

The Z Position and the Advanced Training

Jan Sultan, Certified Advanced Rolfer

A quick note on the Z and some thoughts on “standardized” advanced training.

I taught the Z as Ida taught it to me in my advanced class. I struggled with this position for years, and tried to come up with a way to teach it that gave the practitioners a way to evaluate whether or not a client could handle it, and how to cope with a symmetrical stress position in unsymmetrical bodies.

In classes, there were inevitably some number of students who came up with acute neck problems, or other unexpected results from exchanging the session in classes. Students I encountered later reported that they were very selective in applying the session, if they did it at all. It is super-demanding on the practitioner as well as the client. It has all the potency of a Session Four, with a lot of additional potential for random responses.

After teaching it in six or seven advanced classes, I abandoned it as a formulistic approach. I have demonstrated the Z in classes since, but don't recommend it universally,

or teach it as part of a series.

As for the “standardization” issue: the current advanced training is well-structured. We have developed a Principle/Taxonomy-centered decision-making process that leads the practitioner to make coherent choices about intervention. It is harder to learn than an “advanced formula or recipe”, but gives the Rolfer the tools to make decisions based on observation. Our students give us good feedback for this approach, and we are developing further along this line.

There is a full manual on the advanced class, compiled from various writings on the work. We all use it. We continue to develop it. In addition, each teacher has their own flavor and interpretation.

If I had to hand out formulas for the work at the advanced level, I could be replaced by a robot who could hand out the recipe. I'm not interested in that. Each class has its own unique quality, generated by the group, and I wish to remain available to respond to that, within the limits of what I feel I have to teach.