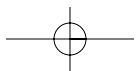
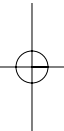
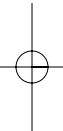


Part I Introduction



1 In the beginning...

This is the book I longed to read when I was a student many years ago. Although I had studied for a degree before, I did not find the transition to being a student in health and social care an easy one to make. I struggled to see the links between what I learned in the classroom and what I would be doing in practice. Sessions in academic or key skills left me cold as I really could not see the point of learning how to take notes or write essays. 'After all', I told myself 'when did writing an essay help a patient?' I was desperate for placement and the opportunity for hands-on experience.

Yet placement came as a shock. I found it hard to manage my time, prioritise whom I should see and when I should see them. Being part of a team also brought its own challenges. The hardest part, though, was getting to grips with the vast quantities of reports, records and notes I needed to keep. Needless to say, I scraped through, but only just.

Then on my second placement I had a breakthrough. I had inadvertently brought my academic skills folder with me and with little to do in the evenings I started to read it. As I did I suddenly realised that the steps to writing assignments, taking notes and giving presentations at university were surprisingly similar to the skills required to write reports, keep records and share information at the many case conferences on placement. The only real difference was the context. This was a light bulb moment. As soon as I understood the relevance I applied myself to these so-called academic skills and saw the marks I gained for assignments and on placement improve on a meteoric trajectory.

Things have travelled full circle. I now help my students make the links between academic skills and the core skills and competencies required for placement. I listen to their 'ah ha!' moments as they begin to relate the two.

I hope that you will enjoy reading this book, that it will result in your own 'ah ha!' moments and help you to place academic skills in their widest context, leading to every success at university, on placement, in practice and beyond.