

Book review

Thornbory, G. 2009: *Public health nursing: a textbook for health visitors, school nurses and occupational health nurses*. Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell. 265 pp, £26.99 paperback. ISBN: 9781405180078
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This book provides a wealth of information about the development of public health nursing as a career and a profession. To get the most from this book is not to read it as a novel; rather, its value is as a table d'hôte menu offering three courses. The entrée (chapters 1 and 2) whets the appetite and sets the context for what is to come. There is ample food for thought provided by the main course options (chapters 3–8) and the final course (chapter 9) allows one to savour the flavours and bring all the different issues together.

The chapters are easy to read and well presented, and offer a combination of learning outcomes, suggested learning activities and chapter summaries. The activities provide the platform for the reader to become an active learner and engage with the text rather than merely accept it at face value. This, along with the extensive reference lists, creates a valuable resource for the lifelong learner, whether that be the student or qualified practitioner seeking to keep up-to-date. The illustrations within the chapters are relevant and promote the learning potential of the content. They are integrated well into the text and help the reader to critically engage with the issues raised and discussed.

The discipline-specific division of chapters provides a helpful signpost for the reader who wants to focus their reading on a specific area of specialist community public health nursing practice. Each chapter provides a historical overview

of policy and practice for the discipline and sets the context for public health and current day practice. The diversification of workforce priorities and professional identity are managed sensitively in the text and readers are provided with suggested actions that will help them to take the issues forward and challenge the status quo.

Throughout the book, the content is presented in a way that challenges the reader to actively engage with the issues of policy, practice and research in relation to specialist community public health nursing. There is a sense that the authors are willing the reader to adopt a 'so what' and 'what now' approach to their practice and professional development after reading it. This culminates in the final chapter, which collates aspects of education, learning and practice and professional development.

The preface states that this book aims to show the diversity of each specialist community public health nursing discipline and how they address public health in different ways according to the needs of the population that they serve, and this book does just that. In summary, this book will be a valuable addition to the bookshelf of a specialist community public health nurse and those working towards entry into the profession. It will also provide a valuable core text to any reading list and library shelf for Universities providing specialist community public health nursing programmes.

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