
Eveliina Korpela, Johanna Komppa & Katriina Eronen

Opportunities for collaborative language learning in a specialised healthcare unit

In this article, we examine language workshops organised in a special unit for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) nurses. The aim of the workshops was to improve the Finnish-language skills of the CALD nurses. The workshops were based on the Swedish Språkombud model. The data consist of 18 video-recorded language workshop sessions (27 hours in total). The study investigates how peer discussions in language workshops are structured as professional language learning situations and how professional language learning is enabled. The theoretical and methodological framework of the research is conversation analysis. The study shows that professional language learning is supported by the following aspects: 1) the learning emerges directly from the daily work situations observed by the participants; 2) ignorance is constructed as an expected action; 3) the instructors are also peer discussants and learners in the situations, which supports the professional identity of the participants; and 4) the negotiation of the meaning of words is constructed collaboratively. In our conclusions, we suggest that language workshops organised in the workplace could be a solution to the language problems of CALD nurses in Finland.

Keywords: specialised nursing, language learning, work community, professional language