"Skärgårdsmedicin och kultur” – An integrated language course in medical Swedish and out-of-classroom learning in the Archipelago of Turku

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The national languages in Finland are Finnish and Swedish which means that everyone in Finland has the right to use Finnish or Swedish in their dealings e.g. in health care (Language Act 423/2003). This means that both languages are therefore compulsory subjects at all school levels, also at universities. This paper discusses firstly how an obligatory course in Swedish for Finnish-speaking medical students at the University of Turku can offer the students a concrete opportunity in form of ”out-of-classroom language learning” to improve their oral skills in Swedish that they will need as doctors, and secondly how it also can contribute the ongoing professional development of the students. The main concepts in this paper are therefore not only the familiar lifelong learning but also an another and newer concept which is called lifewide learning (Skolverket 2000). Both concepts are here observed from the perspective of medical studies and language learning. The data I use comes from the students’ feedback after the obligatory course and their reflections on their experiences and thoughts about the real life in Swedish and what its importance is for them as becoming doctors. Finally I will also discuss how this data can be used in a meaningful way when the teacher is developing a language course for specific purposes (LSP).

References:

Government Decree on University Degrees 794/2004


Language Act 423/2003


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