UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Research and Assessment Methods in Developmental Psychology

2324-1-F5103P100

Learning area

Methodological competences and clinical techniques.

Learning objectives

Knowledge and understanding

- Broad issues and methodological approaches in developmental psychology.
- Appropriate research alternatives.
- Theoretical basis of observation techniques.
- Methodological aspects of direct and indirect observation.

Applying knowledge and understanding

- Critical analysis and correct planning of developmental research.
- Design and implementation of developmental assessment programs.
- Correct use of observation in developmental domains.

Contents

Research methods used in developmental psychology will be discussed, as well as the main issues concerning both the design and the procedure of the studies for the analysis of change. Both direct and indirect observation will be analysed, and assessment instruments will be explained in terms of their limits and usefulness.

Detailed program

- Research goals in developmental psychology.
- Main phases of the research process.
- Research designs for investigating the relationships between variables: experimental, quasi-experimental and correlational designs.
- Research designs for comparing different age groups: longitudinal and cross-sectional designs.
- General characteristics of observation techniques.
- Recording strategies and units of observation techniques.
- Assessment of the observational data reliability.
- Indirect observation
- Use of observation techniques in developmental research.

Prerequisites

A good knowledge of the fundamentals of Developmental Psychology enables a more aware use of the course contents.

Teaching methods

The course is held in Italian. In addition to classroom lectures, part of the teaching includes the discussion of scientific articles, video presentations and practical exercises on the course topics. These teaching methods aim to make the course contents more usable and to involve students, facilitating the acquisition of specific knowledge and methodological skills that characterise research and assessment in developmental psychology. The material (slides of the lectures, any scientific articles and observational protocols) is made available on the e-learning site of the course, so that it can also be used by non-attending students.

Assessment methods

Written test including both open questions and exercises. The questions are aimed at ascertaining the effective acquisition of theoretical knowledge; the exercises are directed to evaluating the skills acquired in the analysis of research designs and in the application of the observational techniques. For those students who request it, an oral interview is also provided, on all the topics of the course. The evaluation criteria are: the correctness of the answers, the ability to argue critically, synthesize, and make conceptual connections.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

- D'Odorico L. (1996). *Sperimentazione e alternative di ricerca*. Milano: Cortina (capp. 1 e 2).
- Cassibba R., Salerni N. (2023). *L'osservazione nei contesti educativi. Tecniche e strumenti.* Roma: Carocci.
- Integrative documentation provided by the teacher.

Sustainable Development Goals