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“Make the impossible possible, the possible easy and easy elegant.”

(Moshe Feldenkrais)

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Abstract

This study examined the opinions and experiences of experienced Feldenkrais practitioners working with primary school children about the effects of the Feldenkrais method on primary school children and the most appropriate scheme of implementing the method in the primary school programs. Three Feldenkrais practitioners were interviewed, who all had more than 5 years of experience in teaching the Feldenkrais method as well as many years of experience in working with children. A qualitative survey, a guided interview, was used. Both genders were represented, and the interviewees had different backgrounds. They reported that introducing the Feldenkrais methods in elementary schools had a positive effect on children. They also stressed the importance of the way in which the Feldenkrais method is presented in a school and discussed what kind of introduction and setting would be the most appropriate. The interviewees emphasized that the Feldenkrais method is appropriate for every child, regardless of his age, and that each child benefits from the Feldenkrais method in his own individual way. Thus, they recommended an early introduction. The long periods of sitting in school were criticized, along with infrequent integration of movement into the learning, in spite of great positive effects linked to greater interest of a child for learning by the means of movement. It is important that teachers get familiarized with the methods which promote learning through movement and that they experience these methods themselves, as this clearly demonstrates their usefulness. Opinion on the integration of Feldenkrais methods into primary school through the health system differed. On one hand, it is important to emphasize the impact on children's health and to improve the psychosocial factors of health for children, which parents have interest for. On the other hand, the Feldenkrais method is primarily a method of learning through movement. Nevertheless, positive effects are to be expected of the integration of Feldenkrais method in the primary school can be expected.

Zusammenfassung

Diese Studie beschäftigt sich mit Meinungen und Erkenntnissen erfahrener Feldenkrais Lehrer, die mit Grundschulkindern zusammenarbeiten. Darüber hinaus untersucht sie die Auswirkungen der Feldenkrais Methode auf Grundschulkinder und das am besten geeigneten Schema für die Umsetzung der Methode in Grundschulprogrammen. Es wurden drei Feldenkrais Lehrer befragt, die alle mehr als 5 Jahre Erfahrung mit dem Unterrichten der Feldenkrais Methode, sowie langjährige Erfahrung in der Arbeit mit Kindern haben. Als qualitative Methode wurde das Leitfadeninterview verwendet. Beide Geschlechter waren vertreten und die Befragten hatten unterschiedliche Bildungshintergründe. Die interviewten Feldenkrais Lehrer berichteten, dass sich die Einführung der Feldenkrais Methode in Grundschulen positiv auf die Kinder auswirke. Sie betonten auch welche Bedeutung die Art und Weise, wie die Feldenkrais Methode in einer Schule präsentiert wird, hat, und diskutierten, welche Art von Einführung am besten geeignet wäre. Die Befragten waren davon überzeugt, dass die Feldenkrais Methode für jeden Schüler und jede Schülerin unabhängig von seinem Alter geeignet sei, und dass jedes Kind auf seine eigene Weise von der Feldenkrais Methode profitiere. Sie empfahlen daher eine frühzeitige Einführung der Methode in den Unterricht. Die Fachleute kritisierten die lange Zeit, die die Schüler im Sitzen verbringen ebenso, wie die seltene Integration von Bewegung in die Lernphasen und die Tatsache, dass viele Lehrer der Erkenntnis nicht Rechnung tragen, dass die Freude am Lernen durch Bewegung gesteigert wird. Es ist wichtig, dass die Lehrkräfte mit den Methoden, die das Lernen durch Bewegung fördern, vertraut gemacht werden und die positiven Auswirkungen dieser Methoden selbst erfahren können. Feldenkrais Lehrer waren unterschiedlicher Auffassungen über die Integration der Feldenkrais Methode in der Grundschule durch das Gesundheitssystem. Es ist wichtig, die Auswirkungen der Feldenkrais Methoden auf die Gesundheit von Kindern hervorzuheben und die psychosozialen Gesundheitsfaktoren für Kinder zu verbessern. Anderseits ist die Feldenkrais Methode in erster Linie eine Lernmethode und keine offizielle Gesundheitsmethode. Trotzdem sind allgemeine positive Auswirkungen der Integration der Feldenkrais Methode in der Grundschule zu erwarten.

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List of abbreviations

ATM	Awareness Through Movement lesson
FI	Functional Integration lesson
FL	Feldenkrais lesson
FM	Feldenkrais method
FP	Feldenkrais practitioner

1 Introduction

One of the consequences of modernization is a greater involvement of children with the means of the modern technology, which does not have only positive influences on them. Both mental and physical abilities of children are decreasing, which is even more evident when the child enters the elementary school. This represents a major change in their lives and may evoke certain problems. Transitioning from a previously playful everyday life to a minimum of 4 hours of sitting in school benches, listening and following the teachers and repeating the learning material. A reduction in the amount of daily physical activity could have both psychological and physical impacts on the child. It may even affect the brain function and cognitive abilities of a child (Fedewa & Ahn, 2011, Chaddock, Pontifex, Hillman & Kramer, 2011).

In the last decades, the sedentary lifestyle is reflecting in decreased physical abilities of children, poor body perception and coordination in space. Low perception of one's own body may lead to inappropriate posture (Assaiante, Mallau, Viel, Jover, & Schmitz, 2005) and the school benches only worsen the situation. The benches are not ergonomic, and children sit in a disadvantaged position for most of the time (Saarni, Nygård, Kaukiainen, & Rimpelä, 2007). According to Persch (2004), this might cause problems in the spine and reduce the respiratory system activity, leading to reduced oxygen circulation and resulting in fatigue and disturbed concentration. Children read, draw, calculate, and write at the table in a hunched posture, and in addition, their eyes strain and focus for longer periods of time. All of these factors lead to reduced efficiency and learning difficulties (Gunzburg et al., 1999). Some children experience lower back pain quite early. It was found that 36% of primary school children experienced back pain at least once (Gunzburg et al., 1999). Children's mental state might also be distressed during long sitting times and high expectations in the primary school. In the interview with Dr. Schleip (2019) a study was mentioned (Hoheisel et al., 2015), which demonstrated a link between stress and back pain in rats. It was shown that stress induced through immobilization for 12 days one hour per day increased the sensitivity of dorsal horn neurons, which suggests a patient's back pain could worsen from stress alone. Schleip (2019) pointed out that the ethical committee had to be convinced that the method of inducing stress through immobilization was acceptable. The research team justified the experiment on the basis that school children are similarly forced to sit for several hours in school on a daily basis. Additionally, a negative impact on the children's ability to retain attention was reported outside the school environment because of the omnipresence of stimuli produced by mass media. Children are not able to concentrate well and read less books than children which are not overstimulated with media (Vandewater et al., 2005). Teachers notice that more and more children have learning difficulties not only in physical

activity, but also in other subjects. Disorders in language development, dyslexia and related problems are common. Likewise, many children develop hyperkinetic disorders, depression, aggression outbursts, obesity or other eating disorders (Persch, 2004).

This raises the question of how we could ease children's transition from pre-school to primary school, whilst maintaining or improving their awareness of their own bodies. How could we help them to be more aware of themselves, find better movement and sit easier in the school? Might this reduce the occurrence of learning problems and make it easier to get rid of them? Easier learning, and thus better success at school, also affects the child's self-image, which is one of the important factors in the further development of a person (Beringer, 2010). Some of the most important questions are, can they have more fun while learning, can find their own interest and the will to learn more? How would learning through movement help them?

In this master's thesis, the influence of the Feldenkrais method on the above-mentioned questions will be investigated. The Feldenkrais method is one of the somatic methods of learning. As described further in the text, it could as well be defined as a neurophysiological and psycho-pedagogical method with a holistic approach based on human development.

In the Feldenkrais method (FM) lessons, the same approach to learning through movement as it commonly appears in the development of a child’s movement, is used. During the FM lessons the student, no matter if child or adult, raises awareness through play, senses and feelings, and thereby explores own motoring possibilities and limitations (Koch, 2004). With slow movement, alert and frequent repetitions, the child's attention is raised by the awareness of how to perform a particular move. Thus, the child's ability to be physically and mentally present improves in many daily situations. The child learns independently and develops the ability to self-examine while practising the FM. The method aims at awakening the awareness of oneself, so that the individual feels the movement comprehensively, recognizes the ineffective patterns, and has the ability to change them (Persch, 2004).

A Feldenkrais practitioner (FP) guides the children's attention during the lesson to what is happening in them while moving, and how different parts of their body are connected. He lets them explore their movements and orientation in space, develop balance and coordination, and helps them to develop more complex motor movements, e.g., rolling, crawling, standing, walking and jumping (Wright, 2004). Awareness of one's own movement is a lifelong process that adds and reveals creativity and joy to life. In addition, it allows an individual to develop desired skills (Persch, 2004). To enable a child an easier start into the educational career, all the mentioned positive effects of the FM may be used. To find out

the best way to introduce children in primary school to the FM and thus decrease their learning – behavioural problems, the following qualitative research has been undertaken.

1.1 Research questions

In the following thesis the potential impact of the FM on children aged between 6 and 10 and the sensible implementation of FM in primary school was analysed. For the purpose of exploring this topic, 3 FP who have been practising the FM and working with children for more than 5 years, were interviewed.

The following research questions arise from the topic:

1. Which key impacts has the FM on elementary school children in the opinion of FPs?
2. Which important key factors have to be applied to successfully use the FM with the elementary school children to gain the greatest benefit?

For this purpose, a qualitative method of interviewing, guided interview (Flick, 2009), was used.

2 Theoretical background

In this chapter, the background of the Feldenkrais method will be presented. In order to better understand its origin, a short biography of its creator Moshe Feldenkrais will be presented together with important events in his life, which influenced the development of the method. Next, a description of the ideology behind the method, its principles and both types of its implementation (ATM and FI) will follow. Finally, uses of the Feldenkrais method with children shall be presented.

2.1 Dr. Moshe Feldenkrais

Moshe Feldenkrais was born in 1904 in Slavuta, today's Ukraine, to Jewish parents. At the age of 14, he and his group of pioneers headed towards Palestine (Shelhav-Silberbusch, 1999). Due to local nationalistic frictions, there were repeated clashes, during which Jewish immigrants were not allowed to carry weapons (Doidge, 2015). Moshe searched for a way to defend himself without weapons in case of such attacks. He began to actively work on fighting skills and developed an effective self-defence system based on jiu-jitsu (Klinkenberg, 2005). At the age of 23, Feldenkrais graduated and started his math studies in Tel-Aviv. Already in that time, he was very interested in psychology.

In 1930, Feldenkrais moved to Paris, where he completed his studies in mechanics and electrical engineering, and as a Ph.D. of applied physics started working at the Institute of the famous couple Joliot-Curie, Nobel Prize winners for chemistry in 1935 (Klinkenberg, 2005). In Paris, he also taught in a jiu-jitsu club where he upgraded his knowledge of judo. He was one of the first Europeans who had earned a black belt (Shelhav-Silberbusch, 1999). In his youth, he injured his knee while playing football. While living in France, the knee problem worsened. On some days he could not even get out of bed due to the pain. His doctor proposed an operation, but Feldenkrais decided against it, due to low probability of its success (Beringer, 2010). He combined his knowledge of mechanics and physics, studied neurophysiology and began to observe his own movement (Klinkenberg, 2005). He found that due to the fear of falling, he unknowingly adjusted his knee movements in a way that was different than before the injury. He began very carefully and attentively, concentrating on small motions in his knee, to reconstruct his movements again.

He learned to use his knee correctly and the movement became easier (Beringer, 2010). He also observed that the pain worsened when he was under psychological stress and became interested in the connection between the body and the mind, and the unconscious (Beringer, 2010). This experience has taught him that not only is the physical condition of his body responsible for his well-being, but also his brain. During the World War II,

Feldenkrais started his lectures on physics, psychology and neurophysiology, and his discoveries in the field of motion. Feldenkrais believed that the mind and body are a connected whole and have in effect an unconditional influence on one another. Body and mind are inseparable whole, the brain could not think without motor functions (Beringer, 2010). This fact also helped him to understand why his problems with his knee always worsened when he was under psychological stress (Doidge, 2015). Each person has specific patterns of motion which he unconsciously engages with similar movements. Lying on the ground, in order to reduce the effects of gravity, he observed his slowly moving knee. With the help of the awareness for himself, which he learned in judo, and the understanding of biomechanical phenomena, he developed movement lessons and shaped them into a method he named after himself. He led lectures in the form of group lessons Awareness through movement (ATM) and individual lessons Functional integration (FI). Later he also introduced training for the Feldenkrais method, educating new Feldenkrais practitioners, which he organized in Israel and the United States of America, where the method was at that time experiencing the greatest development (Klinkenberg, 2005). Feldenkrais has written more than twenty books on self-defence and judo, autosuggestion, and, above all, his own method, which he described both from mechanical, biological and psychological points of view. In the books, he dealt primarily with the topic of how to more effectively coordinate the functioning of the body and spirit (Shelhav-Silberbusch, 1999). Feldenkrais died in 1984 in Tel Aviv.

2.2 About the Feldenkrais method

The method is holistic and connects both natural and social sciences. Due to the complex nature of the method, it will not be described in detail, but the essential elements will be presented. Founder of the method, Dr. Moshe Feldenkrais began to study his movement in order to improve his knee condition. He improved the awareness of his own motion, by breaking down everyday movement functions into smaller movements, and studied motion patterns associated with the functions. Research of his own motion led him to think about how babies learn to move. By exploring themselves, they discover dimensions of their hands and feet, possible directions and rotations, unknown moves and functions. Unknowingly, they learn which muscles need to be active and which relaxed, what later becomes their movement pattern. They develop different movement patterns, according to one’s self-image. »Self-image is an integrated whole of shapes and relationships of the body parts together with feelings, emotions and one's thoughts« (Beringer, 2010, p.3). One's movement and behaviour are based on the self-image; therefore, the self-image needs to be changed if the change of movement or behaviour is desired. Feldenkrais

equates the concept of "self-image" with the "body image" (Busch, 2009). One's self-image is reflected in the way one moves, and it also affects his future, as he plans it according to his perception of himself and his abilities, which is based on past experiences. Each person has his own body structure, life history, past injuries or operations. Gender and cultural differences also play a role in the perception of an individual about himself, his movement and the idea of how he should move (Aberle, 2010). As long as one does not change his notions about himself, he will not be able to change his posture and movements (Feldenkrais, 2002). Hence each individual develops his own appropriate movement according to his own structure, experience, and environment.

Children learn to be effective in their movement patterns by cleverly selecting and coordinating muscles (agonists) only needed for a particular move, and relaxing muscles (antagonists) opposing the move which might potentially block the movement (Doidge, 2015). Feldenkrais developed his method by imitating the model of a child's development of motion in a form of group sessions (movement lessons) called Awareness Through Movement (ATM) which facilitate individual's understanding of his own motion patterns. During the lessons, each individual gets the opportunity to discover the moves that suit him. There are no right or wrong moves in the ATM lessons, but there is a notion of searching for a way of movement which is optimal for each individual.

The purpose of the FM is to guide the student through the learning process to improve his health, emotional state and abilities, and to give him the knowledge to cope with and overcome pain, fears, and problems (Feldenkrais, 1985). Busch (2009) came to a similar conclusion and pointed out that the purpose of the FM is not simply to improve awareness through the teaching method, but also to improve the emotional state and health. The method is performed independently of the current physical and mental condition of the student and is therefore suitable for everyone. Each student achieves this change at his own pace, appropriate to his process of growing up, and , integrates it into his whole personality in accordance with his personal development (Shelhav-Silberbusch, 1999).

Moshe Feldenkrais basically did not consider the method as a medical approach but as a learning process, called organic learning (Feldenkrais, 1985). Organic learning is not comparable to academic learning. In organic learning, we do not have time frames, and we cannot skip the levels. For example, in academic learning, we could first complete a particular university, then continue at another university, or do both at the same time. Organic learning is always dependent on previous levels, e.g., it is not possible to walk if we do not first learn how to crawl. Organic learning has no definite beginning, duration or frequency (Beringer, 2010). Learning could also be equated with development, growing up and maturing, although this is often not conscious, but happens on its own (Shelhav-

Silberbusch, 1999). Feldenkrais regarded learning as a biological, if not a physiological necessity. In his opinion, maturity is never reached, but is a process that spans over the entire lifetime (Feldenkrais, 2002). He linked this with established patterns of motion, which an adult develops for certain familiar goals. These actions become habits. An adult fails to use alternative forms of many movements to achieve a goal, using instead what was already learned. That is how one stops learning and developing in this field (Feldenkrais, 1990) and this invariably affects human self-esteem, since it takes away one's choice and diversity of movement. In comparison with adults, self-esteem in children changes very quickly, from action to action (Feldenkrais, 1990). Through the FM, one deals with forgotten or atrophied movements, which are relearned once more to be felt and used (Shelhav-Silberbusch, 1999). An individual learns to observe differences between the movements, to improve awareness, to feel what is easy and what difficult. Improving our awareness might improve our nervous system and the organization of the movement, because when an individual searches for the easiest way to execute a move through the FM, this leads to the establishment of new neural connections in the brain (Aberle, 2010). Shelhav (1999) stressed the importance of focusing attention on how we learn and not on how much we learn. Learning may be seen as an opportunity to change our behaviour and our self-image (Shelhav-Silberbusch, 1999). In this sense, organic learning might also be seen as a therapeutic approach (Busch, 2009).

Busch (2009) emphasizes that the FM is a holistic method, which is realizable due to the unity of body and mind. Feldenkrais studied human nature in different ways, by focusing on the body and the mind. At the same time, he focused on the connections between components without which a person is unable to function. Feldenkrais (1990) assumed that although motion originates from and is formed in the motor cortex, any excitation caused by motion also extends to the other layers of the brain where sensation and thinking take place. He defined thinking, moving, feeling and sensing as the four elements of personality, which simultaneously affect every action (Doidge, 2015). These elements are interconnected and cannot be isolated from one another (Feldenkrais, 1990). Roth (2003 as cited in Busch, 2009) reported about a magnet resonance-tomography study comparing the development of self-esteem with brain development and confirming the correlation between brain development and the development of motoric functions, perception, emotional and cognitive abilities in infants, children and adolescents. Similarly, Shelhav (1999) agrees that body functions also have a direct influence on one another. We cannot act individually on one function only, without changing or influencing others. Therefore, improving one functional activity contributes to the improvement of others. Shelhav (1999) divided body functions into 4 groups:

- Internal functions are those responsible for breathing, blood circulation, digestion, defecation, temperature control, and reproduction. These functions organize themselves in the motor system.
- Orientation function is responsible for orientation in the space, position, and movement of the body in the room. It is managed by the vestibular system which acts as a motor system and specializes in controlling the one's posture. It usually works unconsciously.
- Learned behaviour are the basic functions which constitute the content of the FM lessons. These are functions like sitting, crawling, standing, walking, running, jumping, turning, pulling, lifting, transferring, speaking, reading, and turning the head in all directions.
- Higher brain functions involve abstract argumentation, logical analysis, use of mathematics, speech, memory, fantasy, planning of the future, creativity and artistic expression. These features include all previously listed functions in their operation.

Feldenkrais also associated the effects of emotions with the individual's posture. “Neither excessive muscular tension nor emotional intensity is compatible with good posture.” (Feldenkrais, 2002). Feldenkrais emphasized that a good posture is the result of the entire neuromuscular function. Posture describes how different parts of the body are connected to achieve a change in position. In his opinion, good posture is not only indicated by a straight, upright and acceptable standing and sitting, but the individual must master the movement patterns, be aware of oneself and own individual parts and be able to easily coordinate the muscles. Generally used functions of body posture and learned movements are expressed in a visible and changing process. For this reason, the FM uses the development of these functions as a mean of a constructive change in the whole person (Shelhav-Silberbusch, 1999). From the inseparable connection of the four elements - thinking, moving, feeling and sensing - originate the principle completeness of the FM and the influences of each one of those elements on one another through the individual lessons of the method (Beringer, 2010).

Each individual is capable of achieving movement with minimal effort by observing its quality and asking himself if it feels light and safe. Through his research, Moshe Feldenkrais designed a series of lessons that make it easier to recognize the functions of the body, as well as the necessary agonists and antagonists. Based on physics and judo, Feldenkrais described minimal effort as one of the basic qualities of motion.

> *“When the muscular tonus is reduced while being accompanied by an enhanced skeletal awareness, the skeletal structure is able to fulfil its function of nullifying*

> *the vertical component of gravity. This frees the musculature from any weight bearing function, so that our internal actions are performed with the least possible effort, ideally with an almost zero effort. All too often, the bodily limitations that we believe are due to not being limbar are, instead caused by a habitual contraction and shortening of our muscles, of which we are not conscious" (Beringer, 2010, P. 19).*

With every deliberate movement, the we have various possibilities of organizing ourselves in motion. In the event of poor organization of movement, less energy is directed into useful motion, while in a well-organized movement, energy is managed effectively, and the movement feels light (Aberle, 2010).

The method has two application modes, group lessons called Awareness through movement (ATM) and individual Functional integration (FI) lessons. It is used differently in different countries, in some more in the form of group lessons, in others more as hands-on-method. It is used in health clubs, physiotherapy centres, public health programs, rehabilitation centres of alternative medicine, psychiatric hospitals, as well as in educational centres. The method is often incorporated into sports, dance, music and theatre schools, training in martial arts, ski schools, as well as in homes for the elderly and as a program of health in companies. In recent years, it has been gaining ground in kindergartens and schools in sports education, as well as in schools for children with special needs and mentally disadvantaged children (Shelhav-Silberbusch, 1999). It is very unlikely that the method would not be advised to anyone, since it is suitable for everyone (Feldenkrais, 1981).

2.2.1 Awareness through movement (ATM)

Optimal movement means that we activate the muscles only when we really need them. The challenge is to find the right balance between resisting effects of gravity and minimizing strain (Aberle, 2010). Awareness through movement sessions take place in the form of group exercise. Lessons are performed on the floor or on an upholstered surface. With this, the vast majority of sensorimotor activities calm down, thus improving the sensitivity and ability of decision-making, which enables the student to build a new set of options to perform own skilful actions (Feldenkrais, 1990). The FP leads the students with clear and concise spoken instructions without actually showing the movement. The focus during lessons is not on the correctness of the performed movement, but on the details in the course of the movement, encouraging students' awareness of their own motion (Feldenkrais, 1990). Students are led into doing effortless movements according to their own abilities. The FP guides the students in observing the parts of the body involved in the movement and linking them with each other, as well as with the basic organization of the body (Shelhav-

Silberbusch, 1999). Every part of the body has a specific task in each movement, which the student will learn through the lesson with increased attention on a particular part of the movement (Aberle, 2010). At the beginning of the Feldenkrais lesson, the FP leads the student through the process of self-examination, also called »scanning«, which is repeated several times during the session and at the end of the class (Klinkenberg, 2005). This facilitates self-observation and tracking changes which occurred during the lesson. ATM lessons are often based on slow, comfortable movements, since students need time to observe, perceive, and learn new ones. Understanding and implementing a new move is a process in which an one integrates the new movement into his already existing motoric scheme (Aberle, 2010). Curiosity, playfulness and exploratory spirit of the student enable organic learning during the lesson. Students learn with images, patterns, and connections. Lessons introduce them to situations in which they learn to think, expand awareness and develop themselves. This way of thinking leads to new actions (Beringer, 2010). Each lesson has a specific theme, which is gradually developed during the lesson. These themes are taken from everyday actions which people often repeat (Shelhav-Silberbusch, 1999). In each ATM session, the student has the opportunity to create and gradually understand new functional movements. Functional movements could be extension, turning, sitting, getting up, walking, etc. The final achievement is a set of individual movements, carried out with focused awareness and growing sensitivity. The main idea is not only the development of a concrete move but also the development of all elements which influence the personality (Shelhav-Silberbusch, 1999). Despite the fact that ATM lessons are often in a lying position, very often on the ground, Feldenkrais has designed the lessons so that, connections are established in the body of an individual that allow for new learning, even if the lesson is about walking, sitting, getting up etc. With a meaningful and useful presentation of new information, an individual learns new movement immediately and also instantly incorporates it into his spectrum of movements.

Optimal movements are the ones which involve every part of oneself. When a certain movement spreads evenly through the body, the muscles in the center of the body produce more power than those in the extremities (Aberle, 2010). Through the ATM lesson, a student looks for all possible alternatives for a particular motion function, which he is learning to add to his motoric scheme (Shelhav-Silberbusch, 1999). Beringer (2010) stated that, when we know more possibilities, we have the option of choosing. By having only one option, we lose the freedom of choice. Our movements are conscientious or automatic. Automatic movements are habits which are important in life to make things easier and we are also quicker that way, since we do not need to re-learn the movements every time. For example, when dressing in the morning, we do not need to think about how to put on a shirt, instead

we think about other things. However, when our habits restrict other movement, this may cause problems and pain. At that moment, one must concentrate and become aware of his movements, so that he is able to select lightweight, unobstructed movement that does not lead to pain. It often happens that movements with enhanced awareness are much better connected, easier, more efficient and comfortable after the lesson (Shelhav-Silberbusch, 1999). When an individual learns this, the pain diminishes, and one again gets the opportunity to do what he desires.

A student who is well aware of the structure and organization of himself is able to make a conscious decision to change. One of the conditions is also the promotion of curiosity and explorative spirit of the student, who observes changes in the different execution and sequence of movements with interest. Hence the student may observe the impact of the newly developed motion pattern on the ease of his movement (Beringer, 2010). The method also includes experiments and mistakes which is part of the learning process. Through observing and experimenting with own movement, FP might improve the student's ability of observation and distinction. In this way, the student perceives ever smaller differences in the kinesthetic feelings of the function performed. Numerous repetitions of a particular movement allow the student to recognize "errors" and improve themselves (Shelhav-Silberbusch, 1999). The moves explored during the lesson are repeated at the end of the session, so that the student combines all the components into a fluidly executed functional movement (Shelhav-Silberbusch, 1999). With a good organization of movement, the muscles in the center of the body work with the same pace and power. The strongest muscles in the human body are connected to the pelvis. For example, when moving the hands the pelvis will also participate (Aberle, 2010).

2.2.2 Functional integration lesson (FI)

Functional integration is a non-verbal, tactile method in which a FP works one on one with a single student. It is not structured in advance, instead it is dynamic and adapts to the needs of the student (Shelhav-Silberbusch, 1999). This method also involves a learning process whereby information is passed on to the student by touch. The FP must have good senses in order to recognize the student's feelings and needs, and could at the same time give him non-invasive important new information that bring the student well-being (Feldenkrais, 1981). FI is not essential for the present research, so it will not be described in detail.

2.3 Feldenkrais method with children

Human children are born with much less functionality compared to animals and need more time to develop their abilities. Children cannot walk, sing, write or count. The nervous system needs to learn this first. Our innate characteristic is curiosity, which guides us into learning all of the acquired functions and skills. The FM emphasizes both for adults and for children the importance of learning through movement. Children encounter many new things. They are continually testing the unknown and learning from it (Feldenkrais, 1990). Children learn in a motor-sensory way without thinking about it (Beringer, 2010). Motor-sensory movement or learning builds the basis for the development of the emotional, cognitive and social skills (Koch, 2004). From the first movements after birth, a child learns to use his own will and intention. The body enables a child through movement since he tests his own ability by performing the first planned actions (Koch, 2004). As Persch (2004) described, Piaget had already in the 1940s considered that a child's social and mental maturation originates from the motoric development.

While learning new movements, new connections are formed inside ourselves; it is necessary to learn how to coordinate the eyes and individual parts of the body, build spatial awareness, shift our weight correctly, maintain balance, and counter effects of gravity. The brain's job is to synchronize the movement of various parts of the body. This requires a learning process with different variations (Aberle, 2010). A healthy child spontaneously develops enormous variations of movement, thinking, feelings and sensing. Variations have a major significance during development. Each time a common event happens in a different way, this new way presents to a child a new variation which appears unusual and brings new information (Baniel, 2012). This expands the set of solutions to puzzles which are solvable with movement.

A child’s development is based on the ability to distinguish between different actions or movements, feelings, and thoughts. Sensing these differences better helps the child to develop. A child performing moves in a subtle way or when being handled by parent or teachers in a subtle way helps the child to better sense the differences. In this way, a child will discover new possibilities, learn diversity of movement, and improve the creativity of solving movement problems. With unusual, unknown, new events, the growth of new neural connections occurs and is enhanced when a child pays attention to own motion (Baniel, 2012). Moseley et al (2008) investigated the effects of tactile therapy on patients with complex regional pain syndrome after the cast removal from the arm. Patients received tactile therapy in such a way that they could not see their hands being touched. One group was actively involved in the therapy and had to pay attention to the touches and provide feedback on the location and contact area. The second group received the same treatment

but did not need to concentrate on the touches and provide feedback. It was found that reduction in pain was reported by the first group, which had to differentiate the touches, but not by the second group.

Persch (2004) emphasizes that the FM teaches internal movement and awakens the child's senses that perceive movement. It is encouraging children to be aware of themselves. This may only happen if a child, while executing a particular move and paying attention to the happening in the body and limbs, detects differences in movements and observes how a certain part of the body is connected to other parts. When a child is fully focused on own sensations, the probability of finding a better move for a certain purpose increases. Our brains need to process a large amount of information and focusing on the movement helps in creating order from disorder (Baniel, 2012).

Neural connections in the brain, which are created with a certain event, might also be used in other unforeseen situations or movements. This applies both to situations when one learns to move his body, to situations when he develops intellectual abilities, or allows changes in perception of emotions (Baniel, 2012). Children cannot be taught this since they learn and eventually develop on their own. Everyone experienced once a long period of organic learning (Beringer, 2010). We can help children during development in a variety of ways (Baniel, 2012). FPs who work with children often focus on children with special needs, in which a particular movement pattern was left out. FP helps them discover the patterns that they missed in the development timeframe of a normal child. Similarly, the FM could also help children who have developed in normal time. Shelhav-Silberbush (1999) says that in a human life events occur that induce deficient or decelerated development of the individual's potential. The reasons may lie in social background, family problems, illness or war. Each individual develops his own potentially unhealthy pattern of solving problems. These patterns may lead to problems and cause physical or mental pain. However, since these newly acquired patterns are not inborn one can also change them or substitute them by learning new alternative patterns. With attentive movement the Feldenkrais way, it is possible for them to develop a larger set of movement patterns and learn to implement them in everyday motion (Shelhav-Silberbusch, 1999).

In his work with children, Feldenkrais respected the momentary abilities of children and their current potential and accepted them as the best at a given moment. When working with children, it was important for him to give children sense of themselves and their movement. Feldenkrais descended on their level, tried to experience the world as a child does and tried to follow the child's movement with his own sensory awareness (Brix, 2004). Instead of only the prescribed expected motion patterns that are to be achieved by the child, Feldenkrais used all possible motion variations. In this way, the child was presented with all the ways of

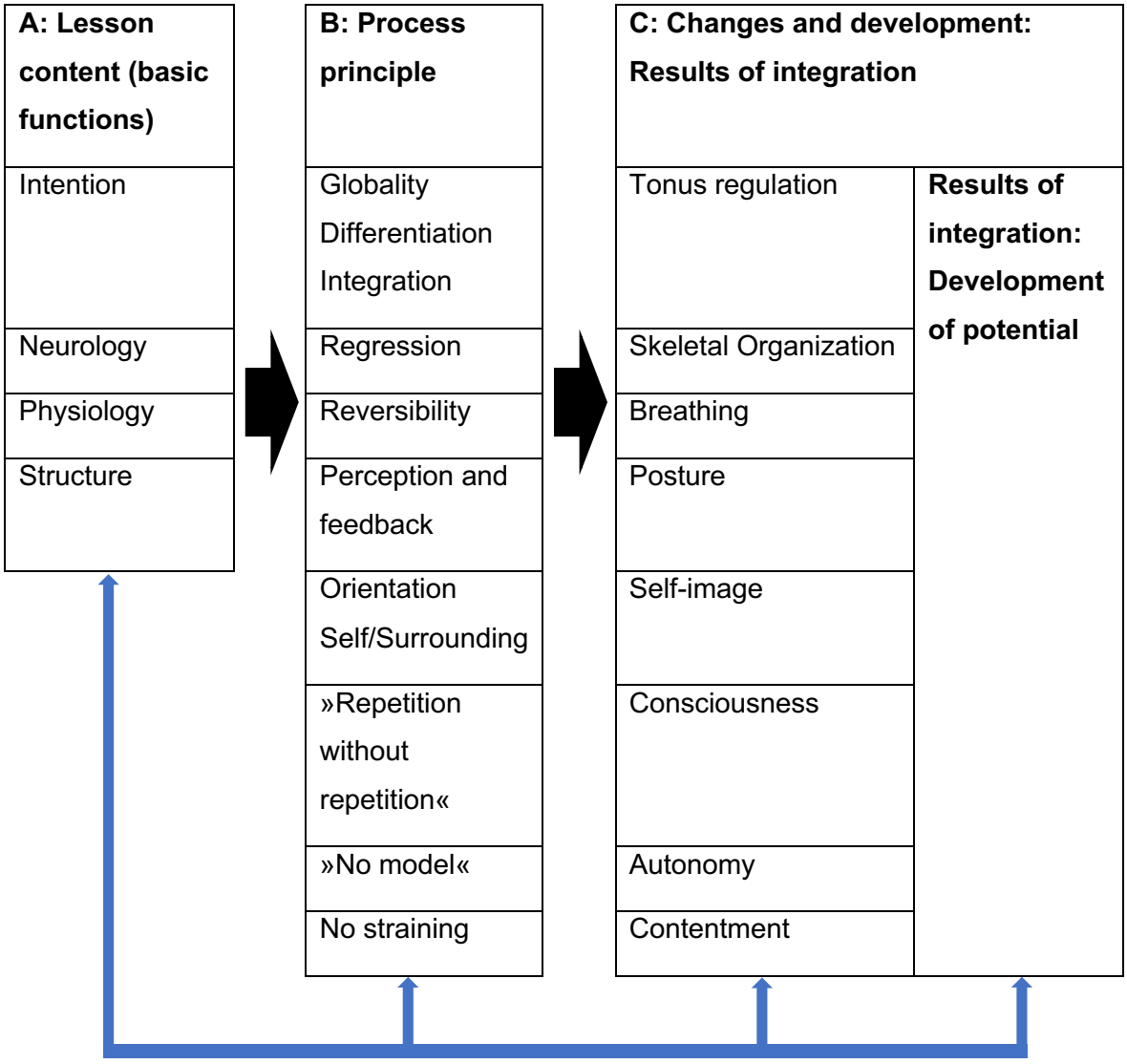
movements, which could then be either adopted or ignored. With this, children have open options to choose the moves that suit them. With a greater range of movements, they are able to sensibly replace or add to the existing patterns. It is important that the FP does not force his own movements, instead he should assists the child in discovering own abilities and help with successful execution of movements (Brix, 2004).

Children with special needs might have damaged capabilities of organic learning or their development might be delayed (Wright, 2004). Poor body sensation may also concern children who visit normal schools and have less pronounced problems, such as Asperger syndrome, dyslexia, ADHD … Delayed development and poor perception of oneself might be related with a child's reduced spatial awareness. In some cases, lack of child's attention makes it hard for them to sense their own doings. Their ability to explore the environment may be impaired due to physical disability. Using the FM, movement and tactile stimuli are encouraged with gentle intervention in which children develop kinesthetic and proprioceptive sense, thus influencing all aspects of development (Wright, 2004).

The Feldenkrais method may be used by adults or children, but it could also be a great connecting factor for the family. In her work with families, Brix (2004) included along with FI the ATM lessons for the family, as she felt that the parents should also actively experience the same process of curiosity, discovery, and fun as their children, thus helping the parrents to better understand the process in which the child learns and develops. Brix (2004) also emphasizes the key role of parents in a child’s development. This approach also influences the involvement of parents in a child's learning or therapeutic process. When the parents experience ATM lessons, they are more involved, observe with greater understanding and interest and are more active in the child's development (Brix, 2004).

2.3.1 Shelhav model of orthogenesis of people

Chava Shelhav-Silberbusch examined the influence of the FM on primary school children with special needs in her PhD thesis. In her work, and later in her research activities, she developed a model for the integration of theory and practice in the ATM and FI process. The model was first developed for the PhD thesis, but later it proved to be useful as work plan for a FP. It could be used in schools for children with special needs and in primary schools. The model is presented more precisely in the doctoral section of Shelhav-Silberbusch (1999, p.121). The diagram of practical use of Shelhav model in Feldenkrais helps to explain how to perform Feldenkrais work with children.



Adapted from Shelhav-Silberbusch, 1999, p. 210.

Figure 1: Shelhav-Silberbusch diagram of practical use of Shelhav model in the Feldenkrais Lesson.

A description of the individual sections in the diagram (Shelhav-Silberbusch, 1999) is as follows:

A) The content of lessons represents the basic functions of the developmental process, e.g. the development of movement from lying to sitting, standing and walking. In each of these functions the following are always involved; 1: intention, which means that each act has a purpose and a goal, 2. neurology, contains the rules and influences of the brain and the nervous system, 3. physiology, respiration, blood-vessel system and internal organs and 4. structure, bones and muscles. When these four factors work in a more coordinated way, basic functions such as lying, sitting, standing, or walking can be executed better or, in other

words, their potential will develop. By experimenting and discovering different alternative movements and by differentiating them, one will master those basic functions.

B) shows the principles which make it possible to improve the basic functions and on the basis of which a work plan could be prepared. 1. "differentiation" of the global movement, followed by its step-by-step development, and finally reintegration, 2. "regression" means that an individual goes so far back in the developmental movement hierarchy that the movement becomes simple and pleasant to carry out, 3. "reversibility" is the ability to carry out the movement in a way that the motion may be stopped and reversed or continued at any moment, 4. "awareness and feedback" are the conditions necessary for improving the function through control and stimulation of senses during movement, 5. "orientation" means to know and shape oneself and forming a relation to the surrounding, 6. "repetition without repetition" refers to the new awareness of oneself in each movement. This means not just doing repetitive movements, because each situation is new and different, 7. "without model" means that a FP is not an example and does not constitute rules. A FP does not correct mistakes; instead, detection of own mistakes is the most important experience and the basis of learning of an individual.

C) shows changes and developments resulting from integration. An individual relearns to use his functions and/or improves them. Effective integration affects the whole person. A new harmony of movement, awareness, sensation, thinking and self-image is established. Enhancement of the aforementioned items requires first improvement of the following functions: 1. "regulation of the muscular tone", 2. "organization of the skeleton", 3. "breathing", 4, "posture", which is not meant in a static, but in a dynamic sense. For example, a path from one state to another, both physically and psychologically. All of this contributes to a better: 5. "self-image", which often inhibits and psychologically obstructs a person. In the ATM lessons, where the individual's function is developed step-by-step, an individual comes closer to what he could not do before, and thus improves his self-image. There is also improvement in 6. "consciousness", which represents a dynamic mental activity, which helps to develop awareness, 7. "autonomy", which enables the individual to choose from several options and gives the individual self-responsibility for his own decisions. Finally, the 8. "satisfaction", which results from all other functions and represents the harmony between the individual and the environment. Integration of all factors enables the development of individual's potentials and affects all aspects of life.

2.3.2 Transferring the experience of FM into the work with children

How to transfer the Feldenkrais method into the work with children? Both the group lessons (ATM) and the individual lessons (FI) can be successfully used with children (Wright, 2004).

The use of the FM with children is reasonable since the method is structured to resemble the process of maturing and development of the nervous system and movement in children. The FM reflects how we experience learning during childhood. Feldenkrais developed a series of ATM lessons which lead a child through development (Brix, 2004). Through playful movement, by trial and error, a child explores his movement possibilities and limitations, tests them repeatedly, uses them in different situations, and repeats them often (Persch, 2004). Exploring new moves is extremely important for children's development since this gives them the opportunity to discover their full potential and also to realize it (Brix, 2004). By improving children's attention, the method develops awareness for how they perform certain action. This encourages them to be physically and mentally focused, no matter what they are doing. The Feldenkrais practitioner directs the children's attention to their actions, with carefully selected visual and verbal guidance (Wright, 2004). Wright (2004) pointed out that observation of animal movement is a useful learning strategy. This also allows for gradual development, such as rolling first, then sliding on the belly, or from crawling to walking on all fours, then standing up, and finally walking. Children learn without knowing the goal and are happily interested in all novelties. It is not possible to predict when and how they will learn something. Suddenly in a completely random event new understanding or capability emerges. Child's play stimulates the feeling, thinking, brain functioning and the awareness of oneself and the world around (Baniel, 2012).

ATM lessons may be thought of as puzzles for the student's nervous system. To solve such movement puzzles, one needs to differentiate and try out new possibilities. A child is capable of improving the ability to detect little nuances in movements which leads to learning; however, if these small differences cannot be perceived, learning cannot occur (Aberle, 2010). Wright (2004) emphasized that the focus for children should not be the correctness of the execution of the moves; instead, the goal for them should be to learn to control themselves through experimentation, trial and error. By sensing, feeling, and being aware, children acquire new motion and gradually reach the full motion functionality (Koch, 2004). In this process, we must not limit the children or students, but let them explore and learn (Pikler, 1988 as cited in Koch, 2004). Improving awareness of one's own motion is a lifelong process which promotes and reveals creativity and joy to life. It allows the individual to fulfil the desired potential (Persch, 2004).

As shown in the introduction, the improvement of self-awareness is an important topic for adults and children. According to the literature, it has a positive influence both on the organization of our movement and on our self-esteem. The FM in public schools is not an officially introduced method, but teachers who are also FP may very well involve the method in normal classes. The FM is already part of the program in some private elementary

schools and schools for children with special needs. Existing literature mostly contains descriptions of using the FM with children with special needs, while experiences of FP working with regular children are not to be found. For this reason, the author considers this thesis to be empirical, explorative research.

3 Method

In this chapter, the selected qualitative research method is described in more detail. On the basis of precise research questions an explanation of sampling process, development of the interview, guidance of it, as well as processes of transcription and analysis of data shall be presented.

3.1 Qualitative interview

The qualitative interview is a suitable method of sampling data in fields in which the interview subjects describe their personal experiences and life events in a subjective way (Flick, 2009). This method was selected due to the nature of the topic, as it was expected that the subjects would be describing their personal experiences, perception of the situation, interests, feelings and thoughts. It was found to be the most suitable way to collect data for the topic, since the FM is not common in primary schools and consequently few teachers have experience in this field. The focus was on how does the introduction of the FM into primary schools affect children and what would be an optimal way for the implementation of the FM in the primary school environment. For this purpose, the idea was to collect experiences and anecdotes from FP, who have worked in the past or still actively work on introducing the FM in school. The qualitative research method keeps the options for conversation open and is therefore the most appropriate. Evaluation of the interviews was carried out in concordance with the structural content analysis according to Mayring (2010). Here, the deductive approach was chosen. The predefined topics of the interview were adjusted during analysis to the least possible extent. This method is particularly suitable because it allows coverage of all the topics which are considered to be important, while at the same time leaves room to explore other unforeseen topics. New categories were established for these additional cases.

3.2 Guided interview

For the purpose of the research, it was decided to gather qualitative data by means of a so-called guided interview. This form of an interview determines in advance the fields of interest and selects the questions to be used to guide the conversation, while still giving us an option to ask additional questions if a certain topic appears to be interesting. It allows for a more relaxed conversation, but having the topics predetermined simplifies later coding and comparison of data (Flick, 2009). After analysing the literature based on collected data and with the goal of gathering the answers to the research questions, a guided interview was composed. The interview comprised 4 topics (described below). These represent the basis

for the flow of the interview and the later analysis. In addition, this basis eases the comparison of interviews of each interviewee (Mayring, 2010).

The main themes of the interviews are: demographical data, effect of the FM intervention on school children, introduction of the FM in school and the conduct of intervention.

Demographical data

In this section the interviewees introduced themselves. They were asked to talk about how long and how actively they have been practicing the FM, about their education for their profession besides the FM and what is their preferred method to work with children – ATM or FI. In addition, they were asked how often and why children come into their practice/office, how often they use the FM outside their usual practice, for example in the school or health care centre, and what is the purpose of that.

Effect of the FM intervention on children in school

Effect of the FM intervention on children in school is one of the central topics of this study. Another question was what are in their opinion the general effects of the FM on children in school. Based on the literature search, further questions about the effects of the method were split into two parts: 1.) change of self-awareness and how this affects a child's quality of movement and posture while sitting in the classroom, and 2.) socio-psychological aspects and the effect on school child‘s learning and concentration skills in school.

Introduction of the FM in school

Introduction of the FM in school is another important topic of this study, since conduction of the intervention plays a crucial role in achieving a positive effect on the children, teachers and parents and enables further application of the FM in schools. To acquire accurate data about successful execution of intervention, a question was posed about the duration of the intervention, presentation of the method to the pupils, teachers and parents, necessary adjustments to conduction of the method in comparison to when working with adults, about possible negative factors and potential introduction of the method into the healthcare system.

Other

With this item, the interviewees were given an opportunity to address topics they found fitting to the conversation and to add additional anecdotal material.

3.3 Sampling

The goal of theoretical sampling is the selection of suitable candidates for the interview based on topic at hand. Flick (2009) emphasizes that in qualitative research, the sampling

is usually purposeful. In this study, the sampling was aimed at selecting the interview partners with relevant experiences. In addition, he stresses that interviewees also need to be willing to set aside some of their own time for the interview, to be able to reflect on the experience and verbalize it. The goal was to find different points of view among the selected statements, which required a diverse set of conversation partners; these were selected within the framework of the inclusion and exclusion criteria listed below. In addition to contrasting background – education for their profession, we also included both genders.

3.3.1 Inclusion criteria

Suitable candidates for the interview were defined as certified Feldenkrais practitioners in accordance with International Feldenkrais Federation, with the FM representing their main occupation for more than 5 years. In addition, it was also important that they independently conduct the Feldenkrais intervention, or have done so in the past, in primary or high school. Despite the fact that the target group was elementary school children, high school children were also included, due to the poor representation of suitable FM practitioners and similarities between conduction of intervention and its effects. Within this study, it was desired to include a diverse group of interviewees and ensure representation of both genders. With the purpose of acquiring as many potential candidates as possible, it was allowed for the interviews to be conducted in English, German or Slovenian language. An important factor was also the willingness of the candidates to participate in this research.

3.3.2 Exclusion criteria

An unsuitable candidate for the interview was defined as the FM practitioner, who does not conduct the FM as his main profession or performs it less than 5 years or does/did not conduct FM interventions with groups of children in the elementary or high school.

3.3.3 Interview partners

Seven candidates have been contacted in person, via phone or email, of which three satisfied the criteria and agreed to participate. In person, two female candidates were invited, and they were both eager to participate. With the provision of precise information about the purpose and topics of the interview, three Feldenkrais practitioners, with whom we had no previous acquaintance, were contacted via email, of which one male was willing to participate. One of the contacted candidates did not identify himself with the criteria and the third female declined the interview. Two other female candidates, contacted via phone, also declined due to mismatching requirements.

The interviews were conducted with the three candidates, two female candidates and one male candidate. All three were Feldenkrais practitioners and the FM represented their main occupation for at least 5 years or more. After completion of the interviews, the search for candidates was finished, since it was concluded that the key group was sampled the research questions answered. Further data collection would may introduce new aspects, but respondents' answers were sufficient for the purposes and scale of this research question.

Person 1 (P1)

The first interlocutor was a male from Germany. He has been a FP for the past 20 years and this has been his main occupation in the past years. He took early retirement, before which he taught physical education and art at a high school where he regularly applied the FM in his lessons. Nowadays, he engages with the FM only privately, so he does not teach any group lessons with children, but occasionally individual lessons. Even though he had worked in a high school, it was nevertheless decided to interview him, since his experiences seemed rich and his knowledge might also be applicable to younger generations.

Person 2 (P2)

The interlocutor 2 was a female from the United States. She has been practising the FM for over 30 years as her main occupation. She is a psychologist with experience in family therapy. Mostly at the beginning of her career, she volunteered at primary schools and at schools for children with special needs. She does not teach group lessons for children anymore, but she still does lessons with individuals.

Person 3 (P3)

Person 3 was an Austrian female. She finished Feldenkrais education seven years ago and this has been her main occupation ever since. She studied sociology and is a dancer. During her Feldenkrais studies, she had already held lessons for children with special needs and incorporated the ATM lessons into the dance lessons. She has been working with children in elementary and secondary school for many years. Currently, she does with children one ATM per week.

3.3.4 The course of the interview

Two interviews were conducted in English and the third one in German by the request of the interviewee, because he felt that it would be easier for him to express in his mother tongue more precisely. The first interview took place at the premises of the Feldenkrais Institute in Vienna and was recorded with the "Easy Voice Recorder" application for Android phone with a duration of 90 minutes. The second interview was conducted using a computer

via the Skype application and was recorded with the programs built-in sound recorder. It lasted 120 minutes. The third interview was held, in accordance with the wish of the interviewee, in front of the Feldenkrais education group of students at the Feldenkrais Institute Vienna, which accompanied the course of the training. The interview lasted 45 minutes.

The course of the interview and the two main topics, effects and application, was explained to the interviewees beforehand. A few minutes were devoted to introducing them to the topics to produce a pleasant atmosphere for the conversation. After the interview, the interviewees commented on the interview and the topic.

3.4 Processing of data and data analysis method

Each interview was recorded and transcribed word by word, leaving out the fillers. The pace and loudness of speech were not noted since it was assumed to be irrelevant for this study. The results of the interviews were analysed using structuring content analysis according to Mayring (2010). The use of categories originating from pre-existing models or from the material itself are characteristic for this type of analysis. Thus, the researcher first formulates (deductive) categories which are derived from their own knowledge and knowledge acquired from the literature reading. The created categories were continually compared with the research data and adaptations were made accordingly, if necessary. The interviews were carefully read, whilst marking relevant statements with different colours / codes for statements related to the topics of “effects on children” and for topics related to “application”. All key statements were placed in a spreadsheet, using a dedicated sheet for each of the two topics. Each statement was then coded so that the essence was extracted and transformed into a shorter sentence (coding 1) which summarized the key information of the statement. Each statement was assigned a sub-category, which was partly determined on the basis of research questions. If necessary, a new sub-category was created, when none of the existing ones complied with the statement. A precise definition was assigned to each subcategory, which was then used for comparison. The process is demonstrated in Table 1 for the category “application”.

Table 1: Example of building subcategories

Statement	Coding 1	Subcategory	Definition
What I do is the same in the adult classes and the children classes, I really try to be with the group. I try to observe the group, try to see what they need and try to see what the individuals need. This is pretty hard sometimes, especially with kids. What does this individual need right now and can the whole group follow, or will I lose the whole group if I go with this particular thing I see right now. (P3, L. 627)	Practitioner needs to be with the group, observe the group and see what they need at the moment.	Role of practitioner	Important aspects of practitioner working in the school
I'm playing a lot of games with them, just referring to, and showing where is what, and then playing with the ability of movement that you have there. Also touching each other and sensing what the shoulder blade does while you're lifting the arm for example, or what is the pelvis doing while you're walking, walking after each other, observing the others, trying to do the same. (P3, L. 81)	Showing and feeling body parts and playing with abilities of movement, sensing, touching in a game.	Differences in work with children	Possibilities to adjust the lesson to children, to make it more fun, interesting ...

Generalizations of summaries of the statements were created for each sub-category, and the ones which were repeated were removed. After completing the analysis, the relevance of newly created categories in the interviews was checked again (Mayring, 2010). The process is demonstrated in Table 2 for the topic “possible negative factors“.

Table 2: Example of generalisation of coding

Coding 1	Generalisation	Definition
Negative influence would have a too big group, because there is not a relationship established. Optimal would be 8-12, so there are social interactions between them, but is not too big. (P3)	Too big group, optimal is 8-12 to so the practitioner can establish a good relationship, so they feel safe. Similar abilities, so everyone has the right amount of challenge. They should not have a feeling of being observed. The room should have right temperature and the light should not come from above.	Factors which could have negative impact on the FM intervention
There should be just the right amount of challenge during the lesson. If the children in the group have very different abilities, some might get bored or it can get too hard for the others. (P3)		
Children should have good relationship with the FP, feel safe, have challenge. The room should have right temperature, the light should not come directly from the ceiling. Being observed is a negative factor too. (P3)		

Generalizations of each interview were then compared with other interviews and grouped into the final generalized generalization (Mayring, 2000). This was done by collecting all of the generalized statements of an individual that have not appeared in other interviews. Lastly, the statements were interpreted based on the research question.

Due to their size the transcription and coding system are not included in the appendix but can be obtained from the author.

4 Results

In the next chapters, results of individual topics corresponding to the main categories are described in detail. For clarity, subcategories are accompanied by excerpts from the interviews.

4.1 The impact of the introduction of FM on children in primary school

The first major category identified is the influence of the FM intervention on children in primary school. Contained topics are changes noted in children when Feldenkrais practitioners practiced the FM with children in elementary school, their experience and their personal opinions based on their observations.

The corresponding sub-categories are:

1. *Holistic impact*; which different areas are affected while using FM with children? to what extent is the FM a holistic method which affects the child in different areas.

2. *Self-awareness*; how after the FM intervention a child's self-consciousness for own body, movement, feeling and behaviour changes.

3. *Socio-psychological aspects*; changes observed in the behaviour of children, towards themselves, self-confidence, self-reliance, interest in novelty, learning ability, concentration, performance at school and in communication with others.

4. *Physiological aspects;* observed physical changes and changes in motoric functions.

4.1.1 Holistic impact: *“All children benefit, each in his individual way.”* (P1, L. 476)

Aware movement develops the brain

Interviewees agreed that while working with the FM, i.e. bringing awareness to movement and learning through movement, there is a constant effect on the brain development. *"Because learning to move is also a neuro-physiological development at the same time."* (P1, L. 117) P1 stated that the neuro-physiological development represents the overall background of the way the FM works. Simultaneously with the development of physical abilities, one also develops psychological and social components. *"A brain is not changing or developing only on the motor level, but a brain always basically develops in its entirety. So also, psychological components, social components, that is the whole background what human being is. That is where the Feldenkrais method works."* (P1, L. 153) P1 added: *"We are constantly working with Feldenkrais on the brain. This works on different levels."* (P1, L. 425) With the FM, one cannot classify lessons according to what kind of effects they have on an individual. Due to the influence on the brain, it simultaneously influences various parts

of the person. Varying how we act and use ourselves in new or already known situations affects how we feel in new situations. *"Because you can't just say: "My foot, or my leg has learned on its own to move better", because you're going to use your leg to shape your life also in other contexts. So, all in all these things always seem to be holistic and the effects differ."* (P1, L. 158)

The FM simultaneously affects the development of the whole personality

P1 believed that the FM simultaneously affects a variety of motorical, social, and psychological characteristics of children. *"The Feldenkrais method works first, as I say, on the pure motoric level, improvement of motor skills. Next of course, on the mental level."* (P1, L. 147) He added that it thus facilitates whole personal development. *"Well, you could put that on the meta-level, on the widest level, and that's personality development. So, development or improvement of the general, the entire personal development in all areas of human being, in all areas of human existence. Whether that is on the cognitive level, or on the motoric level, whether that is on the psycho-social level."* (P1, L. 498) The interviewees experienced that due to the FM children learn to be i) more careful and helpful with each other, *"the group was much more in tune, and much more taking care of each other"* (P3, L. 99); ii) concentrated, motivated for learning and their grades in school improve, *"children who feel comfortable in the classroom, develop differently in all school activities"* (P1, L. 151); iii) aware of themselves, *"you sense yourself and the space within you, sense others and relationship you have to others."* (P3, L. 186); iv) self-confident, have better communication with others, react in a calmer way, are confident and patient, *"if children are in peace with themselves, it's easy for them to be in peace with others"* (P3, L. 231). All three interviewees stated, that the FM develops the whole personality.

The FM has a positive influence invariant to the purpose for which the method was used

The FM is used for a wide variety of purposes, it triggers an individual response and affects various areas. P1 described his own project in which it was examined how the FM affects different parameters for children with different outstanding traits. *"I can only say it this way ... all children have benefited each in their own individual way."* (P1, L 476) P1 emphasised that each individual responds to the lesson differently, depending on his physical and psycho-social characteristics, and previous experiences. It is hard to predict what an individual's response to the FL (Feldenkrais lesson) will be. *"The effects of Feldenkrais at school are very, very, very multi-layered and individual."* (P1, L. 199) P1 described: *"If you have an ATM group of 15 people, the effects are different for and appear differently to each*

individual. One comes out of an ATM with absolute power, with a force, and the other is very tired, deep inside, lost in thought." (P1, L. 200) P3 concurred that each individual recognizes the effects of the lessons differently, for example some people are more attentive to the parts of themselves and they will notice changes in their posture. For instance, a big change in the chest or a big change in the way one perceives standing and the relation of the feet to the floor, while others notice a change in their mood. *“I asked the kids after class, what do they feel now, what has changed and there were very different answers. Some would say they feel calmer and easier, some were saying they feel more active now. They wanted to go outside in the park. One would say I feel very happy, they want to laugh, and play now. Some would really refer to a body part. What feels easier now, or I feel lifted here now.”* (P3, L. 617) Each child benefits and develops from the FM in a different way.

Better awareness of one's own body positively affects comprehension of school subject matter

P1 pointed out that the knowledge that children need in school very much relates to the perception of oneself and capability to perform motoric functions. Especially with how these functions could be carried out. *"A doctor from University in Göttingen said; "Mathematical understanding and spatial orientation could be learned while climbing on trees and not on the board."* (P1, L.577) In addition to mathematics where one can observe correlation between capabilities in school and awareness in space, positive effects are also noticeable in writing. P1 explained that orientation in space is necessary if a child wants to learn to write. *"If you write a font ... just as a small example, a small A, I have to start at the bottom left, then go with an upward stroke to the top right. Here are spatial dimensions that ultimately have to do with body as well."* (P1, L. 581)

P1 stated that the FM encourages children to learn about themselves and their movements and emphasized that children prefer this way of learning. “*They are also more alert and interested in learning the movement.”* (P1, L. 565) He added that the introduction of FL and consequently the development of motoric functions, the capabilities in school may improve. P2 shared a similar experience. *“I had a conversation with the teachers about their writing skills and their math skills, to see if there was any correlation between their inability to find where they were in space and follow those directions. Oftentimes, there was a correlation and sometimes it would actually improve without targeting the problem because I didn't know the problem.”* (P2, L. 72)

Children learn to solve problems of movement in various ways, which is also applicable in other situations in life

P1 thought it to be important that children learn with FM how to solve problems. He came to a conclusion that through the FM, students learn about their own body and movement, and solve problems of movement. Children can use ideas from FM in various ways, when trying to solve problems of movement, as well as with tackling other problems in life. P1 continued that each ATM lesson is a movement puzzle which every student attempt to solve as best he can. Each lesson may be completely different for an individual child, due to varying predispositions. Therefore, each child is encouraged to find an own path leading to a solution and thus learns to solve own challenges independently. These learning processes are also a school for life. In P1's opinion the FM draws parallels to how children encounter and need to resolve problems in their own lives. *"Feldenkrais is to me like a situation in life. I have a problem and now the question is, how do I solve it."* (P1, L. 736) He adds: *"There are different ways. These different ways ..., this is again Feldenkrais to me. It is the application of Feldenkrais to make it immediately concrete."* (P1, L. 734)

4.1.2 Self-awareness: "Their gaze goes internal and they start to sense and feel." (P2, L. 47)

Children who are more aware of themselves better listen to own wishes, needs, and goals

Interviewees agreed, that in the FM, a children learn to listen to themselves, their own body and movement. Children learn to recognize what is best for them. *"A person who feels better, who thinks clearer and more differentiated, who is capable of expressing himself, who differentiates between the external stimuli and the inner own stimuli, can also assert himself better. He is able to definitely differentiate and perceive."* (P1, L. 434) According to P2, with the FM children get a feeling of self-presence and self-awareness, which helps them to know themselves. P2 emphasized that children learn playfully working with movement, balance and spatial awareness. During the FM lesson they become more aware of their movement. *"You can see in the child's face and in the response to awareness through movement that their gaze goes internal and they start to sense and feel just like adults do and to feel the puzzle and sort of the magnitude of their sensations in their nervous system."* (P2, L. 45) P3 learned that it enables a child to cope better in different situations and react according to his needs. When children know themselves and their movement better, they better understand their wishes and needs. *"That he realizes: I'm not feeling well at the moment, I'm not letting it get to me right now."* (P3, L. 438) P3 highlighted that knowing oneself helps children to remain calm in the growing-up process and trust themselves more while their abilities and challenges change. *"Getting to know oneself in all these*

complexities, so one can really be oneself, in relation to all the changes that are going on." (P3, L. 335) P1 concurred that it is vital that children learn to sense themselves, that they become more sensitive in recognizing their movement and changes in their body. P1 accentuated that this helps children to achieve goals in other areas of life as well. *"But what was very important was the sensitization and the perception. My main focus became that children learn to feel what they are doing, as Feldenkrais said, "If you know what you are doing, you can do what you want.""* (P1, L. 79)

Being aware of oneself positively affects social and emotional characteristics

P3 stated that being aware of oneself is an important component of sociability. She explained, that the better children know themselves, the more they will be aware of when they need peace and when they want to be sociable. In addition, she mentioned that when children learn to sense themselves, they are more able to better control their reactions, even when things are tough. *"First they become more aware of what they cannot do as easily, so they can refer to it, they can sense it and then they can react to it, instead of getting angry about it."* (P3, L. 110)

Interviewees shared a few ideas for children, teachers and parents, on how to regulate the child's emotions. P2 named one possibility, which is to focus on for example person's touch of left hand on the right arm in order to connect with oneself. By moving attentively and focusing ourselves on a particular movement, we are capable of achieving change of our emotional state. *"If you train a child or an adult for that matter, when they're starting to feel upset, to put their hand on their leg and notice the contact to themselves and to sense the hand sliding toward the knee and away, it completely shifts the emotional state."* (P2, L. 127) P3 found it important to teach children to learn how to recognize their warning signs before they reach an emotional outbreak and learn how to cope with it. *"Children also sense what is happening when they can't continue, they sense it before, and they will find different possibilities to react to that and they can help themselves. They can address it, so they can say: "I'm sorry, but can I just get up for a moment?", before they start to disturb class."* (P3, L. 93)

With the FM children become more focused on themselves, they can relax and find it more joyful to move

P2 said that reducing the speed of movement helps children to become more focused on themselves and helps them find easier aspects of the movement. *"We go through the process of slowing things down and making distinctions and then the lessons done, in*

themselves begin to link those newly found aspects of movement until the movement becomes easier." (P2, L. 53) P3 pointed out how children learn through the FM and that there is no need to care about the right or wrong movement. Children learn to relax during the FM lesson and just observe and feel themselves. *"The kids are coming from school and from parents, where they are used to behave well and do everything right and want them to help, or they do "misbehave". I really don't relate it like this is a good or a bad child, but in relationship to what the child has learned how to react to surrounding."* (P3, L. 205) P3 said that children have with FM a safe shelter for learning about themselves and testing their abilities. P3 found it to be important that they learn that they are free to move and do not need to care for how the movement should be, but to focus on themselves, and with which movements they are comfortable. *"It's also giving confidence and trust in people around you."* (P3, L. 211) P1 added that it is fun for children to bring awareness to their movement and learn to move differently and coordinated. *"The moment a person learns to feel differentiated movements, so to feel and sense coordination. For example, the person starts the Feldenkrais lesson with some initial movement and then he notices, the movement changes to the effect that it becomes easier, gets bigger, becomes freer. When children feel that, it gives them joy."* (P1, L.252) P3 stated that self-awareness of children improves in accordance to themselves, when they learn to have better self-reflection and perceive and feel themselves better, as well as for their surroundings and people around them. *"This is what I like to focus on in the Feldenkrais method also, that you sense yourself and the space within you, sense others and relationship you have to others."* (P3, L. 180)

Early introduction with the FM leads to improved self-awareness

P3 thought that it is good for children if they start to practice self-awareness lessons as soon as possible, because those children who have had previous experience will have a better perception. *"Children which visited the classes before already know how to do the scan, they may relate to the contact they are making to the floor and they can sense something."* (P3, L. 130) P3 shared her experience on how there was a big difference between children who had previously been doing the lessons of perceiving their own body and those who encounter FLs for the first time. *"The others, it is like just one surface, it is just like one whole back, there is no differentiation in between. They were also not aware of what are the others doing, it took them much longer to be able to sense oneself and the others, who are not just next to them."* (P3, L. 131)

P3 mentioned that after the FM lessons children feel the difference and they know when they would need another FM lesson. She had had an experience with a young boy from a

primary school, who, after he had visited lessons and had already completed all the treatments, noticed that he needed support again. "*He said something like: "I haven't been at Feldenkrais classes for a long time, I really miss it, I don't feel myself anymore."* (P3, L. 325)

4.1.3 Socio-psychological aspects: *"Getting to know oneself in all these complexities, so one can really be oneself. (P3, L. 335)*

Positive development of self-esteem and self-confidence

In the opinion of the interviewees, the FM has a great influence on the mental state of an individual. *"I had a student who was a refugee child. He wrote something that moved me very, very much: "He wishes every person, every child, to have such experiences with Feldenkrais, because they just let that free feeling happen, because they give you such a good feeling." I think that's simply that and it makes a man wealthy."* (P1, L. 260) P1 learned that practicing the FM influences self-esteem of children and helps them to develop. *"What Feldenkrais makes, what it does with self-esteem and self-sensation, with self-worth, that develops people. It gives a good feeling and could be an enormous enrichment."* (P1, L. 728) P2 shared her opinion that an individual's self-esteem is related to his confidence, the feeling of being capable, of mastery. She mentioned that self-esteem and mastery are *"really coupled together".* (P2, L.118) In P2's opinion FM teaches self-control, self-presence and self-mastery, which influences one's self-esteem. *"In the Feldenkrais lessons we take something that isn't very clear or not exactly understandable or maybe just difficult and then by the end of the lesson the person can feel the quality of self-control and mastery. I would say every lesson somehow gives you a sense of self presence and self-mastery."* (P2, L. 113)

FM helps children to recognize and accept the limits of their capabilities which they can then further develop

P3 emphasized that with the FM, a child learns of own abilities and of what is difficult or impossible. She explained that a children develops a sense of their borders and limits, which helps them to feel more secure and become self-confident. *"I think the child becomes more self-confident because he knows his limits, so he can be super clear about what can I do and what I can't do yet. This gives a feeling of confidence."* (P3, L. 198) P3 stated that it is good for children to know their own limits; however, children learn that they do not need to attach to their limits. *"You're maybe not allowed to stay out longer than 6:00 in the evening. This is the border you have right now, it's going to change. Or you can't do your hair on your*

own, this is something you can't do right now but it's going to change." (P3, L. 219) P3 added that children learn to accept the momentary limitations, but not as a long-term state. A child learns through the FM that these limits are not fixed. *"There are so many limits we have in our lives, which we have to adapt to, and we have to make our peace with it, but we don't have to stay with it, we don't have to stick with it."* (P3, L. 221) P3 points out that children slowly realize that they will learn things that they cannot yet do and can watch the progress without feeling incapable. *"You sense the borders and then you have ability to sense changes without trying to do it better. You start to trust the process."* (P3, L. 226)

Children are able to establish a better relationship with classmates, teachers, and family

According to P2, the FM offers many things, but there are still some fundamental aspects that we gain from practising. *"One is self-respect and respect of others."* (P2, L. 188) P2 emphasized that through gentle touch children learn to assert themselves and to perceive, respect and understand the differences of other people. *"Really understanding sensitivity and touch, you know what it means to make contact with another person like this. They learn gentle contact and that's a really beautiful thing."* (P2, L. 189) They also learn how it feels to be touched respectfully.

P3 explained that when children learn to better recognize their emotions, feelings, and sensations, they are able to better recognize these in other people, which encourages their care for others. P3 learned, that children were more attentive to others. She said, that some children do not want to hit or push classmates, but it still happens due to poor control over their own body while running around or because they want social contact with classmates, and it is awkward to start talking or because of not recognizing their own feelings. *"I experienced after those classes that the group was much more in tune, and much more taking care of each other. This was also the feedback I received from the teacher."* (P3, L. 96) P3 explained that it will be much easier for children who are self-confident and satisfied with themselves to be in contact with others. This way they will be more patient and calmer in contact with others. *"If you are in peace with yourself, it's easy to be in peace with others. But if you have a bad day and somebody gives you a bad look, you won't be that patient."* (P3, L. 230)

P3 found that if children are self-confident, they communicate better with others. This occurs in a school where children spend a large part of the day in large groups, where children might not all the time want to be in contact with others and need time for themselves when they distance themselves a bit from the group. P3 accentuated that it is extremely important that a child recognizes when he does not feel social, so that such situations do not end with

quarrels, shouting, or overreacting. P3 believed that a child who knows own emotions well, is aware of them and is self-confident in different emotional states, will be able to communicate this in a calm manner to others. *“They are in peace with themselves, they know themselves ... if they have a bad day and they feel it, they are able to say: “Look, I'm not in the mood right now, please just leave me alone, I need my peace.”* (P3, L. 236)

Interviewees agreed that when the children are more aware of themselves, self-confident, they better know their borders and take more care of each other, also the relationships between the teachers and children and the behaviour between children improves. *"The whole communication structure in the class changed."* (P1, L. 182) P1 mentioned that communication and social learning in the class improves. *"That opened everything, changed colossally. So, we had very positive effects in social learning, in social interaction, among each other, in the group and, of course, in the learning behaviour as well."* (P1, L. 184) There are also less fights in the class due to the FM, which helps the teachers. P3 had an experience where FL were, first by chance and then on purpose, rescheduled from Friday to Wednesday, due to positive effects. *“Shifting this to the middle of the week was very helpful for everyone. The teachers felt better as there was nearly no fights after we changed that.”* (P3, L. 275) P3 stated that it is hard for children to stay in large groups 5 days straight, from Monday to Friday, which consequently leads to more and more arguments towards the end of the week. The FL helped them to stay focused on themselves, which helped to calm the situation in the classroom.

P1 noticed changes in family situations after applying the FM. According to his experience there was more calmness and the communication got better. *"He did not argue with his mother any more but went to his room and said: "I’ll do Feldenkrais." Nobody knows what he did there."* (P1, L. 171) P2 concurred that when a family or a caregiver with a child attended the FL, the attitude in the family changed. After the ATM lesson, the communication completely transformed. *“You would see that they're in this new state of calmness and if they were having difficulty with communication before, it would dissolve.”* (P2, L. 302) P2 named this an example of self-regulation and emotional change from the ATM.

Easier learning and development of all potentials with the FM

P3 stressed that after the introduction of the FM children were able to learn more easily. She explained that a child's better self-esteem might also contribute to the ease of learning, as it may be easier for the child to calm down and focus on the subject. *“Learning is possible for the brain, when it's calm, when it's in neutral place. Because the neurons fire easier and*

the connection to different areas of the brain is easier, it has more access." (P3, L. 251) She added that if children are self-confident, they better calm their mind. *"If you're not self-confident, you're always in kind of a danger mode, always someone could come up and tell you: "You're not okay.", and then the whole world gets upside down. Your mind will not be easy to access, because you are in high tonus situation."* (P3, L. 247) She concluded that a child who constantly feels endangered will often overreact in an unexpected situation. P1 experienced, that after the FL, children are more focused, understand the learning process more and hence learn and improve in school subjects faster. *"Children were more concentrated, able to work better, had better work endurance, were more open to learning, got on with learning better, and got along socially better with their classmates"* (P1, L. 392).

P1, who is a *Physical Education* (PE) teacher, emphasized that children get more joy with movement through the FL, they become more flexible and the development of their movement is greater. According to his experiences, they get to know their body and they learn to use it better which helps them to lose the fear of movement and to experiment with structures of movement. *"Because they notice certain obstacles, that is, things that inhibit their movement, where it does not go any further, and this leads to, opens, and develops new forms of movement."* (P1, L. 243) P1 found that the pleasure and fun for the movement contribute to a greater interest in physical activities and better achievements of children in sports. He experienced that when children get excited, have fun and move more actively, their movement is more diverse and versatile and therefore they have more success in sports. *"Because they are interested, they are also more alert and interested in learning the movement. If they are able to better coordinate the movement elements, then they are also more successful."* (P1, L. 565) P1 stated that improvements are not only seen in sports but could extend to everything in life.

All interviewees shared stories of children, who in one way or another profited from the FM. The introduction of the FM had positive effects on children with ADHD, very shy children or other children which were included in normal classes but stood out in one way or another. After the Feldenkrais intervention, Feldenkrais practitioners, teachers or parents observed a lot of unusual, completely new events. P1, who organized a FM project in his school, mentioned several examples. He told about a boy who had a complicated family situation, was a problematic child in school and was always very active, got an individual lessons and group lessons within the FM project. *"The moment the boy was given Feldenkrais lessons, the situation in the family changed. What I experienced with the same boy when I was teaching art, he was sitting in his place for 45 minutes, the first time I had seen it, and made a fine work of art. That never happened before."* (P1, L. 173) P2 talked about a little active girl. *"A little girl, that was the most hyperactive child I've ever seen in my life, learned how*

to sit still for 3 minutes next to her parents and read a book. Before that she couldn't even look at her book." (P2, L. 244) P1 accentuated that not only very active children experience positive effects, even very shy children open up and become more social. *"Another girl was very reserved, never got involved in class somewhere. She had then met with another student at the other end of our city and went there alone with the public transport. She never did that before."* (P1, L177) Additionally interviewees mentioned, that FM influences how children see themselves and their self-image changes due to the FM. P3 mentioned a girl who had had a hard time focusing on herself. *"She was always making fun of herself, of the others, cursing a lot, referring to herself as a whore and as a slut. She didn't have a positive self-image. In a lesson I made an experiment and picked her to show something on her and showed different ways of moving and what she did was interesting. She felt like she's interesting, what she is doing is interesting. It worked nicely, she got interested, she started asking questions and there was something she could relate to in this moment."* (P3, L. 633)

P1 believed that the FM has an influence on an individual and on the society and that organizing and working on the FM projects in his school, combined with intercultural movement projects like dance, aikido and capoeira, moved the children. *“To get in touch, to listen better, to go inside themselves, to perceive and also to respect other people. These are essential elements that appeared there. That is important for our society.”* (P1, L. 448) According to P1 it is important that children learn to perceive the differences of other people and learn to understand differences as a fertilizing matter of our existence. He said, that society would work better if children and grown-ups learn to welcome and understand other opinions and people from other cultures.

4.1.4 Physiological aspects: *“It was no longer an abstract thing on a page, but it was real, live material.”* (P2, L. 182)

Children’s sensation of themselves improves with the FM

The interviewees shared opinion that the problem of children in elementary school is often related to the fact that children do not know and do not have a clear sensation of their constituent parts of themselves. *“Some kids are really having difficulties overstretching some of the joints a lot. If you don't have the idea of the joint that can only bent in one direction, you will use it differently. You will tend to overextend it prominently and harm it or joints around it.”* (P3, L. 72) P3 thought that poor awareness for their own body and its capabilities leads to unnatural movement which is not suitable for them. *“You don’t have any relationship to yourself. You know it on a piece of paper, but you don’t know it on yourself. You don't know how it feels like. You don't know how you use it."* (P3, L. 80)

Movement gets easier, better, and more fun with FM

Interviewees agreed, that when children become more attentive to their own motion, this provokes curiosity for their own body. Interviewees found that children learn about themselves more joyfully and with much more interest when they learn through movement. P2 found that children enjoyed, when they got to know themselves and their movement in a new way and they followed the lesson with much greater interest if it was designed so that children actively participated and, for example, found their scapula, examined their knees … *"It made it very personal, so it was no longer an abstract thing on a page, but it was real, live material."* (P2, L. 181). P2 added that in this way, subjects in school became much more interconnected and may be presented more comprehensively.

P1 shared his experience, that children are interested in why it is at once easier to move, and he emphasized that it is very important to explain why this happens to children. Children like to understand how the nerve connections in the brain, which cause the improvement of the movement, improve during ATM lessons. *"So, I just told them that there are new synaptic connections, because the question is, why can you all of a sudden move better?"* (P1, L. 230) In P1's opinion, children enjoyed *PE* at schools more when conducted with the Feldenkrais principles. In that way, through exploration of their own motion, they developed their physical abilities. *"The children have evolved, they have learned, they have become more mobile, they have learned things which they were not able to do before."* (P1, L. 113) P1 explained to children that neuronal planes learn to cooperate better which is why one starts to move better.

P3 did dance experiments with children. Together with children she did movement explorations with FM and then they went back to the dancing. In opinion of P3, after the FL with children, their movement was much better organized and their awareness of the space around them improved. She emphasized that most importantly, children understand and felt themselves better, which in turn leads to better movement. *"Their own movement was much smoother, and more coordinated, and their awareness, what is going on around them and their awareness of the space was much better."* (P3, L. 120)

4.2 Implementation of FM in elementary schools

The second main category describes the different ways of introducing and implementing FM into primary schools. According to the experiences of the interviewees, important aspects were gathered, which should be taken into consideration by those conducting FLs in elementary schools.

The following sub-categories were identified:

1. *Different approaches for the work with children:* different approaches in conduction FL for children in comparison to work using FM with adults.

2. Reasonable implementation: information about the organization of lessons, time structure and duration.

3. Long sitting times should be avoided: FM has a limited effect if children still spend most of the day sitting.

4. Sensitisation for FM for teacher and parents: the best way for a FP to present the FM to parents and school teachers. What is the role of teachers and parents, how to involve them in the FM intervention?

5. *The role of the practitioner:* important features and tasks of the FP working with primary school children.

6. *Possibility of integration of the FM in the public health system:* opinions about the easiest integration of the FM into primary school and potential inclusion in the public health system.

4.2.1 Different approaches for the work with children

Going back and forth between "Power out" games and awareness tasks enables children to stay focused and to connect the observed movement into movement function

Interviewees were of the same opinion, that FLs for children differ from FLs for adults. P3 advised that FLs for children should be a combination of child's play and an ATM. The FL with children should be much livelier and more diverse compared to FL for adults, because children get bored more easily than adults. P3 explained, that children on the other hand, are much more flexible and have a lot more energy, and the practitioner needs to make it possible for them to release it. "*With the kids, I really experienced that moving in a totally different way and not in a slow and very aware way in between, is helpful to gain awareness, because they can power out in between and they can relate to, they have a function to what we are doing on the floor.*" (P3, L. 115) P3 stressed that the lessons should be playful with many variations, more complex to retain children's attention and keep them busy, a combination of workout and awareness movements.

P3 described that FPs are able to switch during the lesson from lively games which allow children to release their energy (later in text "Power out"), and then do games of awareness and body scans, where a child calms down and feels his body reacting to the exercise. She found that this helps children to focus on different parts and functions of themselves. *"I usually go back and forth, like do some real workout movement, so they can feel that I am*

moving, I am sweating and I'm breathing, and my heart is pounding and then we do something like falling on the floor and sensing how heavy one can be." (P3, L. 48) P3 continued, that after the children are breathing deeper and feel a faster heartbeat, the practitioner may direct their attention to the changes that have occurred. She added that this opens up new topics related to the functions of child's body and physiology, which the FP is able to better present to children, due to child's own movement experience. *"I do it a little bit more active with the kids and I have this scan after they really have practised something, because otherwise they're all bored and play around. I go back and forth and then we do some movements and we see how the movement goes and then we lie on the floor again, so this is how we do it. It is a lot of fun."* (P3, L. 48) P1 concurred and suggested that after children perform aware movement on the floor, they may use it as a function in a more powerful movement. P1 encouraged FPs to be innovative and play with nonsense, funny movements which make children laugh. "*These are things, where you ma experiment with kids, where you can laugh with them. This are wonderful things.*" (P1, L. 704)

Awareness questions improve a child's self-image

The interviewees agreed that the kids like to learn more about themselves. P2 believed that self-awareness games allow children to develop a self-image of their body parts. She suggested to let them feel different parts of themselves, play with the movement and find the balance, and to ask them awareness questions. In her opinion, children are often very interested in their movement and are very engaged in those lessons. "*The lesson includes for example fooling around with the legs (showing the movement of the leg while holding the heel with the hand) and reaching with the heels toward the sky and then at the same time, where is your elbow; is on the outside of the knee or is it on the inside of the knee, are you on your left sitting bone, or your right sitting bone.*" (P2, L. 60). P2 advised the FP to be patient while asking awareness questions, in order to allow children to slowly become more adapt and capable of playing with movements.

At the beginning as long as children are not yet familiar with the Feldenkrais method, P3 advised that the FM lesson may start with familiar, common games in which practitioner places a lot of awareness questions. *"In the beginning usually very, very simple improvisational games, which is stop-go, playing music and when the music stops you just have to freeze. So, you sense if you're always freezing in the same position. It is already playing with sensations; do you always stand on the same leg? But then I play the music again and they just run and play around. Then I continue doing this game, but when the music stops, they should fall on the floor and here is also the question; "Can you fall on the*

floor without hurting yourself? How do you do that? Which position do you lie in?" Then I have them watch each other, so half of the group will watch, or we would all do it, and then half of the group remains on the floor and the other half gets up and see how are the other lying on the floor. "Did they find different solutions than I did? How would they fall?" (P3, L. 492) P3 found that in this way, children slowly get used to observing themselves, their movement, various parts of themselves, and how these relate to each other. She suggested that FPs should therefore introduce various movement functions through play, such as walking, dancing, running and then lying on the floor and paying attention to themselves. P3 emphasized the importance of lying on the floor for children. While lying on the floor, children slowly get to know themselves by observing how they are lying. She explained how they learn to read the information about their position and muscle tension that they receive as a feedback from the floor. *"This is how we start this awareness process contacting the floor." (P3, L. 501)* P1 suggested that while children are lying on the floor, the practitioner may do a normal scanning, and let them observe themselves and compare their feelings in different parts of themselves: *"How long are your legs, how do they lie, which leg is further rotated outwards, is there an arm that lies closer to the body."* (P1, *L*. 519) P1 thought that FPs could already connect awareness questions with the motor functions of everyday life. *"Here, take the ball and throw it with your arm. Why are you taking that arm and why not the other? These are things that children are interested in." (P1, L. 522)* According to P1's experience, children learn to recognize the movement functions they use throughout their everyday life. P3 said that these could then be used by the FP in a form of a short ATM lesson. „*Than I would just start with one short ATM, like 15 minutes, in relation to the rolling process that we were doing before.*" (P3, L. 505)

P1 accentuated that in addition to asking awareness questions, it is also very important that children understand what is behind these questions, what is the purpose of FLs. "*If you cannot explain the background, it will stay in the black box and it will be foreign for the children.* "(P1, L. 524) P1 shared his experience that if a FP explains the background, this increases the interest of children for their movement and awareness of it.

Learning from different perspectives i.e. feeling, seeing, touching brings children joy and interest for learning

P3 learned that through play, children learn about themselves, how they fell the connections within them and how to use it. "*I'm playing a lot of games with children, just referring to and showing where is what, and then playing with the ability of movement that you have there.*" (P3, L. 81) P3 advised that FPs could make an interactive lesson through play by bringing

children in social interaction and body contact with one another. "*It is very interesting that the kids always want to get in contact with others somehow. They are nosy about each other. Which is a lot of fun, very natural and easy.*" (P3, L. 424) P3 added that child's desire for interpersonal contact may be used by practitioner in various games in which children learn about themselves. P3 thought that children should not only learn about themselves and their structure with explanations and images, but also learn from one another through touches and movements. It opens possibilities of understanding topic from different points of view. "*I use this ability the kids have, this interest in each other to play more. Sensing oneself, touching each other.*" (P3, L. 430) According to P3's experience, children get to know in a playful way during the lesson themselves and movement in various ways. She explained, that FP could first show them the particular joint and connections to it on a skeleton, then they observe in which directions it is possible to move this joint and they feel it within themselves. Afterwards, they may watch or touch another person to see and feel the movement in another person. P3 continued that moving another person to observe how this contributes to the movement function is also a good option. "*Touching each other and sensing what the shoulder blade does while you're lifting the arm or what is the pelvis doing while you're walking. I do for example this game, where they are walking after each other, behind each other and observing the others try to do the same.*" (P3, L. 83). P2 suggested to use the skeleton as a teaching tool to help children find particular bones. She explained that in this way, it gets easier for children to imagine how the human is built and at the same time, touching and learning about movement on a friend's skeleton is no longer an abstract concept. She added that a touch of a friend helps the child to learn about himself and that it develops self-image. "*I would have them learn how to touch each other and have them lean on the back of the chair and do these things (showing movements in the spine) and I would have another child actually touch their spine while it was moving. And I brought a skeleton into the room, so we would go back and forth between finding the spine, touching and then touching the skeleton and everybody got to feel all the parts.*" (P2, L. 177) P3 concurred that observation of the skeleton could help children to develop a more accurate idea of themselves and stimulate interest, whereby a skeleton might also be used as a friend figure. "*They like the skeleton a lot. I always bring the skeleton in the class, he's like my little assistant.*" (P3, L. 434) P3 added; "*I take it along and I'm like: "Hey, this is my friend and we are here to make sure that we all know ourselves and know where is what and how it can move and how we can relate to it. So, do you want to play with us?" They are always interested. I always let the group give him a name, so he changes his name a lot, he has many different personalities, so they can also have like a relationship to this toy that I'm bringing. I'm coming with an expert-toy.*" (P3, L. 484)

Through explorative learning children recognize their individuality and learn that everyone is unique and that there is no right or wrong way, instead everyone's individual way

Interviewees mentioned, that by having children collaborating, observing others, themselves and experimenting with movement, children learn that each of them is unique, and there is no right or wrong, only a wide variety of options. P3 described how observing the shoulder blade in various ways teaches children how different we are. *"I show them how the shoulder blades would move, so they have a picture of it. And then I have them touch each other while they are moving, so they can sense it on themselves with at least two or three different people, so they have an image of: "Oh, it can be like this, or like this, the size of shoulder blade can be different and vary. And then come back to their own and move again and see how his is."* (P3, L. 434) P3 pointed out that when children learn how very different we are in spite of many similarities, and how our movement differs, children find it easier to recognize their individuality. They become more aware of themselves and accept themselves and their movements as they are. P3 said that they are not looking for the ways they should move, instead they understand that everyone moves differently. "*I want them to know that each one is individual, is totally different. They might see some similarities, but each one is one amazing own person.*" (P3, L. 451) P3 added: "*They just know like I'm unique, I can do it in so many different ways, I want to find out how I'm doing it and what else can I do. They have to learn, especially if they are already for a few years in school, that there is no right or wrong. There are just many different ways.*" (P3, L. 463) P1 agreed and described that when children realize that there is no right or wrong and that each one of them is encouraged to move in his own way and they are free to be themselves, their fear of standing out is reduced or lost. "*It is important to take into account the fact that there is no wrong and to accept that every person moves differently. If children will understand that, they will stop seeing obstacles in front of them. They would come up and say, "Hello, I'm doing this now and everyone is laughing, because that's just so wonderfully stupid!*" (P1, L. 704) Interviewees agreed, that with the FM, children learn by trial and error, their interest and curiosity are important, and mistakes are an important part on the way to knowledge. "*What makes Feldenkrais lesson easier in relation to so many other things they do is that they can experiment, they get to know that there is no right and wrong and this is also bringing more fun."* (P3, L. 461) When children become aware of their individuality and more focused on themselves, they are less afraid to stand out. P1 mentioned that the fact that children are not so afraid to stand out influences all other school subjects. "*Since the children are braver to try new things and also lose fears, then during classical lessons they*

would also easier go to the blackboard. Because with these things they could experience failures. Movement is actually a key to reducing fears as well." (P1, L. 622).

P2 pointed out that each child learns in a different way. Some understand more clearly when they hear the explanation, others preferer to sense and feel, some like visual input, or even a combination of aforementioned. P2 advised to transfer the knowledge in various ways to a FL, helping children to find the easiest way for them to learn. "*Feldenkrais practitioner should be aware of the fact that every child learns differently and change the application through different sensory inroads of self-awareness and learning, like hearing, feeling, sensing, moving.*" (P2, L. 198) P2 added "*So eventually all of these capacities become more strengthened as you do the Feldenkrais method.*" (P2, L. 201) P2 observed that children benefit from recognizing their learning style. When children find the way in which they learn the easiest, they are more successful at school. "*That too contributes to one's self respect, the feeling of mastery and feeling confident and being able to learn, when they understand that they need a certain kind of learning.*" (P2, L. 210)

Different ways to implement FM in the school

P1, based on his experiences, advised that a school teacher who is also a FP might mix ideas from the FM with normal lessons thus making them more experimental. *"I've changed all my work, handling and teaching, by introducing the Feldenkrais method in my teaching. I have oriented my teaching experimentally. I have often given a problem in the classroom, much like in an ATM and then we developed the problem with children. We searched for solutions and sought different options."* (P1, L. 44) Practitioners who do not work in school could introduce the FM in the primary school in various ways.

As a good example of a very useful lesson, P2 suggested the pelvic clock lesson (a very known lesson by Moshe Feldenkrais, from Awareness Through Movement book (Feldenkrais, 1990)). She mentioned that this could be done with every child. In the pelvic clock lesson, the movement of the pelvis is described on a clock's face. P2 suggested that in this lesson, children can actively participate so that they draw a clock on a large piece of paper and then sit on a drawn clock on the chair or lie down on it during the lesson, which helps them to connect the picture of the clock with their own motion and the movement of the clock hands. P2 added that during the lesson they could look at the clock on the wall and compare it with the drawing of the clock underneath them. "*Many children that have difficulty figuring out how the clock worked would have this ˝aha˝ moment afterwards: "Oh, oh, I've got it!" It's when the brain, the nervous system, division of movement of self and then being able to understand the clock clicks.*" (P2, L. 107)

P2 stressed that school teachers may use principles of the FM to learn school subjects matter. Children could in each subject use themselves to learn. For example how to count using their own limbs by observing how many hands, legs, fingers they have or through these games count how many hands does a group of 5 children have, etc. "*They are relating to themselves in terms of shapes and movement."* (P2, L. 333) P2 added, that through FLs, children learn about shapes, which facilitates better understanding of geometric forms. "*For example, the triangle-arm lesson ... again they're learning about geometry, they're learning twisting, they are learning about balancing."* (P2, L. 329) To include the FM into the normal school lesson, while children are sitting, P1 proposed usage of the FL for eyes, during which children do not necessarily have to lie on the floor. "*They may do that while sitting and looking; "What happens when your eyes go to the left, feel when you sit and feel what happens when your eyes go to the right. If they go to the left, at the same time feel what happens under your heels.""* (P1, L. 588) With this children develop feelings and self-image.

P1 was of the opinion that in PE it would be optimal to have a mix of the FM and other movements. He shared an Idea, that if possible, a PE teacher should invite teachers of other movement methods to come to school and make a presentation for children. These methods could be dance, martial arts etc., which expands children's horizons to other cultures and educates them in different fields. *"Movement projects that we have tried out were just great. Children have looked into other cultures, to Asia, South America, Africa, so these were intercultural projects. Those movement projects create other movement offers and that's great."* (P1, L. 900) P1 pointed out that FPs should encourage children to learn, develop, have fun and experiment through movement. He found it important to enable and to encourage children to try out many different sports which might be an opportunity for them to find their individual sport. *"So, we tried a lot of other things, because it was important to me that every child also had a chance to find his own sports or movement option. That one gets out of these classic options. We had for example aikido, tai chi, judo and capoeira projects in school in my class. I was allowed to get specialists to school. For me these are all areas of application that work cooperatively with the Feldenkrais method."* (P1, L. 133)

At PE, children could experiment with different movements in small groups, try and analyse different possibilities. P1 emphasized that they are not repeating the same task but experimenting with themselves. *"A repetition in the classical sense is what children do not like. This is not a repetition in a sense of stupid tasks, but a development, to produce tasks by themselves."* (P1, L. 615) P1 added that similarly to how FLs encourage testing of various options and the searching for the best one, children could also develop and explore themselves and their movements during their classes. *"I gave them a motion task and said: "You make small groups, and everyone has ideas how to do a movement. Then they tried*

and analysed and synthesized the movement. Then we demonstrated them, each group one by one." (P1, L. 619)

According to P3 a FP can always include nature and outdoors into FLs, when the weather is nice. Children will have too much energy while spending time inside in the classroom. "*We went also out to the nature. I'm a different person if I have a walk through the forest. For kids that's even more important element.*" (P3, L. 277) P3 experienced that outside, children are able to release their excess energy. Space and nature may be used as part of the lesson. *"We would have a time of free play outside and then gathering and going into some awareness process, playing with nature and space, interaction with each other, so we used different tools."* (P3, L. 269)

P3 observed that when children become more aware of themselves, this is noticeable not only in their movement but in the overall development of the child, in his recognition of feelings and sensations. She accentuated that besides the fact that children become aware of their feelings, it is important to talk about those with children. In her opinion, it is very important that children have the opportunity to talk about their feelings. She suggested that talking about sensations and feelings should take place so that after children learn to sense themselves and others, they will also be able to react to their feelings. She experienced that children felt empowered to react to it. *"If you're driving in the underground and there is a stranger sitting nearby you, you are not like shrink and hold everything and stay there, but you sense what is going on within yourself, and you can just get up and move and sit somewhere else.˝* (P3, L. 187)

4.2.2 Reasonable implementation

Which children and when?

All interviewees found the method suitable for all children. They agreed that for the purpose of developing children's potential each child should be included. P2 advised that the conduction of FLs should differ according to the target group of children. She pointed out, that with different groups there should be a different setting. *"It's really a matter of setting up the learning situation, so that you can create successful learning. You want to have safety and comfort as much as possible."* (P2, L. 215) P1 mentioned that in his project, which was conducted in a primary school, all children participated in the ATM lessons, where children who stood out received additional FI lessons. In his opinion children who experience learning, social or movement difficulties may benefit from FIs.

Interviewees agreed on the topic of when should children be introduced to the FM for the first time. That is their conclusion was that, it would be optimal to start learning to be

attentive with oneself already in the kindergarten. *“That the children, when they come in contact with such methods later on, do not find them strange. Natural movement are of course natural for children. But reflecting on movements is an unusual case for children. In that sense, I think you should start early."* (P1, L. 509) Interviewees pointed out that with the introduction of the awareness process in the kindergarten, children will slowly become accustomed to observing themselves and their movement, so that they get used to these observations and that it feels to them completely normal and easy. *"There are two kids that were in my class in the elementary school for three years and it's immense the change that I see between these two kids and the others."* (P3, L. 125) A FP should be careful not to require too much from the children to avoid stress.

Interviewees identified key transitions where the FM intervention would be particularly meaningful. P3 stressed as especially important for children the transition between the kindergarten and primary school. She explained that children are faced with many difficulties when starting with elementary school. Suddenly they are confronted by hours of sitting, they are not outside in nature as much and move less. *“Before they would play with positions and shift their weight all the time and then they are being asked to stay in one sited position for four hours, from one day to the next, without even being aware of what that means.”* (P3, L. 286). P3 added that even in the transition from primary school to high school, children would need support. Children are asked to sit longer and be able to concentrate more, they need to change the rooms for different subjects and adapt to different people. P3 emphasized that in addition, at this age the start of puberty induces major changes in children. *“Now I especially work with girls a lot, also regarding to feeling good like having breast, having no breast, becoming big buttocks or not, increasing weight in general. Like everything is changing, the skin is changing, and then being fine, self-confident with the situation, makes the whole difference also in school and in learning and also the others.”* (P3, L. 361) P3 found that in some very common cases in school, the FM is a particularly suitable method. For example, during puberty, when some girls do not want to participate in PE because they do not feel comfortable within themselves. P3 stated that the FM offers girls the possibility to become aware of the changes in themselves and feel good within themselves. *“I'm focusing within this class on sensing oneself, sensing the areas you don't feel so comfortable with and the other areas, this is what we do basically in the scan in the Feldenkrais. And then translating that, going towards movement.“* (P3, L. 548) P3 mentioned, that during the time of growing up, a crucial advantage of the FM is getting to know oneself in all these complexities, so one can really be oneself, having the felling of self-confidence and satisfaction, despite the seemingly ever-changing environment. *“Children change so fast and they grow, and they have different abilities in*

different stages, also different challenges, their bodies are changing, the way the grown-ups are talking to them is changing, so I think staying potent, but being flexible due to all the process going on within yourself." (P3, L. 335)

Reasonable duration of FM implementation

Interviewees thought that Feldenkrais intervention may be held as a weekly lesson or a week-long workshop to venture deep into the awareness process. Both have their advantages and would complement each other when combined. P3 explained that it would be optimal to have a workshop first and then weekly lessons. *"What is nice in the workshop format is that they can really dig into it. They don't have like a little touch, especially in the beginning, when they don't know this works. That allows you to really sense your whole self and to develop. To develop this kind of awareness."* (P3, L. 403) P3 explained that the introduction of weekly lessons would be appropriate, once children understand awareness and they feel themselves better. If a workshop format is not possible, P2 suggested another option to have FL 3 times per week. *"The more, the better, it's always like that. If you do it every day, you're going to learn that skill faster and you're going to understand it more readily and you're going to have a sense of self mastery from doing it."* (P2, L. 229)

P1 pointed out the option to schedule FLs early in the morning, before other subjects start, to awaken children and let them feel themselves better. *"If you in the morning, when the children come to school, say to them: "Come and lie down on the floor and feel, compare", it is a classical scanning, so an exploration how is the body organized, how symmetrical, asymmetrical and so on. That's when the kids go inside. They go inside and don't let themselves to be steered away by these outer distractions."* (P1, L. 659) P1 experienced that after the FL, children will sense themselves better and they will be less distracted by external stimuli. He added, that their mind will be more open during school subjects, they may better process and absorb the lessons, work more concentrated.

P2 advised that the FLs could be 20 minutes long; with variations in teaching styles the lessons may extend to 45 minutes. *"If I was teaching children something like anatomy with the skeleton, then if you vary it - movement, touching, movement, looking at the skeleton, touching somebody else, you could go for 45 minutes. Because you're changing how they are learning, and they stay interested for a longer period of time.*" (P2, L. 322) P3 suggested a lesson may be comprised of games with sensation-awareness questions followed by 15 minutes of the ATM.

Based on her experience, P3 believed that it is best if the FL are scheduled in the middle of the week to maximize effects and help children stay calm and concentrated until the end of

the week. *“After teaching lesson two times on Wednesday the teacher said it was amazing how the week went by, because usually on Thursday kids are like not attentive anymore, they can't seat, they're bugging each other, a lot of fights are coming up. When we had this movement exploration in the middle of the week, the end of the week was much smoother for the whole group.”* (P3, L. 103) P3 described it is a very positive experience for the FP if children did not have to stay at the FL, but they could also do other activities if they wanted to. *“I was not in a situation where the kids had to be with me in the class. They knew that if they didn't like it, they could just leave.”* (P3, L. 509)

How to implement the FM in the school system of each school?

P1 accentuated that an important part of introducing novelties into the elementary school is the establishment of connections between the primary school and the outside world. Additionally, he suggested that every school should have a manager, which would help the school to cooperate with outside institutions. This would make it easier for children to learn about how the world functions. *"A school that has a manager has a connection to the outside world. School is an enclosed apparatus in principle and that is a problem. To do this, it takes a person who develops ideas."* (P1, L. 646) P1 stressed the need to respect the interests of all constituents of the school system, that is, pupils, parents, teachers and politicians. He experienced, that every school functions differently, which needs to be taken into account when introducing something new. *"If you do not know anything about school, then you might always be working past the school and the school’s system. That's why in school, where you work, you need someone who connects this phenomenon, who makes the connection to teachers, to children, to the parents' home."* (P1, L. 758) P1 added: *"You can’t do estimations or generalizations like how to do Feldenkrais in the schools. Because every school has, in my opinion, its own profile."* (P1, L. 730)

4.2.3 Sitting in the school

Finding appropriate position while sitting makes it easier for children to sit

Interviewees pointed out that when children start attending school, they suddenly have to sit for a long time, which they have not been accustomed to before and they do not know how to do it without hunching or slumping. The interviewees considered it important that when children develop awareness to observe themselves, they are able to observe how they sit and learn to play with that position. *“I think if we start putting them into this position, we have to play with the position first. We have to become aware of what does it mean, where is your head, where is your pelvis, where are your feet. How can you play with that,*

if you get tired of that and maybe the classes are not finished yet?" (P3, L. 288) P1 stated that when children find it easier to sit, they will be more concentrated during the lesson and will have more success in school. *"Children should become aware of the way they sit and breathe in and out. This alone may eventually help them become awake. Inhalation or exhalation are affecting the position of a child while sitting. These are aspects that may trigger alertness. An alert brain just learns better. Children are interested in having success at school."* (P1, L. 535) Interviewees emphasized that thereby school children should have pauses with options of movement and play as often as possible.

No solution can work, if children remain sitting, even though easier movement and better sitting position are achievable with the FM

The interviewees agreed that children in the school system have too few chances to move and that the movement should be more often implemented in the school system. P3 stressed the necessity for children to have more opportunities to move during the school hours. This, along with self-awareness and learning through movement, bares high importance in her opinion. *"I think the Feldenkrais method is not a solution for everything. I think, if we maintain the system of sitting 8 hours a day, and if you do once a week a Feldenkrais session, kids will remain having problems. With Feldenkrais method they might cope better with the situation they are in, but if we don't change the situation …"* (P3, L. 143)

P1 even thought that common health problems, such as long-term back-problems originate from primary school as a consequence of long hours of sitting. *"I even claim that these primary problems are made at school. So, it starts with the children's entry to school. I am quite convinced that this is the reason, because the children are primarily sitting for 6 to 8 hours."* (P1, L. 289)

Unappropriated furniture badly influences children's posture and learning abilities

P2 emphasized that a long sitting time on unsuitable furniture has a negative impact on the child and his posture. *"And now all the chairs do that (showing how the chair is higher on the front side and lower on the back side of sitting surface), until the kids are sitting like this (showing hunched position) and then along with sitting like this, because the chair makes them do that, they have a platform (showing the desk) in front of them, so they can't move. They are literally stuck in this rounded position."* (P2, L. 88) P1 concurred that rounded position in the back leads to effects that hinder the learning ability. *"The pelvis tilts backwards, towards the coccyx, the spine comes into a round flexion, the shoulders fold*

forward, the breathing is reduced, the cardiovascular system is reduced, the oxygen supply is reduced. These are all aspects that make learning difficult." (P1, L. 295)

P1 pointed out that, in addition to encourage more movement, furniture in schools should also be adaptable. He accentuated that children need ergonomic chairs and tables, or even big balls to enable healthy posture for children. *"In my opinion, this has to be done with healthcare, so you could negotiate with insurance companies. The latter should have an interest that their children, their subjects who will eventually grow up, that they receive sufficient prevention. That they do not have to use regeneration with high costs later, so that's one aspect."* (P1, L. 326)

4.2.4 Sensitisation of teachers and parents for the FM

Importance of cooperation of the entire school system for the positive outcome of FM implementation

P1 found it for the optimal integration of the FM in elementary schools extremely important that teachers and parents are included in the intervention, and that it is supported by the entire school system. *"All this may only work if the whole school community, by that I mean parents and all teachers, only if they all are included."* (P1, L. 357) P1 was convinced that the intervention can be effective only when everyone, the whole school community, teachers and parents are involved/included in the method. For the optimal involvement of teachers and parents, it is very important that they know the FM and understand the effects of the Feldenkrais intervention. P2 shared an example of support from school teachers, who may help in the intervention by encouraging the class to attend the Feldenkrais lessons. *"The teacher sometimes would be playful and say: "Do you want to do this movement lesson, or do you want to do math?"* (P2, L. 348)

Presentation of the method through personal experience of teachers and parents

All interviewees agreed that it is crucial how the practitioner presents the FM in the primary school. Interviewees suggested, that school teachers should first be informed about the method, receive the introduction material and then try it out. The practitioner should explain the background to the teachers and parents, so that it will not be so strange for them. *"There must be an explanation, even for the teachers. Because with them happens exactly the same as with children. Something that is foreign to them, everything that is alien, they reject or mark it with a question mark."* (P1, L. 358) All interviewees emphasized, that the practitioner who presents the FM in school should have know-how to be able to give good explanations and answers.

Interviewees pointed out that the practitioner should consider organizing a conference for the teachers and parents and carry out a short ATM there, to sense the differences in movements, feelings, emotions. Interviewees learned that at the conference the practitioner should then explain that it will be more playful for children. The practitioner may even present the FM with a video, so that the teachers and parents form an understanding of the course of intervention. *"I had a conference where all the teachers were there. Then we explained to them what we were up to and what was important was that the teachers received private lessons, FI as well as ATM."* (P1, L. 263) All interviewees considered it important that before the FM intervention school teachers should have the same experience as the children at the ATM. *“I would just do an easy Feldenkrais lesson with them and let them experience how they can move easier and how they can sense themselves differently, also emotionally.”* (P3, L. 571) P2 thought that individual FI experience has the potential to clearly show the influence of the FM. *“Touching and movement speak louder than words. I would just take the person's arm and move it a little bit and support the shoulder and connected it to the chest and do some movements, so that the teacher would feel the difference.”* (P2, L. 274) P3 mentioned, that a FP can more easily explain the purpose of introducing the FM in the school, through personal experiences of teachers and parents. *“We would have some talks about different situations, like change to school and what does it do with you if you have to sit so much and also let them share their own experience if they have to sit the whole day, or if they take a walk in between. It is also true for adults.”* (P3, L. 574)

P2 suggested that if school teachers do not use any method of learning through movement, FP may discuss with school teachers how to implement the movement in the classes and explain how children learn through movement. *“If you approach it from the standpoint of how children learn through movement from birth, that they make sense out of it very, very quickly. Because that's the way that all human beings learn, is through movement.”* (P2, L. 371) P2 explained that from birth, children learn everything through movement, hence most children need less effort to reach understanding of the school subject when learned through movement.

The importance of understanding of the FM principles for teachers and parents

P3 was convinced that the setting established during the FM intervention is important to give a child a safe space and confidence. She said, that while children are doing attentive movement and feel themselves, they should not feel as though they are observed. She added, that it is important that they feel free to try new things and not only do what they

think would be appropriate. *“Because if they are observed, they don't feel natural anymore, they don't behave natural. They behave the way they think they should behave right now. And the teacher is the person who gives them marks.”* (P3, L. 392) That is why school teacher should be careful while joining the FL. P3 thought that a playful, open, interested teacher can join the session, but only in the role of a student. *“I would have a talk with the teacher and tell her I would be happy to have her, that I don't want her to be the teacher in the room, he or she will be there as a participant, playing with the kids and also experiencing herself in the different role with the kids in this time frame. I would resent her like this in the class. I want to tell the kids; “Look, she is your teacher in all the other lessons, but right now she's just playing with us. This has no consequences for anything else you are doing outside.”* (P3, L. 547)

4.2.5 Role of the practitioner

A FP who wishes to work in schools should have particular traits. P2 emphasized, that most importantly, a FP who wants to work with children groups should like working with children. Below are listed what interviewees taught to be other important features that the practitioner needs, to successfully work with children.

To work with children, FP should be adaptable, respectful, supportive, caring, curious, interested in children and should be able to laugh with children

The FM lessons with children are quite different from lessons with adults. P2 pointed out that a FP who works with children, should be able to make lessons with children easier and enable both, the FP and children to have fun while learning with interest. *“There's a lot of unknown variables, it's very unpredictable. With adults, they are lying down, they're probably going to do what you tell them, more or less. But with kids, it can be kind of like a circus and you can stay in charge, but if you become stern or freaked out or anxious because whatever it is ... it's not an easy thing to do.”* (P2, L. 351) Because of all the unknown variables, P2 experienced that the practitioner must be flexible, patient and adaptable, should flow and laugh with children, be willing to tolerate the feeling of unknown, be curious, gentle, caring and respectful. She told that lessons with children might progress quite differently than planned. That is why P2 suggested, that in the beginning it might be easier, if FPs work in a team. In addition, she said, working in a group allows them to later reflection on the events that occurred, thus improving their work with children. *“I would say that if people team teach, it will have greater success.”* (P2, L. 228) Nevertheless, P2 was clear, that the only way that a practitioner acquires skills to work with children is to practice it. *“The only way to learn how to do it is to do it. You have to be willing to tolerate your own*

feelings of unknown, curiosity and seeing what's going to happen." (P2, L. 358) She added; *"I don't think any harm can be done as long as you're gentle and caring and respectful and you keep working with your own calm sense of security."* (P2, L. 363)

P1 stressed that the practitioner should have a good psycho-social connection with the children, so that the children know that he is interested in their development. *"It has always been very important to me that they do not consider me to be the teacher, but that they regard me as a human being. As someone who is interested in their development, who likes them."* (P1, L. 802) P1 believed that a FP should demonstrate to children that they are able to learn and develop and that the FP is supporting child's progress. *"The children had realized that it was important to me that learning through movement was paramount, and willingness to learn and to develop was encouraged. The kids then started to have a lot more fun."* (P1, L. 102) P1 described that through this process, children learn that their talent is not important to the FP, instead it is their interest, the desire for progress and cooperation. P1 pointed out that the FP should give children a sense of being respected, even before their animosities. *"It's important that you know that children could have prejudice. You have to accept that and explain again and again why you do it."* (P1, L. 781) He added: *"You also have to leave the children space, so they know "I am respected. Including my prejudice." We have discussed this before, in the sense of this is experimental."* (P1, L. 789)

To work in a school, FP should have pedagogic competence, a lot of know-how to work with children and a deep understanding of the FM

When working with children, the FPs have to be aware that they are working with children and not with adults. P1 stressed that FP should have knowledge and competencies in the field of pedagogy and practical know-how for the work with children. *"What I uncovered was, that I had a great advantage, because I studied to become a teacher. One thing is that I understand how groups behave."* (P1, L. 20) He added: „*And the other is of course how one designs the lessons, how one methodically and didactically conceptualizes the lessons. This is an important thing, which I see and how my education, which I received to become a teacher, made things easier for me.*" (P1, L. 25) As P1 stated, methodical and didactical pedagogical proficiency is of great help to a FP, when preparing lessons for and working with children. P1 further advises FPs with pedagogical competences to prepare adequately for the lessons with children. *"In the beginning I received a lot of rejections." (P1, L. 237) P1* encountered that children at the begging rejected FLs, because they did not understand why they should practice the FM, because the lessons are completely different from what they know, so they appear foreign to them. P1 stated that in addition to having methodical-

didactic know-how of working with different target groups, FP should have a deep understanding of the FM to explain to children the background of the method and explain why it is good that they practice the method. *"Of course, at the beginning I did not have the knowledge I have today. I then realized that the children refuse Feldenkrais if you cannot explain what's going on there. Because that is very foreign to them."* (P1, L. 215) He added: *“If you explain to them what happens there, then the strangeness, the unusual disappears. Then they are ready because they know that's something good, I'm doing. Then they are ready to try it."* (P1, L. 238) According to P1’s experiences, the explanation why the lessons are meaningful and important encourages pupils to participate. *"If they understand the background, then they are able to accept it.”* (P1, L. 777)

Mixed groups, groups that are too big or groups of children with too different abilities might be challenging

Interviewees listed several challenges they faced in their work with children. They stressed that using the ATM lessons with big groups of children in the school is not always easy. P1 said that calmness is required to become aware of oneself. This is not always easy, due to social interactions between children transitioning into puberty. *“If you have got 20 or 30 kids lying on the floor, the immediate thing that they're going to do is they are going to poke their neighbour.”* (P2, L. 137) P2 thought that FPs must be inventive to cleverly solve this. *“One of the things what I always do is playfully: “Sense your upper lip touching your lower lip” and immediately there's this (showing how the children are touching their lips while having the mouth closed). And there is complete quiet in the room. Or: “Notice your tongue on the top of your mouth.” (showing mouth closed and tongue moving in the mouth) Then notice your breathing ...”.* (P2, L. 140) P1 mentioned, that it might be harder for children to pay attention to themselves if they are in a mixed class, since girls and boys at this age might be distracted with one another. P1 stated that laying on the floor while focusing on themselves already seemed strange to children, which made it easy to succumb to the smallest disturbance. *"That was a catastrophe in the beginning, because they only laughed around ... the boys about the girls and the girls about the boys.”* (P1, L. 764) P1 suggested that this problem could be solved by separating the class temporarily or permanently. *"Then the girls have been taught alone and boys have been taught alone. Later, we were able to reunite them after they felt more secure. It needs to mature.”* (P1, L.778) P1 experienced that while doing FM in the school group, it might be easier for the FP to find and enthuse the leader of the group, because everyone will follow the leader and join the lesson. *"Each group has such a ranking. Then the people who might not want to go along see the leaders doing that and*

then they go with them. It's like a pack. When the leader of the pack heads, the rest follows." (P1, L. 794)

P3 believed that a FP should establish a good relationship with children and that he should encourage children to establish a good relationship among each other. That is why the group should not be too big, so that children can have a relationship with all the others in the group. *“It's not a group dance experience, where you do the movement and everybody is following, and you can have 50 kids in the room and two other people who are observing that they don't misbehave.”* (P3, L. 589) P3 thought that the optimal size of the group for a FL is 8-12 as this enables social interactions between them and it allows the practitioner to still establish a good relationship with everyone so that the children feel safe. *“Below that it's not really a group, it's more a little bit individual, but 8 to 12 is a great group size. Also, to have something where you can interact, so you also have a social factor.”* (P3, L. 595)

P3 stated that big differences in motoric skills among individuals in a group might be challenging for a FP, when searching for the right ATM to present to the group. “*If I have a group with very, very big gaps of abilities, it would be difficult to find a way to challenge everybody in the right set to be able to learn.”* (P3, L. 605) It happens in classes that some children are sporty while some are clumsy, therefore for some of the children the lesson will be too easy and boring, while for others it could be too hard and stressful, or they might feel incompetent, which according to P3 should be avoided.

A FP should help children to recognize and describe their emotions

P1 advised that a FP should give the children the opportunity to understand the changes which occurred during the lesson and to learn to express themselves and find the confidence to share their sensations with others. *"I always give people the opportunity to give feedback on what happened in the class. I have done that with the children too, so they learn about these sensations. That they realize that it is natural that something happens in the lesson."* (P1, L. 829) P1 stressed that through conversation, children better learn that due to their attentive movements, their mood might change during the lesson and that they might have different feelings afterwards. In that way children see that they can respond differently to the same lesson, learn to observe their feelings and also let others know about this in a group. P1 recommended that after the lesson, an opportunity should be given to hold a group talk about what was experienced during the lesson. If children don’t feel at ease from the beginning to talk about it in front of others, a FP could hand out a questionnaire to let them express their feelings. *"After class, the children had the opportunity*

to write down what they spontaneously noticed during the session or their feelings or what simply occurred to them later." (P1, L. 842)

P3 pointed out that the practitioner should always observe the group to see what their needs in the moment are. *“I try to observe the group; try to see what they need and try to see what the individuals need. This is pretty hard sometimes, especially with kids.”* (P3, L. 627) P3 explained, that sometimes the practitioner needs to decide when to go into details that would suit a particular individual and when not, because it will disturb and lose the group’s attention.

Children should feel safe while practicing FM

Interviewees emphasized, that children should not have the feeling of being observed. P1 learned that some children might feel too present with all the others watching them, which makes it harder for them to close their eyes and concentrate on themselves. In this case, P1 advised that the explanation is crucial for them to understand the background and follow the lesson. *“Apart from the fact that the children are also very different individually. They just feel ... that's for them to be so open as though presented on a plate."* (P1, L. 772) P1 added; *"Also the topic of open or closed eyes. Some could not close their eyes and then I said; "Okay, then keep your eyes open." Then I explained to everyone why it might make sense to close your eyes. We always have important: explain, explain, explain! If they understand the background, then they can accept it."* (P1, L. 774) P3 believed that if children are not observed, they do not need to act as expected which makes it possible for them to establish new relationships with each other. P3 explained that when the practitioner does not know the class and its dynamics, for example which students do and do not get along well, the class can form a completely different dynamic during the FM lessons. The way of interaction in the FM is often different than at school, which allows children to communicate with each other differently. *“I have talked to the teacher and I was like “Really? They don't get along with each other? It is totally fine in my class.”* (P3, L. 530)

The interviewees had a different opinion on the involvement of children in the FM lesson. P1 said that everyone should come to the lesson and stay there, even if they do not participate. *"If someone did not want to do with this ... then I said:" You just lie down, you do not need to get involved. But importantly, you do not disturb the others." Such agreements have to be made, but what is important is that everyone participates. "* (P1, L. 772) P3 thought that if a child does not want to participate, he does not need to, and can leave the class. *“There it was really luxury. I worked with groups where the kids could decide*

whether they want to be there or not. I was not in a situation where the kids had to be with me in the class. They knew that if they didn't like it, they could just leave." (P3, L. 508)

Additionally, P3 mentioned that FP should take care that the room has the right temperature and the light should not come from above.

4.2.6 Inclusion in the public health system

Answers to the questions about the inclusion of the FM in the elementary school differed extensively. On the one hand, P2 felt that the FM does not only affect health, but it also affects the nervous system and the brain, and thus provides a basis for learning through movement. *"Because our method philosophically is an educational method, I would keep it separate from health. I have a very strong opinion about this. We do not want to be affiliated with medical interventions, because as soon as we go in that direction, they're going to limit us. They don't understand that this method is about self-awareness and self-education."* (P2, L. 387) Due to the fact that the FM is a self-awareness and self-education method, P2 believed, that it should not be presented as medical intervention, and as such should not be part of the health system. *"It's a different way of being and thinking and practicing in the world. I think they should be under different umbrellas."* (P2, L. 394)

On the other hand, P3 thought that children are taught many things in school, so there arises the question why they would need another method for learning. "*The teachers are like we are here to teach them, in the learning situation anyway."* (P3, L. 651) P3 suggested, that a FP should reply with an explanation that children stay healthier as they learn to better perceive themselves, recognize what is wrong/inconvenient, to express themselves, to respond to their sensations, to learn better, move with ease … *"I think this will make parents interested also, they will want their kids to grow up and be strong and be able to react to what is going on."* (P3, L. 656) P3 pointed out that parents want their children to grow up in healthy, strong individuals who are capable of responding according to their surroundings. That is why the introduction of the FM as part of the public health system in opinion of P3 could be the easiest way for the general public to approve and accept the method.

P1 stressed that school teachers should learn about and be familiarized not only with the FM, but also with other neuromotorical methods and methods of learning through movement. *"In general, it doesn't need to be only Feldenkrais. This neuromotoric learning can help children feel better, to do better. That they learn better, that they move better, that they are healthier."* (P1, L. 932) According to P1, a program should be established, to spread knowledge about the positive effects of those methods on health and other areas. It is essential that schools raise awareness of neuro-motoric learning, which could make it easier for children to learn, improve their health and social interaction. Thus, many more

school teachers themselves would recognize the need to increase self-awareness in children, which would facilitate the introduction of all neuromotoric methods and methods of learning through movement in schools. *“When teachers are sensitized to go to school with these ideas and to create a sensitivity that this need is perceived at school in the first place. Because many schools do not recognize this, because they do not even see the problem."* (P1, L. 937)

5 Discussion

This master's thesis deals with the topic of introducing the Feldenkrais method into the elementary school, more specifically with the influence of the FM on primary school children, and the method of introduction. The topic was addressed through a qualitative guided interview with practitioners with years of experience in this field. The study considered the importance of including the FM in the elementary school based on effects that the FM has on children. What physical and psycho-social impact does the FM have on children and how does self-awareness improve in children? Possible ways of introducing the FM to the elementary school were discussed. Which children would benefit from the intervention and how long should such intervention take? Which characteristics should a practitioner, who wants to work with children, have and to what should he pay special attention to? How to present the method to the teachers, parents and children, and what role do they have in the intervention? Lastly, the possibility of including the FM as part of the public health system was discussed.

The concept of the research and the suitability of the method used will be critically defined in the next section. The results of the research will then be interpreted. Finally, recommendations for the Feldenkrais practitioners, which were collected and analysed within this study, shall also be provided.

5.1 Discussion of the method

The method was well selected as we managed to provide extensive information on the FM influences on elementary school students and on appropriate manners of introducing the FM to the elementary school. Guided interview proved to be an exceptionally useful tool for data collection, since the practitioners were interviewed, who did not publish their knowledge or only did this partially. In spite of the limited number of publications and research in this field, the study showed that this is quite an active field. Several Feldenkrais practitioners work with children, but they rarely write articles and posts about their work. Throughout the process of research, the author came into contact with numerous Feldenkrais practitioners, who in their work meet children and are actively engaged with this age group. The qualitative research method using a guided interview is very suitable, as the researcher acquires opinions, experiences and anecdotes of the practitioners who would otherwise not have reported about it. After the interviews were completed, a conference for the practitioners who work with children (Feldenkrais Group Children) was organized in Austria. However, due to the lack of time to complete the study, new practitioners have not been included in the sampling after the completion of the interview transcripts and coding

process. Future researchers could contact the Feldenkrais Association Austria (Feldenkrais Verband Österreich) in the process of sampling and they could consider joining the Feldenkrais Group Children.

All three interviews were successfully completed, but each one in a different way. The first interview was very extensive and resulted in a vast amount of information. Useage of Skype produced reasonable results, but still it would most likely be beneficial to conduct the conversation in person. The second interview was made in front of a study group, which was very interested in the topic of the interview, and therefore welcomed its presence. However, due to the study schedule, the interview duration and the possibility to explore topics in detail was limited. Listeners from the study group positively influenced the atmosphere and showed interest in the conversation and research in other areas where the FM is applicable. The third interview was made in person in a private environment, which was determined to be the most suitable arrangement for the conversation.

The focus of this research was on two topics, which on one hand provided a wider picture of the state of the research question and, on the other hand, reduced the depth of the investigation for the particular topic. The interviews lasted more than 45 minutes with one of them exceeding 2 hours. The questions for the interview were well chosen, as substantial answers were received for all of the questions posed. The questionnaire did not include questions about the characteristics of the FP working with children, but all the interviewees unexpectedly mentioned the specific characteristics which the practitioner should have in order to make his work with children more effective. Wright (2004) points out that a FP working with children should strive to create an atmosphere in which children will independently learn and develop self-observation skills. Let them explore their movement, orientation in space, encourage through game the development of balance and coordination and more complex motor movements, such as rolling, crawling, standing, walking and jumping. The FP must be flexible in the lessons with children to gain their interest and attention. In addition, the teaching content must match their age and abilities accordingly.

It is advisable for future researchers to narrow the focus on either the effect of the FM on children or on the manners of the FM introduction to schools. This would facilitate comprehensive exploration of these subjects and would make the interview less stressful. One possibility for exploring the first topic could be to ask the children about the FM in elementary school, where qualitative research method in a form of a guided interview could be used again. It might be interesting to compare the responses of the interviewed children before and after the intervention. A clearer distribution of children by age is recommended for future research. It would be very useful for the FP to also describe some examples of lessons which they use with children. Another option would be to do an observation as a

qualitative method to describe the FLs with children. An example of it would be the Video made by Chava Shelhav, Feldenkrais method with children who have learning disabilities.

A recommendation for future researchers would be to also investigate the legislative side of introducing FM into primary schools, with the focus on who would be allowed to teach. For example, what education and which competences should a FP have to be granted permission to teach the FM in schools and in which time frame. During or after regular lessons.

5.2 Discussion on the topic of effects of the FM with primary school children

In the process of collecting data and carrying out the research, it turned out that the selected topic has even greater potential than expected. Both the motoric and psycho-social development of a child takes place in the earliest period of the child's life, and the early overall development of the child has a major impact on the his later life. Parents and teachers have an important influence on the entire development of a child through sensory education. This has a positive influence on the child's development and on the development of entire potentials. Movement is of great importance. Children's brain develops when they learn, and learning is especially effective through motion. As Brix phrased it (2004), exploring own movement gives a child the opportunity to discover and recognize his full potential. An exploratory game is one of the more effective and simple ways for children to recognize their own physical abilities. Research in the form of a children's game promotes the development of the brain and the awareness of oneself and the world around the individual. Each FM lesson is a movement puzzle that every child solves on his own. Finding solutions to movement problems stimulates the development of the child's brain which may be helpful in other situations. The Feldenkrais method with its investigative approach based on trial and error has a similar effect on the child as play. Each individual fully develops own versatile potentials. In the case of a child who is shyer, a social component could develop, for a lively child self-regulation might come into play and better orientation and coordination might develop for children with a poorer image of self and space.

The FM is suitable for all children, regardless of age. It is beneficial for children to have an early contact with the FM. There is a noticeable difference between children that were already familiarized with self-awareness exercises and those who have not tried it before. Children who have previously performed self-awareness exercises better sense themselves and better perceive their surroundings and other people. It is necessary to promote an early FM intervention to children, parents and educators and introduce it already in the kindergarten. It is necessary to pay attention to the setting and selection of appropriate

activities for children in the kindergarten. Children recognize and start paying attention to own motion by copying animal movement. A great reference is Stephen Rosenholtz's DVD Move like Animals and Monkey Moves, and CD Songs! Movements! Fun!. It is important to start as soon as possible with diverse activities which promote own awareness and the development of motoric and psychosocial abilities. Shelhav (2019) also notes in her work with preschool children and educators that educators in the kindergartens noticed a variety of delays in pre-school children, such as clumsiness and difficulties in balance and coordination, lack of orientation, stiffness in joints, which is noticeable when children have running difficulties, jumping and climbing, difficulty in fine motorical capabilities when holding a pencil or composing a jigsaw puzzle, and additionally problems with social skills, self-esteem, self-regulation, attention, and balancing emotions. At the same time, Shelhav (2019) emphasized the possibility of identifying these problems already in the very early period of the child's life and could be treated with appropriate intervention in a child's first year. Some FP specialize in working with babies, where it is again important to pay attention to the setting. Chava Shelhav developed a specialized method for infants in the normal development process, called Child'Space, which is based on the FM.

Introduction of the FM in schools would be beneficial for children who just started with the elementary school, because of the sudden change in their everyday life, when transitioning from the kindergarten to school. It would ease the adaptation to the novelties and higher demands which are expected from them. Expectations are of physical nature, for example sitting, and of psychological character, such as large learning groups and expectation of success. The FM may accompany other lessons or a school teacher who is also a FP may combine ideas from the FM with standard lessons. The FP could make lessons exploratory, either in a standard lesson or the FM addition. Children are encouraged to learn about themselves which they enjoy. When children are more attentive to themselves and to their own motion, this stimulates curiosity in them. Baniel (2012) emphasizes that new neuronal connections are established when a child is aware of himself and consciously carries out his actions. Aberle (2010) also emphasizes the importance of variations in the child's learning process and claims these have a major significance for development of a child. Each FM lesson is explorative. Children search for different individual paths to the target the goal, thus encouraging them to develop an easier, more controlled motion with more variations. More coordinated and varied movement is fun for children, which is an important component for ever more sedentary youth. Children who learn to use their bodies better lose the fear of movement. More fun in movement and greater interest eventually bring more success in sports. It is important that children learn about as many different sports skills as they can, even the more unusual and "exotic" ones. The FP should continuously

pose awareness-questions, thus directing their attention to their own movements, feelings and encourage their innovation and individuality. In addition, they learn to do things in their own way, try novelties and learn that there is no right or wrong when exploring. They learn to sense what is pleasant and what not and become more focused on themselves. Through the exploration of their own movements, children learn about themselves, their abilities and needs. A school teacher can also work with children in a similar way. Instead of carrying out each exercise individually, tasks could be performed in an exploitative manner. Variations are very important for children to recognize the differences between alternatives. Various aspects exist; for example, variations in the activity during the lesson (from more peaceful to very lively) or - concerning learning style - putting emphasis on motoric, auditory, visual sensation or introducing learning aids. The later are much more interesting for children if they are related to their body and movement. It is very important that children during classes move and change their positions often and sit as little as possible. If it is necessary for them to sit, then they must have good conditions for that.

Differentiation is also very important for the development of a child. Baniel (2012) says that the better the children will be able to recognize the differences between different movements, emotions and thoughts, the better they will develop. Aberle (2010) also says that when a child recognizes small differences between the movements, this leads to learning. Doing so, helps children in several ways, through the observation of ourselves and our own movement. The FP teaches children to ask themselves how they have done something, why they did it, or whether they could do it otherwise. This develops their self-examination and helps discovering their own physical abilities. When children learn to feel their own body through the exercise of self-awareness, their movement will also develop. They will perform tasks more easily and efficiently, which also affects other areas of their lives. Koch (2004) says that the development of children’s motoric potentials also encourages the development of their emotional, cognitive and social skills.

The development of a child’s movement also develops his self-esteem. Children learn to adapt to themselves and their needs, and to act in accordance with them. Being aware of their needs helps them to remain calm and trust in themselves in the process of growing up and changing. A child learns where his limits are, which gives him confidence because he knows what he can and cannot do. In addition, they learn to accept that things which were difficult today might be accomplishable in the future. Children who are confident are more likely to reach out to others because they are more satisfied with themselves, and it is harder for others to get them out of their track quickly. Communication improves both in the school and in the family. Children build self-respect and respect for others, and respect for the different. In addition, empathy leads to tolerance. Children who will better recognize their

own emotions will also better recognize and accept the same emotions in others. They will be much more careful and more attentive to others. The more the children know themselves, the better they will be able to adapt to social situations. They will recognize better when they feel social and when they need time for themselves. Children learn to recognize warning signs before they lose control of their emotions. Parents and teachers could help them to learn how to calm themselves by redirecting their attention on themselves and their own motion. They may recognize the movements which indicate potential trouble. For example, a child can place the palm of his hand on his leg and sense the contact this makes, which will help in redirecting the attention on oneself and calm down. Furthermore, the importance of encouraging children to talk about emotional changes due to the FM intervention process must be stressed. They should talk about occurrences during the lessons, and their emotions thereafter, so that they learn to express and explain their feelings, and respond in accordance to them when they feel overwhelmed with a particular emotion.

Improving the motoric and psycho-social functions improves a child's capabilities in school. When children learn to calm down and concentrate on themselves, it becomes much easier to learn. When they are focused on themselves, they are more easily focused on the topics, their concentration increases, they are more open to learning and work more easily. In addition, the subjects at school are closely connected with the child's understanding of the movement. Mathematics and writing are very much related to the child's orientation in space. If the child is able to perform orientated moves, it will be easier to solve mathematical problems and differentiate different letters. In addition, learning becomes easier and children are more inclined to do it through movement. When children become more attentive to their own needs, it is also easier for them to understand their own feelings during the classes, for example, when sitting or listening becomes difficult. In such cases, the FP assist them with developing methods to resolve such situation. When children are more aware of their own feelings, they are satisfied with themselves and calm, they will communicate peacefully and more easily in the classroom and express their feelings without creating a conflict situation. This leads to a better understanding between children and a better classroom climate. Likewise, the FM may improve communication between the family members after the ATM lessons. This was mentioned by Brix (2004) who regularly included the FM in her work with families as an excellent tool to bring the members closer together.

There is no clear answer to the question of whether the FM should be properly introduced as a primary health method. It is important to note that the FM is a learning method and develops the children's physical abilities but has also a great influence on the development of their self-esteem, self-confidence and social skills. Due to the individuality of children and the diversity of the FM effects, we cannot expect the same impact of the method on every

individual. In case of attempting to introduce the FM into the public health system, a very good mean of measurement should be applied to confirm the effects of the method, by which the expected effects of the method should not be predetermined. A qualitative research method would also be suitable for such future research. On the other hand, in spite of the many positive effects of the FM on a child's health, the FM is more than just a method for improving health factors, so it should not be confined and anticipated. It would be best if it was included in the school system independently, without predetermined expectations and influences.

It should also be emphasized that the FM would be an important complement to the school, but the FM itself would not achieve the intended purpose if the children continue to sit in school for long periods of time. Children need a lot more movement lessons than just physical education and short breaks. The good news is that children learn much better and more efficiently through movement, which is something that teachers could effectively include into the regular lessons. Feldenkrais is not the only method which emphasizes learning through movement. Various other methods promote learning trough movement in the school environment, with which children learn about the school subject similarly to in the FM own body parts are utilized. The FM differs from other methods in how it encourages the formation of feelings for own movement, recognition of own body parts and finding the connections. This gives children a sense for quality of their own movement. Children learnt that it is not necessary to copy how others move. They learn to recognize their own individuum and learn to respect themselves and others. With the help of the FM a child becomes more independent and open, capable of thinking "outside the box".

This raises the question of why methods which promote learning through movement are not a part of the school system. One possible answer is that teachers in schools have not been familiarized with or have only been briefly or insufficiently exposed to these methods to understand the extent of effects on improving the child's potential. It is important that teachers are familiarized with the positive effects of learning through movement, and that they themselves try it out, as this would lead to own experiences of the positive effects of these methods.

5.3 Discussion on the topic of implementation of the FM in the primary school in the form of recommendations for a FP

The interviewees gave advice and shared ideas and experiences on how a FP might introduce the FM into the school system, and how to best present the FM to children. This chapter summarizes all recommendations for the FP and their work in elementary school, resulting from analysis of data collected from the interviews. For a better overview a list of

the findings of this research on implementing the FM into primary schools is provided in the next section.

- It is best for children to start early with lessons for self-awareness and awareness of movement and emotions. Older children might find the FM lessons strange or foreign, but an early introduction avoids this. The FM is suitable for anyone, regardless of age and ability, so the FP may start with the FM lessons in elementary school, or even in kindergarten.
- The FM intervention could take place in the form of one ATM lesson, once or preferably several times per week. Children often forget what they were doing during the previous session, so it is important to shorten the time between the lessons. That is why a workshop format is applicable, because children find it much easier to accept the method if they are in contact with it more often. After the workshop, when children already know the FM, a lesson once per week is also sufficient. ATM lessons may be scheduled before the regular school lessons, as it will make it easier for children to concentrate on the school subjects. If a lesson is held once a week, it is best to schedule it in the middle of the week, because this helps children stay focused and concentrated on themselves until the end of the week.
- FLs for primary school children should be based on individual ATM lesson, which should also be adjusted to suit children. For children to find the FLs interesting and to have an opportunity to warm up, awareness games as well as “power out” games should be included. With this a FP may use different styles, since children are more active, curious and like to connect learning with touching. A FL for children would include only shorter sections from the normal ATM lessons for adults. Even if it means shortening the scanning ATM sections, a FP should strive thought the lesson to channel children’s attention on themselves, their movement and their surroundings. Lessons for primary school children may take up to 45 minutes, when the FP uses different learning styles and variations. If only ATM lessons are conducted, they should not be longer than 15-20 minutes.
- It is important to know the practice group beforehand so that the FP is able to set up an appropriate setting. With younger children, the lessons should be shorter. Care needs to be taken not to overload the children. Each child needs to have the right amount of challenge in the lesson. If the children are already in puberty, it is better for boys and girls to do the ATM lessons separately because they are too disturbed by each other. The group should not be too big - 8-12 children is the optimal size, allowing them to establish a relationship with each other and with the FP. It is very

important that children feel safe in an ATM environment and not exposed or vulnerable. Only then will they be willing to participate and will not resist. It is very important that the FP explains to children why they do the ATM lessons, especially to older children. Attentive movement feels unusual for them and they might refuse to cooperate if they do not understand how the FM could help them.

- The lesson should consist of an active fun and playful part where children can go wild, feel the heartbeat and faster breathing, and of a more peaceful part in which they focus on themselves. The FP may include some familiar games in the animated and playful part so that not everything appears new and foreign to them. Familiarity helps them to accept the new, attentive part of the lesson which should include different variations so that children do not become bored, because they are much more active than adults. The FP could connect both parts by adding intermediate, quiet and attentive sequences to active games. The varied active part of the lessons will help children to be more attentive later and the functions, that they learn on the floor, will be more easily tested in the active movement.
- When learning the movement and learning about one's own body, the practitioner should use different points of view, for example, observing and feeling your own body, testing the movements in this part of the body, watching the move on a skeleton, helping them to build a clearer picture of a human structure, and then observing, sensing and testing this part of the body with classmates. Children love to get in touch with other kids and this could be included in the lessons. It is important for each child to observe, feel and try out the move with several other classmates to learn that each individual is different. In this way, children will find it easier to understand that each person is different and will perceive themselves as individuals independent from others so that they do not need to behave and move like the rest, but in a way that they want.
- When a child learns that everyone is different and unique, for the child is easier accepts that there is no right and wrong movement. Children can always test and experiment with movements, thus creating a greater range of own movements and responses in a variety of situations. This way, the children will lose or reduce the fear of standing out. The FP should encourage the children to experiment with the movement.
- Children love and want to learn about themselves. The FP approaches them the easiest way by posing awareness questions, being patient and giving the children time to observe themselves and their movements.

- Children learn in different ways; some learn best by hearing things, some like to see things, some learn through feeling and touching, some through movement, other with combinations of the aforementioned. Through the lesson, the practitioner should try to help each child find his own learning style that suits him best. This will make it easier for children to learn at school, it will affect their success and it will have a positive impact on their self-esteem.
- After the session the practitioner should give children the opportunity to talk about their experience with the lesson so that they learn that changes which occur during the lesson are perfectly normal. Some children might feel uncomfortable without the explanation why they feel different after the lessons. If the FP helps them understand what they feel and emphasizes that this is something completely normal and encourages them to get to know their moods and emotions, this could have a very positive effect on the child's ability to react in different situations.
- Children in school sit most of the time. The FP could help them develop awareness of how they sit and give them tips on how to adjust the posture while sitting or how to redirect attention when it becomes difficult for them to sit. The FP may promote the introduction of movement to the school lessons. In addition, the FP should talk to the teacher and propose interesting alternative games which children could do in the classroom during the lesson, so that their attention returns to work. The FP can suggest various games in which children learn more easily through movement and involvement of their own body. For example, calculation, geometric shapes or orientation in space. Since children in school are mostly indoors and sedentary, the FP should conduct lessons outdoors whenever possible and include space in lessons.
- For the successful introduction of the FM in the elementary school, it is important to involve the entire school community, i.e. children, parents and school teachers. The way how the FM is presented is crucial. It is best for the FP to organize a conference explaining how the method works and conduct a short ATM lesson so that parents and school teachers get an opportunity to experience and understand how and why the method could benefit the children. The FP needs to stress that the lessons for children will be more fun and varied. School teachers can get a FI lesson. It is important for school teachers to understand that children should not feel observed.
- A FP who plans to work with primary school children needs to be aware of the importance of didactical and methodical approaches for different target groups. It is best if he already had prior experience with working with larger groups of children.

A FP who plans to work with primary school children should comply to legal standards. Each person who works in primary school must have an adequate pedagogical education. A FP who lacks such training can acquire it by attending a course or he could work together with a teacher, in which case the teacher always needs to be present. A FP, who is also a teacher, will find the process of introducing the FM into his school the least challenging. At the same time, he should consider other recommendations. It also needs to be emphasized that the FL should only be conducted by FPs, who had finished the 4-year training, which also needs to be confirmed by the International Feldenkrais Federation. Offering a certified Feldenkrais training as an extension for university courses for school teacher could supplement the competences of school teacher about the positive effects of the FM. At the time of writing possibilities exist for students of musical arts to attend additional lectures on the FM, but this cannot compare to the full certified training.

- Despite the possible challenges that a FP may encounter, if he opts for conduction of FLs in primary schools, such activities should be encouraged, because only through the means of public-school systems can each child inconsiderate of their social status benefit from the method.

The listed points are an important basis for a FP, who wants to perform the FM in an elementary school, but one could certainly add more thoughts on the topic. Additional information is available in the Results section.

The FM offers children the opportunity to explore themselves, and allows them to expand their potentials, in sports, music, and art. With the FM children improve learning, help with forming new social bonds and help with tackling everyday problems in school. In author opinion, inclusion of the FM for children and teacher would be a positive addition to the primary school. FPs are encouraged to actively spread the FM among children and share their joy for own movement, learning trough movement with children and contribute to a pleasant childhood.

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Appendix

Interview questions

1. **Questions about the practitioner**

   How long have you been working as a Feldenkrais practitioner?

   How many hours a week do you spend on this occupation?

   Is that your main occupation?

   What is your professional background? (university title, external educations)

   How often do children come to your practice/office?

   Please describe for what reason/problem they come.

   What is your preferable method to use with children, ATM or FI?

   How often do you use the Feldenkrais method with children outside of your usual work environment (school, health care centres …)?

   What purpose does that have?

2. **The impact of the FM on elementary school children**

   How would you describe the general effects of the FM on primary school children?

   How can self-awareness of primary school child change due to the FM intervention?

   Would due to better self-awareness or other factors correlated to the use of the FM change also the quality of movement?

   What effects could that have on their posture?

   How does in your opinion the FM affect the emotional, psychological aspects and the self-esteem of primary school children?

   How does it affect the learning and concentration skills?

   How do the communication skills change?

   Do you have any experience with the change of the social situation in the class after the FM intervention?

   Has any of the teachers noticed improvements after the FM intervention?

   What kind of a difference could they notice?

What is in your opinion the most important impact which every child can get from the FM?

3. **The important key factors which have to be applied to successfully use the FM in elementary school children to get the most benefit**

With which primary school children should the method be used?

How long and how often should the intervention be carried out?

How should the method be presented to a child, parent and teacher to prepare them for the intervention?

Should the parent and the teacher be involved in the intervention and how?

How does the practice of the FM differ when working with children in comparison to working with adults?

What makes the FM lesson funnier and more interesting for children?

Did you find in your practice any factors which could have a negative impact on the Feldenkrais lesson?

How would you exclude such factors?

What do you as a practitioner do to let everyone get the most out of the lesson?

Would it in your opinion make sense to use the method in the primary school as a part of the health promotion program?

4. **Would you like to add anything?**

Eidesstattliche Erklärung

Ich erkläre, dass ich die vorliegende Arbeit *selbstständig verfasst* und nur die ausgewiesenen Hilfsmittel verwendet habe. Diese Arbeit wurde weder an einer anderen Stelle eingereicht (z. B. für andere Lehrveranstaltungen) noch von anderen Personen (z. B. Arbeiten von anderen Personen aus dem Internet) vorgelegt.

Wien, am