# Lifelong learning and empowerment

## Prof. Alessandro Antonietti

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The course aims to provide students with the skills they need to plan and carry out psychological interventions targeted at the development of personal resources during the life cycle, in typical and atypical situations, with a view to the promotion of well-being. At the end of the course, students will be able to get familiar with different approaches, procedures, and useful tools for the assessment and development of various skills. In particular, they will be aware of the psychological variables that must be considered while carrying out an assessment or empowerment intervention, and able to reflect upon the circumstances that make the application of approaches, procedures, and tools relevant for a specific context.

With regard to the so-called “Dublin descriptors”, the course promotes the achievement of the intended learning outcomes for the degree programme in which it is included, as specified below.

*- Making judgments*:in different moments of the course, students will be invited to make independent and critical judgments, taking into account the ethical and social responsibilities related to the different types of psychological intervention under analysis, and reflect upon the complexity of the professional situations in which they will have to operate, in order to identify the most appropriate analytical, assessment, and intervention tools, and understand how to interact with other professional profiles.

*- Communication skills*: during the course, students will be invited to make oral and written presentations adapting their communication style according to the audience

*- Learning skills*: Students will be made aware of the need to constantly update their knowledge, also once they are actively part of the labour market, stressing the importance of scientific research to support effective interventions. Where relevant, students are invited to find connections with their everyday experience.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The course will explore the psychological processes at the basis of learning during the life cycle, and show how theory and research are at the basis of the interventions for the development of personal skills (cognitive skills, emotional management skills, relational skills, communicative skills) in various fields (education, training, rehabilitation, etc.), with different kinds of audience, and through distinct methodologies. In particular, the course will focus on the techniques and procedures that can be used to promote personal empowerment during the life cycle, and the tools that can be applied to carry out assessment operations and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions. In addition, the course will provide students with the key conceptual elements, and exemplify the different types of intervention approaches.

The course syllabus will be structured as follows.

*Unit 1: Learning and empowerment*

The relationship between learning and empowerment

Why investing on learning and empowerment

Developing soft/transferable/character/life skills

*Unit 2: Creating the conditions for learning/empowerment*

Plasticity and adjustability

Potential assessment

Mindsets

The possible selves

*Unit 3: Preparing for learning/empowerment*

Nudging, boosting, and priming

Preparing the environment: affordances, artefacts, backgrounds

Preparing the body: psychophysiological conditions, physical activity, embodiment, enclothed cognition

Preparing the mind: pre-activating thoughts, self-talk, framing, and regulatory focus

*Unit 4: Carrying out the learning/empowerment*

Observation and imitation

Exercise

Strategies

Self-regulation

*Unit 5: Changing through learning/empowerment*

Transformative learning

Problem finding

Reflectivity

Narration

*Unit 6: Critical reflections on learning and empowerment*

Anthropological, ethical, and deontological issues

The psychological perspective

How to build consensus

***READING LIST***

**a) For the option based on the content and the activities of the lectures**

Lecture notes, with references to the teaching material that will be made available on Blackboard, integrated by the following textbook:

A. Antonietti-C. Valenti (edited by), *Skill training. Interventi psicologici per allenare la mente*. Franco Angeli Editore, Milan 2022.

**b) For the option based on textbooks**

Students will have to study three textbooks:

1. A. Antonietti-M. Cantoia, *Come si impara. Teorie, costrutti e procedure nella psicologia dell’apprendimento*, Mondadori, Milan, 2010 (students will have to study the whole textbook, including the anthology of texts).

2. In addition, they will have to choose one of the following textbooks – J. Mezirow, *Apprendimento e trasformazione,* Raffaello Cortina, Milan, 2003 (the whole textbook).

*or*

– C. Pontecorvo-A.M. Ajello-C. Zucchermaglio (edited by), *I contesti sociali dell’apprendimento*, LED, Milan, 1995 (the whole textbook, excluding the chapters by Bruner (p. 43-60), Edwards (p. 85-114), Strauss (p. 139-153), Scribner (p. 263-301), and Orr (p. 303-326).

3. A. Antonietti-C. Valenti (edited by), *Skill training. Interventi psicologici per allenare la mente*. Franco Angeli Editore, Milan 2022.

***TEACHING METHOD***

The course will be characterised by frontal lectures, held in class, supported by multimedia presentations and other teaching material that will be made available online. Students will be asked to reflect upon and reformulate the topics included in the course content, also from a practical perspective. These activities will be documented in the assignments that students will be invited to write during the course, according to a set of instructions that will be gradually made available.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

**a) For the option based on the content and the activities of the lectures**

During the course, the students’ learning outcomes will be assessed through multiple-choice tests, as well as the evaluation of the assignments that they will be asked to write during the lectures and/or during the period between two lessons. The assessment method will take into account the following aspects:

- The presence of relevant connections between the topics developed by students (25% of the final mark)

- The degree of accuracy and originality of the links found between the course content and the students’ personal experience, and/or between everyday life and professional contexts (25% of the final mark)

- The use of critical thinking in the analysis and elaboration of operational proposals (25% of the final mark).

- The use of a precise terminology and a coherent argumentation (25% of the final mark).

**b) For the option based on textbooks**

The students’ learning outcomes will be assessed through an oral exam divided into two different moments, held by independent examiners; the final mark will result from the average between the points obtained in the two moments. The assessment will be based on the following criteria: the precision and accuracy of the contents exposed (25% of the final mark), the use of an appropriate terminology (25% of the final mark), the relevance of the analysis and the connections found (25% of the final mark), the peculiarity and feasibility of the project proposals (25% of the final mark).

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

Students should have a basic knowledge of the most important contributions of psychology in terms of theories and constructs.

For foreign students who choose the course in the context of international exchanges: full mastery of the Italian language is required since the study materials, lessons and training activities are all in that language.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG or on the Faculty notice board.