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Title

Becoming (a) public : what the concept of public reveals about a programmatic public pedagogy at the university / Leena Ripatti-Torniainen

Publication year

2018

Source/Footnote

In: Higher education. - 75 (2018) 6 , S. 1015 - 1029

Inventory number

47001

Keywords

Hochschule und Staat : allgemein ; Hochschule : Idee und Aufgabe ; Hochschule : gegenwärtige Situation

Abstract

This article extends the ongoing argumentation of 'public', publics and universities by providing a conceptual discussion of issues at the core of the public sphere: how does public form and exist amid private and individual life and pursuits, and how does a collective public body identify itself. The discussion is placed in dialogue with two earlier contributions to 'becoming (a) public' by Simons and Masschelein (European Educational Research Journal, 8(2), 204–217, 2009) and Biesta (Social & Cultural Geography, 13(7), 683–697, 2012). Brought together, these contributions constitute a definition of a programmatic public pedagogy at the university. This article develops the definition of a programmatic public pedagogy by drawing on the conceptual core meanings of public in continental antiquity, Enlightenment and American pragmatism. The author discusses public as (1) indefinitely circulating discourses, (2) sociability between strangers, (3) macro structures and (4) the political public sphere. The article reveals that the 'becoming (a) public' extends and occurs across a broad

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spectrum, and that the discursive and sociable manifestations of public are not secondary to explicitly political action but have an inherent value in themselves. The article distinguishes the character of public as constant openness to the emergence of what is yet not known from interpretations that locate public in the existing structures, ideologies and forms of action. The dialogue with Simons and Masschelein and Biesta shows that this distinction has critical implications on how programmatic public pedagogy is understood at the university. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Ripatti-Torniainen, Leena, E-Mail: leen.ripatti-torniainen@helsinki.fi