Student Teachers in School Practice
An Analysis of Learning Opportunities

Alaster Scott Douglas

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Alaster Scott Douglas is Assistant Director of Education and Reader in Education and Professional Practice at the University of Roehampton, London.

"In an educational era characterized by oversimplified solutions to complex problems, Alaster Scott Douglas provides in this study a deeper, richer look into how schools and departmental faculty work than is usually envisioned in the creation of educational policy. Using a cultural-historical activity theory framework and ethnographic methods, Douglas is able to investigate the social processes through which teachers think about how to teach their academic discipline in relation to the material conditions of their community. Within this setting, Douglas further studies how apprentice and novice teachers are socialized into the profession through their engagement in departmental discussions and student response to instruction. Policymakers and teacher educators would be wise to read this research and learn that learning to teach is a multidimensional, difficult process whose effects cannot be easily reduced to student test scores or other superficial measures of how teaching affects learning.” - Peter Smagorinsky, Distinguished Research Professor of English Education, The University of Georgia, USA

“...This book makes a significant contribution to the growing literature examining teacher education. In doing so, it asks new and important questions about the nature of the practicum in particular and the aims of initial teacher education in general. The clearly written account of ‘Market Town High School’ and ‘Downtown University’, and the work they engage in together to prepare new teachers, should be compulsory reading for everyone who cares about teacher education and the role of the teaching practicum. The description of the culture of school departments is not only applicable to secondary schooling contexts but to primary and early years settings too. Indeed, any setting where novice teachers enter into groups of teachers organised around historically-accumulated cultural norms and expectations. In adopting a cultural-historical approach to analysis of the work of preparing teachers, Douglas takes us beyond dominant assumptions about how individuals learn to teach – that learning to teach is something that primarily goes on inside individual minds – to an understanding of learning to teach as a collaborative form of workplace learning.” - Joc Nuttall, Associate Professor, Faculty of Education, Australian Catholic University

About the book
Alaster Scott Douglas uses current research to develop an understanding of how student teachers learn in school teaching practices. He is a researcher who has also been a school teacher, a student teacher mentor, a high school senior manager and a university teacher educator. This book illustrates through detailed case studies how learning opportunities for student teachers in school practices are often very different. An analysis of the different types of learning leads to a follow up study where the author suggests and utilizes a model for developing and maximizing learning opportunities in school settings.

Appropriate for students, student teachers, lecturers and early career researchers who are particularly interested in researching in schools in an ethnographic way, the book will also be of interest to students, lecturers and teachers involved in undergraduate and postgraduate teacher education and education courses.

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