

Original Research: Reprint

United States Guild Certified Feldenkrais Teachers®: A survey of characteristics and practice patterns

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Abstract

Background: *Feldenkrais Method*® teachers help students improve function and quality of life through verbally and manually guided lessons. The reasons people seek *Feldenkrais*® lessons are poorly understood. Similarly, little is known about practice characteristics and patterns. To address these knowledge gaps, we conducted an extensive survey of United States *Guild Certified Feldenkrais Teachers*®.

Methods: We invited all *Feldenkrais Teachers*® to participate in this survey delivered in web-based or print formats. We obtained overall and question-specific response rates, descriptive statistics, chi-square tests of response bias, and performed qualitative thematic review of comments.

Results: Overall response rate was 30.5% (392/1287). Ninety percent of responders had college degrees in diverse fields; 12.5% had credentials outside health care, 36.9% held conventional health care licenses, and 23.1% had complementary and alternative medicine credentials. Mean age was 55.7 years; most teachers were women (83%). California (n = 100) and New York (n = 34) had the most teachers. Forty-five percent of teachers earned ≤ 20% of their gross income from their practices, while 26% earned > 80%. Most saw < 10 students/week for individual lessons and < 10 students/week for group lessons. Students were mostly women (71.1%) and 45–64 years old. The primary reason students sought *Feldenkrais* lessons was pain. A quarter of students self-referred, a fifth were referred by conventional health care providers, and two-thirds paid for services directly. Themes from comments included: beliefs that *Feldenkrais* training had important personal and professional benefits for teachers; recognition of the challenges of operating small businesses and succinctly describing the *Feldenkrais Method*; the variety of practice approaches; and a deep commitment to the *Feldenkrais Method*.

Conclusions: Most *Feldenkrais Teachers* were well educated, often held additional credentials, were located in the West, were women, were older than 50 years, and had part-time practices. Most students were women, were adults, came from various referral sources, and paid directly for services. Teachers and



students utilized the *Feldenkrais Method* in diverse settings and applications. These findings may foster practice development by *Feldenkrais Teachers*, improve communication between health care consumers and providers and assist decision-making, and stimulate more research concerning the *Feldenkrais Method*.

Keywords

Feldenkrais Method of somatic education, *US Guild Certified Feldenkrais Teachers*, Practitioner characteristics, Practice patterns, Communication, Decision-making, Research development

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