

Journal of Neurotherapy: Investigations in Neuromodulation, Neurofeedback and Applied Neuroscience

Book Review: Introduction to Quantitative EEG and Neurofeedback

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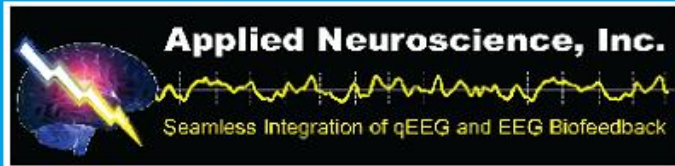
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Book Review:

Evans, James R. and Arbarbanel, Andrew (Eds.). (1999) *Introduction to Quantitative EEG and Neurofeedback*. San Diego: Academic Press.

This is the first clinical textbook on Neurofeedback (NFB) to be published, and if you are a professional seriously interested in neurofeedback, we urge you to buy it immediately. We are so impressed by the book that we are including its use in our seminars.

Since we know most of the chapter authors (some of whom we introduced to NFB and provided their original training and equipment) and either have or intend to have ongoing professional relationships with most of the others, we will refrain from using specific names when we suggest that there are several individual chapters which by themselves are worth the hefty cost of the book to most NFB practitioners.

This book is filled with formulas and protocols from some of the most successful practitioners and researchers in the field. I emphasize some, because for whatever reason, a number of prominent players were left out. We would also warn the reader that most of the hypotheses about how and what works in neurofeedback are just that, unproven (but usually working) hypotheses. Some of them appear to be contradictory, but we think that is just part of the excitement and struggle for prominence that is going on within this young and promising field. If I had been asked to edit the book I would have included additional pioneers and innovators and other concepts, clinical strategies and business models. But then this text is already 406 pages and there are several other books in the works. So, their stories will eventually get told.

Some of the chapter authors have economic interests in the development and marketing of specific NFB systems (as do we) so their work tends to be biased in favor of their own equipment. We think this is understandable, but believe the read-

ers would have been well served by a statement pointing out these biases and acknowledging that there is no controlled research indicating that one NFB system is superior to the other; and further there is relatively little (or no) controlled research that proves that most of the protocols detailed are the only NFB strategies which will deliver the impressive results documented by virtually all of the chapter authors.

We teach QEEG strategies in our certification seminars and believe it plays a useful role in the treatment of some contemporary NFB disorders. However, the naive reader could come away with the impression that QEEG is required for all clinical NFB protocols. There has been historically a huge amount of controversy surrounding QEEG and especially QEEG and NFB and that controversy continues. Some of the reasons include:

1. The exceptional skill and training required to technically achieve truly accurate, artifact free QEEG data.
2. The exceptional skill and training required to interpret that data.
3. The often prohibitive cost of obtaining adequate QEEG assessments.
4. Controversy surrounding the use of the normative databases which greatly enhance QEEG assessments.
5. The cost of quality QEEG equipment which has been subjected to FDA scrutiny (without which it may not be legally used for anything other than research, and that research must meet federally mandated human subject standards).

By the way, at least two chapters discuss these problems in some depth; and we are enthusiastic about both correct use of QEEG and the normative databases. We just think it is important that people considering offering NFB services not be intimidated by the apparent QEEG biases of some of the gifted and prominent personalities within

our field. We are also concerned about the dampening effect on Neurofeedback's growth if the additional expense and inconvenience of getting quality QEEG assessments were made mandatory for all NFB patients.

That said, get the book. Some of the writing is brilliant. You will learn a lot. And if you love neurofeedback you will be in for some fascinating and fun reading.

(Review by Adam Crane, Ph.D.

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We are also considering articles for our new sections: Current Concepts in Neurotherapy, News From Other Journals and Websites, Technical Notes, Book Reviews and, of course, Correspondence.

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