What BCIA Learned from Bob Dylan

Judy Crawford¹ and Fred Shaffer, PhD, BCB²

¹BCIA, Wheat Ridge, CO; ²Truman State University, Kirksville, MO

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Biofeedback and neurofeedback certification expanded internationally, and the Biofeedback Certification International Alliance (BCIA) revised both recertification and certification programs in 2013. This article examines the main engines that have fueled certification growth: the BCIA affiliate program, the international expansion of BCIA-accredited training programs, and international educational and scientific society meetings held by the Society for Applied Neuroscience and the Biofeedback Federation of Europe. The authors conclude with a review of recent changes in recertification, academic certification, and the Neurofeedback Blueprint and a progress report on BCIA’s HRV Biofeedback Certificate of Completion, Board Certified Practitioner and Mentor Directory, and Job Board programs.

Bob Dylan (1965) wrote, “He not busy being born is busy dying.” Biofeedback Certification International Alliance (BCIA) certification programs have continued to grow internationally, and BCIA has revised its recertification, certification, Board Certified Practitioner and Mentor Directory, and Job Board programs to adapt to rapidly changing health care environments, to strengthen professional standards, and to better serve its stakeholders.

Biofeedback Certification International Alliance of Australia

The Biofeedback Certification International Alliance of Australia (BCIA-A), the first BCIA affiliate, had a very successful meeting at the Applied Neuroscience of Australasia annual conference in Melbourne, Australia, in August 2013. They invited a wonderful group of speakers, including Professors Richard Clark, BCN, and Richard Silberstein and Joy Lunt, BCN, from the United States, who presented “Comprehensive Assessment for Neurofeedback.” BCIA-A sponsored their very first certification exam, which resulted in 21 new certificants. Jon Hegg, BCN, chairs the BCIA-A Board. Welcome to BCIA’s new certificants in Australia!

Australia was not the only country to add new BCIA certificants. BCIA also welcomed new certificants from Canada, Germany, Hong Kong, Japan, New Zealand, and South Africa in 2013.

International Expansion of BCIA-Accredited Training Programs

For many years, veteran educators such as Joel Lubar, BCN; Don Moss, BCB, BCN; Erik Peper, BCB; Lynda Thompson, BCN; and Michael Thompson have regularly taught BCIA didactic workshops abroad. Increasingly, BCIA-accredited training providers, such as StressTherapy Solutions, the Institute for Applied Neuroscience, and Brain Science International, have recruited and trained international educators to teach BCIA’s neurofeedback curriculum to a wider international audience. Students in Australia, Brazil, Canada, England, Germany, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, South Africa, and Switzerland can now enjoy high-quality face-to-face instruction in their own countries.

The Society for Applied Neuroscience

The Society for Applied Neuroscience held a joint meeting with the National Initiative Brain and Cognition on January 30 to February 2, 2014, in the Royal Dutch Jaarbeurs in Utrecht (the Netherlands). The keynote speakers included Niels Bierbaumer and John Gruzelier, and the program included presentations on Neurofeedback for ADHD, Neurofeedback and Learning: Applications for Research, and Traumatic Brain Injury and Blast Injury. BCIA hosted an exam site.
The Biofeedback Federation of Europe
The Biofeedback Federation of Europe recently changed its name to include the term “Federation.” Their meeting was held in Venice, Italy, from February 11 to 15, 2014, at the Instituto Universitario Salesiano Venezia. Presenters included Jay Gunkelman; Eveline Kempenaar, BCB; Inna Khazan, BCB; Danielle Matto, BCB; Erik Peper, BCB; Ute Strehl; and Paul Swingle, BCB, BCN. BCIA offered Biofeedback, HRV Biofeedback, and Neurofeedback didactic workshops, and hosted an exam site.

Recertification 2014
The BCIA Board voted to make recertification easier and less expensive in 2014. The Board reduced the continuing education (CE) requirement from 55 hours to 48 hours across a 4-year cycle. It added new opportunities to earn CE hours, including 20 hours of formal mentoring and successful completion of preapproved Massive Open Online Courses. Finally, it lowered the second recertification fee for dual-certified practitioners to $175 from $225.

Academic Certification
The BCIA Board reviewed the 3-year-old academic certification program and found that the majority of its applicants would be better served by satisfying the higher standards of clinical certification. Once individuals earn clinical certification in biofeedback or neurofeedback, they can work in clinical practice, peak performance training, and/or academics. Although BCIA will no longer accept new academic certification applications, it will continue to recertify academic certificants every 4 years. Moreover, academic certificants with health care degrees may complete the remaining clinical certification requirements to earn this credential.

Updated Neurofeedback Blueprint
BCIA has recognized the rapid growth and increased success of neurofeedback and asked veteran educator Eugenia Bodenhamer-Davis, PhD, BCN, to chair a task force to revise the Neurofeedback Blueprint. A task force, composed of clinicians, optimal performance trainers, researchers, and university educators, reviewed current science and evidence-based clinical practice and suggested appropriate revisions, supported by an updated reading list. BCIA shared the revised blueprint with its accredited educators and incorporated their feedback into the document posted on the BCIA Web site. The final task is to build and validate a new Neurofeedback Certification Exam based on this blueprint.

HRV Biofeedback Certificate of Completion
BCIA launched its first certificate of completion program in spring 2013. Truman State University has taught the 15-hour HRV Biofeedback blueprint for two semesters, and the Association for Applied Psychophysiology and Biofeedback, International Society for Neurofeedback and Research, Biofeedback Federation of Europe, and Biofeedback Society of Texas have offered 2-day didactic workshops. In addition, BCIA accredited the Behavioral Medicine Research and Training Foundation and Seminars Without Borders to teach this blueprint in online and workshop formats. BCIA has already awarded the HRV Biofeedback Certificate of Completion to 19 individuals in its first 9 months.

Board Certified Practitioner and Mentor Directory
Because professional standards are the foundation of clinical practice, the BCIA Board voted to apply the American Psychological Association’s standard on listing professional credentials to its Board Certified Practitioner and Mentor Directory. Certificants may list only the degrees earned in a BCIA-approved health care field from regionally accredited academic institutions. The BCIA Board encourages all BCIA certificants to check your online profile in the Find a Practitioner menu of its Web site to ensure that your listing accurately describes your current practice. Help BCIA better promote you!

Job Board
If you haven’t visited BCIA’s Job Board, which is posted on the Web site under the Certificant’s Area, you should! BCIA advertised 19 positions in 2013. These positions ranged from neurofeedback technician to a research neuropsychologist. Even if you aren’t currently looking for a position, it shows hiring trends and the increased importance of a BCIA credential. Although the Job Board started with only clinical employment listings, BCIA has expanded its scope to include academic positions, such as postdoctoral fellowships and university internships. Employers and university program directors are increasingly relying on BCIA to hire the best-trained candidates. Send employment, fellowship, and internship listings to info@bcia.org and BCIA’s staff will help you advertise your position at no charge.

Conclusion
BCIA has reinvented itself as an international certification body to contribute to the worldwide expansion of biofeedback and neurofeedback. BCIA has focused on the needs of its stakeholders and adapted its programs to better
serve their needs. Through its international perspective on science, evidence-based practice, and professional standards, it helps to ensure that our certificants will be “more than qualified, BCIA certified.”

Reference

Correspondence: Judy Crawford, Executive Director, BCIA, Arvada, CO, email: jcrawford@bcia.org.