Research Related to the Feldenkrais Method & Senior Citizens

Alexander A. Perceived pain and disability decreases after Feldenkrais’ Awareness Through Movement. Masters Thesis. Cal State, Northridge, June 2006. Movement method for motor learning was effective in decreasing pain perception and disability of adults who self-reported experiencing chronic low back pain. Subjects, staff members of California State University Northridge, were voluntarily recruited for this study using email and word of mouth. Final sample (N=12) was comprised of males and females, aged 35 to 67 years (average age was 51.833). The intervention consisted of a total of eleven 45-minute Awareness Through Movement classes offered over a 5-week period. Participants were free to come to all 11 classes, and average class participation was 10.25. Pain was assessed using the Visual Analogue Scale and disability was measured using the Oswestry Disability index questionnaire, both administered pre and post intervention. Multivariate Analyses of Variance showed significant differences (p < .05) pre and post testing and the investigation concluded that the Feldenkrais method was effective in reducing pain perception and in decreasing disability in a population experiencing chronic low back pain. This research paper supports the use of the Feldenkrais method for decreasing pain and increasing function in daily activities for adults experiencing chronic low back pain.

Ann J. Individuals with dementia learn new habits and are empowered through the Feldenkrais method. [Journal Article, Case Study] Alzheimer’s Care Quarterly. 2006 Oct-Dec; 7(4): 278-86. (29 ref) journal article - case study. Nursing; Peer Reviewed

Batson G and Deutsch JE. Effects of Feldenkrais Awareness Through Movement on Balance in Adults With Chronic Neurological Deficits Following Stroke: A Preliminary Study. Complementary Health Practice Review, Vol. 10 No. 3, October 2005 203-210 DOI: 10.1177/1533210105285516© 2005 Sage Publications. Peer Reviewed The Feldenkrais Method is a complementary approach to motor learning that purports to induce change in chronic motor behaviors. This preliminary study describes the effects of a Feldenkrais program on balance and quality of life in individuals with chronic neurological deficits following stroke. Two male (48 and 53 years old) and 2 female participants (61 and 62 years old), 1 to 2.5 years post-stroke, participated as a group in a 6-week Feldenkrais program. Pretest and posttest evaluations of the Berg Balance Scale (BBS), the Dynamic Gait Index (DGI), and the Stroke Impact Scale (SIS) were administered. Data were analyzed using a Wilcoxon signed-rank test. DGI and BBS scores improved an average of 55.2% (p = .033) and 11% (p = .034), respectively. SIS percentage recovery improved 35%. Findings suggest that gains in functional mobility are possible for individuals with chronic stroke using Feldenkrais movement therapy in a group setting. Keywords: Feldenkrais; balance; stroke; complementary medicine. Instrumentation: Movement Imagery Questionnaire (MIQ) (Hall and Pongrac), Dynamic Gait Index (DGI) (Wrisley et al), Berg Balance Scale, Stroke Impact Scale (SIS), Mini-Mental Status Examination (MMSE) (Folstein et al)

Abstract. **Background and Purpose:** The Feldenkrais Method® is a complementary approach to motor learning that shares tenets with dynamic systems theory. The efficacy of the Method on balance in persons with neurological disabilities has been tested in only one controlled trial with people with multiple sclerosis. The purpose of this study is to report the outcome on balance of 10 patients with chronic stroke who underwent a trial of Feldenkrais Awareness Through Movement (ATM) training. **Methodology:** Subjects included 7 men and 3 women (ages 50 – 78), 1 to 3 years post-cortical stroke. Primary outcome measures were the Berg Balance Scale (BBS) and the Timed Movement Battery (TMB), with secondary outcomes being the Stroke Impact Scale (SIS) for quality of life, and the Movement Imagery Questionnaire (MIQ) for ability to imagine motor tasks. Subjects received 18 ATM sessions (1.5 hours each) over a 6 week period. **Results:** Comparison of double baseline pretest with immediate posttest scores of 8 out of 10 subjects showed statistical significance for the group- and individual scores for the BBS (Z score = 2.53, p = .0057). Pretest-MIQ scores correlated positively with posttest improvements on the BBS. Scores decreased significantly on the TMB for 4 complex movements (p = averaged over 5 subjects), and correlated with self-reported improvements in balance on the SIS. **Discussion and Conclusion:** This trial shows that for select individuals post-stroke, an intensive trial of ATM results in functional improvements in balance and movement efficiency. The ability to imagine movement corresponds with actual and perceived gains in functional mobility using a group-delivered, exploratory method of perceptuo-motor training. **Key words:** Balance, Feldenkrais, Stroke, Motor Learning

Abstract: One hallmark of dance education is rigorous and repetitive physical practice. Of the many unifying theories of motor learning, the “power law of practice” states that repetitive practice of physical movements is a necessary ingredient in improving performance. Compelling evidence exists, however, showing that practice conditions where rest intervals are interspersed between movement repetitions (“distributed practice”) play a strategic role in the acquisition and consolidation of learning motor skills. Further, repetition without adequate rest is implicated in overuse syndrome and has injurious consequences in both the peripheral and central nervous system. This article summarizes the research from neuroscience and motor learning on distributed practice conditions within the context of overuse injuries in dance. The neural consequences of repetitive movement without rest (adequate rest-to-activity ratios) are discussed. Schedules designed to promote motor skill learning and avoid overuse (adopted in somatic education, sports, and martial arts) are reviewed in the light of the current philosophy underlying dance practice schedules. Finally, the paper points to need for future research in designing protocols with higher rest-to-activity ratios in dance classes.