COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE: BRIDGING VOICES - HOW MEDIATION IMPROVES COMMUNICATION

COURSE INFORMATION

Program	**Empowering Community Engagement: Soft Skills Micro-Courses for Students and Staff**
University	**University of Calabria**
Department	**Culture, Education and Society - DICES**
Course name	**Bridging voices - How mediation improves communication**
Course code	**ECE1.5**
Credits/hours	**Non-credit micro course – 2 hours total**
Language of instruction	**English**
Course dates	**On demand, flexible access**
Course mode	**Asynchronous online**
Course coordinator	**Prof.ssa Emanuela Pascuzzi**
Course instructor	**Dr Vanessa Marcella**
Contact details	**vanessa.marcella@unical.it**

SHORT DESCRIPTION

This module introduces mediation as a core soft skill for effective communication in community engagement. Learners will explore how mediation supports mutual understanding, reduces miscommunication, and enables constructive collaboration in diverse social, civic, and professional settings. Drawing on the Council of Europe's CEFR framework, the module situates mediation within language learning, intercultural interaction, and meaning-making, thus highlighting its relevance for working across differences and perspectives.

The module also emphasises mediation as a practical competence for building trust, facilitating dialogue, and supporting inclusive participation in community-based initiatives. By strengthening learners' ability to bridge viewpoints and make communication accessible to all participants, mediation contributes to social cohesion and more effective engagement in collaborative processes.

Participants will develop and practise concrete strategies—including paraphrasing, reformulating, summarising, and negotiating meaning—through realistic scenarios linked to community and multi-stakeholder contexts.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course, learners will develop:

Knowledge & Understanding

- Define and explain mediation within the CEFR framework and differentiate it from translation, interpreting, and general communicative interaction.

- Identify and describe the role of mediation in intercultural interaction, collaborative tasks, and conflict-sensitive or high-stakes communication, including community-based and participatory settings.

Applied Skills

- Apply CEFR mediation descriptors to analyse and evaluate communicative situations and select appropriate strategies for inclusive, community-oriented communication.

- Identify mediation techniques—such as summarising, paraphrasing, simplifying complex

content, and reformulating messages—to strengthen clarity, shared understanding, and collaborative engagement within groups and communities.

Personal & Reflective Competence

- Reflect on personal communication patterns and assess individual strengths and development needs in mediation competence, recognising mediation as a key factor in supporting participation, social cohesion, and community engagement.

COURSE CONTENTS

The course covers the following topics:

1. Introduction to mediation as defined in the CEFR framework

2. Mediation in multilingual and intercultural contexts with a focus on community-based communication and participation

3. Mediating communication: managing interaction, reducing misunderstandings, negotiating meaning to support inclusive dialogue and social cohesion

4. Practical examples of mediation in academic, social, and professional scenarios, and community contexts (e.g., summarising, paraphrasing, simplifying, reformulating)

TEACHING METHODOLOGY

The course adopts a practice-oriented approach grounded in the CEFR mediation framework and teaching activities include:

- Lecture introducing mediation concepts and CEFR descriptors
- Case-based activities using real communication breakdown examples
- Demonstration and guided analysis of mediation strategies (summarising, paraphrasing, simplifying, reformulating)
- Stakeholder-inspired examples, drawing on intercultural and multilingual communication contexts

Module	Topic	Activity	Duration

1	Presentation of key concepts (mediation, CEFR mediation framework, and distinctions between mediation, translation, and interpretation)	Micro-lectures – PPT presentation Multiple choice comprehension tests	40 mins
2	Mediation in multilingual and intercultural contexts	Reading and listening comprehension	20 mins
3	Applied task: analysis of short texts or predefined communication scenarios, with use of mediation strategies such as summarising, paraphrasing, simplifying, and reformulating	Introduction to different scenarios, short videos, multiple choice comprehension tests	40 mins
4	Self-check and clarification phase: clarification of key concepts and guided reflection on mediation strategies and their relevance to academic, professional, and community contexts	Wrap-up of key concepts	10 mins
5	Self-assessment	Matching task	10 mins

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

Assessment type	Assessment criteria	Overall weight
Comprehension tests		80%
Self-assessment	Ability to critically analyse mediation processes; clarity; connection to course concepts and CEFR descriptors	20%

AI & Academic Integrity Note

AI tools may be used only for linguistic refinement or idea exploration; full assignment generation is not permitted. All sources (including AI assistance) must be acknowledged.

STUDENT WORKLOAD (in hours)

Contact hours	Autonomous work	Overall
0	2	2

READING LIST / RELEVANT REFERENCES

Council of Europe. (2018). *Common European framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment. Companion volume with new descriptors*. https://rm.coe.int/cefr-companion-volume-with-new-descriptors-2018/1680787989

Rodrigues, R., & Dias, A. (2024). Influence of soft skills on career development: Exploring performance appraisal as a mediating mechanism. *Problems and Perspectives in Management*, *22*(4), 14–24. https://www.isg.pt/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/2024_Soft-skills-and-career-development.pdf

Wall, J. A., & Dunne, T. C. (2012). Mediation research: A current review. *Negotiation Journal*, *28*(2), 217–244. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1571-9979.2012.00336.x