UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

SYLLABUS DEL CORSO

Fondamenti Psicologici delle Tecniche Espressive nel Ciclo di Vita

2425-1-F5702R006

Course title

Psychological Foundations of Expressive Techniques in the Life Span

Topics and course structure

The course integrates psychological theories with expressive practices in order to explore the crucial role these techniques play in human development across the lifespan. Through an approach that combines theory with practice, the course aims to provide an in-depth understanding of how expressive techniques can be used to promote psychological well-being, personal growth and social adaptation.
Students will be introduced to the principles of embodied cognition, a theory that emphasizes how cognitive processes are rooted in bodily experiences. This concept will be examined in the emotional, perceptual and linguistic contexts to understand how the body and mind interact dynamically to influence our understanding and interaction with the world.
Creativity will be another key pillar of the course, analyzed as an inherent capacity that evolves and manifests differently at different stages of life. Students will explore different forms of creativity, understanding how it can be stimulated and supported to foster cognitive and emotional development from childhood to adulthood and beyond.
Artistic expressiveness will be treated in their mutual interactions with psychological development. Various artistic approaches-from visual arts to music, theater to dance-will be examined to understand how these forms of expression can facilitate self-expression, emotional processing, and personal growth. Through case studies and exercises, students will learn about the bsychological foundations for using these techniques in educational and training contexts.

The main topics covered will be:
Embodied Cognition
Definition and Fundamental Theories: Introduction to the concept of embodied cognition and its main theories. Study of the interactions between body and mind.

Emotional Systems: Analysis of how bodily experiences influence emotions and emotional regulation.
Perceptual Systems: Exploration of the body's role in sensory perception and integration of sensory information.
Linguistic Systems: Study of the interaction between language and the body.

Creativity in the Life Cycle

Evolution of Creativity: Study of creativity in the different stages of life, from childhood to adulthood and senility.
Creativity and Cognitive Development: Analysis of the role of creativity in cognitive development and problem solving skills.
Strategies to Stimulate Creativity: Techniques and approaches to encourage creativity in educational and training settings.

Artistic Expressiveness and Psychological Development

Visual Arts and Psychological Development: Using visual arts for self-expression and emotional processing.
Music and Emotions: Studying the impact of music on emotions and emotional regulation.
Theater and Social Development: Use of theater as a tool to improve social skills and empathy.
Dance and the Body: Exploration of dance as a means to improve body awareness and mind-body integration.
Case Studies and Exercises: Analysis of real cases and development of skills to understand the psychological foundations of expressive techniques that can be used in educational and training contexts.

Objectives

The general objectives of the course are to provide students with a thorough and applied understanding of the psychological basis of expressive techniques, exploring how they can promote cognitive, emotional and social development throughout the life cycle.
Through this teaching, with consistent and participatory attendance at course lectures, it is intended to PROMOTE the following learning, in terms of:
Knowledge and comprehension skills

- Understanding and mastering expressive, performative and participatory art-based languages in the context of educational professionalism.
- Gaining knowledge regarding models of coordinating services, events, and training pathways.
- Acquisition of knowledge regarding models of cultural and environmental heritage enhancement.

Ability to apply knowledge and understanding

- Apply knowledge and skills to problem-solving in both concrete contexts and unforeseen situations, demonstrating an understanding of the relationships between theory and practice
- Identify and read educational and training needs in diverse contexts.
- Designing and coordinating responses to needs, using and enhancing the potential of the arts

Autonomy of judgment

- Develop original reflections and planning in response to the needs of work contexts.
- Promote innovative research based on the synergy between educational and artistic skills
- Develop the ability to analyze different professional contexts and identify their need*s

Communication skills

- Develop the ability to relate and effectively communicate their knowledge to both professional partners in the educational, organizational and artistic-cultural sphere (colleagues, managers, principals, administrators, etc.) and non-professional partners (users, families, widespread society).
- Know how to use artistic-expressive languages not only as training tools, but also as fundamental means of communication.

Learning skills

- Ability to use personal methods of self-promotion and tools to support one's professional growth.
- Reflexive and metacognitive skills to monitor the adequacy of one's knowledge and skills and identify any areas that need mind-body deepening.

Methodologies

The course includes moments of frontal (25%) and interactive teaching (75%) as moments of participatory lectures, exercises with the support of artistic materials (video, images, music, etc...).
During classroom work, role playing, dialogue, discussion and individual, pair and small group exercises will be used to promote the ability to read the potential of expressive techniques in psychological development and the promotion of well-being and creativity in educational and training contexts.
Each lesson will include lectures and interactive moments: part of the lesson will be frontal didactics, to introduce content on which to then lead discussions and/or exercises. Some initial lessons on embodied cognition will have a greater percentage of frontal didactics, always maintaining, in each one, a part of participatory reflection on the topics addressed, also with the help of different didactic supports (video, audio etc.). Lessons on creativity and expressive techniques will include more interactive involvement of students in the form of exercises, discussions and/or small group activities supervised by the lecturer.
Teaching activities will be conducted in-person and some lectures or parts of lectures (especially frontal lessons) will be recorded and uploaded to the platform.
Teaching materials will be uploaded to the platform.

Online and offline teaching materials

Papers, videos, learning objects and other digital resources available from e-learning course repository.

Programme and references

Common texts
Caruana, F., Borghi, A. (2016). *Il cervello in azione*. The Mill.
Albanese, O., Peserico, M. (eds.) (2009). *Educare alle emozioni con le artiterapie o le tecniche espressive*. Junior editions. Only chapters 1-4-5 in PART ONE, chapters 4-9-10 in PART TWO plus two expressive workshops of your choice in PART FIFTH.
Fosha, D., Siegel, D. J., Solomon, M. F. (2012). *Attraversare le emozioni. Vol. 1. Neuroscienze e psicologia dello sviluppo*. Mimesis.

Further study materials.
Texts or research articles (mainly in English) that will be posted on the e-learning page associated with the course by the beginning of class.

Students/students may contact the lecturer to arrange the possibility of studying on an English-language bibliography and/or the possibility of taking the exam in English

Assessment methods

The exam may be taken in Italian or English and consists of a written test designed to testify to competence in reworking and critically traversing the topics encountered in all the texts in the bibliography.
The questions cover:
topics covered in class (only for attending students);
reworking of the exercises carried out during the course (for frequent attendees only);
volumes brought to the exam.

During the test, the following will be assessed:
the level of knowledge of the theory and models (Knowledge);
the ability to exemplify concepts (Understanding);
The ability to use and apply (Applied Knowledge and Ability to Understand);
the adequacy of language.

Office hours

By appointment, writing an e-mail to: eleonora.farina1@unimib.it

Programme validity

Two academic years.

Course tutors and assistants

Sustainable Development Goals

GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING | QUALITY EDUCATION