

**SUBJECT SYLLABUS**

Degree				Academic year
<b>141.1 BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN SOCIAL EDUCATION</b>				<b>2011/12</b>
Subject code and title				Duration
<b>41121 Mediation and Communication Skills</b>				<b>Semester 2</b>
Type	Language	UD Credits	ECTS Credits	Group/Language
<b>COMPULSORY</b>	<b>SPA</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>01 / Spanish</b>
Lecturer				
<b>Martínez Rueda, Ignacio María</b>				

**DESCRIPTION**

¿Communication creates what we call reality. At first glance, it could seem a paradoxical thesis, which puts the cart before the horse, given that the reality is, clearly, what the thing really is, while communication is merely the way to describe and report on it.

We show that that is not the case; that the crumbling scaffolding of our everyday perceptions of reality is, strictly speaking, fanciful, and that all we do is constantly repair and shore it up, even at the high price of having to distort the facts so that they do not contradict our concept of reality, instead of adapting our conception of the world to undisputed facts. We also show how the most dangerous way of deceiving ourselves is to believe that there is only one reality; as, in fact, there are numerous versions of reality, that may be very different, and that all of them are the result of communication, and the reflection of objective and eternal truth. Watzlawick, P. (1981) [backtranslated from the quote in Spanish as the original was not available]

It is obvious that communication is an essential condition to human life. From the moment we are born, we are immersed in communication processes that are the basis of our very existence and of our development as individuals. If we start from the fact that "it is not possible not to communicate" (Watzlawick Beavin, Jackson 1981), our interest is going to focus on how those communication processes are implemented, on their quality to generating learning opportunities, community, group or personal evolution or development.

Communication has many dimensions or aspects: interpersonal communication, persuasion, verbal communication, social skills, organisational communication, virtual communication and social networks... It is also very important to recognise that communication occurs in certain contexts that give it sense and meaning.

From the educational point of view, communication is also the main process of any intervention or measure, and it can be considered as a basic tool used by the professionals. Therefore, this subject focuses on handling this tool with precision, establishes its characteristics and elements and the different ways of using it.

To be able to develop this, it is important to start from two closely related premises. On the one hand, communication involves us globally as people and, therefore, affects our emotions, beliefs, perceptions, conduct, values, etc., and furthermore, does so in an integrated way.

On the other hand, given that communication is a condition for human life, socialisation has enabled us to develop a variety of communicative resources, strategies or styles that make us more or less efficient in our professional and personal life. It is important to realise that what we have learnt in our socialisation process is incidental the majority of times, and where we have not been aware of what we learnt - many times not even of what we are learning-. This learning "without teaching" process leads to implicit theories about how things function and how to behave towards them.

Therefore, learning to improve our communication will involve reviewing our communicative forms and theories to readjust some of the elements while incorporating new resources at the same time.

It is therefore necessary to develop an active training process that means seeing ourselves in action to be able to analyse and review. This subject has therefore been designed as a workshop, where all the participants are going to work together to try to construct 'maps' for the communicative processes through dialogue, discussions and active experimenting.

**PREREQUISITES**

None.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES IN TERMS OF GENERIC AND SPECIFIC COMPETENCES**

On completing the course, students are expected to be competent in the following generic competences:

¿ Interpersonal Communication Competence. Positively relating to other people by means of empathetic listening and through the assertive and clear expression of what is thought and/or felt, by verbal and non-verbal means.

¿ Third level of expertise: Fostering sincere and empathetic communication aimed at constructive dialogue.

¿ Critical Thought Competence:

Second level of expertise: Analysing the coherence of one's own and others' opinion, and assessing their social and personal involvement.

**Specific Competences**

1. Constructing a group-personal reference framework on communication and mediation:
  - Assessing communication as the basic process in the organisations.
  - Understanding basic characteristics and components of the mediation and communicative processes.
2. Analysing, assessing and developing strategies to improve our communicative styles and forms.
3. Developing strategies to tackle the conflicts and to facilitate mediation processes.

**CONTENTS**

The following themes will be covered in the subject:

**Theme 1: Social education, systematic thought and communication.**

Insofar as social education is taken to be a practical and complex profession, where the beliefs, theories or 'maps' of its professionals are critical elements, it is interesting to begin to identify some key references to be used to construct systematic thought. Therefore, we will consider some issues related to the relations between behaviour, beliefs and emotions, along with some contributions of the systematic models.

**Theme 2. Communicative processes and communication**

Studying communication has multiple aspects and models of understanding. Students will here try to conceptualise what they understand by communication, its main components, and, based on authors such as Watzlawick, identify the axioms or principles of communication, as a key approach for social education professionals.

**Theme 3. Interpersonal communication skills**

Apart from having a global vision of the communicative processes, it is useful in practice to develop a set of skills that help us to maintain or develop useful communications with people. Listening, empathy and rapport, providing information, asking questions or maintaining conversations, I-messages... are some of these skills that we can try out and practice.

**Theme 4. Conflicts and processes and intervention strategies in mediation.**

Conflicts are a natural component of the relations between people and are not in themselves either good or bad. In this theme, students will consider what a conflict is, along with its elements and the different influential factors and the ensuing process. Mediation is proposed as a conflict intervention process to tackle them in a satisfactory and constructive way. Students consider their definition, characteristics, models and their spheres of application. Taking the mediation process as the benchmark, students explore and try out some strategies and techniques that facilitate interventions.

**TEACHING-LEARNING STRATEGY**

The subject is taught during the second semester with 3 hours a week of class sessions over 14 weeks. It also includes outside-class reading and discussing texts, preparing certain contents and a portfolio with systematic discussion and reflection of what has been learnt.

Given the experimentation and applied nature of this subject, the following types of activities will be organised:

1. Dialogic reading or discussion group of different selected texts. Dialogic reading is the process of reading and giving meaning to a text through peer dialogue among all the participants. This process is based on the reflections, discussions and arguments and also the daily life experiences of the participants. Everybody can put forward their contributions and it is the contrasting of points of view what leads to learning. The role of the teacher is to facilitate collective interpretations, without imposing their point of view and without allowing the students to impose their perspectives on the others.
2. Life experience and practical exercises that enable us to experiment, observe ourselves in the action and reflect on the different components and processes involved in communication and mediation
3. Presentations by the lecturer or students on some areas or sections of the programme that contribute to its systematisation or clarification.
4. There is also the opportunity to invite professionals who are working in the field of mediation as a way to learn about some specific realities.
5. Preparing an individual portfolio with the work done and systematising from a personal approach the in-class activities, the associated reference concepts and their application to different contexts of social education.

The student's time distribution (6 ECTS: 150 hours) will be organised as follows:

¿ In class: 45 hours

- Explanations by the lecturer: 5 hours
- Dialogic discussion group: 15 hours
- Practical exercises: 20 hours
- Presentations by the students: 5 hours

¿ Outside-class time 105 hours

- Activities to prepare discussion groups: 30 hours
- Preparing presentations: 15 hours
- Producing the portfolio: 50 hours

- Tutorials and others: 10 hours

### ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

Attainment of the specific and generic competences will be assessed through the following procedures:

- Participation and interventions in class and discussion groups (20%)
- Personal paper (portfolio) (60%): Preparing a weekly diary-essay on the significant aspects from a personal point of view of the different tasks and activities. The aim is to gather from a personal perspective the most important aspects of the different activities and work sessions. The criteria to assess this activity are:
  - a) Presentation.
  - b) Quality of the individual reflections.
  - c) Thorough use of concepts and ideas.
  - d) Scope of the personal reflection.
- Justified self-assessment (20%), based on the participation criteria, essay preparation and learning achieved.

The assessment in the extraordinary exam session will be according to the same criteria and procedures as for the ordinary session.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alzate, R. (2000): Resolución del conflicto. Tomo I y II. Bilbao: Mensajero.
- Bandler, R.; Gringer, J.(1980): La estructura de la magia. Volumen 1. Lenguaje y Terapia. Santiago de Chile: Cuatrovientos.
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