

Case studies. What kind? Who will write them? For whom?

Dear Reader,

The articles in Volume 4 of the International Feldenkrais Federation's on-line research journal focuses on case studies. Every Feldenkrais practitioner has a case study that is worth publishing. For a variety of reasons, most practitioners do not take the time to share the wealth that case studies can provide to the rest of our community. Several questions arose when I started thinking about case studies as the theme for this volume. Who do we write the cases for? Who do we want submitting articles to the journal? What makes a good case study?

Who do we write the cases for? Our own community? Other researchers? Other professionals? I believe this basic question determines who will submit articles to the journal and what kind of cases the journal accepts. In some journals, it is very difficult to get case studies published, and therefore mostly academically based researchers submit articles for publication in those journals. Unfortunately, this frequently means that most of the articles are of interest to the researcher and not as valuable to the general practitioner, and this can create a split between the researchers and the practitioners. If we want our members to read and get ideas from the material that is published in the IFF research journal, making articles difficult to get published might not be the right way forward. Cliff Smythe has written an article for this volume where he describes different types of case studies. I believe that the table that Cliff has included in his article makes a great case for the inclusion of different levels of case studies. From the simplest cases that are easy to write up, to very elaborate forms of case reports that people with more research and writing experience can submit.

Who do we want submitting articles to the journal? Do we want to encourage our practitioners to submit articles, or are we more interested in having a few select practitioners, and researchers from other fields submit articles. Most of the cases reported in Volume 4 of the journal were written as part of the application process to become an assistant trainer. The practitioners who were contacted showed an incredible generosity in sharing their material, and we ended up with more articles than we had space for. There is a wealth of knowledge in all the cases that have been written in these assistant trainer applications, so why are these case studies not being published? Imagine the learning opportunities and inspiration that could come from sharing case studies from the world wide Feldenkrais community. I know several practitioners who will not write up cases for publication because they think it is too difficult. I personally would like to have everyone from new graduates, to experienced practitioners, to people in academia feel welcome to share their information in the IFF research journal. The difficulty lies in how to find the right balance between encouraging our members to write while at the same time maintaining a high quality journal that other researchers and professions will seek out for information.

The third question that I am often being asked is, what makes a good case study ? How does the writer decide what kind of case is interesting to write about? I believe that the articles in Volume 4 of the IFF research journal displays a wide variety of cases, reported from a variety of viewpoints. The cases include description of thought processes, description of outcomes, as well as more mechanical descriptions of the lessons. There is something unique, and therefore valuable about each case, whether it is the reason they came to the Feldenkrais practitioner, the approach the practitioner took, or the outcome.

I believe that many journal editorial boards and professions ask themselves the above questions and try their best to balance the interest of the researcher, academician, and practitioner with the needs of the profession as a whole. By allowing a wide range of cases to be published in the IFF research journal, I believe that we can ensure that many practitioners will submit articles and take ownership of the research and sharing of information, instead of just a few practitioners with advanced skills submitting manuscripts for publication. With time more and more practitioners will write and publish and that will ensure a bright future for the dissemination of research on the Feldenkrais Method.

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