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Panel M.16. Digital Transformation and Democratic Regeneration: The Essential Role of Critical Education in the Age of Algorithmic Capitalism

Narrating Work in the Age of Algorithms: Biographies, Transformative Education and Democratic Imagination in Digital Society

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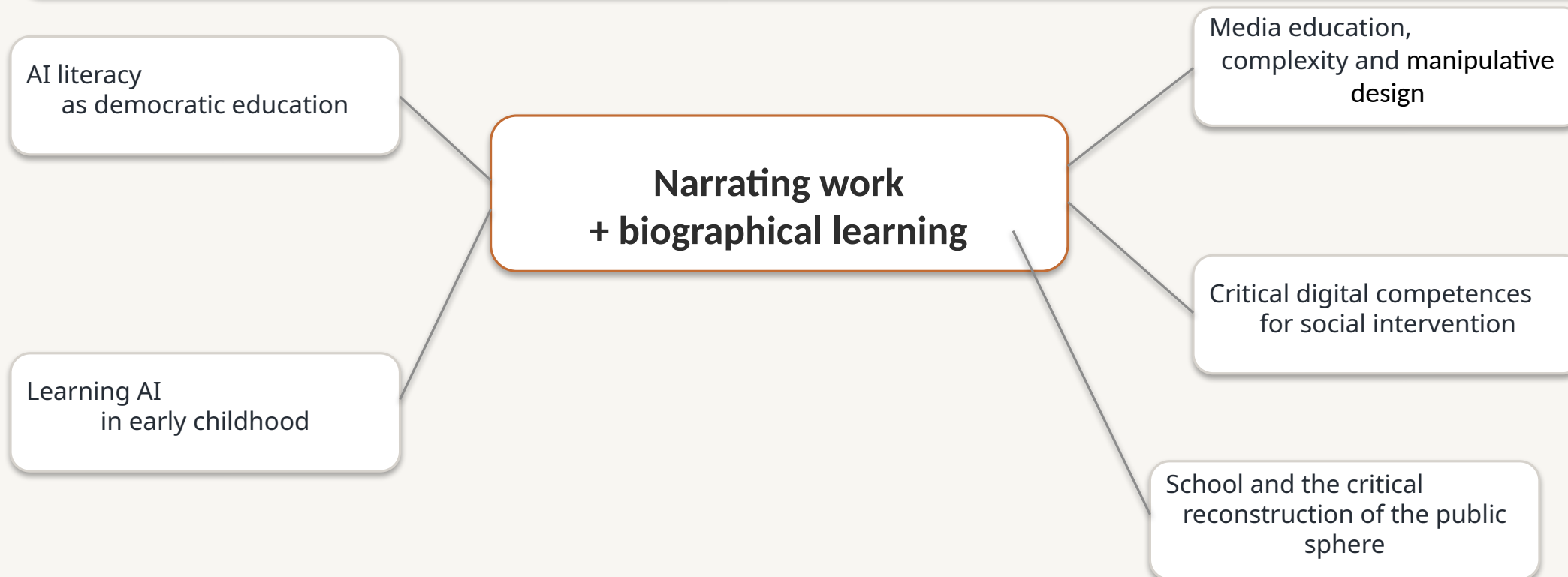
INAPP Istituto Nazionale per l'Analisi delle Politiche Pubbliche

Positioning within Panel M.16

A biographical perspective on work, subjectivity and democratic imagination



How can education respond to the democratic fragilities of digital society?



This contribution looks at digital transformation through work biographies.

Digital ecosystems and democratic fragility

Platforms organise attention, visibility and participation



Expanded access

information • knowledge
connection • participation

Intensified risks

disinformation • polarisation
profiling • data extraction

Algorithmic selection

what we see, what we consider relevant

Filter bubbles

echo chambers weaken informational pluralism

Platform power

not neutral tools but social infrastructures

Democratic culture

collective imaginaries and social time are reshaped

From industrial capitalism to platform economies

Large structural transformations become visible in individual stories

Structural transition

from industrial capitalism
to digital platform economies

Key references

Srnicek (2017)
Zuboff (2019)

Focus

labour
vs consumption

Digital capitalism reshapes boundaries

individual
vs collective

work time
vs life time

labour
vs consumption

Technological change reshapes identities, expectations and life trajectories.

Transformative education as democratic regeneration

Experience becomes learning when it is narrated and critically reinterpreted



Sociological imagination

Mills (1959)
connect biography, history
and social structure



Biographical sociology

Ferrarotti (1981)
life stories help us
understand society



Biographical learning

Alheit · Mezirow
experience is narrated,
questioned, reinterpreted

Reflexivity • Narrative interpretation • Critical awareness of digital power structures

Schools and universities can become spaces for reflexivity and dialogical democracy.

Educational experimentation in higher education

What appears to be personal becomes socially interpretable

Research resource

Storie di vita... e di lavoro
(Barricelli, 2026)

Biographical interviews with
professionals from different sectors

Workshop process

1

Autobiographical reflection

digital experiences
images of work and the future

2

Narrative writing

episodes, tensions
and turning points

3

Collective interpretation

stories connected with
socio-economic transformations

**Learning focus: connect personal
experience with wider transformations.**

What narrative practices make possible

Biographical learning and critical agency can revitalise democratic imagination



1

Reflexive capacities

students critically interpret
their digital experiences

2

Biography + structure

personal stories connect
with digital capitalism

3

Critical agency

understand change,
take a position,
imagine alternatives

Take-home message: narrating work in the age of algorithms helps revitalise democratic imagination through biographical learning.

Conclusion

In the age of algorithms, narrating work also means imagining the future democratically

Critical education must go beyond technical and instrumental digital skills.

Reconnect

biography, history
and social transformation

Recognise

individual stories as part
of collective history

Imagine

alternative futures
democratically

***Recovering the capacity to narrate work may also mean
recovering the capacity to imagine the future democratically.***



References

Core sources supporting the analytical path: platform capitalism → biographical learning → democratic imagination

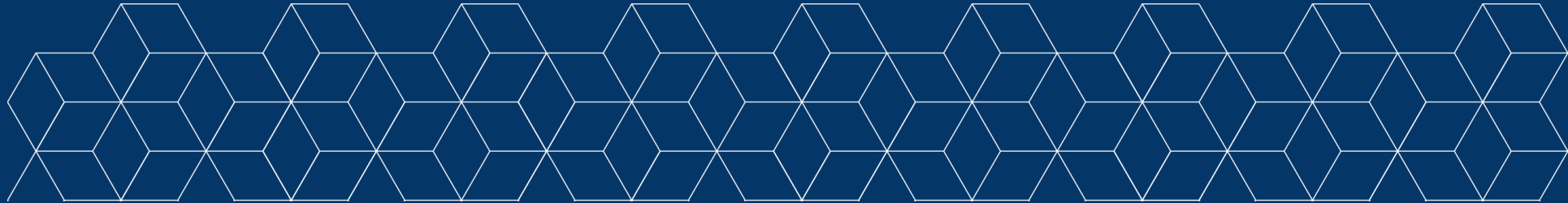
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These references frame the move from digital infrastructures to narrative practices as resources for democratic regeneration.



Thank you for your attention

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