

ESCILO

Information, Links e Opportunities for ESC doctoral students

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On the art of interweaving

Passing the baton is not a solitary act, but a coordinated effort. The newsletter moves from one cycle to the next, yet it remains what best represents us: a space created by peers; not merely a collection of contributions, but a shared workshop.

Similarly, research is never an isolated act. For us, it is a process that takes shape, above all, in conversations in the corridors, in shared doubts and difficulties, and in mutual feedback. It is a line of thought that becomes clearer as it is discussed.

This newsletter, then, is not merely an editorial project, but a practice – that of working together. The reflections we present in the following pages are a case in point: they have emerged from a shared process of discussion and co-creation; they bring to light the network of relationships that made them possible.

Whilst the previous issue looked at themes, in this one we want to talk about weaving things together...

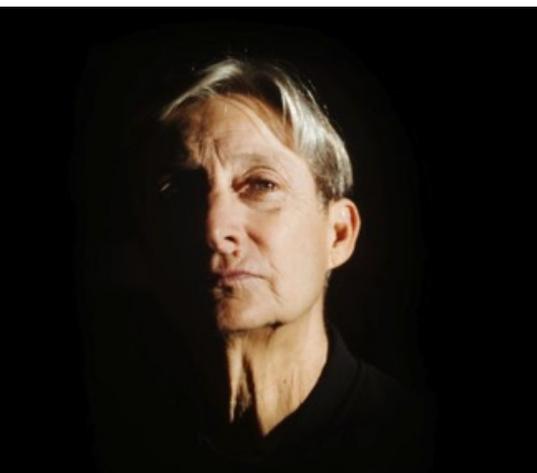
40° cycle

SPECIAL**WRITER***Caterina Rapini*

«No heroes, but collective virtues»: meeting Judith Butler

We meet Judith Butler at the end of their talk, entitled “**The Contemporary Time of Grief: Reconsidering Merleau-Ponty's Flow of Time**,” at a conference on French Phenomenology organized by our department. It is April 29, 2025, and the Israeli genocide in Gaza continues mercilessly, with no end to the mourning in sight.

A mourning that affects people, culture, but also animals, plants, water: what we, from our anthropocentric perspective, are accustomed to calling nature, and which we witness being continuously martyred for the profit of a few human beings. This is also what Butler talks about in their speech, inviting us to reflect on the time of mourning and the end of the planet and on the time of mourning and the end that we humans may have. A dense speech, difficult for me to follow as I am totally unfamiliar with Merleau-Ponty, but from which comes all the power of the thinking of this person behind the microphone, a giant of contemporary thought, especially on their fundamental reflections on gender.



JUDITH BUTLER

Post-structuralist philosopher, they have been teaching at the University of Berkeley, California, for over thirty years. They have worked in the fields of political philosophy and ethics, and their ideas on gender are fundamental to Queer Theory.

When the speech ends, we timidly venture towards the lectern, our notebooks with our questions becoming more trivial with every step we take. Several people surround Butler, some asking questions, some declaring their admiration, some trying to capture their attention for even a second. As we approach, we are told that they are too tired to answer our questions.

We remain there, with our notebooks in hand, and when they approach, we tell them that we are first-year doctoral students and that we would like to ask them a question for our doctoral program newsletter. They looks at us smiling, a figure who seems very small among us, their arm in a cast because, they say, they wanted to experience the joys of life by going skating.

We ask, in English that stumbles on the tip of our tongues (partly because of our excitement and partly because that's how we speak it), how we students in education, with the yearning for transformation and hope that education brings with it, can imagine the future in these times of loss and continuous mourning? How can we maintain pockets of freedom and critical thinking within an increasingly neoliberal university?

Butler answered us thus:

"Well, my general sense is that this is a moment in which we are strengthening our **communities** and our **solidarities**. We're producing networks of support and seeking to regenerate each other even as we experiencing enormous loss in terms of war and climate change and many other attacks on vulnerable minorities and the like.

None of us regenerate ourselves completely independently right? **We depend on each other and we strengthen these ties** because our actions and the world we want to build will come from those ties and those bonds.

The world we make together even locally gives us a vision of the world we want to live in, right? So you embody the principles you want to see realized in the world. If you do that even at a very local level, it can be expensive. They're widening circles and it gives you a kind of **practice into larger transformative actions** whether protests or changing institutions or making political demands.

Don't be a hero, right? **We don't need another hero**. I like that line. Have courage in your solidarity; we don't need hero, **we need collective virtue**. I wish you luck!"

INSIDER**WRITER***Alessia Polidori*

The interview is reproduced here in summary form, as edited by the interviewer.

«Exploring connections»: interweaving as an epistemological horizon.

CAPTED. Interview with Paolo Monti

In this article, we take an in-depth look at the **CAPTED Departmental Research Centre** through a conversation with **Prof. Paolo Monti**, a lecturer and researcher in Moral Philosophy and coordinator of the Centre's seminar activities. CAPTED was established within the framework of the Department of Excellence (2023–2027), a programme run by the Ministry of Universities and Research that recognises and funds departments presenting innovative and significant projects across all academic disciplines.

What was the inspiration behind CAPTED?

The aim of the departmental project – which was subsequently rated 'excellent' and received funding from the Ministry – is to explore **the educational and socio-cultural changes and opportunities associated with the digital transition**. The objective is to examine the dual nature of these transformations: on the one hand, their potential; on the other, the risks that arise from these changes.

PAOLO MONTI

Researcher in Moral Philosophy at the “Riccardo Massa” Department of Human Sciences for Education. His academic work focuses on the relationship between ethics and politics, the role of cultures in the public sphere, and technological change.



One of the key elements of the project was that the research work would be driven by the creation of a new research centre, the CAPTED Centre, which, during the Department of Excellence period (2023–2027), would bring together as members all those interested in working on these topics: from the Department’s lecturers and researchers to younger members of staff, such as PhD students.

Why this name, CAPTED?

Initially, we tried to create an acronym that would capture the phrase “Educational Changes and Potential in the Digital Transition”, but we realised it would have been unpronounceable. We therefore opted for a term that suggested something similar to the English “to captivate” or the Italian “captare”: **to grasp and identify a change that is in the air.**

There is also another English meaning, “captive”, which means “prisoner”...

We felt that the idea of “captivity” had too negative a connotation, even though it captured an aspect of the ambivalence of the transformations taking place: there are great opportunities, but also enormous risks and new injustices. The term is intended to represent something that captures the attention because it is persuasive, interesting and hits the nail on the head. At the same time, “captive” and “captivating”... it seemed a good compromise for capturing this ambivalence.

What, on the other hand, is CAPTED Next, and how does it relate to CAPTED?

The launch of CAPTED Next is closely linked to a desire to address the digital transition with a view to building a research community. In this regard, the two key concepts are **INTERDISCIPLINARITY** and **INTERGENERATIONALITY**.

Our Department has an inherent interdisciplinary focus – as reflected in its name, “Human Sciences for Education” – which brings together pedagogy, psychology, philosophy, history, literature and anthropology around the theme of education. We aim to build knowledge together, drawing on contributions from these various disciplines, regarding the digital transition.

The second keyword is “intergenerational”. Bringing together lecturers, research fellows, PhD students and Master’s students is closely linked to the idea that, despite being at different stages of our research journeys, we can build new forms of collaboration and new practices of collective research around shared questions.

It was precisely a request from PhD students and research fellows that gave rise to the idea of CAPTED Next: **a space where younger researchers are granted autonomy**, particularly in their ability to work together. This is precisely where the novelty lies: in collectively identifying cross-cutting research themes, in establishing shared methods for developing them, and in engaging in dialogue with external stakeholders. The aim is for the work of this group to provide fruitful input to the Centre as a whole, proposing activities that become fully-fledged initiatives of the Department.

What are the research areas the Research Centre focuses on?

From the outset, the project has identified three key areas: digital transition and the **fight against educational and socio-cultural inequalities** – in other words, issues of justice, particularly as they relate to education. Digital transition and **the formation of individual and collective identities**: technology is not a neutral tool, but transforms the way in which we become autonomous, adult individuals capable of self-determination, and at the same time the ways in which we interact with others and coexist within communities and institutions. Digital transition and **the strengthening of social bonds**, of the ways in which we relate to one another, and collaborate sustainably across different contexts.

These three strands suggest a trajectory that begins with an analysis of contemporary problems and injustices in order to understand how they might be addressed. This presupposes a profound theoretical reflection that calls upon the humanities in a particularly significant way: new inequalities are linked to an awareness of who we are today as human beings and what our capabilities are in the context of coexisting with artificial intelligence and social media; one cannot address injustices without realising that they are closely connected to the most profound transformations and the trajectories of personal lives.

How do these ideas translate into practical activities within the Research Centre and the Department?

All this reflective work takes shape in a series of events coordinated through the Permanent Seminar. We have organised in-depth meetings with international experts specialising in new models of knowledge construction in the “Global South”; we have hosted speakers from Palestine and South Africa.

We have organised public lectures by leading international figures, such as Judith Butler's talk on the relationship between gender issues, new forms of authoritarianism and shifts in social and political communication.

In addition, there are meetings held outside the university campus, such as those at the FrancoAngeli Academy in the Bicocca district, where we met with artists and professionals working with new musical languages to reflect on how technological transformation is having an impact not only on the production of knowledge but also on artistic creation. In other cases, the Permanent Seminar organised by CAPTED provided for the opportunity for a speaker, whether Italian or international, to give a lecture to our Master's degree students.

Another valuable component of the project is the **Summer** and **Winter Schools**. In January, we organised one on the theme of "In-)visibility and marginalisation from a pedagogical and anthropological perspective", bringing together experts and PhD students from both within and outside our Department. There was a large, lively and extremely stimulating turnout of international participants who joined us for morning seminars and afternoon workshops, introducing us to research fields previously unknown to us and further expanding the interweaving of methodologies and academic knowledge that we are cultivating.

This wide range of activities, not surprisingly, reflects the ethos of the project and of the Research Centre, which operates on various levels, adopting an intergenerational and interdisciplinary approach. All initiatives are designed to **foster relationships**, not only within the University, but also between the Department and the University and the wider community.

The CAPTED logo also seeks to convey this relational complexity, attempting to capture **the construction of a network**, the idea of **connection**. It is the connection between disciplines, between generations, and between the University and the local area, with those working in the field. Today, connecting with society means doing so in a way that falls within the scope of the term **ON-LIFE**: traditional physical spaces and constant shifts to online relationships that in turn impact people's bodily and physical reality.



CAPTED

Centro per i Cambiamenti e le Potenzialità Educative
nella Transizione Digitale

One last question... There has been a lot of talk about connections and the need to forge productive links. Why do you think this is so important? Especially for PhD students and new students entering the world of research?

These transformations currently underway – in which we are both observers and fully immersed – are extremely complex phenomena. To understand them, we must examine them from multiple perspectives. Of course, individual methodologies or approaches can isolate a specific aspect of reality, focus on it and investigate it in depth, but we must be aware that it will always remain just a snapshot. Unfortunately, there is **a certain tendency towards simplification** in today's world, which is sometimes used as a tool to serve various interests, but at other times represents a temptation to escape from that complexity which frightens us and which, to some extent, eludes us. **Weaving together multiple disciplines staying close to reality** is an embodied approach to research and education that naturally counters this temptation, because **the research community constantly brings complexity to the fore** through the voices of those who have explored reality from different perspectives, using different tools.

As the narrative unfolds, it becomes clear that these perspectives, though different, are not at odds with one another or at cross-purposes; they do not simply pass each other by, but rather, when it comes to certain fundamental issues, they identify **surprisingly convergent points** from which to imagine fairer and more desirable horizons.

It is surprising, then, when we discover that these artificial intelligences – if we can call them that – actually present themselves as new interlocutors who interact with our academic discourse, entering into our research practices – often without asking permission – and into the relationship between student and lecturer...

In fact, the digital transition is now part of this intertwining, and we must seek to understand it together: on the one hand, because reality is complex and demands this **plurality of perspectives and voices**; on the other, because our very existence as a university and a research community is already made out of a tapestry of different disciplines and methods, and perhaps we need to become more conscious of this. **We need to strengthen the connections** that we know exist but which we must learn to engage with.

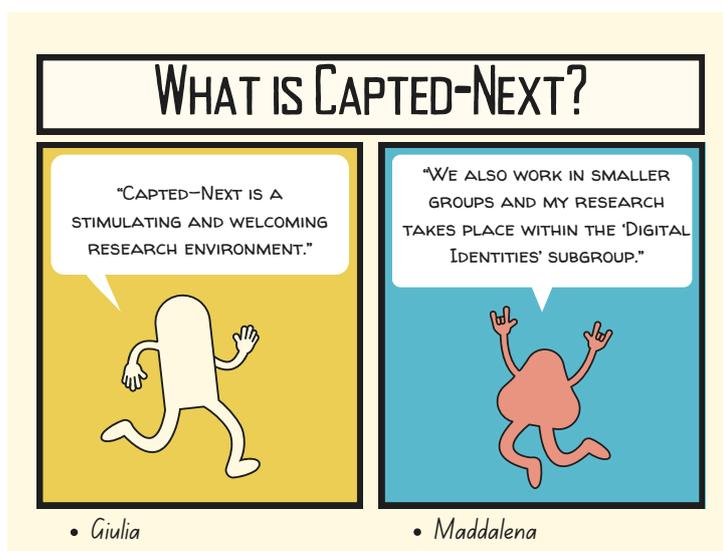
Claudia Menofuni
Giulia Sironi
Pier Daniel Corracchia

What is it like to be part of Capted-Next?

Caped-Next is not only a research space, but also a context for discussion, exchange, and shared growth. For this reason, in this issue of the ESCilo Newsletter, we wanted to give a voice to those who experience it on a daily basis: researchers affiliated with the Center.

Last month, we invited Caped-Next members to freely and voluntarily share a brief reflection on their experience within the departmental group: the reasons that led them to join and, above all, what it means to be part of Caped-Next from a human and scientific point of view.

The following is a collection of the contributions received in the form of comics. These are short but dense responses that reflect the plurality of perspectives, paths, and sensibilities that animate Caped-Next, offering an authentic glimpse into how the Center is experienced by those who are part of it.



WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

"BEING PART OF A MULTIDISCIPLINARY GROUP HELPS ME GAIN NEW PERSPECTIVES."



• Mehmet

"MY EXPERIENCE AT CAPTED-NEXT IS PROVING TO BE A GREAT HELP IN THE INITIAL PHASE OF MY ACADEMIC CAREER."



• Roberta

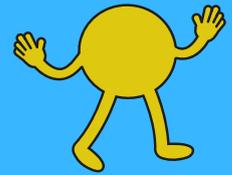
IT'S A SOCIAL OPPORTUNITY

"IT HAS ALLOWED ME TO CONDUCT RESEARCH TOGETHER WITH OTHER PHD STUDENTS AND RESEARCHERS."



• Pier Daniel

"IT HELPS PREVENT ISOLATION AND FOSTERS THE CONSTRUCTION OF MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS."



• Claudia

FOSTERING FUTURE RESEARCHERS

"I FEEL THAT THESE NEW PERSPECTIVES WILL GIVE ME MANY IDEAS IN THE FUTURE."



• Roberta

"THIS IS A PROFESSIONAL HERITAGE THAT I WILL CARRY WITH ME THROUGHOUT MY PHD AND BEYOND."



• Giulia

IT'S INTERDISCIPLINARY!

"THE MOST VALUABLE ASPECT OF CAPTED-NEXT IS THE OPEN AND INTERDISCIPLINARY EXCHANGE."



• Mehmet

"THIS GROUP ACTIVELY ENCOURAGES EXCHANGE AND DIALOGUE AMONG RESEARCHERS FROM DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS."



• Maddalena

RESEARCH**WRITER***Roaa Al Ghadban*

Why corporate training needs to stop being boring

(and what I'm doing about it)

Corporate training is often treated as a formal requirement rather than a real **learning experience**. In many organizations, employees are asked to complete long courses made of slides, PDFs or videos usually alone, often quickly and mainly to be able to say that the training has been “done.”

During my research, I started to question how effective this approach really is, especially when training addresses sensitive and complex topics such as ethics, workplace safety, compliance or whistleblowing. These are areas where **understanding, reflection** and **decision-making** matter far more than memorizing information. Yet, the way training is designed often encourages passivity rather than engagement. This is where my PhD research is situated.

ROAA AL GHADBAN

PhD student in Education in Contemporary Society. Her research focuses on the development of methodologies and models of blended learning for corporate training, with particular attention to improving good governance.



My work focuses on blended learning and game-based approaches in corporate training, with the aim of making learning more engaging and meaningful. Instead of seeing training as a one-way transfer of information, I explore how **gamification, simulations, storytelling** and the use of avatars can actively **involve learners in the process**. The idea is simple: when people are asked to interact, make decisions and reflect on realistic scenarios, learning becomes more memorable. In my research context, this means designing training experiences where learners face situations similar to those they might encounter in real workplaces, particularly in relation to ethical dilemmas, compliance responsibilities and governance systems. Avatars and narrative elements are used not as decoration, but as tools to support immersion and engagement.

Methodologically, my PhD adopts a **mixed-methods approach**, combining quantitative data (such as pre- and post-training measures, delayed tests to assess retention over time and usability indicators) with qualitative feedback from participants. This allows me to **compare traditional training formats with more interactive**, game-based ones and to better understand not only learning outcomes, but also how learners experience the training itself.

Why does this matter?

Because training in areas like ethics, safety and compliance should not be reduced to a checkbox. When learners are disengaged, training risks becoming ineffective and in some cases, this can have serious organizational consequences. Designing learning experiences that people actually engage with can support better understanding, more responsible behavior and stronger governance practices.

Through my PhD, I aim to contribute to a dialogue between educational research and real organizational needs, showing how innovative learning design can be studied rigorously and applied concretely. If corporate training has real stakes, then it deserves to be designed with care and never to be boring.

EXPERIENCES

Talking Thoughts. A Dialogical Seminar on Becoming a Reflexive Researcher

WRITER

*Fabianna
Marechiro*

TALKING
THOUGHTS

*Davide Cino,
Eugenia
Campanella,
Mattia
Marechiano,
4th cycle
PhD students*

After a summer rich in meetings and discussions among the PhD students of the 40th cycle, on **November 27** the **Self-organized Seminar** entitled “Talking Thoughts. A Dialogical Seminar on Becoming a Reflexive Researcher” took place. Despite the great heterogeneity of the topics addressed in our research, in designing the seminar we asked ourselves what common element might unite us all. The answer that emerged was **reflexivity**.

Reflexivity had in fact been one of the themes explored during the first year of doctoral coursework and took shape as a constant companion throughout our research experience. We practice it in the solitude of the pages of our research diaries, as well as in peer exchanges that arise over a coffee in the doctoral students’ room.

For this very reason, we decided to make reflexivity the protagonist of our seminar, narrating it and articulating it through the different fields of our research. We chose to organize ourselves in pairs, bringing together those conducting related research, to show how reflexivity takes on different forms and meanings depending on the contexts of reference.



“Talking Thoughts” is the second self-organized seminar, organized and held by the 40th cycle of PhD students in Education in the Contemporary Society

After the valuable introduction by **Davide Cino**, the event's discussant, with his talk *"Seeing ourselves 'seeing': reflexivity as an ongoing epistemic and ethical enterprise in research"*, which will be discussed further in a later section—the seminar opened with **Claudia Menduni** and **Fabiana Marchioro**, presenting *"Reflexivity, perspective, and categorization in educational research: reimagining representations in complex sociocultural contexts."* As both work with students with **migrant backgrounds** and, in Claudia's case, also with **disabilities**, reflexivity represents a constant alarm bell for us. It reminds us that every researcher is always situated within a specific historical, cultural, and social context, which inevitably shapes their gaze. When this gaze turns toward cultures perceived as "other," there is a risk of applying one's own categories, interpretive schemes, and theoretical frameworks, producing simplified, distorted, if not outright pathologizing and stigmatizing readings. A prime example is the use of categories such as "second generations," "special educational needs (SEN)," or "disability." In this way, educational research—particularly in multicultural school contexts—risks producing forms of knowledge that **normalize** and **classify** subjects rather than **conveying their complexity**. Reflexivity thus becomes an urgent and indispensable tool, both epistemologically and ethically.

Following this, **Chiara Paganuzzi** and **Caterina Rapini**'s presentation *"Agency and Participation – How reflexivity enables the recognition of students as active political subjects and supports participatory research practices"* explored the role of reflexivity in recognizing students as active political subjects. The contribution drew on the powerful and deeply felt experience of the student occupation of the Manzoni High School in Milan, recounted by Chiara, who was a teacher there at the time. The presentation showed how reflexivity, understood as an epistemic, ethical, and political practice, is central to overcoming a view of students as mere objects of research or recipients of decisions. Instead, it highlighted how **agency** and **participation** are inseparable from power dynamics and how disciplinary responses tend to depoliticize dissent. Reflexivity thus emerges as an everyday democratic practice, necessary to transform schools and research into genuinely participatory spaces.

Bogdan Novakovic and Giulia Sironi, with their contribution *“AI in Education – understanding the visible and invisible uses of technology to reshape our ways of thinking, teaching, and creating, while avoiding the reinforcement of our own biases,”* offered a critical reflection on the **visible and invisible role of technologies**, particularly **artificial intelligence**, in the ways we think, teach, and produce knowledge. Technologies were presented not as mere tools, but as true **epistemic and cultural mediators**, capable of shaping practices, imaginaries, and processes of meaning-making. Through examples related to image generation and the analysis of biases in AI models, it emerged how these systems can both amplify dominant representations and silence culturally marginalized elements, contributing to the creation of cognitive “echo chambers.” The contribution therefore called for the development of a reflexive stance that, moving beyond both uncritical enthusiasm and outright rejection, interrogates the entanglement between our own biases and those embedded in technologies, in order to design educational environments capable of making us more consciously human in the age of artificial intelligence.

The final presentation, by Alessia Polidori and Pier Daniel Cornacchia, entitled *“Reflexivity through Arts and Games – How creative experiences foster deep thinking and transformation,”* explored the role of **art** and **games** as **catalysts for reflexivity and educational transformation**. Despite their differences—art being more closely linked to the aesthetic and expressive dimension, and games to the playful one—both share an **experiential nature** that fosters self-awareness, critical thinking, and agency. It was highlighted how reflexivity runs through all phases of the experience: beforehand, in preparing for the activity; during, in the choices and actions undertaken; and afterward, in the debriefing phase, which is fundamental for reworking what occurred. It is precisely this final re-elaboration that makes the cognitive and emotional processes involved more visible and intertwined, transforming experience into conscious knowledge.

This initial theoretical moment was followed by a more dynamic one thanks to the participation of three PhD students from the 39th and 38th cycles: Eugenia Campanella, Mattia Marexiano and Petar Lefterov. Acting like “living books”, they shared with participants some critical incidents encountered during their doctoral journeys—from feelings of impatience toward research participants to sudden changes in research topics.

In a climate of great conviviality, the PhD students then divided into three groups according to their cycle and tried to write a page of a reflexive diary. As we now leave the floor to those who took part, we hope that this seminar represented not only a moment of theoretical and epistemological reflection, but above all a space for sincere exchange, openness, and a precious pause from the frenzy that often characterizes our work, giving us back the time for a healthy practice of reflexivity.



(Last) Talking Thoughts Participant's reflections

4th cycle PhD students

It was fascinating to experience the variety of themes, approaches, tools and references in scientific research in education. The theme was broad enough to allow us to identify patterns in individual works, while also permitting a variety of approaches.

The practical part made us feel comfortable enough to ask questions and share our comments and experiences.

It was an interesting space to both listen to lived experiences and reflections of our colleagues, and to start building our own reflective journey. The small group activity was stimulating, and the moment in which we shared it with the larger group was handled in a very welcoming way.

Davide Cino, Assistant Professor and keynote speaker

On November 27, 2025, I was invited to serve as Chair at the self-organized PhD seminar Talking Thoughts, part of the Education in the Contemporary Society doctoral program. I found the seminar genuinely engaging and was impressed by both the quality of the collective discussion and the level of reflexive awareness that shaped the exchange. In particular, reflexivity was not treated as a stable concept to be defined once and for all, but as an epistemological stance that takes form through research practice, disciplinary positioning, and the often disorienting dilemmas of empirical work. The PhD students demonstrated a strong ability to connect theory, researcher positionality, and the ethical and relational dimensions of research in thoughtful and convincing ways. Overall, the seminar created a serious and intellectually demanding space for dialogue. Differences in approaches and doctoral trajectories were not flattened but instead became a resource that enriched the discussion in a genuinely dialogic way. The seminar offered a reassuring picture of a community of emerging scholars who are able to reflect with scientific maturity not only on their epistemic objects, but also on their own perspectives and on how these shape the conditions, responsibilities, and practical consequences of doing research in pedagogical and interdisciplinary fields.

Eugenia Campanella, 39 cycle PhD student

I just want to say few things about the experience of joining the seminar organized by the second year PhD student group.

I think that Academia is a difficult place to live right now and, politically, we are facing an important crisis of the Higher Education System. When I reflect about my experience as a PhD student, I hope that sharing political and communitarian reflections can -at least partially- undermine the competitive and depoliticized system where we live.

It's not about empty words, used in a very utilitarian manner as I hear often in Academia, it's about practicing solidarity among peers and break the cycle of precarity and exploitation.

Reflecting on our political perspective and speak up, if necessary, maybe it's not the faster way to move up the career ladder, but it reflects profoundly who we are as humans and how deeply the values that we affirm and the rights that we defend live in our thoughts and behaviors.

Mattia Marexiano, 39 cycle PhD student

Focused on an everydayness like that of many PhD candidates, never truly stable, yet somehow always lacking moments of solidarity and unhurried exchange, my participation as a "living book" in the "Self-organized seminar of the PhD candidates of the 40th cycle" was an encounter I would describe as unique. Personally, finding myself, after two years, reflecting on the path already travelled became a way of reactivating emotions and memories that constantly form the background to my days, yet only rarely find an opportunity to be acknowledged. Recognizing that the path was no longer merely outlined but largely already traversed, being able to speak about it to PhD candidates from subsequent cycles, observing their looks and curiosity, offered me again a different gaze, not yet forgotten, toward the time when the path was only traced out, allowing me to retaste some of its emotions. I did not expect such a lively curiosity toward my own account, nor toward that of the other living books: perhaps precisely because there had never been an occasion to foresee it. For this reason, I would tend to describe this kind of meeting among the three different cycles as a unique moment within the doctoral journey of these years. Finding ourselves, by the desire of the PhD candidates themselves, sharing experiences and reflections without forms, without schemes, without constraints other than those imposed by time, which was perhaps the only true protagonist of the encounter, carries a value that is anything but obvious to grasp and, indeed, to reflect upon. Perhaps because beauty has to do with something like the possibility of expressing oneself or of encountering something unforeseen, or perhaps because time smooths over wounds, thinking back on this experience, which allowed me to rethink the beginnings of the path, has been, sincerely, a meaningful experience of reflexivity, solidarity, and listening, from which I hope I was able to receive something.

For all this, I would like to thank all the PhD candidates who organized it: I am sure that the stimulus to reflexivity offered by this seminar has not yet faded.

EXPERIENCES**WRITERS***Pier Daniel
Cornacchia**Claudia Merofuni**Giulia Sironi*

Digital Identities, Education, and New Professional Challenges

We are part of a group of young researchers – doctoral students and a research fellow – belonging to **CAPTED-Next**, a subgroup of the **CAPTED Departmental Study Center**, within the Department of Human Sciences for Education "Riccardo Massa". Our work is situated within the framework of the 2023–2027 Department of Excellence project and stems from the desire to critically understand the educational transformations related to the digital transition.

The project we are working on, "**Digital Identities: an investigation on the use of ICT in the training of socio-pedagogical professional educators**" explores the role of digital technologies in the construction of the professional identity of those currently training to work in educational services. We are interested in understanding how technologies integrate into learning processes, professional reflection, and the identity construction of educators. The research explicitly dialogues with major European frameworks on digital competences, particularly **DigComp 3.0**, which broadens the perspective on the skills needed to inhabit complex digital contexts.

“Digital Identities” is one of the Capted-Next research groups that is looking into the Digital Competencies of Socio-Pedagogical professional educators.





In this scenario, the growing impact of **artificial intelligence in the educational world** represents a central challenge for new professionals, who are called to integrate powerful but non-neutral tools into daily practice.

Comprehending this phenomenon requires a deep and situated understanding as well as a large-scale vision.

For this reason, our study adopts a mixed approach: qualitative interviews and quantitative questionnaires allow us to capture both subjective experiences and

recurring trends in this sample of educators. Furthermore, we pay particular attention to the **different user groups with whom educators work** (children, adolescents, people with disabilities, adults), as the use of technologies takes on different meanings and implications depending on the educational context.

The final goal is to contribute to **a critical and informed reflection on the training of today and tomorrow's educators**, offering useful elements for research, university teaching, and the debate on the future of educational professions.

On February 3, 2026, we promoted a public moment of discussion and sharing with **a seminar aimed at CAPTED members and the entire Department**, aiming at presenting the state of the art of the project, so as to explicit the theoretical and methodological choices being made and, above all, collect critical feedback from the academic community.

During the opening, **Maddalena Sottocorno** (research fellow) and **Monica Facciocchi** (39th ESC cycle) introduced the project, clarifying its theoretical framework, objectives, and the mixed-methods design focused on the use of ICT in the training and identity construction of educators in internships.

Following this, **Pier Daniel Cornacchia** and **Andrea Di Gallo** presented the key points of the DigComp 3.0 framework, focusing on the complexity of constructs like digital competence and social inclusion. Finally, **Giulia Sironi** offered an in-depth look at artificial intelligence, highlighting educational implications, ethical issues, and the importance of developing AI literacy.

The second part of the meeting developed through a **round table** facilitated by **Leonardo Lapomarda** (39th ESC cycle), **Claudia Menduni** (40th ESC cycle), and **Sonia Bonatti** (41st ESC cycle). This moment allowed for a shared discussion on how technologies enter educational relationships not as "neutral" tools, but as elements that redefine balances and possibilities. Specifically, they addressed how competence requires preliminary steps of **understanding and acceptance**, and how specific user **needs define social inclusion goals**.

The seminar confirmed that speaking of digital identities in educator training means questioning competencies, contexts, and responsibilities together. The discussion provided precious **insights for the next steps of the research**, contributing to the quality of training and the transformation of educational professions in the digital era.

Starting from the left and then clockwise: Pier Daniel Cornacchia, Claudia Menduni, Leonardo Lapomarda, Andrea Di Gallo, Maddalena Sottocorno, Giulia Sironi, Monica Facciocchi, Sonia Bonatti.



EVENTS**WRITER***Eugenia Campanella*

The new “bell hooks lectures” series

On the 14th of January the **He.Co.Psy (Health Conflict Psychology Lab)** – run by Professor Guido Veronese – presented the opening of the new series of **bell hooks lectures**.

Bell hooks lectures are a tradition here in the Department of Human Sciences for Education: **every two weeks from January to June, on Friday (2.30-4.30 CET)**, the He.Co.Psy lab invites researchers, activists, PhD students to discuss their research works or a political/clinical topic that is relevant for our academic community.

It is a very nice occasion to meet other scholars and to learn more about contemporary issues from a transdisciplinary perspective.

During this semester bell hook lectures are **mostly online** and you can participate entering Professor Veronese’s Webex room (<https://unimib.webex.com/meet/guido.veronese>).

If you want more information, here you can find attached the winter/spring 2026 program.

You also can email **Eugenia** (e.campanella@campus.unimib.it) if you want to be included in the lab’s mailing list.

He.Co.Psy is a laboratory aimed at developing research pathways, teaching activities, and clinical and psychosocial interventions within a critical analytical perspective on human rights, social justice, and their impact on mental health and well-being

He. Co. Psy.
Health Conflict Psychology

Winter edition

THINK TANK HE.CO.PSY 2026

<https://unimib.webex.com/meet/guido.veronese>

Wednesday 14/01

2-4 PM CET - online

5-7 PM CET - in person

**OPENING- RUTH NELSON AND
BAABAYN ABORIGINAL
CORPORATION PRESENT "FENCES
AND WALLS"**

Friday 16/01

2.30-4.30 CET - online

**"DECOLONISING ARCHAEOLOGICAL
PRACTICE: SUBALTERN VOICES AND
COMMUNITY-DRIVEN APPROACHES IN THE
ANDES"**

Claudia Fredella and Carolina Orsini

Friday 27/03

2.30-4.30 CET - online

**"AGENCY AND SUMUD ACROSS A
LIFETIME: LIFE HISTORIES OF PALESTINIAN
ELDERS WHO LIVED THROUGH
OCCUPATION"**

Sabrina Russo

Friday 10/04

**"WHAT COUNTS AS KNOWLEDGE?
REFLECTIONS ON LEGITIMACY AND
AUTHORSHIP"**

Chiara Fiscone

Spesago CET online

THINK TANK HE.CO.PSY 2026

<https://unimib.webex.com/meet/guido.veronese>

Friday 24/04

2.30-4.30 CET - online

"CONNECTED EXILE, THE STRUGGLE OF
THE HAZARA DIASPORA"

Claudio Concas

Friday 08/05

2.30-4.30 CET - online

"THE IMPACT OF FAMILY DYNAMICS ON
PSYCHOLOGICAL FUNCTIONING IN
PALESTINE: CHILD AGENCY AS A SOURCE"

Lana Omari

Friday 15/05

2.30-4.30 CET - online

"THE BODY AS AN ARCHIVE:
UNDERSTANDING TRANSGENERATIONAL
TRAUMA AND EXPLORING AFROCENTRIC
FRAMEWORKS TOWARDS COLLECTIVE
HEALING IN AZANIA"

Rafique, M.A.C.

Friday 29/05

2.30-4.30 CET - online

"SCHIZOCARTOGRAPHY IN ECUADOR'S
CLOUD FOREST: SUBJECTIVE MAPPING AS
RESISTANCE IN ACTION"

Sofía Jiménez Guzmán and Tracy Sidesinger

Summer edition

THINK TANK HE.CO.PSY 2026

<https://unimib.webex.com/meet/guido.veronese>

Friday 05/06

4.30-6.30 CET - online

"AGENCY, URGENCY AND THE STALKING PRESENCE OF VIOLENCE: THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF BOTH ACTIVIST-RESEARCHER AND DIASPORIC QUEER PALESTINIANS DURING GENOCIDE"

Liam Hilton

Friday 12/06

2.30-4.30 CET - online

"IS IT POSSIBLE TO BE BOTH AN ACTIVIST AND A RESEARCHER? THE ROLE OF REFLEXIVITY IN CRITICAL MENTAL HEALTH"

Eugenia G. Campanella

Friday 26/06

2.30-4.30 CET - online

"BRIDGING LGBTQ+ MIGRANT COMMUNITIES IN THE DIGITAL AGE: NARRATIVES OF OPPRESSION AND RESISTANCE IN ITALY AND THE UNITED STATES"

Lucinda Ugarte

Reading Tips



La Ricerca-Formazione. Impatti, strumenti, fattori is a cornerstone for those seeking methodological rigor and wishing to define the multidimensional impact of Teacher Action-Research. This volume proposes practical tools born from field experience and offers a valuable guide to understanding and giving meaning to the professional development of teachers and other professionals in training, while identifying the factors that facilitate or hinder this growth.

Against the backdrop of an international political landscape in which the far right is becoming increasingly radicalised, Judith Butler's latest book, *Who's Afraid of Gender?*, offers a lucid analysis of how this is also taking place through anti-gender campaigns in various global contexts. Butler analyses how the term 'gender' is exploited in political and media discourse to fuel fears and resistance towards LGBTQ+ rights and social change, highlighting that the struggles for LGBTQ+ rights are struggles for the rights of everyone.



Final reflection

Every weave has a moment when the threads tighten and then loosen, not to unravel, but to make room for new patterns. This issue of ESCILO has been, for us of the 40th cycle, precisely that moment: a space in which we discovered that doing something together, even a newsletter, is already a form of research, already a way of inhabiting the questions we carry with us.

As Paolo Monti suggests, pursuing the weave as a way of working means resisting the temptation of simplification — because a research community always reopens complexity, through the voices of those who have investigated reality from different perspectives, with different tools.

The reflexivity that ran through the Talking Thoughts seminar, the questions about the professional identity of educators, the encounter with Judith Butler: all of this gave us back an image of research not as individual conquest, but as a collective and relational practice, made of listening, of conscious positioning, of responsibility toward those we encounter in the field.

Now this space opens to other hands. The baton is not handed over, it is left in the middle of the circle, for those who come next to pick it up in their own way, bringing with them their own season of questions. We are curious to see what weave will emerge.

Alessia Polidori

Fabianna Marchioro

*Pier Daniel
Cornacchia*

Claudia Menduni

Caterina Rapini

Giulia Sironi

Bogdan Novakovic

Chiara Paganuzzi