UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Childhood Pedagogy

2526-2-E1901R143

Course title

Childhood educational contexts and experiences

Topics and course structure

It also aims to support a discussion on what it means to educate children today, in dialogue with their adult caregivers, exploring **experiences, methodologies, tools, contexts** (both indoor and outdoor) and materials (from the most to the least structured) within educational services for children aged 0 to 6.
Finally, it aims to develop the educational role, with specific reference to childhood and its contexts, through an observant, questioning and critical **approach**, cultivated through the exercise of the actions of an educator engaged in research.

These are the **main thematic areas**:

- images of childhood,
- guidance documents,
- educational planning and exploratory research involving children,
- the role of adults in educational relationships,
- peer relationships and the group dimension,
- physical and relational educational contexts for children, both indoors and outdoors,
- the participation of adult caregivers.

The course is held in Italian.

Objectives

The teaching aims primarily to support the aptitude to problematize educational situations and events, to analyze them in depth and process them in a reflective form; to make judgment on educational situations and events after taking accurate documentation; and to renew educational practices through openness to research, experimentation and innovation.

This teaching is intended to develop the following learning:

Knowledge and understanding

- Develop a critical and comprehensive understanding of issues and dimensions inherent in early childhood education
- Acquire knowledge of theoretical and methodological approaches to early childhood education

Application of knowledge and understanding

- Apply knowledge and skills to analyse educational contexts for children aged 0 to 6, with particular reference to the preparation of experiences and environments, connecting theory and practice
- Design, document and evaluate educational contexts and experiences for children

Autonomy of judgement

- Acquire and consolidate analytical and critical thinking skills in educational situations involving children, particularly in relation to specific educational professionalism, identifying and critically analysing the choices and actions implemented

Communication skills

- Knowledge and use of the specific language and vocabulary of early childhood education
- Develop the ability to communicate effectively with children aged 0 to 6
- Develop the ability to effectively communicate the choices and criteria of educational interventions aimed at children with all relevant stakeholders

Learning skills

- Ability to rework and organise knowledge;
- Ability to identify methods and tools to support one's own and others' personal and professional growth.

The acquisition of the expected learning outcomes is supported through the solicitation of reflection from the discussion of content, experiences, contexts and materials, as well as through the proposal of opportunities for observation, research and documentation.

Methodologies

The course is divided into moments of theoretical framing and synthesis, presentation and discussion of experiences in children's educational services, and individual and group activation. As such, active and critical participation is required of attending students.

More precisely, the hours of teaching activities are indicatively organised 50% as lecture and 50% as interactive teaching (classroom discussions, case presentations, group work, exercises, etc.).

About 20% of the teaching activity will take place remotely, through moments of deeper understanding and e-tivity aimed at promoting participation and active learning, both individual and group, in synchronous or asynchronous mode.

Online and offline teaching materials

Brief summaries - in presentations, maps or videotaped pills - of the issues discussed and pointed out links, articles and videos of interest will be offered during the course through the platform.

Programme and references

The **programme** will include discussion of the issues and themes covered in the course, useful for introducing and framing childhood pedagogy and educational experiences for children aged 0-6. The many possible representations of girl and boy that those who educate may hold will then be shared and analyzed, to probe how much and how they may condition educational experiences. The main reference documents relating to services 0-3, 3-6 and 0-6 will be discussed. Theoretical and methodological approaches useful for learning about, but also for designing, educational experiences for boys and girls will then be presented, with particular reference to ways that enhance exploration and play through an educational role that invests in observation, documentation and shared research between adult and child. Finally, children's educational services, such as nurseries, preschools, childcare centers, and outdoor educational experiences will be encountered, including through the voices of educators, coordinators, and atelierists, in order to explore the many different possible modes of educational contexts capable of responding to the intelligences and supporting the skills of young children.

The **references** consist of the following texts:

1. Guerra, M., Luciano, E. (eds.) (2023). *Accanto a bambine e bambini. Questioni e prospettive per educare nello 0-6. Parma: Edizioni Junior-Bambini.
2. Guerra, M. (2019). *Le più piccole cose. L'esplorazione come esperienza educativa*. Milano: FrancoAngeli.
3. a text to be chosen from:
   • Clark, A., Moss, P. (2011). *Listening to Young Children: The Mosaic approach*. National Children's Bureau.
   • Giudici, C., Krechevsky, M., Rinaldi, C. (eds.) (2009), *Making learning visible: children as individual and group learners*. Reggio Children Editore, Reggio Emilia.
   • Guerra M. (2020). *Nel mondo. Pagine per un'educazione aperta e all'aperto*. Milano: FrancoAngeli.
   • Luini L. (2025). *Photovoice con bambine e bambini. Un approccio per ascolti sensibili e dialoghi multimodali*. Milano: FrancoAngeli.
4. a collection of documents and papers uploaded to the platform and freely downloadable.

In order to consciously identify questions for observation, documentation and research around a context it is also required to read:
Guerra, M. (2024). *Taccuino per un luogo. Pagine per una ricerca quotidiana*. Mantova: Corraini.

Erasmus students
Students from foreign universities can contact the lecturer to arrange program and bibliography in English.

Assessment methods

The course includes a final examination, which consists of **an oral exam based on a previous paper**, while **no intermediate attempts are planned**.
This assessment method is consistent with the objectives of the course, as the short paper allows students to carry out preliminary observation and reflection, while the oral exam allows for interaction that is useful for assessing students' critical understanding and discussion of the course topics, pedagogical analysis and the connection between theory and practice.

The **project** is a brief work of personal research around one or more contexts, with the aid of some of the proposals presented in the text *Taccuino per un luogo* (Corraini, Mantova, 2024).
At the oral exam this project will be the starting point and relaunch.
The place can be external (and this is an invitation), but also internal (including an educational place).
Choose some questions from the *Taccuino per un luogo* (avoiding those already experienced in the classroom) to be used to explore, get to know, document the encounter with a place. Proposals should be chosen avoiding those that refer to the memory of a place and favouring those that require direct experience. For those who wish, regardless of the mode of participation, the experiences can be carried out in progress and uploaded to dedicated Padlets, so that they can be shared and discussed.
Try to gather observations by going as deep as possible and allowing yourself to be challenged by the questions that arise during the experience.
Document your explorations and research in the way you prefer (with texts, graphics, images, audio, collections, etc.) so that you can share them.
Complete with initial reflections on the processes activated during the experience and related to the course topics and texts in the reference list.
When you have finished, assess your work using the dedicated form.

To facilitate the work, a preliminary reading of the book *Le più piccole cose* (FrancoAngeli, Milano, 2019) is suggested.
The paper should be submitted 15 days prior to the roll call to which one intends to present. The address to send the papers to is esploratoridelmondo@gmail.com. Before sending, files should be named with surname and first name, numbering them in case there are more than one. Ex: Guerra Monica 1-2 (first of two), and reduce the weight of the images, so as to avoid excessively heavy papers. Any heavier and non-reducible materials can be shared on Drive of the same address.

The **oral exam** will open with a discussion about the evaluation of the paper and will ascertain the knowledge of the topics and the ability to critically use the acquired knowledge, also referring to experiences, situations, examples discussed in class or belonging to the students' educational and/or professional experience.

During the oral exam, the following **will be assessed** with appropriate requests for further study and, for those who took part in the lessons, through references to the lived experience during the course:

- the knowledge acquired;
- the ability to argue, analyse and critically and reflectively process the topics and issues covered;
- the ability to connect theory and practice and identify relevant links, re-examining situations and experiences through the lens of the perspectives and tools used;
- the ability to develop an independent discourse with appropriate vocabulary on the topics studied in depth.

The assessment will be graded on a scale of 30, based on the following **assessment scale**:
Not sufficient (0-17/30): insufficient preparation on the main topics covered in the programme and in the course bibliography; very limited and poorly independent ability to argue, analyse and critically elaborate; insufficient ability to connect theory and practice and to identify relevant links between the texts and the course topics; incorrect presentation skills and specific vocabulary of the discipline.
Sufficient (18-21/30): general preparation and, in some respects, uncertain or incomplete on various topics covered in the course programme and bibliography; limited and not very independent ability to argue, analyse and critically evaluate; difficulty in connecting theory and practice and in identifying relevant links between the texts and topics covered in the course; only partially correct presentation skills and specific vocabulary for the discipline.
Fair (22-24/30): adequate preparation on the main topics covered in the course programme and bibliography, but

lacking depth on some more specific topics; ability to argue, analyse and critically evaluate present, but not always accurate and independent; fair ability to connect theory and practice and identify relevant links between the texts and topics covered in the course; presentation skills and subject-specific vocabulary mostly correct.
Good (25-27/30): comprehensive and in-depth preparation on almost all topics covered in the course programme and bibliography; generally articulate and independent ability to argue, analyse and critically evaluate; good ability to connect theory and practice and identify relevant links between the texts and topics covered in the course; good presentation skills and mastery of the specific vocabulary of the discipline.
Very good - Excellent (28-30/30): exhaustive and in-depth preparation on all topics covered in the course programme and bibliography; ability to argue, analyse and critically evaluate in a well-structured and independent manner; very good/excellent ability to connect theory and practice and to identify relevant links between the texts and topics covered in the course; very good/excellent presentation skills and complete mastery of the vocabulary specific to the discipline.

Students with a PUOI are invited to write to Dr Letizia Luini to agree on the most coherent examination method.

Working students are invited to write to Dr Angela Rinaldi for any needs.

Erasmus students are invited to write to Dr Francesca Rota to agree on the most coherent examination mode.

Office hours

By appointment, to be arranged by e-mail with the lecturer at monica.guerra@unimib.it.

The reception can also be held remotely in the teacher's Webex room: https://unimib.webex.com/meet/monica.guerra.

Programme validity

The programme is valid for two academic years.

Course tutors and assistants

Course tutors:
Dr. Alessandra Bocchi
Dr. Letizia Luini
Dr. Angela Rinaldi
Dr. Francesca Rota
Dr. Angela Sangalli
Dr. Cilene Tineli
Dr. Monica Zanchi

Sustainable Development Goals

QUALITY EDUCATION | GENDER EQUALITY | REDUCED INEQUALITIES | SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES | PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS | PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS