UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Theories and Models of Educational Consultancy

2223-2-F5701R011

Course title

**Pedagogical group counselling as complex knowledge:
theories, training models, experiences**

Topics and course structure

In contemporary organisations, characterised by flexibility and increasingly sophisticated technological development, the dimensions of efficiency and effectiveness of professional action are increasingly rewarding and training easily adapts to the demands of specialisation and increasing technicality. Professionals are called upon to update and equip themselves with skills that are more and more up to date with the complexity of a labour market in perpetual transformation and subject to changes and perturbations that make the stability of an organisation a result that is never predictable, changeable and always precarious. Faced with demands for effectiveness, updated skills that are consistent with changing scenarios, and ever-improving performance in every professional sphere, the time that an organisation spends on training and reflecting on its internal processes, attributing meaning and significance to the processes implemented, risks becoming progressively shorter; at the same time, investment in participatory processes that allow each professional to grow professionally in a work team capable of investing in the plurality of professional skills present in an organisation, in a logic of cooperation and the revival of the values of cooperation and solidarity, becomes increasingly less important.
In this scenario, the risk is that individual and collective work loses its project investment in favour of the accentuation of a dominant performative value. Organisations, today, are traversed by trends that seem to be in opposition; the rationalisation of tasks seems not to take into account the share of emotional investment that professionals bring in the exercise of their roles and functions, and the underestimation of this 'immaterial' component of organisational life may generate states of distress that affect individuals and groups: pronounced competitiveness can be at the origin of tacit states of conflict that run through the life of work teams and, which, without appropriate safeguards, can degenerate over time into toxic dynamics that work against productivity goals. Relaunching the recovery of meaning for professionals is vital today, as well as supporting them in the search for interstitial spaces to relaunch forms of reflexivity and planning as well as evolutionary alternatives, both in the profit

and non-profit sectors.
The course will address pedagogical counselling as knowledge endowed with a complex epistemology and as a device capable of valorising the client system's implicit knowledge, capable of overcoming moments of impasse and criticality thanks to a practice of reflexivity in which counsellor and client develop a concerted process of negotiation of the problem and a multi-layered reading of its implicit aspects. Thinking about pedagogical counselling needs to refer to a complex epistemology in which professional practice is embedded with implicit theoretical dimensions that emerge when the professional knowledge of an individual, a group or an organisation as contextually situated knowledge is made the object of processes of reflexivity by "observing depths and dialoguing with situations". The course will develop a focus on the centrality of the group as a driving force in the life of an organisation. A work group is a multi-layered entity that, in addition to a formal structure of roles and functions, experiences submerged dynamics of an emotional/affective order. These elements connected to the organisation's manifest dimensions may conflict and not find sufficient harmonisation; thus some tacit dimensions may generate over time deadlock situations, widespread experiences of dissatisfaction and dynamics that crystallise around rigid communication scripts that hinder the group's productive process and the organisation as a whole. Reconsidering each individual organisation as a living, dynamic organism crossed by phases of development and temporary moments of crisis that may prelude new arrangements is the task of pedagogical counselling that works for the autonomy of the client system and for the system's ability to learn from itself. Pedagogical counselling establishes work settings in which reflexivity is put at the service of a change process that reinforces, over time, the system's resilience and cohesion and its ability to accept new challenges. When collaboration and cooperation enable divergent positions to be negotiated and constructive conflict processes to mature, the organisation's knowledge grows and is amplified. A functional group is a multiplier in both a quantitative and qualitative sense of the thoughts and dynamics that develop within it. Solutions to a problem will certainly be more forward-looking, perspective-rich and elaborated if it is a group rather than an individual alone that elaborates them. The course will focus on the theoretical and experiential nature of the group construct. This knowledge about the group as a trans-disciplinary object will be approached through a didactic device that relies on learning to inhabit a group, to know its dynamics from the inside. The course will think together clinical-pedagogical theories on counselling and training models to translate this knowledge into competences. Within a theoretical-experiential training perspective each student and the group as a whole will be involved in the experimentation of counselling attitudes in the context of the living and participating work of the class. The dialogical dimension, the focus on specific moments of intensive work in small and large groups allows for the maturation of knowledge that is not only theoretically founded, but which calls upon each student to re-examine his or her own implicit epistemologies, allowing for the assumption of a clearer awareness of the value assumptions that guide one's positioning within an organisation and developing communication and relational abilities that qualify as skills of primary importance for a productive integration in the world of work. Knowledge of this complexity is built through a pedagogical device in which the group assumes the role of active protagonist who, starting from specific and targeted stimuli (case analyses, co-construction of self-cases, etc.) is stimulated to train its own capacity to elaborate contents, negotiate its own cultural assumptions, share its own internalised training models, and co-participate in emotional processes of resonance and mirroring.
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In this direction, it becomes essential to work on transversal competences such as

1. Reading and analysing the demand for help in its manifest and latent aspects;
2. Active listening;
3. Observation of the dynamics and phenomena that characterise the life of a team
4. Self-observation;
5. Meta-reflection;
6. The negotiation of one's own viewpoints within working groups;
7. The understanding of conformity processes that characterise organisational mindsets;
8. The focus on building trust, mirroring and empathic movement;
9. The ambivalences that characterise the affective movements of work groups.
10. The processes of feedback and recognition of resistance in the helping relationship that are always active processes within a working group requiring counselling intervention.

The processes of feedback and recognition of resistance in the helping relationship, which are always active processes within a working group that requires counsultancy intervention. It is significant, at a training level, to work

to develop skills in students that will allow them in their future professional role to creatively combine elements belonging to the technical area and hard elements with elements belonging to the emotional area and soft elements of organisational life to understand the points of interconnection and move them in a creative and generative direction for the organisation itself.

Objectives

GoalsThe aim of this teaching with a participatory lecturing frequency is to promote the following learning in terms of understanding of the main counselling models and their epistemological references,

1. Development of skills to read the needs and requests for advice in organizations,
2. Development of an approach to group management and understanding of its dynamics,
3. Reflective experiences of group work
4. Development of meta-cognitive skills and self-awareness of one's own cultural preconceptions,
5. Development of consulting skills such as listening and self-listening.
6. Expected learning outcomes (disciplinary and transversal) consistent with the cultural, scientific and professional profiles identified by the CdS":
7. At the end of the course students will have to be able to understand the theories underlying the consultancy models, to know how to apply the consultancy techniques (coaching, etc...) and, more generally, they will have to show that they know how to activate processes of building positive training relationships and support the development of personnel in organizations as required by the professional profiles at the end of the Degree Course; moreover, they will have to show that they have transversal skills of communication, dialogue, relationship, reading of explicit and implicit individual and group questions, which are indispensable for those who are called upon to manage and develop human resources to operate in dynamic and inter-functional contexts.

Methodologies

Methodologies will include:

1. **face-to-face lectures,**
2. **large group discussions,**
3. **exercises on professional cases in groups**
4. **work on scientific articles that can be downloaded online**

The frontal lessons allow to get into the heart of the theoretical and methodological approaches to counselling; large group discussions are aimed at elaborating theoretical concepts, developing an active and participatory relationship with knowledge and putting oneself at stake to implement skills of observation, listening, self-listening and reading of group dynamics; the analysis of professional cases contributes to the development of metacognitive skills and self-awareness of one's own cultural preconceptions. In fact, the cases are, through the reticular process established by the group's thought, subjected to a multifocal analysis that allows to see the different implications, the possible exports to other contexts (generalizations) and the feedback on the level of transformation of their cultural assumptions.The analysis of scientific articles allows for the comparison of different approaches to the course topics from a multicultural perspective (articles in English will also be examined).

Online and offline teaching materials

All teaching materials, such as slides, articles and working outlines, will be provided during the lessons and uploaded to the on-line platform.

Programme and references for attending students

- E. Schein (1999), *Process Consultation: Building the Helping Relationship.* Prentice Hall.
- S. Ulivieri Stiozzi (2013), *Il counseling formativo, Milano:* FrancoAngeli.
- C. Kaneklin (2010), *Il gruppo in teoria e in pratica. L'intersoggettività come forza produttiva.* Milano: Cortina.
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La bibliografia è provvisoria e verrà confermata nella prima settimana di settembre

Programme and references for non-attending students

- E. Schein (1999), *Process Consultation: Building the Helping Relationship.* Prentice Hall.
- S. Ulivieri Stiozzi (2013), *Il counseling formativo, Milano:* FrancoAngeli.
- C. Kaneklin (2010), *Il gruppo in teoria e in pratica. L'intersoggettività come forza produttiva.* Milano: Cortina.

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Assessment methods

The exams in the 2021-2022 academic year will be conducted in person. Should there be any changes due to the evolution of the sanitary situation, further indications and updates will be provided in September.

As established by the latest Rectoral Decree on didactics, the exams of the winter session 2021/2022 will be held online. The links to WEBEX will be published before each exam on the Course presentation page.

Oral exam in which the student will be asked to critically elaborate the proposed theories and to know how to interpret them in a consultative capacity to read the processes of an organization.

Specifically, two dimensions will be evaluated:

Knowledge and understanding

The knowledge of the pedagogical models of counselling will be ascertained through an oral interview aimed at verifying, with appropriate questions, the level and extent of understanding of the fundamental concepts and cores of meaning.

The ability to critically elaborate the proposed knowledge, both in relation to the individual text and with a view to dialogue and comparison between authors and models, will also be ascertained.

For the students attending the classroom the material is a specific object of verification, with particular reference to the formative and self-training dimensions produced by the classroom experience.

Ability to decline knowledge into competence

In relation to the models of pedagogical counselling, it will be ascertained the ability to translate theoretical knowledge into reading skills of the counselling questions that are developed within the services and professional groups, knowing how to articulate them with reference to concrete experiences.

The ability to plan consulting actions and the methodological skills related to teamwork will be verified.

The ability to manage effective communication with particular reference to group contexts will be verified.

The skills of self-reflection on one's own role positioning within a work context and a professional group will be evaluated.

The ability to learn to learn will be assessed with particular reference to Problem Soling and critical connection between the proposed knowledge, as well as the translation of knowledge in multiple professional contexts.

Office hours

In the academic year 2021/2022 the reception will take place by appointment, writing an email at the address:

stefania.ulivieri@unimib.it

Programme validity

The programs are valid for two academic years.

Course tutors and assistants

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Sustainable Development Goals

GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING | PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS