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Reference for Adrian Finnegan

I have known Adrian since November 2001, when a friend recommended his coaching practice to me. At that time I had started studying for a Psychology degree at Northampton University. As a mature student, originally hoping and aiming for a 1st Class degree, I found degree-level study much tougher than my University entry (Access) course. Struggling, for example with meeting assignment deadlines whilst achieving the grades that I wanted, and performing effectively under exam conditions, I was considering leaving my full-time BSc Course. I thought I might benefit from the accelerated learning techniques and coaching Adrian offered.

Coaching for me typically involved 90-minute sessions every 2-3 weeks, with more intensive coaching prior to my Exams. We focused on developing my ability to write high quality assignments more quickly, take lecture notes in a way I could most easily revise, with technique for passing Exams. After 7 months' coaching, I came Top of Year in my 1st Year exams. I went on to achieve a 1st Class degree, with the highest mark gained in my year group.

In 2006 I aimed to secure a place on the government funded Doctoral Training Programme in Child and Educational Psychology (EdPsychD). I resumed my coaching with Adrian where he helped me develop my self-presentation and interview skills. Competition for places was extremely high with over 200 applications and only 14 funded places. I was accepted on the course, and via a further interview process, secured a work placement at one of the country's largest and most prestigious Educational Psychology Services (EPS). Again, competition was high, with eight Trainees applying for one Trainee post. In 2009 I successfully completed my EdPsychD qualification with University of Birmingham and my placement at Birmingham EPS.

In my time being coached by Adrian I have benefited in many ways. I gained significantly more confidence in how to learn faster and achieve more in less time. Adrian's RCL (Rapid Cognitive Learning) techniques proved invaluable in helping me to organise and structure ideas clearly and efficiently. I was able to process, store and recall large quantities of information with ease, enabling me to excel in exams without the stress. Adrian's RCL techniques were also useful in high pressured interview situations where I needed to prepare and present complex ideas without prior notice of the presentation subject matter. Many interviewees find this process extremely challenging. RCL techniques allow you to 'think on your feet' and I scored highly on these tasks during interviews. Most notably, RCL allowed me to generate my own ideas. Originality is one of the key criteria that differentiate high quality academic work (i.e. the difference between a First Class and a 2:1 / 2:2 degree classification). I used Adrian's RCL techniques throughout my postgraduate work and I excelled on the Doctoral training programme. As with my first degree, RCL strategies were fundamental to this success.

I am currently employed as a main grade Educational Psychologist in Birmingham and continue to use Adrian's RCL strategies on a daily basis to help me; coordinate and lead multi-agency meetings; prepare and present complex information to other professionals and academics; carry out statutory assessment work with children and families. With many theoretical standpoints to consider in this work, Adrian's RCL techniques allow me to be thorough, rigorous and comprehensive in my approach. Again, Adrian's RCL techniques take the stress out of what are often high pressured situations.

Adrian always prepares well for coaching sessions, is reliable, and has a relaxed and personable coaching style which facilitates 'optimal learning' in the coaching environment. I would recommend Adrian to anyone who wants to pass exams, develop study skills, excel in professional interviews, and work quickly and effectively in high demanding work situations.

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