

On Techniques Certification

Techniques exam...

cue shoulders moving protectively up to the ears as the knot of self doubt screws up the stomach

by Alison Williamson CST MCSS



Something changed during SER2; I blame Stan Gerome. If you haven't met him think part Robert De Niro, part Indian Navaho, but he kicks ass and takes freakin' names! It was during Stan's course that I met my 'warrior' and found some self belief. I decided to apply for the certification, to give myself a year to write the essays - one a month - and if I passed those then I would take it from there.

After receiving my essay titles I picked one that seemed straight-forward, got my books out and started typing... If you are wondering why you would want to put yourself through the exam process, here's a good reason: you learn so much! Sitting down and being very lucid about the what, why and how we do what we do made it very clear in my own mind, and I re-remembered things I had learned seven years previously on my first CST course.

I was also lucky enough to TA on CST1, and seeing a different instructor teach in a slightly different way turned light bulbs on in my head. There were a few sticky moments where I thought, "hang on, they didn't teach us this on my course", only to look at my study guide and see I had taken notes on it!

I then decided to re-sit CST2, which again was invaluable, and unlike TAing, you get to lie down now and again. It is well worth the £200/£300 regardless of whether or not you are taking your techniques; it's impossible to absorb all the information first time around, and it's really easy to start doing your own special techniques. But "Williamson CranioSacral Therapy" doesn't quite have the same ring to it.

I had a wobble listening to different people give their version of what the examiners wanted from the essays : "you can't take it from the books"; "you have to give your own experience"; "you have to do 3000 words per essay", but John Page gave some great advice: "I'm not giving you any advice about the essays," he said, but followed this with "other than, read the essay title and how many points it is worth", which I felt was the key to figuring out where you need to keep things technical and where you can add your own experience.

I followed revisiting CST1 and CST2 by attending Caroline's *Inside the Cranium* course. What a depth of knowledge that woman has, I have attended her courses before and if you fancy making the digestive system out of plasticine and naming bones via touch while blindfolded then check out her college. *Inside the Cranium* was the perfect course to give me some idea of what was happening under my hands, to see a real membrane system in the dissection lab was a privilege indeed and completely changed my tactile skills as I could be very specific about the structures I was working on.

After finishing my essays in 10 months (a couple were only one page essays), I sent them off with a cross of the fingers, and soon found I had passed, and passed with a mark that would make mum proud. So now to the practical exam, I found out you could go for Techniques preparation which I did, and have to say my teacher (Nikki Campbell) was amazing, putting me at ease and explaining what they were looking for. So when it came to the actual day of the multiple choice and practical I was ready to go through the transition, to go there as a student of CST and to come away as a CST therapist. I wanted to know what I knew and what I didn't, and I wanted confirmation that I wasn't making this stuff up, so it's really positive when you arc onto an area then the teacher arcs onto the same area, it quelled all the little voices in my head.

So if you have just started studying CST or have been doing CST for a decade I would say drop your shoulders down away from your ears, breath into your belly, and get writing, it's a worthwhile experience.

Diplomate next... uh-oh, there go those shoulders...