UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Pedagogy of The Body

2627-2-G8501R013-G8501R013M

Course title

Embodied Education

Topics and course structure

The centrality of the body in kindergarden and primary schools is pivotal: children inhabit, experience, and learn about themselves and their surroundings through their bodies, and their thinking always develops in connection with their embodied experience of the world. At the same time, in training and educational professions, the competence of *presence* indicates the ability of the subject to *be* in the relationship starting from him/herself, through an embodied attention that opens up to the encounter: it is the sensitive presence that unfolds the possibility of educational actions. The course theorizes some epistemological aspects related to a range of conceptions of the body in contemporary culture, introducing the pivotal topics of reflection for Embodied Pedagogy: this is a discipline that observes from a critical perspective the role and function of corporeity in educational and care contexts, where body is often investigated through instrumental, reductionist perspectives that decrease its relational, educational and cognitive potential. We can situate Embodied Pedagogy in the paradigm of the *Embodiment*: in this perspective it is relevant to overturn the hierarchical order that still remains in many formative contexts between body and speech, mind and body, theory and practice. During the course, we will focus on an embodied education, in search for a kind of presence and a fully, embodied, involvement in the relationship. Embodied Pedagogy is a wide field, constitutively transversal and in connection with a branch of knowledge and practices: psychomotor, somatic, performative, artistic. It captures approaches, strategies, languages to hybridize and inspire the educational work. For this reason, the course is interested in studying practices and experiences from heterogeneous fields (dance, theater, circus, yoga, somatic disciplines ...) that show "embodied ways", somatic practices that can inspire, inform and guide educational actions. A specific part of the course will concern the educational use of reflective, narrative and embodied methodologies and we will theorize the potential that a performative gaze may open in the field of qualitative research in school and educational fields: a research *from* and *on* body.

Objectives

This teaching aims to develop the following objectives in terms of knowledge and understanding:

- To know and critically read, including from an historical perspective, the role of the body in educational and learning processes in different school and educational contexts.
- To understand and frame the body dimension in school and educational contexts with a multidisciplinary perspective.
- Recognize the main body-mediated educational strategies.

This teaching aims to develop the following objectives in terms of application of knowledge and understanding:

- To know how to connect theoretical and practical knowledge.
- Knowing how to design school and educational settings that integrate the potential of embodied languages with speech.

This teaching aims to develop the following objectives in terms of autonomy of thinking:

- Develop reflective and metacognitive skills to build one's own theory on the role of the body in educational actions, beyond a stereotypical perspective.
- Develop abilities to use personal methods of autonomous self-reflection and tools to support one's own professional growth, including the confrontation with teachers and specialists who have centered the body in their professional practice.

This teaching aims to develop the following objectives in terms of communication skills:

- To know how to use embodied and artistic-expressive languages as pivotal elements of communication.

The following learning skills are intended to be developed with this teaching:

- Develop abilities to use personal methods of autonomous self-reflection and tools to support one's own professional growth as teacher.
- Reflective and metacognitive skills to assess one's knowledge and skills and identify any areas that need further study.

Methodologies

The language of teaching is Italian.

Generally, all the planned training activities will be in-person.

The course provides erogative didactic activities, such as moments of frontal lectures, and interactive didactic activities, such as moments of participatory lectures, exercises, discussions, experiences of an expressive-body nature, viewing and listening to material related to the course topics. With these methodologies students can be involved to consider the topics of the course by exploring their own point of view.
Each lecture is structured into large - and small - group interactive moments (70%), individual work and erogative moments (30%), providing for the following types of teaching activities: tutorials, lectures, embodied activities, supervised by the teachers.
Guest speakers related to artistic and pedagogical contexts are also expected.

Online and offline teaching materials

Materials, resources and tools are provided on the e-learning course repository; therefore, attending and not attending students are recommended to register.

Programme and references

I. Gamelli, C. Mirabelli (2019), *Non solo a parole. Corpo e narrazione nell'educazione e nella cura.* Raffaello Cortina, Milano.

I. Gamelli (2011), *Pedagogia del corpo*. Raffaello Cortina, Milano.

N. Ferri (2022), *Embodied Research. Ricercare con il corpo e sul corpo in educazione*. Armando Editore, Roma.

G. Schiavone (2019), *Le radici nel cielo. La disciplina del funambolo per la formazione dell'educatore*, FrancoAngeli, Milano.

Although this course is held in Italian, for Erasmus students, course material can also be available in English, and students can take the exam in English if they wish to do so.

Assessment methods

The Embodied Pedagogy course does not include intermediate examinations. Only the final examination is scheduled.
The examination consists of a one-hour and a quarter written test, containing three open questions, designed to assess critical thinking and reflection skills in relation to the topics presented in the study texts and the course lectures.

The following skills will be assessed during the test:

- knowledge of the theory and models related to the representations of the body in education;
- ability to exemplify concepts (ability to understand);
- the ability to use and apply the learning achieved during the course (applied knowledge and understanding).

Assessment criteria:

- Ability to organise and articulate the knowledge acquired through the training course, the study of the texts in the
  programme, and the teaching material made available on the e-learning platform.
- Ability to discuss the knowledge relating to the topics covered by the course.
- The ability to connect theory and practice, and to establish relevant links between the texts and the course topics.
- The ability to use the discipline's specific vocabulary and correct exposition.

Using a written test with open questions as an examination method is coherent with the teaching objectives, as it allows students to critically interpret the role of the body in educational and learning processes within various

educational and care contexts. It also enables students to understand the body dimension with multidisciplinary references to educational issues and to critically compare examples and testimonies of educators and experts who have placed the body at the centre of their professional practice.

Office hours

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Programme validity

Two academic years.

Course tutors and assistants

Laura Corbella
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Laura Gabas
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Sustainable Development Goals

GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING | QUALITY EDUCATION | GENDER EQUALITY | REDUCED INEQUALITIES