UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Psychology of Special Educational Needs

2627-2-F5113P016

Learning area

Atypical Psychological Development

Learning objectives

Knowledge and Understanding
• Classification and assessment of disabilities
• Knowledge of neurodevelopmental disorders
• Presentation of students with Special Educational Needs (SEN)
• Principles and regulations of school inclusion
Applying Knowledge and Understanding
• Analysis of strengths and weaknesses in cases involving disabilities, developmental disorders, and Special Educational Needs
• Dynamic functional profile of disabilities and developmental disorders
• Understanding of the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) and the Personalized Didactic Plan (PDP)
• Development of school inclusion projects for students with SEN

Making Judgments
Students will acquire the ability to independently integrate methodological and theoretical skills in the field of special educational needs and neurodevelopmental disorders. They will apply these skills to critically evaluate previous studies and propose new school inclusion projects within the various subfields of developmental psychology, taking into account the specific critical aspects of each research technique and the different operational contexts. Students will also develop the ability to reorganize acquired knowledge in order to promote innovative and original solutions, through judgment based on empirical data and a critical understanding of the complexities inherent in developmental psychology. This objective will be achieved through class discussions and group work.

Communication Skills
Students will acquire communication skills that enable effective interaction with professionals from different cultural and scientific backgrounds. Through group presentations, students will learn how to propose school inclusion projects in the field of developmental psychology and how to communicate their results and conclusions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences in a clear, detailed, and scientifically sound manner, using the specific terminology of the discipline. Students will also learn how to coordinate within teams and collaborate effectively and competently.

Learning Skills
The course will foster the ability to absorb new developments and innovations emerging from international scientific research in the field of special educational needs, updating one's competencies in line with the rapid evolution of the field. It will also promote the use of specialized bibliographic resources to carry out in-depth scientific reviews, in order to critically evaluate current knowledge in the area of atypical developmental psychology and build upon it to propose further advancements in the field (e.g., through the development of new scientific projects). This will be achieved through discussions of available tools for bibliographic research and through in-class debates.

Contents

Classification and assessment of disabilities and neurodevelopmental disorders. The characteristics of students with Special Educational Needs (SEN).
Methods and tools for describing the functioning (strengths and weaknesses) and quality of life of individuals with disabilities.
The course will present interventions aimed at school inclusion, focusing on the individual (training, rehabilitative and educational programs) and involving the context (peers, parents, teachers).
Theoretical constructs related to social skills, self-determination, and school well-being will also be introduced.

Detailed program

• Classification systems of disabilities according to the ICF
• Special Educational Needs and school-related regulations
• Classroom observation and behavioral interventions
• Neuropsychological assessment and rehabilitation in developmental age
• Sensory and intellectual disabilities
• Autism Spectrum Disorders
• Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
• Specific Learning Disorders (SLD)
• Students with high cognitive potential
• Foreign students and their needs
• School inclusion strategies

Prerequisites

• Knowledge of typical developmental psychology
• Classification of disorders according to the DSM and ICD
• Educational psychology

Teaching methods

The teaching methodology includes the presentation of theoretical frameworks and the discussion of cases involving students with Special Educational Needs (SEN). Videos will be provided to supplement the lesson content, and students will engage in group work in class to develop school inclusion projects. Students may carry out group projects, which they will present to their classmates during class sessions. Students who present their group work in class will receive 1 extra point on the final exam. Lessons will be delivered using slides and videos, which will be made available to students through the e-learning platform.
Approximately one-third of the teaching activities will be interactive in nature (including case presentations and discussions, as well as in-class group exercises), while the remaining two-thirds will consist of traditional lecture-based instruction.
The course will be delivered in Italian and entirely in person.

Assessment methods

The exam consists of a written test made up of 6 open-ended questions, along with the writing of a short report describing a school inclusion project for a case involving a disability or developmental disorder. During the exam, a case description will be presented, and students will be required to develop a school inclusion project based on it.
The questions aim to assess the actual acquisition of the theoretical concepts covered during the course. Each answer will be evaluated based on accuracy, completeness, ability to argue, and ability to make connections between concepts.
For those who wish, it is possible to take an oral exam, which may increase or decrease the written exam grade by up to 3 points. The oral examination will focus on the questions that the student answered less comprehensively in the written examination. In addition, three further questions will be asked on topics different from those covered in the written examination.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

Lecture slides + other texts that will be announced at the beginning of the course.

Sustainable Development Goals

GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING