

In Chapter 3 the author develops the process of organizing and delivering information. The writer of any document must learn to “look at it from 2 angles: logic and development of ideas.” While this is often difficult for writers, this chapter walks through the process in a manner that helps the writer understand how to develop this skill, with written examples to support and explain the process.

Chapter 4 will be very helpful for anyone who writes business correspondence, letters, memoranda, electronic correspondence, and facsimiles. A letter is, in many cases, the first contact a party has with a company, and you want their first impression to be the correct one. While letters are usually inter-organization communications and memoranda are intra-organization communications, facsimiles can be either, and you want to make sure that you are conveying the correct message in your wording. Knowing how to convey an accurate and professional piece of correspondence is very important. This chapter offers many good ideas and examples.

Chapter 5 addresses the skill of writing policies, plans, manuals, procedures, and methods, and describes why it is very important to understand the process of writing these correctly. The chapter explains the backbone process documents that must be in place for companies to operate compliantly. Examples of various process documents are provided. Chapter 6 discusses data-collection and routine reporting. Chapter 7 discusses process reports. Chapter 8 discusses summary writing. These chapters address the differences and similarities in writing routine reports, process reports, and summary reports. There are many different examples, along with specific information on what to include and what not to include in each.

The book’s largest section, Chapters 9 through 12, extensively covers grammar, writing style, sentence structure, managing verbs, and punctuation. These chapters are very informative and useful for developing clear, professionally written papers.

Chapter 13 is a glossary, which is very informative and offers good insights for avoiding inappropriate words in formal writing. Chapter 14, “Acronyms, Symbols, and Abbreviations,” offers help for eliminating the confusion and possible misunderstandings when using these in formal writing.

In summary, **Write It Down: Guidance for Preparing Effective and Compliant**

**Documentation**, is very helpful and informative, and the format makes it easy to read. It would be useful to professionals, both as a reference and a teaching aid, to enhance the preparation of effective documents. I would conclude that any person who has to provide documentation in a clear, effective, and professional manner will find it invaluable.

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**The Respiratory Therapist’s Legal Answer Book.** Anthony L DeWitt RRT CRT JD FAARC. Sudbury, Massachusetts: Jones and Bartlett. 2006. Hard cover, 501 pages, \$59.95.

DeWitt, an attorney and former respiratory therapist, has written a sound basic overview of general legal principles a respiratory therapist or nurse may encounter (and many that they will wish to avoid) in the regular course of their profession. The legal points included are sound, the analysis is accurate, the examples are usually helpful; for the most part, this is a handy reference or starting point to research the legal issues that can accompany many health-care situations. It contains information that will help avoid liability in the practice and legal problems relating to employment, and perhaps can even help address some of the ethical issues routinely confronted in this field.

A book can never replace an attorney. While this book may help practitioners to avoid some legal problems, and briefly explain the legal system, it cannot be relied upon for specific situations. Yet it does provide answers to common legal questions that can arise. It is written in an easy-to-use question-and-answer format, and it provides a complete survey of the legal principles that a respiratory therapist might encounter in employment settings. An understanding of some of those basic legal principles might help a nurse or therapist avoid legal pitfalls and lawsuits.

A treatise such as this should be restricted to legal principles and guidelines. Sometimes DeWitt’s bias and opinions creep in. On page 1, in the first paragraph, DeWitt says, “It is difficult to adequately describe ‘the legal system’ in a book that isn’t filled with legal jargon, because the legal system tries very hard to make itself difficult to

understand.” That opinion is incorrect. The legal system does not use jargon in a deliberate attempt to make itself hard to understand. Books on pathology or physiology contain medical terminology, but that does not mean that the health-care field deliberately uses jargon in order to be difficult to understand. Legal books and journals use legal terminology for the same reason medical books and journals use medical terminology: to be precise and accurate.

DeWitt wrote in simple, easy-to-understand language; at times maybe too simple. While there is nothing wrong with using examples, DeWitt uses the names Curly, Moe, and Shemp as parties in contract negotiations, which seemed somewhat condescending. Phrases such as “Lawyers are like nuclear weapons” (page 447) and “A lawsuit is much more like a ride through a haunted house on Halloween,” (page 2) seemed out of place in a serious work.

I expected this book to confine itself to legal issues that arise in the practice of respiratory care, such as liability for negligence, battery, lack of informed consent, and contractual issues. Indeed, these issues are covered, but so are other legal issues, including homeowners insurance, consumer-protection litigation, and domestic relations (divorce). Perhaps this broad focus will make the book more valuable to some readers, but the target audience will most likely be using this as a tool for legal issues that relate directly to their profession. If DeWitt intended to write a broad survey of the law for every occasion, there are many other issues (eg, tax law, estate planning, and securities law) that should have been included.

One problem with such a broad-based survey of law is that it is too general. If the author had concentrated on the legal issues that relate to the profession of respiratory care, he could have included more detailed analysis, including reference to more relevant legal cases. Legal research in the LEXIS and WESTLAW databases would have produced numerous citable cases where respiratory care was involved in allegations of negligence. Including a description of some of those cases might have made the book more interesting and relevant to the target readers.

DeWitt includes his own opinions in some sections, and that is fine, but he could have been clearer in differentiating between law, fact, and opinion. For example, in Chapter 8 he strongly recommends that respiratory therapists obtain their own malpractice in-

insurance. On page 262 he states, "The most common misconception is that you are covered under the malpractice liability policy of the hospital you work for." He then states that employees are not covered. That has not been my experience. I have been personally involved in many cases in which hospital employees were covered by hospital insurance for acts within their scope of employment. A hospital can act only through its agents and employees, so, for instance, if a nurse administers a wrong medication, the hospital can be sued, because the hospital is responsible for the nurse's negligence, under the legal doctrine of *respondeat superior* (let the master answer for the wrongs of the servant). However, if DeWitt wants to recommend the purchase of malpractice insurance, he certainly can, and should. One reason a person consults an attorney is to obtain good advice, and that recommendation might be such. Yet it should be presented as a recommendation, instead of implying that it is clearly established.

Since this is more of a reference book than one that most people will read cover-to-cover, the detailed table of contents and the index are helpful. The last chapter, which deals with ethical issues, was a nice addition. Sometimes the question is not whether a course of action is legal or illegal, but whether it is ethical, and clinicians should have high ethical standards. It is good to have something written about this important subject.

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**Qualitative Research Methods**, 2nd edition. Pranee Liamputtong and Douglas Ezzy. South Melbourne, Victoria, Australia: Oxford University Press. 2005. Soft cover, 410 pages, \$59.50.

As the title indicates, this book is about methods of qualitative research. It provides a practical guide to address the most commonly used techniques for collecting and analyzing qualitative data in health science. Its strength is also its weakness. This book is limited in discussion of theoretical perspective and paradigms of qualitative research.

This is the second edition of this title, and 3 new chapters (10, 11, and 15) were added. There are 3 parts and 15 chapters. The parts have no introduction sections to provide an overview of the ensuing chap-

ters, nor are there transition sections to help the reader journey from one chapter to the next. It feels like the chapters exist independently. The reader has to guess from the titles why the chapters were grouped together.

Part 1 initiates a description of the field of qualitative research, starting with the history and philosophy of qualitative research, then discusses criteria for judging the rigor of study findings, including ethical issues and sampling methods. The first 2 chapters describe the foundation of theoretical traditions of qualitative research, including positivism, ethnography, phenomenology, symbolic interactionism, feminism, post-modernism, and hermeneutics. Qualitative research methods commonly used for each tradition are identified, which is valuable information for new qualitative researchers to identify an appropriate method. There is a lot of useful information in Chapter 2, which reviews 12 commonly used qualitative-research sampling strategies. However, the section on rigorous reflexivity (often referred to as trustworthiness) provides limited information. Criterion area and techniques commonly used to establish trustworthiness, such as credibility and negative case analysis, are not included.

Part 2 introduces and addresses 7 methods of quantitative-data collection: interviews, focus groups, unobtrusive methods, narrative analysis and life history, memory-work, ethnography, and participatory action research. These chapters are good in reviewing and summarizing the advantages and limitations of these research methods. Unfortunately, these chapters seem unrelated to each other; there is no overview to provide a holistic perspective on these methods. Some comparison of the methods would help readers summarize the information and choose the right method, so an overview would greatly increase the value and usefulness of this book.

Part 3 is devoted to the application of qualitative research, including researching vulnerable groups, research in cyberspace, analysis processes of qualitative research, and writing qualitative research proposals and reports. This part concludes with discussion of new directions in qualitative research. The new chapter on online research describes computer-mediated communication as a research resource and tool. Chapters 10 and 12 seem to be out of place. Chapter 10, on researching vulnerable

groups, is more closely related to ethical implications of qualitative research, which is discussed in Chapter 2. Ethical issues are discussed all over again in Chapter 11, as they relate to online research; in Chapter 6 ethical issues are discussed in relation to narrative analysis, and in Chapter 12 as they relate to data analysis. Chapter 12, on analysis process, might fit better in Part 2, since all the other information on data analysis is discussed there.

One of the greatest challenges in doing qualitative research is data analysis and interpretation. This book devotes limited space to discussing how to analyze and interpret qualitative data. The book would also benefit from adding a section on the phases of qualitative research. And the authors could have made it easier to access the book's information by providing a more detailed tabulation of chapter content. The index is of limited usefulness; it does not provide complete information on terms used in the book. For example, content analysis is discussed as an analytic strategy used in an unobtrusive method, but the reader would not know that if he or she were only to look at the index under "content analysis."

What makes this book stand out from other books on this subject is that it is easy to read and gives a simple-to-understand introduction to qualitative research methods. It provides broad examples of qualitative-research methods in health-care research disciplines, and readers can learn from these examples how particular qualitative-research methods are used. Also, the length of this book makes it less intimidating than some other books on the subject, though it presents a tremendous amount of useful information. At the end of the chapters there are helpful tutorial exercises and lists of recommended reading on specific qualitative-research topics. Additionally, there is a complete reference list at the end of the book, and a glossary. This book does not belong on every bookshelf but it is a "how-to" guide for beginning qualitative researchers.

Though the primary intended readers are students of health and social sciences, this book could be a good introduction for clinicians who are not familiar with qualitative inquiry. I would recommend it for beginning researchers, but for in-depth discussion of qualitative-research methods and exploration of philosophical and theo-