



# 20 Opportunities to Transform Yourself While Teaching



*A workshop taken from actual experiences that honor spirituality in education.*

Intended audience: Teachers, Pre-service Teachers, Curriculum and Instruction, Education

Instructor: John Bickart, Ph.D.

Prerequisites: none

Web Page: <https://www.bickart.org/intuitive-education.html>

Recommended Reading: [The Next Version of You](#), [Bickart's Just-in-Time Fables](#)

*Institutions that are highlighted in this workshop:*

- Meditation Ashram, Haridwar, India (1971)
- The Waldorf School of Garden City, Long Island, NY (1975-1978)
- American Airlines, Dallas, TX / AT&T, Basking Ridge, NJ / GE, Rockville, MD / Smith Barney Shearson, NYC, NY / World Trade Centers Association, NYC, NY (~1990)
- Marine Corps Base Quantico, Triangle, VA (~1990)
- The Canadian Federal Government, Ottawa, Canada (~1990)
- Uplook School, Greenfield, MA (~2000)
- Four Rivers Charter School, Greenfield, MA (~2000)
- The Center School of Greenfield, MA (~2000)
- Prairie Hill Waldorf School, Pewaukee, WI (~2000)
- Collier High School, Wickatunk, NJ (2002)
- Shanghai International Studies University, Shanghai, China (2007)
- VERA Institute of Justice Pathways Project for Incarcerated Individuals, NC State Prisons (2013)
- Omega Middle School, Asheville, NC (2017)
- Rainbow Institute, Asheville, NC (2018)
- Azalea Waldorf School, Asheville, NC (2019)
- School of Living Arts, Candler, NC (2020)
- YTL (Youth Transformed for Life), Asheville, NC (Oct. 2021)
- The Collaborative for Spirituality in Education, Columbia U., NYC, NY (Nov. 2019)
- INSS (International Network for the Study of Spirituality), St. Johns U., York, UK (June 2021)
- Holistic Teaching and Learning Center, Southern Oregon U., Ashland, OR (Oct. 2021)

Bio for the Workshop



*Led by John Bickart. John is an over half century veteran teacher of both children and adults. He is also an educational consultant. His goal as a teacher is to work in the background while letting good ideas speak for themselves. He believes that teachers and students know what they want and that we empower ourselves when we listen to our hearts. He values helping his students transform personally over simply passing along information. His professional offerings include higher ed. pre-service teacher preparation, in-service teacher workshops, high/middle school science and math for youth at risk, science topics for incarcerated individuals, and educational software development.*

The sacred or spiritual in my life ... what does that mean? I think it means looking at nature and being grateful for whatever is fun or inspiring or beautiful for me. You know – whatever engenders wonder and awe, as I experienced when I was a child. I think being sacred is simply being present, observing, and enjoying. I've taught children in private and public schools, and adults in schools, corporations, and state prisons. What they have taught me about spirituality can be summed up in three sentences.

One way to see the genius in your student, is for you, yourself to continually be grateful as you learn new things from everything around you, including your student; but sometimes this means that you have to stop your thinking and just observe.

“If children grew up according to early indications, we should have nothing but geniuses.” (Goethe, 2016/1882)

“The simple reason why the majority of scientists are not creative is not because they don't know how to think; but because they don't know how to stop thinking.” (Tolle, 2011)

## Abstract for the Workshop

Recent research in neuroscience and brain studies highlights both horizontal integration of the brain as well as vertical integration of the body, brainstem, limbic areas, and cortex (Hart, 2001, 2010, 2014a, 2014b; L. Miller, 2015; L. W. E. S. Miller, 2021; Siegel, 2010, 2018). Horizontal integration means connecting “our left hemisphere’s narrator function with the autobiographical memory storage of our right hemisphere” (Siegel, 2010, p. 74). A great joy for me is that the time we live in embraces the intersection of spirituality in education through the research being done on the integration of right and left brain and the parallel integration of heart thought and head thought. In other words, the right hemisphere uses our intuitive abilities for observation while the left hemisphere uses our analytical abilities to narrate what we have observed. My experiences with students for over 50 years is that they seem to have a window into their spiritual values when they start looking at themselves first with the heart, then follow with the intellect. Other research suggests that humankind, in the far distant past, used to lead with our naturally intuitive heart, then pass information to our head for the purpose of analysis (Dispenza, 2017; Dispenza & Boyce, 2016; Dispenza, Knight, & Encephalon, 2005; McGilchrist, 2009). This is why we need *intuitive education* - a way to let children remain in an intuitive state of observation before they engage their analytical ability to narrate and reflect.

To be completely honest, I think that education is often facing 180 degrees in the wrong direction and the youth knows it. Education needs to lead with the right brain. We need to replace exclusive left brain thinking that basically says, “To have a good life, you must *get* things – and school is the place to learn how to be successful at *getting*,” and integrate this with the right brain tendencies of including and *giving*. Also, we need to replace the habit of exclusively having the older generation teaching the younger. The very fact that the new kids already know that the only hope for humanity lies in learning how to *give* is evidence that we need to learn from

our students – now more than ever. At this crucial time in history, we need to leave certain habits behind and re-learn the truly ancient way of giving to each other – to the earth – and to other beings.

Recent research from my Ph.D. Dissertation concludes the need for intuitive education.

When educators are trained to disregard intuitive world views, there can arise losses of inclusion of paradigms of thinking from our past (Kuhn, 2004), appreciation of indigenous thought (Whorf & Carroll, 1964), and understanding of ancient Eastern (Nisbett, 2003) and African (Asante, 1991) philosophy. ... In addition, character education could suffer in a decreased appreciation of social diversity resulting in lesser awareness of the 'other' in education (Dewey, 1910, 1916/2005; Freire, 1998a, 1998b, 2000; Freire & Freire, 1994), less sensitivity to sustainability of the environment (Senge, 2008), and decreased attention to family and community (Bruner, 1960, 1983, 1986, 2004; Foucault, 1971). We are already seeing these changes. (Bickart, 2013, pp. 112-113)

## Description of the Workshop

Participate in 20 interactive examples of moments in teaching where the teacher can have a transformative experience. Each is a practical example where you experience an opportunity to model truly transformative learning for students.

### *Workshop Activities*

The activities of the workshop anticipate that each participant will be able to perform the following.

- **Intuitive Teaching** where the teacher is open to new ideas while *telling*.
- **Teacher / Student Reversal** where the teacher is open to learning from the student by active *listening*.
- **True Learning Modeling** where the teacher experiences true *gratitude* for the student, becoming a model of the highest form of a true teacher.

The workshop will show that teaching in a sacred, spiritual way is really quite simple. First, know that you, yourself are already a good teacher with an innate ability to be intuitive. Second, look for chances to learn from your students, so that they can see your gratitude for them. And in the end, if once in a while you get inspired and have fun with your students, then you are already celebrating the sacred, the highest, and the best anyone could ask of you.

### *Workshop Opportunities*

Some opportunities that will be offered are as follows.

- I. *First, Change Yourself ... then Dismantle the Master's House*
- II. *The True Teacher ... Modeling the Grateful Learner*
- III. *Intuitive Teaching ... A Simple, yet Powerful Tool*
- IV. *The Test of Awakening ... The Final Test*

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