UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Psychology of Language in Typically and Atypically Developing Children

2526-2-F5103P092

Learning area

Atypical development

Learning objectives

Knowledge and understanding

- Theories of language development.
- Typical development pathways of the different communicative-linguistic components.
- Communication and language in atypical populations.
- Language delays and disorders.

Applying knowledge and understanding

- Integration of theories and methods for analyzing language development.
- Ability to monitor the process of language acquisition and development for early identification of risk factors.
- Ability to use procedures and tools to assess communicative-linguistic competence at different developmental stages.

Making judgements

- Developing the ability to make independent judgments in assessing communication and language skills by critically analyzing the available information in light of typical developmental trajectories.
- Acquiring the ability to independently make appropriate decisions in choosing tools for measuring different communication and language skills to provide a comprehensive overview of the child's abilities and identify

the need for intervention.

Communication skills

- Acquiring the communicative skills necessary to interact usefully with individuals, groups, and institutions directly and indirectly involved in one's professional activities, to facilitate teamwork, intervene adequately within the network of services, and effectively communicate the conclusions of one's assessment analysis.
- Enhance communication skills to interact effectively with parents, teachers, and children during counseling and psychological support activities, taking into account the unique characteristics of individuals and the specific contexts.

Learning skills

- Promoting the ability to update one's knowledge, autonomously and critically assimilating the evidence of national and international scientific research in the relevant disciplines, and acquiring new information from the experience of specialists and practitioners in the field and/or other related disciplines.
- Fostering the analytical, investigative, and critical thinking skills required for higher education courses.

Contents

The course aims to provide students with an in-depth knowledge of the theoretical and methodological issues related to language acquisition and development, delving into the developmental stages of its various components. The main atypical language and communication pathways will also be analyzed, differentiating risk developmental profiles from clinical disorders.

Detailed program

- Language and communication.
- Main models of language acquisition.
- Early speech perception.
- Vocal and gestural preverbal communication.
- Lexical development and early individual differences.
- Morphosyntactic development.
- The role of input characteristics in language acquisition.
- Risk factors in language development.
- Communicative and linguistic development in preterm children.
- Delays in language development: Late Talkers and Late Bloomers.
- Developmental Language Disorder: early indicators, differential diagnosis and clinical presentation.

Prerequisites

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

Teaching methods

The course is held in Italian. In addition to classroom lectures (22 lessons, 2 hours each) part of the teaching activity will be interactive, including the vision and comment of videos about the course topics, the discussion of scientific articles and clinical case reports (practical classes: 6 lessons, 2 hours each). These teaching methods aim to make the course content more usable and to involve students, facilitating knowledge acquisition. All lessons will be held in presence.The material (slides of the lectures, any scientific articles) is made available on the teaching e-learning site, so that non-attending students can also use it.

Assessment methods

The exam will take place only in oral form. The questions are aimed at ascertaining the actual acquisition of theoretical knowledge and the relative ability to apply it to reality. The evaluation criteria are: the adequacy of the answers, the ability to argue critically, synthesize, and make conceptual connections.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

- D'Amico, S., Devescovi, A. (2013). Psicologia dello sviluppo del linguaggio. Bologna: il Mulino (Capp. 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 12).
- Chilosi, A. M., Pfanner, L., Pecini, C., Salvadorini, R., Casalini, C., Brizzolara, D., & Cipriani, P. (2019). Which linguistic measures distinguish transient from persistent language problems in Late Talkers from 2 to 4 years? A study on Italian speaking children. *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, *89*, 59-68.
- Sansavini, A., Faldella, G. (2013). Lo sviluppo dei bambini nati pretermine. *Aspetti neuropsicologici, metodi di valutazione e interventi* (pagg. 147-169).
- Integrative documentation provided by the teacher.

Sustainable Development Goals

GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING