experience. Undoubtedly, taking responsibility for your degree can be daunting, but it is also an exciting opportunity to play an active role in what you gain from the course. I personally found that engaging, contributing and fully participating in my learning experience was tremendously rewarding.

**During the course**

*Know how you work*

It is unlikely that your colleagues will form a homogeneous group of students, but will instead come from a variety of backgrounds, be of different ages and have a range of experiences and expertise. As a result, the ways in which you learn may differ significantly and it is important to remain confident in your own learning style and not be swayed by others. By all means share study skills and ideas, in fact I would encourage it, as discussing content with others is a fantastic way to broaden perspectives and views, however *do not fall into the trap of comparing yourself to others*. Theodore Roosevelt said that “comparison is the thief of joy” and ultimately your masters course is there to be enjoyed, albeit stressful and challenging at times. Therefore, *pursue your own interests, work in the way that is best for you and stay focussed on your own progress* and development during the course.

*Staff are a resource*

Many health psychology courses now feature a number of highly successful health psychologists who are leaders or specialists within their field. My experience of being surrounded by these people is to use them. **Staff are a resource** as what they can teach you the content of a course throughout your masters, in addition to a great deal more they can teach you with regard to skills. **Networking is a vital component** of a psychology profession and taking the opportunity to make connections with the staff in your department and fellow colleagues is highly recommended. In addition to this however, simply observing staff at events, conferences or seminars is a highly effective way to develop networking skills as well as a way to learn how researchers discuss their work in an effective and engaging way. The staff working in your departments are experts in their field and to underuse such a valuable resource would be a shame, therefore *I would urge you to make contacts, express interest and develop ongoing conversations wherever you can.*

**Focus on skills – not marks**

As previously mentioned, a Masters in Health Psychology is stage one of the training to become a chartered health psychologist and it is important to bear this in mind when studying. You are not only developing a sound knowledge and understanding of the discipline, but *you are being given an opportunity to develop skills and qualities that you will need for a career in psychology*. You are surrounded by expert staff and colleagues in the same position as you, it is a perfect chance to **identify weaknesses and work on them in a supportive environment**. Take every opportunity to nurture and test your critical appraisal, communication and time management skills as these are all extremely necessary for future work. On a similar vein, I would urge you to remember you are gaining these skills when it comes to receiving grades and feedback. Throughout your course *you will be learning things that cannot be measured or assessed through assignments* and it is useful to hold onto this when the pressure of assignments or exams may become heavy.