UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Social and Intercultural Pedagogy for Childhood

2627-2-E1902R020

Course title

Fostering intercultural thinking in early childhood education contexts

Topics and course structure

Social and Intercultural Pedagogy is currently framed as an ambitious and inclusive project that begins in early childhood, placing educators in early childhood services before complex challenges posed by contemporary societies. These include issues related to equity and social justice; linguistic, religious, and identity diversity; as well as social and territorial inequalities, developmental trajectories, diverse cognitive and socio-emotional functioning styles, and the life trajectories of children and adults with migration backgrounds.
The course aims to analyse key themes and issues in social and intercultural pedagogy, with particular attention to its interpretative frameworks, including the recognition of the value of diversity, the relationship between the intercultural dimension and the development of rights, and the promotion of participation and social justice. Specific focus is placed on early childhood and educational practices within services for children aged 0–6.
The course will introduce the theoretical, epistemological, and methodological foundations of social and intercultural pedagogy, with a particular focus on the cultural nature of human development and the exercise of critical and intercultural thinking in educational work with children aged 0–6 and their families.
Issues related to communication and educational relationships—both within early childhood services and beyond—will be critically examined in relation to the goals of the integrated education and care system from birth to six years of age, particularly in light of current challenges of diversity (including language, religion, identity, cognitive and socio-emotional functioning styles, and social and cultural inequalities).
The course will also examine and deconstruct stereotypes and prejudices associated with educational practices, and explore the relationship between complexity, difference, multiculturalism, and interculturality in interactions with children and their families.
Through the lens of social and intercultural pedagogy, the course exmines the educational implications of the cultural processes underpinning human development, the ways in which adults (family members, education professionals, and citizens) perceive childhood and children, and the conditions for designing—within and beyond

early childhood services—educational experiences and practices that promote the recognition and appreciation of diversity, as well as coexistence and dialogue across different identities.

Objectives

The course aims to foster students' ability to engage in intercultural thinking in relation to educational interventions for early childhood and families in 0–6 settings.
In particular, the course intends to promote the following learning outcomes:

Knowledge and Understanding

- Acquire knowledge of theoretical and methodological approaches to pedagogy and intercultural education.
- Develop a critical understanding of the key components of intercultural pedagogy and the role of cultural dimensions in human development.
- Acquire knowledge of the distinctions between multicultural, intercultural, and transcultural approaches in relation to educational interventions for early childhood and families.

Applying Knowledge and Understanding

- Apply knowledge and skills to develop intercultural competences aimed at fostering meaningful and effective interactions with children and families from migrant and non-migrant backgrounds.
- Apply key theoretical and methodological frameworksand methodological frameworks to understand the relationship between representations of childhood and the intercultural dimension of educational relationships.
- Draw on theoretical knowledge and practical tools to design intercultural projects that enhance cultural diversity within early childhood services.
- Apply theoretical frameworks and operational tools to operate competently in socially and culturally diverse educational contexts, addressing inequalities and promoting cohesion, equity, and social justice.

Making Judgements

- Develop and strengthen reflective and critical analysis skills concerning intercultural dimensions in projects and experiences involving early childhood and families.

Communication Skills

- Acquire and use the terminology of social and intercultural pedagogy.
- Develop communication skills for interacting with children aged 0 to 6 and their families, using approaches and tools from intercultural pedagogy.

Learning Skills

- Develop the ability to critically process and organize knowledge and to reflect metacognitively on learning content.
- Enhance the ability to identify methods and tools that support both personal and professional development for oneself and others.

Methodologies

The language of the course is Italian.
Approximately all training activities (56 hours) are conducted in person.
Each lecture includes a component of direct instruction (theoretical explanation and conceptual development) and a component of interactive teaching (dialogue-based exchanges and instructor-guided activities, such as individual exercises, group work, case studies, and project design), with an estimated overall distribution of 50% direct instruction (DE) and 50% interactive teaching (DI).

Online and offline teaching materials

Materials used during classes (such as slides and articles) will be made available to all students on the course webpage. For video materials, links will be provided. A bibliography for further reading on the topics covered will be provided.

Programme and references

The programme includes a discussion of the issues and topics covered in the course, which are useful for introducing and framing intercultural pedagogy and the contextualisation of the intercultural perspective in early childhood services.
The bibliography consists of 4 texts:
Bove C. (2020), Capirsi non è ovvio. Dialogo tra insegnanti e genitori in contesti educativi interculturali, FrancoAngeli, Milano.
Luciano E. (2023), Tra adulti e bambini. Le relazioni educative nei contesti per l'infanzia 0/6, FrancoAngeli, Milano.
Fierli E., Franchi G., Lancia G., Marini S. - SCOSSE (2015), Leggere senza stereotipi. Percorsi educativi 0-6 anni per figurarsi il futuro, Settenove, Cagli (PU).
Korczak J. (2004), Il diritto del bambino al rispetto, Luni editrice, Milano (or any unabridged edition).

Assessment methods

The Intercultural Pedagogy exam does not include mid-term assessments; it consists exclusively of a final written examination.
The written exam, lasting 75 minutes, consists of three open-ended questions on topics included in the syllabus and covered in the course readings. Answers must be developed as short essays addressing the proposed topics. All answers must be sufficient (i.e. achieve a score of at least 18/30) in order for the exam to be considered passed. If one or more answers are insufficient, the exam is considered failed.
The open-ended questions are designed to assess the ability to construct arguments through independent reflection on specific topics included in the syllabus.
The choice of a written examination as the assessment method is consistent with the course objectives, as it allows for the evaluation, for each student, of: knowledge and critical understanding of course topics; the ability to organize and critically, reflectively, and independently process knowledge; the ability to use appropriately the language of intercultural pedagogy; as well as skills in pedagogical analysis and in connecting theory and practice.

Assessment Criteria

- Ability to organise and present the knowledge acquired through the course, the teaching materials made available on the e-learning platform, and the study of the texts included in the syllabus;
- Ability to argue in a reflective, analytical, critical, and independent manner on topics covered in the course;

- Ability to connect theory and practice and to identify relevant links between texts and course topics;
- Accuracy of presentation, clarity of argumentation, and command of the discipline-specific terminology.

The assessment will be graded on a scale of 30, as below:

1. Unsatisfactory
   Insufficient preparation on the main topics covered in the course program and bibliography; very limited and poorly independent ability to argue, analyze, and critically elaborate the educational material; insufficient ability to connect theory and practice and to identify relevant links between the texts and topics of the course; incorrect presentation skills and specific vocabulary of the discipline.

2. Sufficient – More than sufficient (18-23)
   General preparation and, in some respects, uncertain or incomplete on various topics covered in the course program and bibliography; limited and not very independent ability to argue, analyze, and critically evaluate the educational material; difficulty connecting theory and practice and identifying relevant links between the texts and topics covered in the course; partially correct presentation skills and specific vocabulary for the discipline.

3. Fair (24-27)
   Adequate preparation on the main topics covered in the course syllabus and bibliography, but lacking depth on some more specific topics; fair ability to argue, analyze, and critically evaluate the educational material, 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.

4. Good - Excellent (28-30/30L)
   Exhaustive and in-depth preparation on the topics covered in the course program and bibliography; ability to argue, analyze, and critically elaborate the educational material in an articulate and independent manner; good/excellent ability to connect theory and practice and to identify relevant links between the texts and topics of the course; good/excellent presentation skills and mastery of the specific vocabulary of the discipline.

Office hours

The teaching staff receive students by appointment, to be arranged via email:
Professor Elena Luciano: elena.luciano@unimib.it
Professor Elena Zizioli: elena.zizioli@unimib.it
The teaching staff respond to emails sent from institutional (campus.unimib) accounts that request information not available on the course webpage or in the syllabus.
For any requests for clarification regarding topics covered in class and/or included in the examination, the teaching staff are available during office hours.

Programme validity

Programme last two academic years

Course tutors and assistants

dott.ssa Elisabetta Marazzi (elisabetta.marazzi@unimib.it)
dott.ssa Angela Sangalli (angela.sangalli@unimib.it)

Sustainable Development Goals

NO POVERTY | QUALITY EDUCATION | GENDER EQUALITY