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**THE FELDENKRAIS METHOD  
IN THE CONTEXT OF INSTITUTIONAL  
MODELS DEVELOPMENT IN ACTOR  
TRAINING IN THE XXI CENTURY**Victoriia Strelchuk<sup>1a</sup>, Iryna Ivashchenko<sup>2a</sup><sup>1</sup>*PhD in Pedagogy, Professor,**ORCID: 0000-0002-8516-5829, e-mail: maximile@ukr.net;*<sup>2</sup>*Associate Professor,**ORCID: 0000-0002-1046-0735, e-mail: fusia5@ukr.net;*<sup>a</sup>*Kyiv National University of Culture and Arts,**36, Ye. Konovaltsia Str., Kyiv, 01133, Ukraine*

The aim of the article is to identify whether the Feldenkrais method is effective in the process of actor training in the context of the development of modern institutional models designed on bio-psychosocial practice. The methodology of the research. Main principles of the research have been historical-survey and historical-descriptive methods, which have enabled to explore the process of actor training by the M. Feldenkrais method since the 1970's in the USA, Israel, and France. In addition, the method of somatic education Feldenkrais based on knowledge of physics, mechanics of the body, neurology, theory of training and psychology is used. The scientific novelty. The article analyses the use of the Feldenkrais method in the professional actor training in connection with the development of modern institutional models, designed on bio-psychosocial practices that promote self-awareness, mobility, effective creative skills in the process of transformation. The expediency of some integrated aspects of Feldenkrais method into the acting classes programs at higher art educational institutions of Ukraine is substantiated. Conclusions. It is proved that techniques and actor trainings designed on the Feldenkrais method aimed at rethinking ourselves and our body power in creating towards the image. By developing a variety ways of moving and perceiving, students understand the creative process from the standpoint of the lack of restriction of expressions. Thus, future actors are working on setting up their bodies as a professional instrument, expanding the capabilities of voice and muscle-skeleton, and are aware of new opportunities for actor expressiveness, having received a choice of feelings, sensations, movements and actions.

*Keywords:* the Feldenkrais method; actor teaching techniques; bio-psychosocial practice; higher educational institutions.

**Introduction**

Modern theater practice, methods and techniques of actor training are formed within the urban cosmopolitan context, which is simultaneously multicultural, intercultural and intercultural. Researchers emphasize the fact that the modern theater reflects the city's response to the challenges of globalization and is a kind of "meeting point of the West and the East cultures" (Li, 2007, pp. 440–469). Thus, it is logical and expedient in the process of actor training in the XXI century to combine the traditional methods and trainings and modern practices, western pedagogy and eastern philosophy, various institutional models, and so on. In this context, the specificity of the actor training by the method of M. Feldenkrais acquires particular relevance.

Only a few our researchers published papers on the key features of the Feldenkrais method, as one of the most effective in the process of psychological and physical rehabilitation, as well as the personal development of a person. Thus, O. Tokhtamysh in the article "The Feldenkrais method as a theory and practice of human learning and development through awareness of body movements" analyzes its main theoretical, methodological, and applied aspects (Tokhtamysh, 2012).

A. Lutsenko highlights some aspects of the method, in particular, the technique "Awareness through Movement" (Lutsenko, 2014). Instead, the study of the Feldenkrais method as an innovative practice in actor professional training is still left out of the attention of Ukrainian researchers.

**The purpose of the article**

The aim of the article is to find out the feasibility of using the Feldenkrais method in the process of actor training in the context of the development of modern institutional models designed on bio-psychosocial practice.

### Presentation of the main material

Modern theater practice, methods and techniques of actor training are formed within the urban cosmopolitan context, which is simultaneously multicultural, intercultural and inter-cultural. Therefore, it is logical and expedient in the process of actor training in XXI century to combine the traditional methods and trainings and modern practices, western pedagogy and eastern philosophy, various institutional models, etc. In this context, the specificity of the actor training by the Feldenkrais method acquires particular relevance.

Now the democratization of common learning practice is a key trend, which promotes the identified emotional abilities and the formation of psychophysical flexibility of actors. One of the existing techniques within this context is the Feldenkrais method, which offers emancipatory, empathic-forming and agent-oriented processes for an open and clear approach to the actor training.

M. Feldenkrais, Doctor of Science in Physics, who actively practiced martial arts and the first among the Europeans to get a black belt, had developed a unique synthesis of science and aesthetics - the method of somatic education *Feldenkrais* based on knowledge of physics, body mechanics, neurology, theory of training and psychology for 40 years. Today, this method is considered as a revolutionary approach in understanding human functioning, improving its physical and mental activity. It is actively used to increase the efficiency of professional athletes, as well as in the training of dancers, musicians and actors. The versatility of this method allows you to achieve a higher level of comfort, increase mobility and range of movements, improve coordination and flexibility, expand self-awareness, increase self-esteem and viability (Zarrilli, Sasitharan and Kapur, 2016).

According to some researchers, pedagogical practices and actor trainings based on this method, provide students with a sense of belonging and social complicity, creating conditions for the discovery of internal power (Lorde, 2007, p.56) through the development of a jointly implemented professional closeness, that forms a pedagogical foundation for the revitalization and integration of own actors' "the I" in the process of training and stage performance as "the most profound creative source" (Lorde, 2007, p. 57).

The use of the Feldenkrais method in the actor training process began in the 1970's. Feldenkrais personally conducted the first training for actors and dancers in the USA and Israel, and held classes with actors in Paris at the invitation of the famous theatrical director P. Brooke. His students and followers (for example, M. Panier, one of the leading teachers of the movement in Europe) contributed to the recognition and adoption of the Feldenkrais method as a somatic discipline and practice that greatly improves the process of learning the performing arts.

One of the first countries where various aspects of the Feldenkrais method were integrated into the programs of higher art school was the United Kingdom. In 1996, G. Newell launched the first British training program for professional actors for Feldenkrais method. An innovative seminar in the curriculum of the Royal College of Holloway (University of London) became a physical theater course, developed on the Feldenkrais method, introduced since 1998 by R. Cave, an honorary professor of dramatic and theatrical art. Some other universities in Great Britain have also integrated the Feldenkrais method in the curriculum of performing arts: the BA Performing Arts at the London Metropolitan University, the BA Contemporary Performance Practice Program, Doncaster University Center (University Center Doncaster), etc. (Igweon, 2010, pp. 6–7).

Currently, well-known Western theatrical actors and directors have developed Feldenkrais-based training courses and trainings: they are taught at many leading art institutions in West-European countries and the United States of America, and the method regarded as a dynamic learning approach that adds traditional methods and techniques.

The Feldenkrais method is a somatic discipline based on sound mechanical and neurological principles that are easily accessible through physical displacement or reorganization and re-balancing of the body in time and space; emphasizes the empirical aspects of learning, helping the person to improve psychophysical awareness, giving them the opportunity to make a rational choice of movements and actions. This idea, identified by A. Questel, is central in the practice of the Feldenkrais method.

A. Questel, a well-known teacher of the *Feldenkrais* training program, who holds workshops for actors at leading world institutions, notes that one of the main principles of the actor's stage activity is to understand what needs to be done to obtain unlimited opportunities. The Feldenkrais method, which includes all the necessary aspects for improving person potential through learning, focuses on four aspects: thinking, emotion (emotional level), perception (processing of information) and motion, as the changes in any of them can lead to a change within "the I" totally. The author of the method has chosen movement as the method of achieving this process, since changing the way of thinking, our own feelings and perceptions is rather difficult, whereas

the change of movement (the process that takes place immediately) and the use of attention can lead to abrupt changes in the perception of oneself and others (Fonow, & others, 2016, pp. 116–130).

There are two practical approaches in the training: “Awareness through movement” – a series of group exercises from sequences of movements that affect changes in the breathing, posture, flexibility, range of movements, shifting self-esteem, reducing pain, increasing viability, and generally focuses on the process what we do in reality; and “Functional integration” is a technique aimed at a new perception of oneself through physical organization, empowerment and free choice of how and what to do (Questel, 2002, pp. 11–16) (as a rule, takes place in the form of individual classes).

In the process of actor training, this technique is used from the elementary level, to work body and voice up, as well as to create various motivations for actors, the experience in which they can choose how to respond, in accordance with many factors that determine the context in which they are and regarding what they or a director want to convey to the spectators.

A. Questel points out that the education system is based on knowledge of something; most of a person’s life is spent in the process of learning, planning and forecasting, since in the cultural plan, deprived of means to support the feeling of non-acquaintance, stay in the process, focusing on the process itself, and not on the outcome. Using the technique, an actor practices the creation of comfort and new levels of awareness and action in the context of non-acquaintance of what will be further (Questel, 2002, pp. 11–16).

Sensations are different from feelings; they can even describe other forms, such as fatigue, comfort, readiness, etc. By developing the ability to feel and comprehend their own feelings, the actors can find out exactly what they feels and express it more precisely. According to Feldenkrais, the ability to perceive and express a wide range of sensations is inactive, and only due to certain techniques awakens.

Movements, gestures and poses are much more truthful than words, and hence the congruence of words and movements contributes to a better perception and understanding of what an actor wants to convey (Fonow, & others, 2016, pp. 116–130). At the heart of the technique is the notion of “awareness”, which is considered by the movement as a vehicle. According to M. Feldenkrais, “movement is the basis of comprehension” (Feldenkrais, 1987, p. 36), whereas “comprehension is consciousness, along with the realization of what is happening in it, or as it occurs in us, while we are conscious” (Feldenkrais, 1987, p. 50).

The method contributes to the creation of neutral state by an actor, which is a foundation for better developing the physical characteristics. Students distinguish the structure of movements, how to use them to express the nature of the character, etc.

The particular advantage of the method is in the context of the development of internal stability, including emotional. It contributes to the creation of a sense of lightness, confidence and presence, which is extremely important in performing arts.

An effective method of Feldenkrais contributes to enhancing understanding by an actor in a state of tranquility and state of action, and movement is an integral part of the actor’s ability to tell a story, not only in terms of what needs to be expressed, but also in terms of setting, re-formulating and developing means external and internal expressiveness. Thus, the method gives a unique opportunity for an actor to create an image, as well as to make deeper the comprehension of the creative process.

The methodologies and actor trainings developed on the Feldenkrais method are aimed at rethinking ourselves and the power of our body in the process of creating an image. By developing a variety of ways of moving and perceiving, students understand the creative process from the standpoint of the lack of restriction of expressions. The series of structured sequences of movements “Awareness through Movement” (group vocal practice) promotes the development of actor’s attention, perception and imagination; improvisation of movements provides further development of the skills of studying the qualities of motion, surrounding space, sounds, music, etc. In this way, students are adjusting their bodies’ settings as a professional tool, expanding the capabilities of voice and musculo-skeletal, and are aware of new opportunities for actor expressiveness, having received a choice of feelings, sensations, movements and actions.

This methodology is not aimed at obtaining fast, well-defined results, although certain difficulties (breathing problems, voiced push, etc.) can be solved for several classes, but is characterized by individuality and positioned as a continuous opening process that takes time to reach and change habits and gain enormous benefits by reflecting on a new dimension of being as an executor.

The article analyses the use of the Feldenkrais method in the professional actor training in connection with the development of modern institutional models, designed on bio-psychosocial practices that promote self-awareness, mobility, effective creative skills in the process of transformation. The expediency of some integrated aspects of Feldenkrais method into the acting classes programs at higher art educational institutions of Ukraine is substantiated.

### Conclusions

It is proved that techniques and actor trainings designed on the Feldenkrais method aimed at rethinking ourselves and our body power in creating towards the image. By developing a variety ways of moving and perceiving, students understand the creative process from the standpoint of the lack of restriction of expressions. Thus, future actors are working on setting up their bodies as a professional instrument, expanding the capabilities of voice and muscle-skeleton, and are aware of new opportunities for actor expressiveness, having received a choice of feelings, sensations, movements and actions.

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**МЕТОД ФЕЛЬДЕНКРАЙЗА  
В КОНТЕКСТІ РОЗВИТКУ  
ІНСТИТУЦІОНАЛЬНИХ МОДЕЛЕЙ  
АКТОРСЬКОГО НАВЧАННЯ ХХІ СТ.**

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Мета статті – виявити доцільність використання методу Фельденкрайза в процесі навчання акторів у контексті розвитку сучасних інституціональних моделей, розроблених на основі біопсихосоціальної практики. Методологія дослідження. Основними в проведенні дослідження стали історико-оглядовий та історико-описовий методи, що дало змогу розглянути процес навчання актора за методом М. Фельденкрайза з 1970-х рр. у США, Ізраїлі та Франції. На основі знань із фізики, механіки тіла, неврології, теорії навчання та психології застосовано метод соматичної освіти «Feldenkrais». Наукова новизна. У статті проаналізовано використання в професійному навчанні акторів методу Фельденкрайза у зв'язку з розвитком сучасних інституціональних моделей, розроблених на основі біопсихосоціальної практики, що сприяють самоусвідомленню, мобільності, ефективному виробленню творчих навичок у процесі перевтілення. Обґрунтовано доцільність інтегрування деяких аспектів методу Фельденкрайза в програми курсів акторської майстерності вищих мистецьких навчальних закладів України. Висновки. Доведено, що методики та акторські тренінги, розроблені на основі методу Фельденкрайза, спрямовані на переосмислення себе та можливостей свого тіла в процесі роботи над створенням образу. Розробляючи різноманітні способи переміщення і сприйняття, студенти осмислюють творчий процес із позиції відсутності обмеження варіантів вираження. У такий спосіб майбутні актори працюють над налаштуванням свого тіла як професійного інструменту, розширюючи можливості голосового й рухового апаратів, та усвідомлюють нові можливості акторської виразності, отримавши вибір відчуттів, почуттів, рухів і дій.

*Ключові слова:* метод Фельденкрайза; методики навчання актора; біопсихосоціальна практика; вищі мистецькі навчальні заклади.

**МЕТОД ФЕЛЬДЕНКРАЙЗА  
В КОНТЕКСТЕ РАЗВИТИЯ  
ИНСТИТУЦИОНАЛЬНЫХ МОДЕЛЕЙ  
АКТЕРСКОГО ОБУЧЕНИЯ ХХІ ВЕКА**

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Цель статьи – выявить целесообразность использования метода Фельденкрайза в процессе обучения актеров в контексте развития современных институциональных моделей, разработанных на основе биопсихосоциальной практики. Методология исследования. Главными в исследовании стали историко-обзорный и историко-описательный методы, что позволило рассмотреть процесс обучения актера по методу М. Фельденкрайза с 1970-х гг. в США, Израиле и Франции. На основе знаний из физики, механики тела, неврологии, теории обучения и психологии применен метод соматического образования «Feldenkrais». Научная новизна. В статье проанализировано использование в профессиональном обучении актеров метода Фельденкрайза в связи с развитием современных институциональных моделей, разработанных на основе биопсихосоциальной практики, которые содействуют самосознанию, мобильности, эффективной выработке творческих навыков в процессе перевоплощения. Обоснована целесообразность интегрирования некоторых аспектов метода Фельденкрайза в программы курсов актерского мастерства высших художественных учебных заведений Украины. Выводы. Доказано, что методики и актерские тренинги, разработанные на основе метода Фельденкрайза, направленные на переосмысление себя и возможностей своего тела в процессе работы над созданием образа. Разрабатывая различные способы перемещения и восприятия, студенты осмысливают творческий процесс с позиции отсутствия ограничения вариантов выражения. Таким образом будущие актеры работают над настройкой своего тела как профессионального инструмента, расширяя возможности голосового и двигательного аппаратов, осознают новые возможности актерской выразительности, получив выбор ощущений, чувств, движений и действий.

*Ключевые слова:* метод Фельденкрайза; методики обучения актера; биопсихосоциальная практика; высшие художественные учебные заведения.