This is not simply a matter of the way the book is conceived, authored and organised: it is also evident in the predominant approaches to ethics.

Ironically, there is only one reference listed in the index to the key social work value of anti-discriminatory practice (and none to anti-oppressive practice), yet in that single reference Louise Terry states that: 'anti-discriminatory practice should be the foundation of health and social care' (p. 138). Strange that such a foundational value is not mentioned anywhere else in the book! In fact, the index fails to identify one other place where anti-discrimination is mentioned, when it is fairly described by the Whittingtons as 'lodged in contemporary social work and social care values' (p. 88). Yet again, its importance as a key social work value is not matched by any degree of attention throughout the book – one that claims to cover both health and social care ethics. Equally, there are no apparent references to feminist ethics which are currently an important area of debate, especially (but not only) in social work – an absence mystifying in the light of its relevance to all these professions. Although some of these issues are discussed indirectly, there is only one actual indexed reference to age discrimination (in a chapter by Terry on human rights, p. 38), and no references in the index to other forms of discrimination, such as disablism or sexism. Most shockingly, there is no reference to racism, individual or institutional. These are the kinds of matters that are fore-fronted in social work ethics and values, yet are sidelined or discussed obliquely in these two sections that focus mostly on health governance and health ethics.

There is an interesting chapter by a general practitioner on ethics in practice (Campion-Smith, Chapter 5), but none by a social worker or any other social care practitioner. Employees of social services can and are regarded as 'health employees' for the purposes of one author (Pierce, p. 55), while another is content to adapt a clinical decision-making model from health to cover social care (Terry, Chapter 2). Similarly, service users are the occasional objects of analysis – especially in a useful summary about how they might be involved by Stevens and Manthorpe (Chapter 8), but do not otherwise contribute to the book, despite an interesting chapter that argues the case for *dialogue* with the 'other' (Irvine and McPhee, Chapter 10). There are other useful chapters on payment for services (Chapters 12 and 13) and on research ethics (Chapters 2 and 3), also mainly addressing health perspectives, with the exception of Penhale's account of payment for care for older people (Chapter 13).

The stated aim in the introductory chapter is simply 'to show the importance of ethics in health and social care' (p. 1), and in this the book succeeds. However, the blurb disputably claims that little attention has been paid to the subject of ethics in social care, and that the book is needed for academics, students and researchers who need an up-to-date analysis of debates in both health and social care. Despite these claims, given the book's primary orientation, the audience for this book is likely to be mainly in health. However, it is less useful for those who fall into the 'social care' category. It is a matter of concern and regret (but perhaps not a surprise) that a health-dominated book that advocates and analyses multiprofessionalism at some length (Leathard, Chapter 7; and Irvine and McPhee, Chapter 10) in fact fails to effectively integrate significantly different perspectives from non-health sources.

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Researching Health: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods
Edited by Mike Saks and Judith Allsop
Sage Publications, London (2007),
£22.99 (paperback), 422 pp.
ISBN 9781412903646

Social Work: A Companion to Learning
Edited by Mark Lymberry and
Karen Postle
Sage Publications, London (2007),
£20.99 (paperback), 320 pp.
ISBN 9781412920025

The first of these books, *Researching Health*, is an edited collection with contributions from 24 academics from a range of countries and academic institutions. The book is divided into five parts: conducting health research; qualitative methods and health; quantitative methods and health; contemporary issues in researching health; and disseminating health research. The first thing I noticed about this book was how easy it is to navigate. There is a particularly helpful section at the start of the book entitled 'Guided Tour', which draws the reader's attention towards the specific elements of each chapter, such as chapter introductions, case studies, exercises, overviews, further reading, and the glossary of key concepts. There is also reference at the start of the text to the companion website, where a range of teaching and learning materials can be found. This should prove useful for both students and lecturers.

This text appears to be presented in such a way that it will serve as a practical and informative guide for students and academics in the health field. The guide incorporates sections that cover the wide-ranging methods used in health research. As many of the research principles will be similar, this book may also be relevant to those working or studying in other fields.

Part 1 of *Researching Health* consists of three opening chapters that deal with the wider factors associated with health research. There is a detailed and engaging introduction written by the editors, which asks, what is health research? This is followed by a complex discussion of competing paradigms in health research, which is well summarised in the conclusion to the chapter. The final chapter in this section is a comprehensive look at how to conduct a literature review in the field of health. This chapter is particularly well written and will be of considerable benefit to anyone conducting a literature review. Furthermore, the exercise at the end of the chapter is a useful tool to utilise in a learning environment.

Part 2 of the book consists of five chapters that address the use of qualitative methods in health. When read individually they each provide detailed yet accessible information on a range of methods. However, when they are read together they offer the reader a comprehensive understanding of the

range of qualitative methods appropriate for health research. The chapter that focuses on participant observation is particularly engaging and offers methodological solutions as well as highlighting the difficulties of employing this method.

Part 3 of the text combines six chapters that cover quantitative methods and their use in health research. The order of this in itself struck me as refreshing, given that research methods texts usually deal will quantitative methods before qualitative. Perhaps this reflects the greater emphasis being placed on qualitative methods in health research. This part of the book covers sampling, survey methods, statistical methods, randomized controlled trials, experimental methods, and the use of economics in health research. The diagram that Calnan uses on page 179 to assist the reader in understanding how indicators can be developed when using survey methods is likely to be very useful to those considering how to operationalise a particular concept of investigation. The same chapter also contains an interesting exercise that focuses on translating concepts of health into indicators. The chapter that follows on statistical methods will be particularly helpful to those who find this a difficult area of research. Argyrous deals with some difficult concepts in a straightforward and engaging style. The final chapter in this section deals with the use of economics in health research. I found this chapter to be particularly interesting, as the author offers the reader a distinction between different types of economic evaluation and what they aim to do. The exercise at the end of this chapter is also useful in stimulating thoughts around this subject area.

Part 4 of the book deals with the contemporary issues in researching health, over six chapters. This section was the most interesting part of the book, addressing a range of topics and drawing the readers' attention to the use of mixed methods. While not an exclusive portrayal of contemporary issues affecting health research, these chapters represent an appealing selection of topics for consideration. The chapter on researching orthodox and complimentary and alternative medi-

cine is worthy of attention. The authors advocate an eclectic approach to research in this area, highlighting the need to consider both qualitative and quantitative methods when conducting research. The social action model proposed in the chapter on researching ethnic minority groups is useful to consider and is supported by a case study on the Sahara Project in Birmingham. The subsequent chapter on involving the consumer in health research offers a detailed portrayal of participation in health research. Of particular value is the discussion of the range of models and methods used. The author, Hill, addresses the advantages and disadvantages of consumer involvement, and despite only offering the reader limited coverage of these issues, she nevertheless addresses the main points and provides a good starting point for exploring this concept in greater depth.

The final part of *Researching Health* is concerned with the dissemination of health research. In this sense the book takes the reader full circle from the start to the end of a project. The editors draw the book to a close by discussing the challenges involved in writing up and disseminating health research. While they do address the difficulties often inherent in this process, the chapter has a positive twist given the focus on how rewarding this process can be. The book concludes with a helpful glossary. Overall, I would highly recommend this text. It combines the knowledge and experience of experts from a range of countries, who all write in an engaging and accessible style. This book will be a valuable resource to all those involved in health research.

Similarly, the second book, *Social Work: A Companion to Learning*, is an edited collection comprising five sections, with 24 manageable chapters that cover a range of topics. There are 27 contributors from a mix of professions, who are leading experts in their respective fields. Overall the book is put together in an accessible and engaging way, which serves to stimulate the reader by posing questions, and creating opportunities for reflecting on the key learning points of each chapter. There are also 'taking it further' sections,

detailing other reading for those who wish to expand their knowledge of a particular interest area.

Lymbery and Postle open in Chapter 1 with a discussion of the social work profession against a backdrop of 'challenging times' in British society. They identify that because the future of social work is difficult to predict, those entering the profession and those already established will need to be resilient and adhere to key elements of social work practice, which have been neglected in recent years. This sets the tone of the book well, given the critical and questioning approach that is adopted. The chapters that follow focus on the key elements of the social work training curriculum in England, offering a critical overview of what is required of professionals in practice; and an analysis of the debates and political and social contexts inherent to social work practice. This means that this text is likely to be invaluable to any social work student or practitioner, and a useful aid to keep them engaged in current thinking and debates. The drawback of the text is that it is written primarily for the British reader, although many of the concepts are likely to be transferable and adaptable.

This review does not allow for a detailed analysis of each chapter. I have therefore selected three chapters to comment on in greater detail. These three are chapters that I found to be of particular interest. First, in Chapter 6, Advocacy in Action discusses the truth behind service user involvement. I found this to be of particular interest given that the recognition of the importance of participation in social services across the UK is not always matched by appropriate and meaningful action. This chapter is written in a particularly engaging way, and includes examples of personal histories from the advocates who highlight what involvement means to them. This represents a brave attempt to highlight that non-involvement is no longer an option for individuals or organisations.

In Chapter 16, Rafferty and Steyaert focus on the concept of social work in a digital society. Technology has transformed every aspect of our lives and social work is no exception to this. The

authors use the chapter to explore how information and communication technology impacts on the individual, families and communities. They explore a range of issues including: the digital divide and inequality; digital bridges (whereby technology can have a liberating potential); and digital literacy and the three forms of skills (instrumental, structural and strategic). In terms of the implications for social work practice, the authors highlight the need for social workers to engage creatively with digital tools that are available, but also clearly point to a need for curriculum changes to take this agenda forward. This is an important chapter for students, practitioners and academic staff to consider. All parties will need to embrace digital developments in order to improve social work practice and the quality of support to service users.

Finally, Chapter 24 serves as the conclusion by discussing the opportunities and threats for social work in the twenty-first century. Postle and Lymbery cleverly elicit themes from previous chapters to draw a close to the book. They highlight the need for social work professionals to become more aware of the experiences of those receiving social care, and to use this knowledge to inform their practice. A clear message that comes from this chapter is the distance between social work theory and social work practice. The authors draw the reader's attention to this 'widening gulf', which serves to paint the social work profession in a rather dismal light. The only opportunity appears to lie in the participation of service users in shaping the social work profession, something that will take time and dedication to achieve.

Overall, *Social Work: A Companion to Learning* represents a detailed portrayal of the societal pressures on social work practice, the changes that are required within the profession, and some detail about how these changes can be achieved. This should be an essential reading item on the book list of every social work student and act as a training resource to those training future social workers, and those already established within the profession. In particular, readers should take note of the focus on participatory techniques and the need to ensure that the involvement of service users is embraced as being central to future developments within the profession.

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Understanding Health and Social Care
By Jon Glasby
Policy Press, Bristol (2007), £18.99 (paperback), 216 pp.
ISBN 9781861349101

This is an extremely well-thought-out book on the interrelated subjects of care in the community and interprofessional working. Its key strength is that it is set out in a way that will be useful on a number of different levels to students on social policy degree programmes, social work education courses and nurse education courses. Each chapter is divided into subsections entitled Overview; Policy context; Key concepts; Policy and practice dilemmas; Summary; Further reading/relevant websites; and Reflection exercises. Thus, on one level, it is structured like a complete self-contained course unit on the subject of health and social care. Indeed, the reflective exercises are even subdivided into different exercises thought to be of use to different subgroups of readers. In truth, though, all readers (or at least all health and social care students) would benefit from going through most of these exercises regardless of how the exercises are labelled as this would help them to view situations from the perspectives of other stakeholders. On another level, the chapter titles, subheadings, lists of recommended reading and websites, and the detailed index make this an excellent starting point for students preparing coursework. Similarly, these features make the book an excellent reference point for students working in placement settings where community care of adults is the core business (or even for newly qualified staff working in similar agencies).

The chapter headings (not including the introduction and the brief postscript) are Origins of community and health and social care; Current services; Partnership working in health and social care; Independent living and the social model of disability; Anti-discriminatory practice and social inclusion; User involvement and citizenship; and Support for carers. In terms of content (although I have one comparatively small reservation about the longer history which I will refer to later) the book begins with a good account of how health and social care has evolved in the UK since the late twentieth century. This is followed by a review of the contemporary situation that includes some useful statistical information. The following chapters deal with the issues in question in a way that is both thorough and critical. For example, the chapter on partnership working discusses practical difficulties associated with implementing (sometimes contradictory) government policy that demands close interprofessional working. The chapter on independent living and the social model of disability explores the tendency of official policy and the occupational culture of caring professions to lag behind challenges to traditional ideas about disability emanating from disabled people themselves. While the chapter on anti-discriminatory practice is rather brief and arguably focuses on some forms of discrimination more than others, it nevertheless highlights the importance of anti-discriminatory practice and social inclusion and does provide a very useful resource list. The chapter on user involvement and citizenship neatly summarises and explains the discourses that have underpinned the efforts of various groups of user activists in recent years. However, it would have been useful to have linked this discussion to a more detailed analysis of the relationship between the user movement and other forms of advocacy; not least because the subject of advocacy merits no more than a few passing mentions in the entire book. Finally, the chapter on carers provides a comprehensive account of the rights of carers and the challenges they face, as well as a critical discussion of the concept of carers and caring.