Biofeedback Certification Institute of America Educators Who Have Made a Difference

Fred Shaffer, PhD, BCIAC, and Judy Crawford

Provisional Issues

Biofeedback Certification Institute of America believes that the public has a right to efficacious treatment from competent certified biofeedback professionals who practice ethically and operate within the scope of their professions. This article is the first in a series that introduces the dedicated educators who have helped us succeed in our mission to protect the welfare of biofeedback consumers, to provide credibility to biofeedback practitioners, and to advance the field of biofeedback.

The phenomenal growth of biofeedback and neurofeedback represents the collective achievement of our diverse community. This article is the first in a series that celebrates the contributions of our dedicated educators. Robert Frost wrote, “I’m not a teacher, but an awakener.” Our colleagues featured in this series have helped awaken the excitement and unlock the potential of generations of students. They have helped Biofeedback Certification Institute of America (BCIA) certification succeed through their dedicated teaching of our Blueprints, modeling of our ethical standards, and mentorship of professionals entering the field.

This article highlights the contributions of John Anderson, Eugenia Bodenhamer-Davis, Cynthia Chandler, R. Adam Crane, Eleanor Criswell, Jay Gunkelman, Dick Gevirtz, Joel Lubar, and Don Moss to training in biofeedback. Future issues will honor the achievements of educators in biofeedback, neurofeedback, and pelvic muscle dysfunction biofeedback.

John Anderson has taught neurofeedback since 1987. He currently trains professionals for the Stens Corporation in cities throughout the United States. In 1974, John started at a local hospital-based substance abuse treatment program. He moved on to a variety of positions in chronic pain rehabilitation and in private medical clinics. In 1992, he took a position as a neurofeedback practitioner at the New Visions School in Minneapolis and was fortunate to be trained by Sue and Siegfried Othmer, who had been instrumental in helping establish the program. He had the privilege of working with David Trudeau on a research project at the Minneapolis VAMC, and David introduced John to 19-channel electroencephalography (EEG) and quantitative EEG assessment. In addition to the Othmers, Barry Sterman, Jay Gunkelman, Bob Thatcher, Steve Wall, and many, many others helped enrich his knowledge of neurofeedback, whereas Tony Hughes and Jacques Kelly generously mentored him as an educator.

John’s specialty is neurofeedback. He has trained about 2,500 people during his career, 1,200 of these while teaching workshops for the Stens Corporation. He hopes that someday BCIA certification will be the standard for all professionals offering biofeedback services using any method. He also hopes to see state-by-state licensure for biofeedback practitioners to recognize this field as an area of practice that is independent, unique, and requires distinctive preparation.

Eugenia Bodenhamer-Davis has trained students in neurofeedback since 1994. She presently teaches at the University of North Texas (UNT), Department of Rehabilitation, Social Work, and Addictions. She was trained in peripheral biofeedback in the 1980s but did not seriously study biofeedback until the early 1990s, when she heard about Eugene Peniston’s work with EEG biofeedback and substance abuse at the Fort Lyon, Colorado, Veterans Administration Hospital. She was invited by Bob Dickson, then the director of the Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse (TCADA), who was interested in Peniston’s work, to apply for a grant to evaluate the Peniston Protocol and, if she found it to be effective, to begin training addiction counselors in...
Texas to use neurofeedback. With a TCADA start-up grant, she founded the UNT Neurotherapy Lab in 1991. At that time, the only place in the country that provided training in EEG biofeedback and the Alpha-Theta protocol developed by Eugene Peniston was the Menninger Foundation Medical Center in Topeka, Kansas. Genie received her initial training in EEG biofeedback at Menninger’s with Dale Walters and Eugene Peniston. Shortly after that, Peniston was transferred to the Bonham, Texas, Veterans Administration Hospital, just 50 miles from UNT. Peniston continued to mentor Genie and her early students during the 2 years of their TCADA-funded project, when they primarily treated adult probationers who had been arrested for alcohol-/drug-related offenses. Another early mentor and supporter of the UNT Neurotherapy Lab was Jonathon Walker of Dallas, who donated their first quantitative EEG equipment (QEEG). Dr. Walker helped them learn to use QEEG to guide neurofeedback as they expanded the number of students they trained and the types of clients and disorders they treated.

Genie’s specialization is in neurofeedback, and she has developed expertise in treating children, adolescents, and adults with a variety of disorders, from attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and autism to depression and substance abuse. Since 1994, she has trained about 200 professionals in annual neurofeedback workshops and approximately 80 additional doctoral and master’s students in her annual Introduction to Neurofeedback course and Neurofeedback Practicum provided each semester in the Neurotherapy Lab. Genie believes that the future of BCIA and the field is continued growth and challenge. There is a growing public interest in neurofeedback treatment and thus a growing number of professionals and students seeking training in neurofeedback. BCIA will continue to be challenged to monitor the quality of professional training programs offered, to maintain ethical practice among its certificants, and to continue to encourage newly trained practitioners to acquire the BCIA credential.

Cynthia Chandler has offered courses in biofeedback for more than 20 years. She most recently taught at the UNT Counseling Program, Department of Counseling and Higher Education, located in Denton, Texas. She was introduced to biofeedback by John Carlson at Texas Tech University, where she received her master’s degree in psychology and doctoral degree in educational psychology. Dave Danskin supervised her advanced training in biofeedback during her doctoral internship in psychology at Kansas State University.

She has trained more than 500 students. Cindy’s greatest concern for the future of the field is that its resiliency very much depends on the quality and qualifications of its practitioners and researchers. Thus, the profession must have standards and guidelines for practice that evolve as science and technology evolve because they are major forces that drive the direction of biofeedback.

R. Adam Crane has presented workshops on biofeedback since 1971. He currently teaches for Biofeedback Resources International. Although he has been mentored by more than 50 professionals, his earliest mentors included Erik Peper, Gay Luce, Les Fehmi, and Chuck Stroebel. Although he has been a generalist throughout his career, he has preferred teaching and developing equipment for neurofeedback. He has trained more than 2,000 health care professionals and has taught in Russia, Canada, and Mexico.

Currently, Adam is deeply involved in the practical science and art of enhancing consciousness. He is very active with the International MindFitness Foundation (a 501 c3 not for profit founded by Adam and his wife Dagne). In addition, he recently authored the first chapter of Jim Evans’s new book, A Handbook of Neurofeedback. The chapter was largely devoted to his vision for the field. Adam forecasts an immense future for biofeedback/neurofeedback.
Eleanor Criswell has lectured about biofeedback and EEG biofeedback (now called neurofeedback) since 1969. Originally, biofeedback/neurofeedback was part of the physiological psychology class at Sonoma State University, California. In time, a student survey of course preferences showed that the students wanted to have a biofeedback course. She taught the first biofeedback course (the course has always included EEG feedback), which was called “Biofeedback and Consciousness Research.” She has taught biofeedback/neurofeedback in the Psychology Department at Sonoma State University, California, since 1969. She also taught biofeedback/neurofeedback at the Novato Institute for Somatic Research and Training. Following full retirement from Sonoma State University, she teaches biofeedback/neurofeedback in her Hanna Somatic Education training programs at the Novato Institute. Eleanor became involved with the field of biofeedback in 1967. Joe Hart at the University of California, Irvine, first introduced her to biofeedback in the context of his research. She became part of the information exchange group created by Barbara Brown and others that involved 17 people exchanging information and articles. When she came to live in the Bay Area, she began to study with Joe Kamiya, whom she considers her primary mentor and inspiration.

Eleanor’s specialty is biofeedback/neurofeedback done in a psychotherapeutic and somatics (mind-body integration) context. She has trained more than 1,500 students. She envisions BCIA continuing to certify professionals in biofeedback and neurofeedback to help build the field and communicate the incredible potential of biofeedback/neurofeedback for human development and welfare.

Dick Gevirtz has provided courses in biofeedback since 1975. He currently teaches at the California School of Professional Psychology at Alliant International University. He started working with Peter Lang in psychophysiology, was introduced to biofeedback in a workshop by Tom Budzynski, and then worked with Mark Schwartz at the Mayo Clinic–Rochester.

Dick is widely published on topics related to the etiology and treatment of anxiety and other psychophysiological disorders, heart rate variability, and the mechanisms of chronic muscle pain. He also maintains a part-time clinical practice treating patients with anxiety and stress-related disorders. Dick has served on various AAPB committees and is a past-president of AAPB. His vision is for BCIA certification to be considered a necessary credential for all professionals in the field.

Jay Gunkelman has instructed thousands of students in the many years of workshops and professional training programs since he started in the field in 1972. He was a staff instructor at the Biofeedback Institute of San Francisco’s training program from the 1970s through the 1980s. He currently trains professionals through courses at the various meetings held by the professional membership organizations worldwide. He stepped into the field of biofeedback directly from his university studies in psychophysiology under his professors Drs. Patricia and William Beatty (both now deceased) at North Dakota State University. The underlying neuroanatomy and neurophysiology course work has proven invaluable over the years, especially in addition to all the EEGs he has seen. Jay lectured for Fred Shaffer when Fred was a brand new instructor at Truman State, decades
before Jay’s involvement in running meetings or sitting on the Boards for the various professional societies in his area (ISNR, AAPB, and BSC).

As an experienced registered EEG technologist, Jay generally lectures on EEG and QEEG, as well as—in the earlier days—on instrumentation and filtering for all modalities. “The crystal ball I can see shows a bright shiny future for the field’s certification organization (BCIA) and a big step up for the field’s professionalism, as the nation moves closer to having a state begin the process of licensure for psychophysiology professionals. This will likely be done first in California, like many trends.”

**Joel Lubar** has trained professionals in neurofeedback and biofeedback since 1976, when he taught a course in behavioral medicine at the University of Tennessee. He currently teaches neurofeedback and QEEG workshops for the Brainfeedback Training Institute. Joel became interested in neurofeedback in about 1972 after reading about Barry Sterman’s work with epilepsy. His laboratory at the University of Tennessee replicated and extended Sterman’s initial findings with epileptic patients, and he published his first study on this topic in 1975. Joel developed the first study using neurofeedback for training children with the “hyperkinetic disorder of childhood” (later designated as ADHD) with his graduate student Margaret Shouse. This started the whole intervention of using neurofeedback for ADHD, which is still the most widespread application of neurofeedback worldwide.

Joel’s specialty areas include QEEG analysis, neurofeedback, and LORETA analysis. He has trained hundreds of students through university courses, workshops, and consultation. Joel sees BCIA expanding and hopefully requiring more even more comprehensive training in the EEG area. This area is becoming very complex and much more technical as new modalities are developed, such as connectivity training and analysis. Joel advises university students who wish to enter the field to become grounded in higher mathematics and physics and to complete sufficient coursework in chemistry, biochemistry, and neuropharmacology. They need to understand the electrodynamics of how the nervous system operates and obtain enough chemical knowledge to understand drug actions and appropriate use of medications to coordinate with neurofeedback interventions.

**Donald Moss** has trained and supervised students in biofeedback and neurofeedback since 1986. He currently teaches at the Saybrook Graduate School in San Francisco, where he is director of integrative health studies. He presents workshops worldwide, through AAPB, BFE, ASCH, SCEH and through guest lectureships at various universities. For example, he has taught biofeedback recently at the John Paul II Catholic University in Lublin, Poland, and at UNAM in Mexico City. Don also supervises health professionals in basic skills and practice models of biofeedback through his clinic in Michigan. He had his first opportunity to use biofeedback systems purchased for a community outreach clinic in Holland, Michigan, in 1980. That spurred him to obtain training and develop a biofeedback practice. Don’s mentors included David Regester, an early leader of biofeedback in Michigan, and Ian Wickramasekera.

Don has also been the editor of the *Biofeedback* magazine for 14 years and sees *Biofeedback* as a primary tool in promoting biofeedback and communicating new
developments in research and clinical practice to the health professions. His primary interest is the integration of a variety of mind-body therapies, including biofeedback, hypnosis, and imagery therapies into the treatment of medical conditions and illnesses. Other interests include the psychophysiological assessment and treatment of anxiety disorders and the development of treatment protocols for heart rate variability biofeedback. He has taught biofeedback skills to approximately 500 students worldwide. Don is hopeful that BCIA will network with emerging biofeedback practice associations worldwide and become a leader in establishing practice standards, quality assurance, and certification systems for a new world community of self-regulation and biofeedback-oriented health professionals. He also envisions a much greater number of health professionals in medicine and nursing and allied health fields actively pursuing training and practice opportunities to apply biofeedback in the everyday practice of medicine.

The educators profiled in this series have trained generations of professionals to achieve the high ethical standards and competence that are the foundation of BCIA certification. As Henry Brooks Adams observed, “A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops.” Many of these students have achieved BCIA certification and now serve as teachers and mentors, so that the next generation of professionals will be “More than qualified—BCIA certified!”

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