from the INVOLVE website). Each of these is useful in different ways and helpful to different groups of people.

The report summary is (obviously!) a summary of the whole project. It is quick and easy to read and gives a useful insight into the origins, definitions and principles of user-controlled research that would be helpful for those who do not know much about it and were too afraid to ask. It includes a one-page (eight bullet point) synopsis of Good Practice for User Controlled Research and a nice concise description of the barriers faced by user-controlled research. It is a good, user-friendly document (excuse the pun) that is well presented, and easily accessible over the Internet.

The final report is more comprehensive and is a resource for those who are more interested in service user involvement in research, and is a very detailed source of information relating to User-controlled Research, including its origins, its relation to other types of service user research, definitions, good practice guidelines, the benefits of and barriers to user-controlled research and concerns for the future. Importantly, it clearly and helpfully discriminates between *user-controlled* research and research *involving users*. Even more importantly, the list of source material at the back of the report is one of the most valuable resources currently available for people interested in user-controlled research. The list includes helpful organizations, as well as a fantastic comprehensive list of literature, which is usefully grouped into key categories (including one category of examples of user-controlled research).

What's missing? Well this study is very much focussed on the definitions and meaning that service users attach to user-controlled research. The authors readily admit that the project does not seek definitions and meanings from 'conventional' researchers and therefore may only represent 'one side of the story'. But as this is about user-controlled research and not user involvement in research I do not see that *not* having the viewpoints of conventional researchers is a major drawback except that they may have more to say about the limitations of user-controlled research.

Not addressing the limitations of user-controlled research in my opinion *is* a major drawback of the report. User-controlled research is important and has an important role in health and social care research. But it is not the ideal approach to all forms of research. There are types of research that require substantial infrastructure, expertise and accreditation. User involvement is possible but user control may not always be.

Another limitation is that the report does not address the ambiguity between 'service user' researchers and 'conventional' researchers. When does one stop or start being the other? The report discusses the potential for service users to become 'experts' but ignores the fact that 'conventional' researchers are normal members of the public who are also service users. But as with every good project, this just shows that there is still work to do, and questions to be answered.

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Disability: Definitions, Value and Identity

By Steven D Edwards Radcliffe Publishing Ltd, 2005, PB £24.95, 156 pp., ISBN 1-85775-700-9

The definition of disability is an endlessly fascinating subject to anyone interested in the study of disability. Hardly a month goes by without the publication of another text that seeks to define the problem. Much of the debate and conflict, for this is a very contested subject area, centres on the role of impairment and/or role of the body, and how it is viewed and theorized. On the one hand, there are those who argue for a causal relationship between impairment and disablement and on the other, there are those who seek to present disablement as a condition that arises as a result of the way that society is organized. Put simply and crudely the arguments revolve around whether disability is

the result of a deficit in an individual or the product of social relations, what are called individual or socio-medical vs. social models of disability. This distinction is used to define disability studies. Those who identify with the social model being placed within the disability studies perspective.

These debates, whilst initially interesting, have now become sterile. Proponents of the social model argue that their approach has allowed for the development of a radical political movement that has politicized disability. Those who have adopted a less materialist understanding point to how their analysis has allowed us to gain an understanding of what it is to live with a particular impairment, how that impairment impacts on individual lives and how, for example, health care and rehabilitation are experienced. There is little chance of agreement between these two camps, but what is clear is that both approaches only provide partial answers.

In this highly readable and accessible book Steven Edwards attempts to take the debate in a new direction. Edwards is a philosopher and he has used a philosophical perspective to examine and critically review current writings on disability and to present new ideas on defining disability, on identity and quality of life for disabled people. Philosophy is good at clarifying terms and at its best it is also a critical, strongly imaginative and creative subject. Much of this book is good philosophy.

The book is split into three sections: defining disablement, disablement and the idea of a good human life and disablement and the person. In each section Edwards presents the key debates in a logical and clear style as he examines what disability is, whether a disabled person can have a good quality of life and what it means to be a disabled person. He lays out the key theoretical issues and clearly and succinctly presents arguments and counterarguments.

Edwards appears to be a critical friend of disability studies. He wants to challenge and test the assumptions that lie behind the subject. Whilst for example, he is very critical of the social model of disability, he does present the case for a model that is firmly located within a barriers approach to disability. He also clearly argues that having an impairment is not incompatible with leading a good life and neither does it make leading a good life less likely.

I would highly recommend this book and suggests that it would be of interest to a broad readership, including both academics and those who are disabled people themselves and those who work with disabled people.

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