UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Experimential and Participatory Theories and Methodologies for Education

2526-1-F5702R003

Course title

In every possible way: observe, experiment, participate between art and pedagogy

Topics and course structure

'To create means to relate. [...] Each time we fit things together we are creating, wheter it is to make a loaf of bread a child a day.' -Corita Kent

The course offers an in-depth study of theories and methodologies which, by combining **artistic approaches and languages with pedagogical dimensions**, can find space, use and meaning in the field of training and within different professional contexts.
More specifically, the course develops in a progression that starts from the knowledge, analysis and experimentation of **exploratory approaches and individual experiential practices** – primarily **of an interrogative, observational and documentary nature** – to arrive at the knowledge and development of **collective and participatory strategies and actions**.
To this end, theories and practices with an artistic foundation and educational value will be presented, discussed and, above all, experimented with through different codes, such as *writing*, *illustration*, *graphics*, *photography* and *collecting*.
Within each lesson, each approach and/or language introduced will be investigated through personal exploration, which will contribute to generating knowledge based on the experience of exercises that are carried out, documented and sometimes shared: in this way, we aim to encourage the construction of a space of **individual experimentation** and a personal archive, useful for investigating the most coherent methods for each individual and for building a **complex and articulated set of possibilities** for a pedagogue who wishes to distinguish themselves through an experiential and participatory approach.
Experiences will be facilitated for everyone through blended lessons and materials made available on the platform.

In this process, the aim is to keep the individual and the group constantly connected, experimenting with what permeates every context and practice and exploring how artistic experiences and pedagogical approaches can support educational work, starting from the definition of an **attentive and creative educational approach**, in which creativity is expressed first and foremost in the ability to recognise resources and then in the ability to foster relationships and connections between subjects, objects and contexts.
In line with the objectives, the in-depth and tested experiential and participatory theories and methodologies are proposed as reference frameworks and tools that can be used in different contexts, actively demonstrating possible applications for second-level teaching professions.

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

- Understand and master expressive, performative and participatory art-based languages in the educational professions;
- Acquire knowledge regarding models of coordinating services, events, and training pathways;
- Acquire knowledge regarding theories, methodologies, tools and procedures of training, management and development of human resources in the arts and culture settings;
- Acquire knowledge regarding models of cultural and environmental heritage enhancement.

Application of knowledge and understanding

- Apply knowledge and skills to solve problems in both concrete contexts and unexpected situations, demonstrating an understanding of the relationships between theory and practice
- Identify and read educational and training needs in different contexts
- Design and coordinate responses to needs, using and enhancing the power of the arts
- Know how to apply acquired knowledge to design, implement and evaluate educational activities in cultural and artistic contexts

Autonomy of judgement

- Develop original reflections and projects in response to the needs of work contexts
- Promote innovative research based on the synergy between educational and artistic skills

Communication skills

- Knowing how to use artistic-expressive languages as fundamental communications media

Learning skills

- Ability to use personal methods of self-advocacy and tools to support one's professional growth
- Reflective and metacognitive skills to monitor the suitability of one's knowledge and skills and identify any areas that need further study

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, which will be favoured in any case for everyone through the lessons organised in blended learning mode and the materials made available on the platform.

More precisely, the hours of teaching activities are indicatively organised 30% as lecture and 70% as interactive teaching (classroom discussions, case presentations, group work, exercises, etc.).

About 40% of the teaching activity, corresponding to approximately 7 lectures, will take place remotely, through e-tivity aimed at promoting participation and active learning, both individual and group, in asynchronous mode. The e-tivity will take different forms: recorded lessons, reading and work materials, exercises, co-constructed pages, forums, “after-hours” meetings...

Online and offline teaching materials

Brief summaries of the issues discussed and pointed out materials, links, articles and videos of interest will be offered during the course through the platform.

Programme and references

The **programme** provides an in-depth examination of the issues and topics covered in the course.

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

1. Guerra M. (2019), *Le più piccole cose. L’esplorazione come esperienza educativa* (*The smallest things. Exploration as an educational experience*), FrancoAngeli, Milano.
2. Tishman S. (2018), *Slow Looking. The Art and Practice of Learning Through Observation*, Routledge, New York.
3. In-depth analysis of experiential proposals from a book chosen from among the following:
   Guerra M., Ottolini L. (2020), *In the Street. Participatory Actions in Public Spaces*, Corraini, Mantova.
   Oliveros P. (2005), *Deep Listening. A Composer's Sound Practice*, Deep Listening Publications.
   Smith K. (2016), *The Wander Society*, Penguin, London.
4. Reading (and practising) the book:
   Guerra M. (2024), *Taccuino per un luogo. Pagine per una ricerca quotidiana*, Corraini, Mantova.
5. Some papers from those uploaded to the course page in the dedicated space, chosen based on your interests in exploring the theories and methodologies presented.

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

Assessment methods

The course includes a final exam, which consists of **an oral examination based on a previous project**, while **no intermediate attempts are planned**.
This assessment method is consistent with the objectives of the course, as the written assignment allows students to carry out preliminary personal research, while the oral examination allows for useful interaction to assess their critical understanding and discussion of the course topics, pedagogical analysis and connection between theory and practice.

The **paper** can be done in two ways:

1. **Experimentation and analysis of some experiences proposed during the course**, in the classroom and/or at a distance. This work involves experimenting with and documenting some *ongoing* experiences, which will be organised, reviewed and analysed in relation to the exam bibliography. For this assignment, it is necessary to have carried out some experiences (we suggest between 6 and 10) from those made available in the classroom and/or on the e-learning platform, according to the methods indicated.

2. **Experimentation and analysis of one of the methodologies presented in the course and in the bibliography**. This work involves the design, in-depth experimentation and documentation of the chosen experience *according to one's own schedule*, to be organised, reviewed and analysed in dialogue with the exam bibliography and the teaching materials made available on the platform. For this assignment, it is recommended that students refer to the texts in the bibliography in order to outline their interests and then write to the teacher with their ideas and, if useful, arrange a meeting to discuss them.

The assignment may be individual or group work, depending on the experience developed. In the latter case, specific instructions will be provided.

The way in which the experience is documented and the design of the overall work is at the discretion of each student.

The paper must be uploaded in the dedicated e-learning folder at least 15 days before the call you intend to attend. Before uploading, you must name the files with your surname and first name, numbering them if there are more than one. E.g.: Guerra Monica 1-2 (first of two), and reduce the weight of the images in order to avoid excessively heavy documents.

The **oral exam** will open with a discussion about the work 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 the professor in advance 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 tutor:
Dr. Letizia Luini

Course assistants:
Dr. Angela Rinaldi
Dr. Francesca Rota

Sustainable Development Goals

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