

A Snapshot of Our Practice

by Robert Black

INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 1996, Andrea Wiener, Vice President of the North American Guild, was asked to conduct a survey of graduates of trainings in order to provide the Board some pertinent information. As I am a Psychologist, and my background is in survey methodology and statistics, I offered to assist with the methodology and analysis of the responses to the survey. I compiled a report and presented it to the Board of Directors and members of the Steering Committee at the working meeting prior to the Annual Conference in September, 1996. At the Annual Meeting, members requested the information be made available to all practitioners. Recently, there has been an ongoing dialogue on the FelDigest about the meaning of the results and a drive to get further clarification of the results.

My own thoughts are that these results are tantalizing. They give us some clear information in some areas, and bring up more questions in other areas. People who have seen the results say, "I thought the results would be thus, *except...*" I hope you find the results interesting to read. Perhaps they will help you understand the nature of your practice in light of other practitioner's experiences.

I wish to thank the volunteers who did the surveys and also to the respondents.

METHODOLOGY

In the summer of 1996, a draft of the survey was developed and pre-tested. Then all graduates from trainings who lived in the US or Canada who had graduated at least 2 years or more before 1996 were included in the prospective sample pool. This was divided by region and names were drawn at random for a 10 percent sampling. The names were given to volunteers who agreed to do the telephoning. As it turned out, all regions were represented except New England, Southern California and the North West. In light of the methodology employed, I believe that the results can be said to accurately represent practitioners in all parts of North America except those regions noted above.

RESULTS

A total of 55 responses were received. Of these, 5 (or 9%) said they were not practicing the Method. Their reasons were: 4: had another career that took precedence; 1: full-time mothering. These five were excluded from further counts relating to how practitioners thought of their practices.

Practitioners were asked about the number of FI's and the ATM's per week. Based on the average response of the sample, and generalizing to the 800 practitioners in

Canada and the United States, we have the most astounding information:

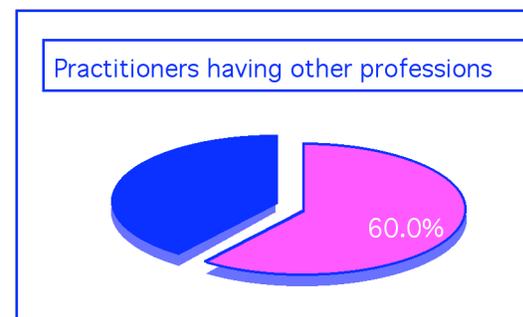
THE IMPACT OF THE METHOD ON THE WIDE WORLD:

2400 PEOPLE RECEIVE FI'S EACH DAY

14,400 PEOPLE ATTEND ATM'S EACH WEEK (assuming class sizes average 6).

SETTING OF THE PRACTICE

72% of practitioners were in private practice. 6% were with a group of other Feldenkrais practitioners, 13% were associated with another group, 4% were in academic settings, and 4% considered themselves to be in an "Other" setting.

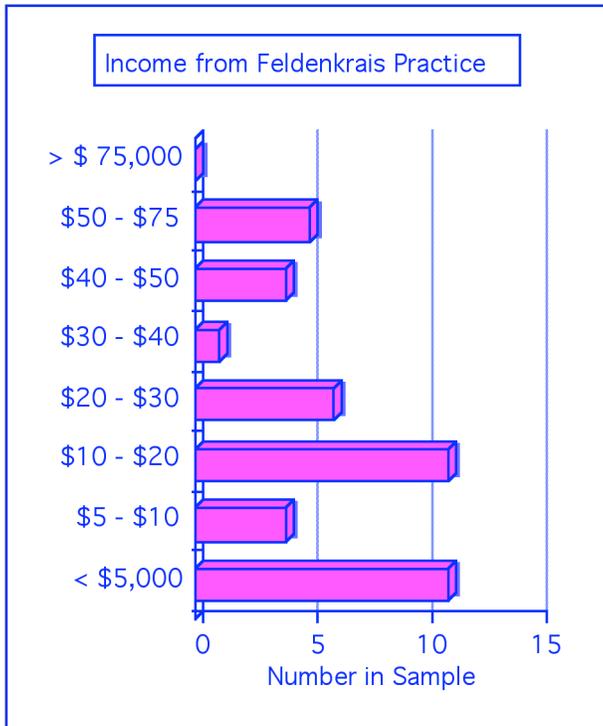


60% of the practitioners had another profession in which they were engaged.

DESCRIPTION OF "ADDITIONAL PROFESSION"

The information in this section was requested at the Annual conference and is not in the original Report: Of these 30 practitioners, the alternate professions were:
Medical field 16 total (11 - PT or OT, 3 - Massage, 1 - Chiropractic and 1 - Nurse)
Education field 6 total (college professors, or other teaching)
Performing fields - 3 total
Technical fields - 2

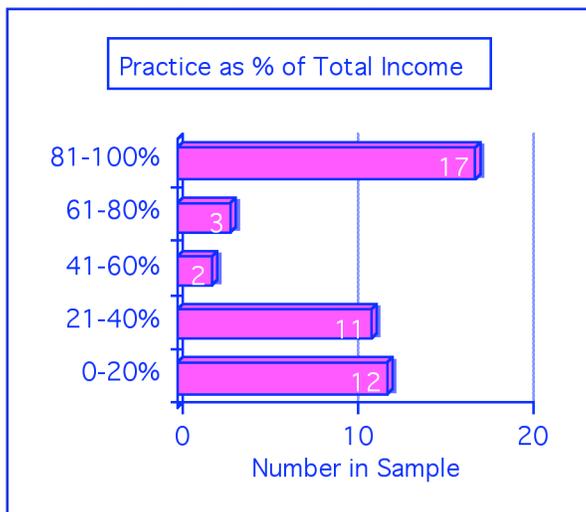
FELDENKRAIS PRACTICE INCOME -- We asked participants their gross income from their Feldenkrais practice as well as what percent this was of their total income. Most were willing to give us their information!



About half of the practitioners make over \$20,000 (US).

Approximately one in five (22%) make \$5,000 or less from their practice.

FELDENKRAIS PRACTICE AS A SOURCE OF SUPPORT
 Respondents were asked the percentage that their practice contributes to their total income.



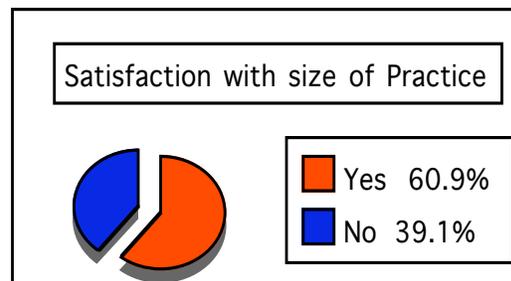
As can be seen from this chart, 34% (17 out of 50 respondents) support themselves with their practice. For half of the respondents, their practice provides under 50% of their income. Where does this other money come from?

COMPARISON OF FELDENKRAIS PRACTICE INCOME and an ADDITIONAL PROFESSION

The information in this section was requested at the Annual conference and is not in the original Report:

Most (47%) of those with a single profession (being the Feldenkrais Method) reported their income from their practice as being in the \$10-20,000 (US) range, and none reported income over \$40,000. However, over a third of those with another profession reported their Feldenkrais Practice income as being over \$30,000.

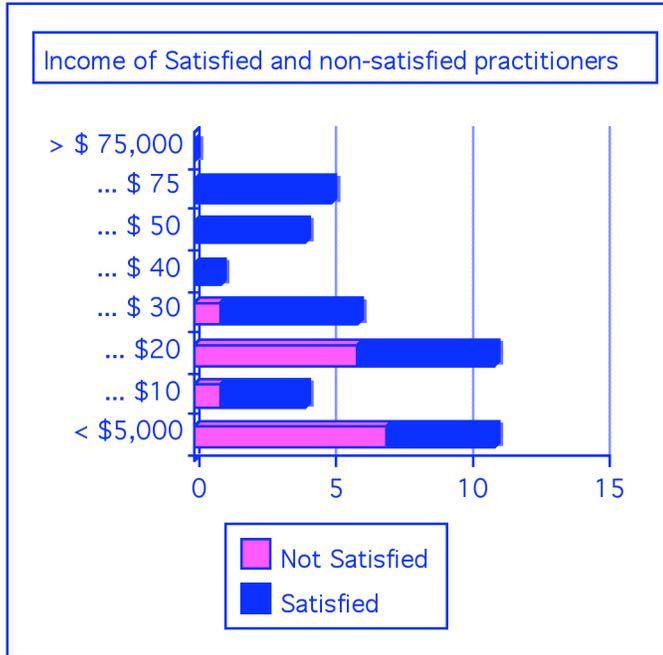
Approximately two-thirds of those with a single profession reported that they support themselves completely on their earnings from their practice, whereas only about one-fifth of those with another profession support themselves completely on their earnings from their practice.



61 % were satisfied with the size of their practice. Satisfaction appears to be independent of year of graduation. Dividing respondents by their year of Graduation yielded a fairly even proportion for each year of those being satisfied with their practice.

SATISFACTION AND INCOME

There was a higher proportion of reported satisfaction among practitioners with higher incomes from their practices tended to be more satisfied with the size of their practice.



Member support: Education/Training (22 responses)
More involvement in the Pedagogy of Trainings (10 responses)

COMMENTARY

(Approximately one in five make \$5000 or less) For these people, membership fees are a very high percentage of their income. The cost of further education and/or collegial contact (through Annual Conferences or Advanced Trainings) is extremely high relative to their professional income.

NUMBER OF FI's and ATM Classes PER WEEK

Practitioners who were "satisfied" with their practice did an average of 18 FI's per week whereas those who were "not satisfied" with their practice averaged 9 FI's.

Almost 25% of practitioners have NO ATM classes! Of those that do have classes, they average 3 classes per week. There were no differences between those who were satisfied and those not satisfied with the size of their practice.

REASONS FOR THE SIZE OF ONE'S PRACTICE

Respondents were asked, "If you are satisfied with the size of your practice, to what do you attribute your success?"

The responses were: "Personal Effort", "Other Professional background", "Developed Referrals", "Effectiveness of the Method", "Effective information on how to build a practice"

"If you are not satisfied with the size of your practice, what 3 factors do you think have most impact on the size?"

The responses were: "Limited promotion/advertising", "Difficulty communicating about the Method", "Limitations in space, time", "Lack of confidence", "Limited business skills", "Limited collegial support", "economic conditions in my community"

WHAT DOES THE GUILD DO, OR WHAT COULD IT DO THAT WOULD BE WORTH YOUR SUPPORT AND PARTICIPATION?

The most common responses were:
More PR/Advertising (28 responses)

A Snapshot of Our Practice - Part II

Further Results of a Survey of Practitioners.¹

by Robert Black

This is a continuation of the article that appeared in the last InTouch (Winter, 1997, p 14). In that article, details were provided on how the survey was conducted, and some basic statistics on number of responses, how many were practicing, their satisfaction with the size of their practice, the setting of the practice, how many have "other" professions and gross income from their Feldenkrais practice.

Prior to the publication of Part I, there had been an fairly intense discussion on the FelDigest about the results (which were available at the 1996 Annual Meeting in Berkeley) -- but not everyone had the details.

The statistics reported in Part I have a multitude of interpretations. These results are tantalizing. They give us some clear information in some areas, and bring up more questions in other areas. People who have seen the results say, "I thought the results would be thus, *except...*"

In presenting these further results, I am hoping to give practitioners a mirror to help understand the nature of their own practices in light of other's experiences.

Based on the average response of the sample, and generalizing to the 800 practitioners in Canada and the United States, we have the most astounding information:

2400 PEOPLE RECEIVE FI'S EACH DAY

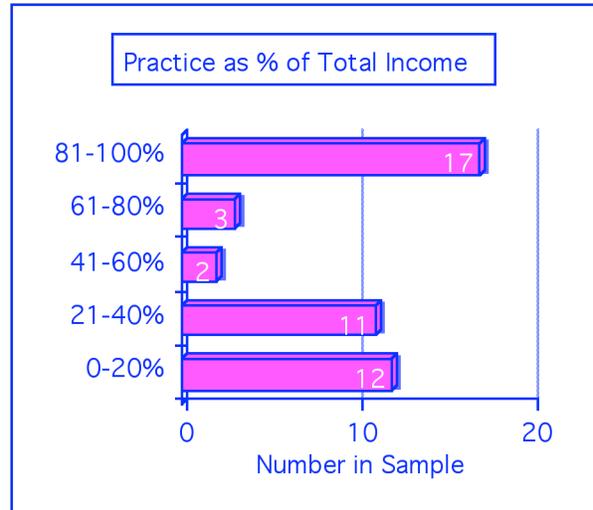
14,400 PEOPLE ATTEND ATM'S EACH WEEK
(assuming class sizes average 6).

FURTHER RESULTS

INCOME from one's practice: From Part I, we learned that about half of the practitioners make over \$20,000 (US). and approximately one in five (22%) make \$5,000 or less from their practice.

FELDENKRAIS PRACTICE AS A SOURCE OF SUPPORT
Respondents were asked the percentage that their practice contributes to their total income.

¹I wish to thank the respondents of the survey and the volunteers who collected the data for their time and effort.



As can be seen from this chart, 34% (17 out of 50 respondents) support themselves with their practice. For half of the respondents, their practice provides under 50% of their income. Where does this other money come from?

COMPARISON OF FELDENKRAIS PRACTICE INCOME and an ADDITIONAL PROFESSION

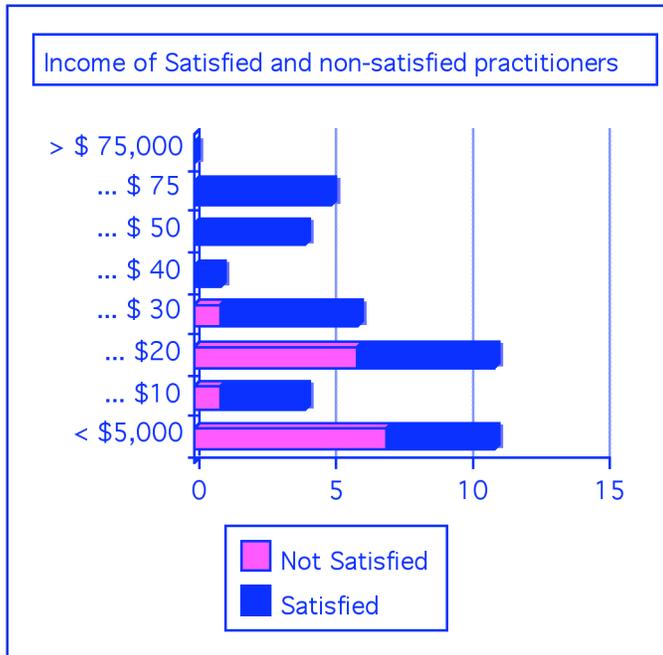
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Approximately two-thirds of those with a single profession reported that they support themselves completely on their earnings from their practice, whereas only about one-fifth of those with another profession support themselves completely on their earnings from their practice.

SATISFACTION WITH ONE'S PRACTICE

As reported earlier, 61 % were satisfied with the size of their practice.

As can be seen from the next chart, those with higher Feldenkrais income were satisfied with the size of their practice whereas those with lower income tended to report they were not satisfied.



NUMBER OF FI's and ATM Classes PER WEEK

Practitioners who were "satisfied" with their practice did an average of 18 FI's per week whereas those who were "not satisfied" with their practice averaged 9 FI's.

Almost 25% of practitioners had NO ATM classes!² Those with classes averaged 3 per week. There were no differences in the number of classes between those who were satisfied and those not satisfied with the size of their practice.

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² I find this startling and have wondered whether this result might be somewhat of an artifact of the survey being conducted in the summer.

WHAT DOES THE GUILD DO, OR WHAT COULD IT DO THAT WOULD BE WORTH YOUR SUPPORT AND PARTICIPATION?

The most common responses were:
More PR/ Advertising (28 responses)
Member support: Education/Training (22 responses)
More involvement in the Pedagogy of Trainings³(10 responses)

COMMENTARY

Although the survey has a number of weaknesses, it has given the Guild some significant data. As most of us are aware, Regional Representatives call practitioners in their area each year reminding them to pay fees. Over the years, many of these Representatives have reported degrees of dissatisfaction among the membership. The present survey validates these concerns of members in the following areas:

1. FEES: as one-fifth of practitioners have low incomes from their practices, the cost of membership is a significant percentage of this income.
2. CONTINUING EDUCATION: the cost of many advanced trainings are relatively high for those with low income from their practices.
3. DIFFICULTY SETTING UP A PRACTICE. A sizeable number of members have ongoing frustration with the size of their practice.
4. DISSATISFACTION WITH SOME ASPECTS OF THEIR TRAINING.
5. ALIENATION or ISOLATION.

In this commentary I have chosen to highlight these more "negative" results of the survey because I believe that those who are caught in some of these concerns are isolated from other practitioners at a time when they need a sense of community.

In conclusion, I hope that while you read this report you had a sense of "hey that's my practice!" and also had the opportunity to wonder about other practices that might be qualitatively different.

--rob

³Here respondents were saying things like, "The Guild should be more involved in trainings". This is as close as the survey was able to get to the issue of graduates' dissatisfaction with their training.