



UNIVERSITY OF LATVIA  
FACULTY OF  
HUMANITIES

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## **Fostering medical communication during the Covid-19 pandemic: an example of language mediation**

*Thursday, 28 April 2022 15:00 (20 minutes)*

The “Medical English” (English for Specific and Academic Purposes) course is compulsory for all first-year medical students at the University of Oulu. The course utilizes the action-oriented approach (CEFR-CV 2020) and introduces the concept of mediation to students by providing them with opportunities to learn and practice intra-linguistic and cross-linguistic mediation (from medical English to plain language, and Finnish to English). The course assignments are also designed to support students’ utilizing mediation strategies of explaining new concepts and simplifying texts through a cross-disciplinary collaborative approach.

The mediation activities combine the field-specific and academic aspects of language learning at university level: simulated doctor-patient consultation, and a student conference. These authentic activities enable students to reflect on how doctors communicate effectively medical information to different audiences.

Traditionally, in the Medical English conference students working in teams prepare a poster to present what they have learnt in the Clinical Psychology course, which is taught in Finnish. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the face-to-face conference was switched to online delivery, which required enhanced communicative skills. The scaffolding we provided introduced students to the basics of multimodality, such as using design features effectively, mediating between spoken and written reporting, responding to audience - thus also ensuring the development of interactional and generic skills.

Here we present students’ perceptions of their development, collected via a self-assessment questionnaire, and summarized in four main themes: cognitive skills, transferable skills, language skills and learner autonomy. Finally, we discuss teachers’ views on future course development.

### **Biographical note(s) of the author(s)**

Eva Braidwood, PhD, has been working as an ESP/EAP teacher at the University of Oulu, Finland. Her areas of responsibility include curriculum and course design for the degree programmes of architecture and medicine. Her research and publications include using CLIL pedagogy in higher education, discipline-specific discourse features of professional and academic writing, PBL and digital pedagogies in ESP/EAP, mediation in ESP courses. She is an associate partner to the M.E.T.L.A. ECML project, and has been participating in two Erasmus + supported projects; FOR21 project (Fostering the doctor of the 21st century) and EntreSTEAM (Entrepreneurial skills for STEAM students).

### **Recommendation (for student section)**

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