

Fractal Math and Science Academy Review

Fractal is an excellent tutoring service for many reasons. I originally found them by searching for an MCAT tutor online. I was about to take the exam for the third time and was at a plateau with my scores, which barely rose no matter what I did on my own. I was already strong in the Physical Science section (General Chemistry and Physics) and was primarily looking for help in Organic Chemistry and some topics in Biology.

I contacted Kevin Anderson about participating in his new MCAT prep course as well as having some O-chem tutoring before the course started. I did very well in my undergraduate career and had never needed a tutor so I did not know what to expect initially. While he certainly does have the credentials, that didn't matter to me. My university professor for one subject certainly had the qualifications, but couldn't teach in a way that I could understand and it seemed to affect me negatively when I tried studying on my own. As I quickly found out, this was not the case with Kevin!

When I met with him, I was happy to see that he was down to earth and approachable. He was able to condense and break down complex concepts in a systematic manner that was easy to understand. I am the type of student that can't process material just from listening to someone speak for an hour or two. I usually ended up learning the material well enough on my own. On the other hand, learning from Kevin in both a one-to-one and small group setting felt more like an active conversation and less like a passive lecture or talk. I was able to ask questions and make sure I understood the material while he taught it to me, allowing me to synthesize the concepts while they were being taught. This is something I had not gotten from any teacher or professor before and is something I valued the most from my experience with Fractal. Thanks to his teaching style and skills, I had the tools and knowledge to tackle O-chem problems on the MCAT even though I opted to only go through what I needed most for the test.

During the MCAT Prep Course Kevin focused primarily on General Chemistry and Physics, which he was able to explain just as simply as the Organic Chemistry. Although I was already strong in those subjects he tested my knowledge of the material to make sure I had a solid understanding of the concepts. The prep course only had three other students aside from myself and we were each given proper attention and our individual needs were addressed.

Kevin's associate Yayoi Kumata, taught the Verbal section and Biological Science section (Biology and Organic Chemistry) during the MCAT Prep Class. It is evident from her approach to teaching that she knew all of the MCAT material. Drawing from her experience with MCAT prep, she developed an effective teaching and note taking method which continues to influence how I study and take notes. Using multiple illustrations, clever mnemonics, and a plethora of colored markers, it was very easy to follow the material she presented during class. Yayoi presented the material so well on her

whiteboard that I copied her writing almost verbatim (down to the color she wrote with), which made reviewing the material just as easy as when she had first presented it.

In addition to the MCAT Prep Course, I went to her for private sessions on Biology topics I was weak in, particularly cellular and molecular biology. Since she had already taught the material during the prep course, our sessions were similar to office hours with a professor where I asked questions about problem sets I had difficulty with. She was very down to earth and approachable during our sessions and during class. She answered all my questions well and was attentive to my needs. Like my sessions with Kevin, I was able to have an active back and forth conversation with Yayoi to make sure I understood the material properly. During our sessions it was clear that her mastery of the material went beyond the level required for the MCAT even though her credentials may not show this. On several occasions I asked questions that went beyond the scope of the MCAT in order to gain a better understanding of the material and she was able to answer them in a way I clearly understood.

Overall, I had a wonderful experience with Fractal Academy. Both Kevin and Yayoi were very calm and reassuring during the time I was with them. As the test drew closer they made sure I wasn't too stressed. They also made sure I was doing well on the practice exams and we came up with test taking strategies specific to what I needed. Aside from just teaching the material they shared interesting factoids that were relevant to the topics that were being taught and we also shared several side conversations which made my overall learning experience enjoyable. Thanks to Kevin and Yayoi I was able to significantly boost my score on the MCAT and break into the double digits on all 3 sections, going from plateauing at 30 to moving up to a 33. This was something I was not able to do on my own nor had I even thought I could do in the first place. Both of them not only taught the material but gave me the confidence and ambition that not only would I score well but that I may even do better. It was clear during my time with them that Fractal goes above and beyond for each and every student. I remember Kevin even took time out of his lunch break to answer some of my questions! My experience with them still influences me today. Thanks to them I discovered different learning methods that I never considered or even knew worked very well for me. As I stated in the beginning, Fractal Academy is fantastic. Whether you are a student struggling in a certain subject or a student doing well, there is always room for improvement I highly recommend Fractal Academy and believe that they can bring you up to the next level.

Emmanuel Magsino
B.S. Rochester Institute of Technology 2012
M.S. Boston University 2016