

## **Flow in Feldenkrais' theory and practice: An example of emersiology of the living body**

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This article introduces two research projects pursued by Adjoa Domelevo in France. One was a Masters Degree, and the other is a in PhD study in preparation.

Her Masters Degree research, presented on the 29<sup>th</sup> September, 2014 at Bordeaux University, was titled: 'Coping with stress in adolescence: impact of a school form of practicing 'Feldenkrais®'' (in French: '*Composer avec le stress à l'adolescence: impact d'une forme scolaire de pratique du "Feldenkrais®"*').

This research has two main aims :

- (a) to propose a school form of practicing Feldenkrais Method®
- (b) to locate the effects of the activity Feldenkrais Method on stress and coping after a training program for pupils in a class of Troisième (Grade 9 or Third Form of High School).

This work drew on several theoretical areas in order to follow a multidisciplinary method. The research methodology was based on a mixed methods approach: qualitative research – because the Feldenkrais Method is a process-improvement model, and quantitative methods. Data was collected from five types of sources: a documentary analysis, a quasi-experimentation process, questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, grounded observations. The quasi-experimentation took place with students from a Third class of a secondary school (13-15 years of age). The study size is n=20, with a control group (n=10) and an experimental group (n=10). The experimental group is trained over a period of 5 weeks:

- (a) at school for 40-45 minutes, once per week, with the technique Awareness Through Movement® (ATM®) lesson

(b) at home, between one and three times per week, with an ATM lesson of 10 minutes (an audio recording by the experimenter).

The pre-test and the post-test measures are based on the «Mesure du Stress Psychologique (MSP)», the Adolescent Coping Orientation for Problem Experiences (A-COPE), the Questionnaire Image du Corps (QIC). Our results indicate that the stress level decreases after Feldenkrais Method training. But results were more nuanced in relation to body image and coping strategies. Some of our results confirmed our hypotheses and others tended to refute them.

The main contributions of the research are :

- a better knowledge of the Feldenkrais Method of the somatic education;
- a better knowledge of health education;
- a didactic innovatory proposal: teaching a body awareness method in scholarly context;
- a new tool to cope with stress, for the adolescents.

This work opens paths to exploring a self-care approach to health, transdisciplinarity, and the exploration of well-being bodily techniques in schools in relation to the idea of body ecology.

'Body Ecology' is not just an interesting phrase, but a practice that engages our daily responsibility and it also connects to a body awareness through reflection on our actions and its consequences. 'Body Ecology is a practice of self-care that is responsible for the care of others through lifestyle choices' (Andrieu 2011: 12). Without knowing the ecology of our own bodies, we are looking in nature a harmony that is within us: our microcosm no longer corresponds with the macrocosm.

In order to further her research into the domain of body ecology, since October 2014 Adjoa Domelevo has been pursuing Doctoral research, at University Paris-Descartes, with Bernard Andrieu. The dissertation title is: 'Body in Feldenkrais Method: From awareness to flow'.

There are three contexts from which this scientific investigations was born: the researcher's interest in 'the body question', her professional bivalence (teaching first physical education, and second the Feldenkrais Method of somatic education), and her passion for an ecologically situated sport (surfing). There has been little research about Feldenkrais Method in the French scientific context, and this can be improved by these studies about *flow* experience (Csikszentmihalyi 1975, 1990). The research will benefit from the partnership with the CETAPS laboratory, which focuses on its work the themes being explored in this study. The importance of this work can be seen as situated on three levels: on world level (in relation to ideas of the 'fluid society') (De Rosnay, 2012), on European level (in relation to Health Well-being objective for Horizon 2020: EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation), on

national level with INPES (National Institute of Prevention and Education for Health) recommendations about health prevention and education.

The research problem is expressed as follows: Awareness Through Movement, one of the two Feldenkrais Method modalities, promotes emergence and persistence of *flow experience* and its returning into flow (Csikszentmihalyi 1975, 1990). The aim of this research is to create new knowledge about the body, Feldenkrais Method, and flow. It is intended also to test and verify the Feldenkrais Method's impact on the experience of flow. Her epistemological posture will be rooted in body ecology (Andrieu, 2011) and positive psychology (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi 2000). The research methodology will adopt a qualitative approach. The results of of this study will be relevant to three social spheres: the scientific community, educational sphere, and the sports world.

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## Biographies

### Bernard Andrieu

Bernard Andrieu has been Professor in EA 3832 CETAPS (<http://staps.univ-rouen.fr/le-laboratoire-cetaps-191625.kjsp>) since September 2014. He was educated in the 1980's at Bordeaux in phenomenology, psychoanalysis, primatology and neuroscience, and did his doctorate on the topic of neurophilosophy. From 1999 to 2004, Bernard was Professor of epistemology at Lorraine IUFM and a researcher at the Archives Poincaré CNRS (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique)/Nancy-II University. From 2005 to 2014, he was Professor for Body Epistemology and bodily practices in the sport faculty of Lorraine University. He was director of the Master Staps (Sciences and Techniques of Sports and Physical Activities) at Nancy-Metz and of the Program Disabled persons empowerment through adapted physical activities. In that institution, he lead the team ACCORPS (2005-2011) and has been a member from 1999 to 2011 in the History of Sciences and Philosophy Laboratory, Archives Poincaré UMR 7117 CNRS (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique)/Nancy University. He is Associate Member of UMR CNRS 6578 ADES Biocultural Anthropology on the topic of body and health anthropology. He founded the Archives Alfred Binet (<http://alfredbinet.univ-lorraine.fr/>), blogducors <<http://leblogducors.over-blog.com>> and collections "Écologie corporelle" (Body Epistemology) at Lorraine University Press and "Mouvements des savoirs" (Knowledge Movement) at L'Harmattan Editions. Since 2014 he has co-directed the collection at Rouen Le Havre University Press of "Ecologie corporelle et Environnements sports" (Body Ecology and Sports Environment). He is co-director of the interdisciplinary revue Corps (CNRS Ed.) and of the revue 'Recherches et Éducation' available from the website : <http://rechercheseducations.revues.org/616>. He is a founding member of Francophone Association of Sport Philosophy (Société Francophone de Philosophie du Sport).

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### Adjoa Domelevo

Adjoa Domelevo has worked as a physical education teacher in secondary schools since 1993. Since 2010, she also gives Feldenkrais Method® lessons to physical practioners in various institutions (schools, CREPS Center of Resources, Expertise, and Sport Performances (Centre de ressources, d'expertise et de performance sportives) Bordeaux-Aquitaine, and associations) and offers professional trainings. Her professional website is at <<http://www.somatikeduc.com/>>. In 2014, she received a Master's research degree for a study about application of the Feldenkrais Method® in éducation and its impact on adolescent stress. This master's thesis is available, in full, at <http://dumas.ccsd.cnrs.fr/dumas-01083692/document>. Adjoa is now a first year PhD student in the CETAPS (Center of Studies of Physical and Sport Activities

Transformations (Centre d'Études des Transformations des Activités Physiques et Sportives) laboratory at Rouen University.

She also writes a blog <<http://somatikeduc.blogspot.fr/>> about somatic education and is a founding member of Francophone Association of Sport Philosophy (Société Francophone de Philosophie du Sport).

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