Case Studies

# Chapter 3: The development of nursing and midwifery knowledge

As we have discussed in chapter three of the book, some people are more comfortable with one research paradigm than any of the others. The case study students have been asked to consider which paradigm, at this point in their research experience they feel most closely aligned with.

In order to do this, Blessing, Darren, Gloria and Rachel first consider the ontological, epistemological and methodological beliefs that are associated with positivism, interpretivism and pragmatism (see Table 3.1). They then think about the research that they have seen being carried out in clinical practice, the research that they have seen being used to underpin clinical practice and the research papers that they have read.

Blessing and Rachel decide that they feel more comfortable with the paradigm of positivism. They feel that objectivity is essential when conducting research and can relate to the notion of cause and effect. They both believe that randomised controlled trials provide an essential evidence base that underpins the care of patients and clients. They also feel more comfortable with the notion of structured and fixed research designs that are associated with quantitative research.

Gloria and Darren feel more drawn towards interpretivism. They think that when research involves humans, there cannot be one understanding, truth or meaning because each individual will interpret their experiences in their own way. They believe that interpretivism provides a way in which practitioners can gain insight into the perspectives, behaviours and experiences of patients, clients and their families. They also feel more comfortable with the notion of flexible and evolving research designs that are associated with qualitative research.

* Having read chapter 3, what is your opinion of research paradigms?
* Identify which research paradigm you feel most aligned with at this stage in your research experience
* Write a short summary in which you explain which paradigm you feel most comfortable with and why. Try to relate this explanation to the research that you have seen being undertaken in clinical practice, the research that you have seen being used to underpin clinical practice and the research papers that you have read