

Learning in the Plural: Essays on the Humanities and Public Life (Transformations in Higher Education)

David D. Cooper

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Can civic engagement rescue the humanities from a prolonged identity crisis? How can the practices and methods, the conventions and innovations of humanities teaching and scholarship yield knowledge that contributes to the public good? These are just two of the vexing questions David D. Cooper tackles in his essays on the humanities, literacy, and public life. As insightful as they are provocative, these essays address important issues head-on and raise questions about the relevance and roles of humanities teaching and scholarship, the moral footings and public purposes of the humanities, engaged teaching practices, institutional and disciplinary reform, academic professionalism, and public scholarship in a democracy. Destined to stir discussion about the purposes of the humanities and the problems we face during an era of declining institutional support, public alienation and misunderstanding, student ambivalence, and diminishing resources, the questions Cooper raises in this book are uncomfortable and, in his view, necessary for reflection, renewal, and reform. With frank, deft assessments, Cooper reports on active learning initiatives that reenergized his own teaching life while reshaping the teaching mission of the humanities, including service learning, collaborative learning, the learning community movement, and student-centered and deliberative pedagogy.



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