:

ImpulsTanz, Wien, Austria

July 2009 - 1 week workshop

TanzQuartein Wien, Austria

April 2009 - 2 week morning class

November 2008 - 1 week morning class

January 2008 - 2 week morning class

Tiloja Tanssille

February 2009 - 4 x morning classes

Moscow, Russia

November 2008 - 1 week evening class

St Petersburg, Russia, BodyWord Festival

April 2008 - 3-day afternoon workshop

In Educational Institutions:

Budapest Contemporary Dance Academy, Hungary

April 2009 - 1 week morning workshop

Theatre Academy (TEAK), Helsinki

September to October 2008 - Perceiving Choices - Movement Improvisation, Composition and Technique Workshop - 1st year BA Dance students - three classes a week for six weeks (I gave over one class a week to teaching Awareness Perception Presence)

August 2008 - 2 week free-choice workshop

October to November 2007 - 10 x 2.5hr evening class course - Open University

August 2007 - 2 week free-choice workshop

December 2006 - 2 week free-choice workshop

August 2006 - 2 week free-choice workshop

December 2005 - 2 week free-choice workshop

August 2005 - 2 week free-choice workshop

December 2004 - 2 week free-choice workshop

August 2004 - 2 week free-choice workshop

Pohjois-Karjalan Ammattiopisto, Dance Department, Outokumpu

December 2008 - 2 week morning workshop

November 2007 - 1 week morning workshop

September 2006 - 2 week morning workshop

November 2005 - 2 week morning workshop

April 2005 - 2 week afternoon workshop

November 2004 - 3 week afternoon workshop

Kuopio Academy of Music and Dance

May 2009 - 1 week workshop

ISLO, Joensuu

September 2008 to May 2009 - regular freelance teacher - 9 weeks full-time

September 2007 to May 2008 - regular freelance teacher - 9 weeks full-time

September 2006 to May 2007 - half-time staff teacher

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Endnotes

1 Besides a number of audio recordings a Feldenkrais' teaching, and extensive collection of transcriptions of his ATM classes is available to qualified Feldenkrais teachers. They are published in 50 class volumes, the largest collection of these is known as the Alexander Yanai classes since they consist mainly of classes Feldenkrais taught at his studio which was located on Alexander Yanai street in Tel-Aviv, Israel. The transcripts are available from the International Feldenkrais Federation at http://www.iffmaterials.com accessed Febraury 2009.

2 See Novack, 1990; p191

3 The effect on the body that training for Contact Improvisation can have is documented in the video *Fall After Newton* (1987)

4 Salford University, Manchester, UK. Performance Workshop Project, 5-21 March 2001

5 For example, see Julyen Hamiltion http://www.julyenhamilton.com accessed February 2009

6 Julyen Hamilton and Simone Forti are the two biggest influences on my practice and teaching improvisation. I have also been informed by my studies with Katie Duck, David Zambrano, Kirstie Simson, Steve Paxton, Chris Aiken, Lisa Nelson, Christie Svane, Felice Wolfzahn, Pauline De Groot, Bo Madvig

7 My most regular period of practise was during my time at the SNDO where I took a class every week outside the school with Felice Wolfzahn. It has also been a regular feature of many BMC, experiential anatomy and Contact Improvisation workshops and meetings.

8 Teachers: Cathie Caraker, Erika Berland, Wendel Beavers, David Beadle, Linda Hartley, Patricia Bardi, Trude Cone, Naomi Duveen, Jacques van Eijden, Margot Rijven, Clover Catskill, Mette Anne Bruhn, Catherine Hossenlopp

9 Interviews with Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen by Nancy Stark Smith and Lisa Nelson that appeared in *Contact Quarterly* formed the basis for the book *Sensing, Feeling, and Action: The Experiential Anatomy of Body-mind Centering.* (1993)

10 For more about Elsa Gindler see Johnson, D. H. 1995. *Bone, Breath & Gesture: Practices of Embodiment.*

11 For example, in conversation with Alan Roberts at Bristol Community Dance Centre

12 See for example Stokes, B, (2002). *Amazing Babies*.

13 See www.english.theaterschool.nl accessed February 2009.

14 See www.nicefeldenkrais.co.uk accessed February 2009.

15 See http://www.davidzambrano.org accessed February 2009.

16 See http://www.julyenhamilton.com accessed February 2009.

17 See http://nancystarksmith.com accessed February 2009.

18 See http://www.thecircusspace.co.uk accessed February 2009.

19 Fool Time Circus and Performing Arts School, which later became Circomedia, see http://www.circomedia.com accessed February 2009.

20 Franki Anderson see http://www.geocities.com/frankifool accesed March 2009

21 For more information about the histories of the SNDO and EDDC see http://www.dance-web.org/sndo-eddc/pages/?page_id=2 accessed March 2009.

22 Such as Franki Anderson, Guy Dartnell, Sandra Reeve

23 Erika Berland and Wendel Beavers

24 I became fully qualified as a practitioner in 1995 enabling me also to work with the one-to-one form of the method.

25 See http://www.movetolearn.com/03_bodyschool/03_bodyschool.01.intro.html accessed February 2009.

26 It is for similar reasons that I resisted for a long time using the word somatic to describe what I do and now use it with misgivings and a certain reluctance (see page 5)

27 For example, when teaching Authentic Movement in Bristol, UK, in 1996, I had a couple of regular students who were MA Dance Movement Psychotherapy graduates from Roehampton University. When I asked them why they were in my class, they said they had only read about Authentic Movement and written about it, but had never actually practised it.

28 I feel that, in a society where individual value is so entwined with professional status, then in order for the somatic project to gain visibility and respect (value) there is a tendency to try to academicise, to abstract, somatic practices. A trap into which I feel myself continually invited to step into. A greater challenge might be to rehabilitate the master/apprentice model.

29 see my article online on the Underscore at http://www.movetolearn.com/05_ci/05_ci.04.Underscore.01.html

30 From Paxton, S. (2008). Material For The Spine (DVD ROM). Contradanse.

31 For a concise biography of Moshe Feldenkrais visit http://www.feldenkrais.com/download/PR-Kit-Docs/moshe_bio.pdf accessed March 2009

32 Andrea Olsen at the Connected Body Conference, Amsterdam 1994

33 I studied Feldenkrais from 1991 onwards and did my first BMC workshop in which I encountered experiential anatomy for the first time in the summer of 1992. I entered the Feldenkrais training in 2002.

34 In the Feldenkrais 32 week professional training, you qualify to teach ATM after week 16 if you meet the requirements

35 What I mean by this is that professional dancers often take morning classes before going on to rehearsals or performances. The culture has grown up around more orthodox technique classes where the idea is to come in a get a workout.

36 I imagine this is something to do with vector addition of forces.

37 See http:// www.tqw.at accessed March 2009

38 See http://www.impulstanz.com accessed March 2009

39 See http://www.sead.at accessed March 2009

40 Quoted in an audio recording of a class in one of my Feldenkrais trainings by Jerry Karzen, one of Feldenkrais confidants towards the latter part of his life.

41 This is often quoted, an internet search will reveal it in many places, however, I was unable to find a reference as to where to find this in Einstein's work.

42 There were many anecdotes to suggest this given by different trainers on my Feldenkrais training who know Feldenkrais personally. A biography of Feldenkrais is in preparation but not yet published.