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A to Z of Professional and Management Talk for Nurses (continued)

Last month we got as far as the letter O in Graham Thurgood's *A to Z of Professional and Management 'speak' for nurses* and here is the concluding part of the alphabet. You may well think of different words than those used in this A to Z that reflect your own interests and roles.

P is for Preceptorship

Preceptorship, in the context of PREP, is the provision of role support to a newly registered nurse by an experienced practitioner during the transitional period between registering and adjustment to the new role requirements (about 4 months). It is not a statutory requirement.

Q is for Quality

(and Quantity)

Quality is the watchword in the purchaser/provider contracting arrangements for care. Standard setting, measuring nursing outcomes, clinical audit and the use of protocols all have a place in the quest to demonstrate quality. In black and white terms 'quality' is thought to be good whilst 'quantity' may be viewed as bad! Provided that acceptable and agreed standards are met what is wrong with 'quantity'?

R is for Re-engineering

Not redesigning the hospital heating system as you could well think but restructuring the entire way by which care processes are provided for patients in hospital. It is characterised by the departmentalising of services so that care is patient focused - brought to the patient in many cases rather than the patient going to a particular department of the hospital. Integrated care pathways are designed to simplify the processes of care delivery.

S is for Skill Mix

(and multi-Skilling)

Skill mix is the balance between trained and untrained, qualified and unqualified,

and supervisory and operative staff within a service area. The optimum skill mix is achieved when a desired standard of service is provided at minimum cost (quality and quantity).

Multi-skilling is currently in the news seen by some as a threat to the erosion of professional role boundaries. It is to do with the decentralisation of roles through providing a range of health care staff with basic skills in patient care, irrespective of the initial employment role, e.g. providing a hospital ward receptionist/hostess with the skills of carrying out patient observations such as pulse rate.

T is for Time Management

Last month's issue of *Professional Update* featured the 'management of time' arguing that it is not 'time' itself that is managed but rather the events and occurrences which occupy time. As a valuable and expensive resource, it is essential that one's own time and the time of others is used effectively. At work, demands upon time can be classified as boss imposed, job imposed, subordinate imposed and discretionary time (your own).

U is for UKCC

Many nurses cannot state with accuracy what is the role and function of the UKCC. There is much confusion between the responsibilities of the UKCC and the national boards.

Council maintains a live register of nurses, midwives and health visitors (and removes names from the register), fulfils a disciplinary function and establishes policy for education and professional practice, e.g. PREP

The National Boards approve specific educational programmes at both pre- and post-registration levels.

V is for Virement

If financial budgets are too rigid, only allowing allocations of money to be spent on specific items, then there may be a tendency for waste through purchasing unnecessary items simply to spend the money. Unspent money can result in next year's budget being cut. Virement is the facility built into the budget that allows money intended for one purpose to be used for something else.

W is for WOTS up analysis

Beginning to struggle now - WOTS is an anagram of SWOT. A SWOT analysis identifies an organisation/department's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. It is used when preparing business plans, planning change or introducing new services, etc.

X is for theory X

X

According to the McGregor theory of how managers view people, theory X managers assume that all people are basically lazy, indifferent, uncooperative and used to being controlled (Bedian 1989).

Y is for theory Y

Theory Y managers (McGregor) assume people are hard working, diligent, bright, friendly and self controlling.

Z is for Zero Inventories

An import from Japan, zero inventories involve 'having only in stock what is needed (dressings, etc.), when it is needed'. This encourages early detection of need and best use of resources.

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