UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Teaching and Learning Approaches - 1

2526-2-G8501R010-G8501R010M-T1

Course title

Didactics with Lab

Topics and course structure

The aim of the course is to reflect on the relationship between teaching and educating, between cognitive and socio-affective development, between teaching methods and the teacher's communicative style.
The course focuses on deepening the epistemological framework of the different approaches related to teaching, problematizing the ideas of teaching and learning that are underlying them.
The way the course is conducted provides an articulation between experiential and laboratory moments, together with moments of theoretical and synthetic framing, in which the participation of students becomes a fundamental element to problematize, address and develop the proposed themes.
The acquisition of the expected learning results is supported in the lessons in attendance, through material analysis (observation, diaries, testimonies) and by the presence of teachers, and in the workshops through the experimentation of the different active methodologies (group work, discussion, role-playing and brainstorming).
The course is structured around key themes in didactic theories:
The origins of didactic reflection and the main developments of the 20th century, with particular reference to socio-constructivist theories, metacognition, and inquiry-based learning;
The analysis of didactic action and core conceptual frameworks such as the didactic contract, setting and strategies, transposition, within the broader context of a pedagogy aimed at the development and acquisition of competencies;
Didactic models and approaches (Montessori, Pizzigoni, Freinet, Reggio Children, Senza Zaino), with particular attention to aspects such as time, space, and materials; classroom communication and relational dynamics; the didactic transposition of knowledge and fields of experience; active methodologies; and assessment and self-assessment.

Objectives

Through this course, one of the core courses in the psycho-pedagogical and didactic area, with consistent and engaged attendance at lectures as well as participation in the Laboratory connected to the course, several fundamental objectives from the Tuning framework of the degree program are pursued.
Specifically, the course aims to achieve the following objectives
Knowledge and Understanding
• Acquiring knowledge and understanding in the field of educational sciences, particularly in psychology, sociology, pedagogy, and didactics, with specific attention to the historical-social development of these disciplines.
• Understanding the role of educational sciences, particularly pedagogy and didactics, in the analysis and design of school environments and teaching practices.
• Gaining knowledge of perspectives and theoretical models related to learning processes, with a focus on their historical development.
• Understanding key issues related to the definition of the teacher's role and professional profile, including social and historical aspects.
• Acquiring knowledge of fundamental elements and challenges related to teaching practices, from an inclusive education perspective.
• Understanding various perspectives and major models of educational and didactic planning.
• Gaining knowledge and understanding of different assessment methodologies, as well as qualitative and quantitative tools for evaluating students, the teaching process, and the school system.
Applied Skills
• Identifying and critically re-examining pedagogical and didactic models that emerged in specific historical contexts in light of contemporary settings and current educational legislation.
• Utilizing knowledge of human development to design, understand, and interpret the growth of students and the classroom system.
• Recognizing and valuing diverse learning styles and independent study acquisition methods.
• Creating an inclusive and welcoming environment that fosters children's development while considering their individual, family, socio-cultural, linguistic, religious, gender differences, and learning styles.
• Applying essential theoretical frameworks to understand implicit dimensions and variables in the teachinglearning process.
• Designing and implementing educational pathways that incorporate a variety of methodologies and organizational strategies, leveraging diverse teaching tools and digital technologies.
• Using theoretical knowledge and operational tools related to observation and reflection techniques to understand school environments, students, and their interactions, as well as teaching practices.
• Developing appropriate documentation to monitor educational and didactic interventions and systemic approaches.
• Creating teaching documentation to prepare assessment tools for evaluating student learning.
• Constructing research pathways in education and didactics to enhance professional practice.
• Establishing and fostering communication and collaboration with families and other institutions to support student development.
• Reflecting on professional practice, critically identifying and analyzing the intervention models employed.
**The course pursues also General and Cross-Disciplinary Skills
Inclusion Area
• Creating an empathetic and inclusive classroom environment that values diversity and promotes participation.
• Welcoming students and their families by offering listening, sharing, and tailored educational and didactic proposals based on individual student needs.
• Collecting and interpreting observational data on all students to develop active and participatory teaching practices.
Cross-Disciplinary Area
• Connecting disciplinary knowledge through an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary perspective.
• Promoting active democratic citizenship and global citizenship competencies through pedagogical-didactic approaches and disciplinary knowledge.
Judgment Autonomy
• Developing awareness of the ethical and cultural responsibilities associated with the teaching profession and assuming related duties towards students, families, the school institution, and the community.

• Demonstrating the ability to interpret the needs and behaviors of children in preschool and primary education settings in light of contemporary social contexts.
• Analyzing and critically reflecting on educational situations and events.
• Considering alternative solutions to problems and making informed decisions that meet students' educational needs.
• Formulating judgments on educational situations and events based on thorough documentation.
• Self-evaluating professional preparation and the effectiveness of teaching practices.
• Renewing teaching methodologies through openness to research, experimentation, and innovation.
Communication Skills
• Modulating verbal and non-verbal communication in the classroom to serve different purposes: facilitating experiences, explaining concepts and theories, motivating learning, supporting struggling students, and encouraging peer interaction.
• Effectively presenting the objectives and nature of didactic interventions through educational and didactic planning.
• Communicating student learning outcomes and possible solutions for identified difficulties clearly to students, their families, and colleagues.
Learning Skills
• Demonstrating interest in the teaching profession and a desire to enhance knowledge and practice.
• Expanding foundational psycho-pedagogical and methodological-didactic knowledge in alignment with scientific research advancements.
• Deepening subject-specific content and study methods in school education with ongoing updates to disciplinary repertoires.
• Exploring didactic, methodological, technological, and media research at national and international levels, with openness to special pedagogy and didactics.
• Self-sustaining and self-regulating learning through independent bibliographic research and active participation in professional training and development opportunities.

Methodologies

The following Teaching and learning methods will be used: lectures and workshops (team works, role play, case analysis, etc.).

The contents will be examined using video, conversation and observation transcriptions.

The course includes Teachers’ lectures presenting school cases.

The course includes an obligatory Lab where students will be immerged in significant educational experience focused on evaluation and assessment.

Online and offline teaching materials

In the lectures, articles, video recordings, photographs, transcripts, and other documentation and research materials are used.
The professor provides additional and alternative materials to support all students, particularly so-called nontraditional students, in their study and exam preparation.

Programme and references

Two texts:

- Balconi B., Nigris, E . (a cura di) (2026) Imparare dall’esperienza. Metodologie didattiche per l’insegnamento (In press)
- Nigris, E., Teruggi, L. e Zuccoli, F. (a cura di) (2020), Didattica Generale. Seconda edizione, Pearson, Milano. (Except chapter: 2-4-5-7-9)

One of these texts:
Edwards, C., Gandini, L. e Forman, G. (qualsiasi edizione), I cento linguaggi dei bambini. L’approccio di Reggio Emilia all’educazione dell’infanzia, Junior, Bergamo
Dewey J, Esperienza e educazione, Raffello Cortina Editore, Milano, 2022 (o altre edizioni precedenti)
Morin E. Insegnare a vivere.Manifesto per cambiare l'educazione, Raffello Cortina Editore, 2015
Lodi M., Il paese sbagliato. Diario di un'esperienza Didattica, Giulio Einaudi editore, 2022.
Meirieu P., Pedagogia. Dai luoghi comuni ai concetti chiave (curatore dell’edizione italiana: Enrico Bottero), 2018
Meirieu P. Frankenstein educatore, Junior, 2007.
Nigris E. (ed.), (2025) Tradizione e Innovazione a scuola. Un percorso di Ricerca-Formazione con Scuola Città (In press)
Pastori G., Zecca L., Zuccoli F., Cantieri aperti e scuole in costruzione. Alla ricerca di nuovi “modelli” e pratiche per una scuola democratica. FrancoAngeli, 2024, Open access (10 Capitoli a scelta) https://series.francoangeli.it/index.php/oa/catalog/book/1126
Lazzari A, Pastori G., Sità C., Sorzio P., Prospettive educative per i servizi zero-sei. Itinerari di teoria, pratica e ricerca. Edizioni Junior-Spaggiari, Parma 2020
Molinari L, Mameli C.(2015), Gestire la classe, Il Mulino: Bologna
Orsi, M. (qualsiasi edizione), A scuola senza zaino. Il metodo del curricolo globale per una didattica innovativa. Erickson. Trento
Tamagnini, D. (2016), Si può fare. La scuola come ce la insegnano i bambini, Ed. La Meridiana, Molfetta (BA)
Lorenzoni, F. (2014). I bambini pensano grande. Cronaca di una avventura pedagogica: Cronaca di una avventura pedagogica. Sellerio Editore srl.

This course is held in Italian, for Erasmus students, course material are partially available in English. Students can take the exam in English if they wish to do so
**Students who intend to take this exam as an elective must agree on a revised and updated bibliography with the instructor in order to take the test.

Assessment methods

1 midterm exam, graded on a scale of 30.

1 exam (to be taken in pairs) to be handed in during the last class of the course, graded on a scale of 30. If the grade is lower than 25, the exam can be retaken after an interview with the tutor and/or course instructor.

All students who request it may supplement the assessment acquired through the midterm tests with an oral interview on the texts in the bibliography. The oral exam will be mandatory for students who do not pass the midterm exam or who are unable to take it.
In order to ensure a transparent assessment, the criteria adopted and shared with students for the evaluation of the exam are outlined here:
Knowledge and ability to conceptualize, understand, and establish connections between texts.
Expository and argumentative skills.
Ability to apply knowledge to the comprehension and analysis of observed and documented cases, examples, or practices.

Capacity for critical reflection.

Office hours

By previous appointment via e-mail in the Webex room
https://unimib.webex.com/meet/barbara.balconi

Programme validity

Programme validity is two years.

Course tutors and assistants

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Sustainable Development Goals

QUALITY EDUCATION