

Personal and Professional Development: Dr. Waters' Corner September 2011

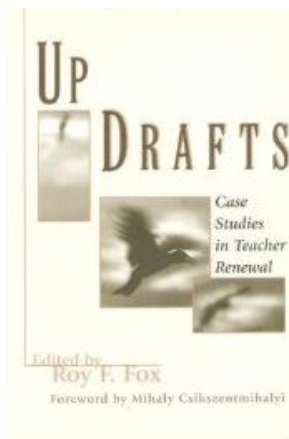
UpDrafts: Case Studies in Teacher Renewal

Edited by Roy F. Fox (2000)

“UpDrafts reminded me that we must see the process of renewal as normal, recurring, and idiosyncratic — no simple one-size-fits-all blueprint, but instead a call for teachers (for everyone) to find their own individualized routes to renewal. Fox reinforces the teachings of Ralph Waldo Emerson that already resound so clearly within me when he summarizes: “Renewal must come primarily from within”. By recognizing ourselves as processes, rather than things, we grow to see our unfinishedness. And that is the first and necessary step toward renewing ourselves so we can, in turn, renew others.”

– David J. Waters

Description from back cover of *UpDrafts*



How do successful teachers renew themselves for the classroom? To explore this question — one of increasing urgency in today's often stressful and demanding environments — Roy F. Fox's team of teacher-researchers interviewed highly successful literacy teachers. These individuals employed a range of approaches for staying alive and creative in the classroom, from cultivating their own and their students' voices to imagining alternative scenarios; from engaging in reflective action research to thinking maternally; from writing poetry and criticism to making pottery and raising horses. In *UpDrafts: Case Studies in Teacher Renewal*, you will meet 8 teachers whose strategies for renewal re-energize not only their teaching but also their lives outside the classroom.

Drawing on the theoretical implications of the lively, engaging, and often sobering personal narratives of the first 8 chapters, Fox outlines in the final chapter four main themes intrinsic to the renewal process: Social context; Passion and flow experiences, which can focus on everything from our discipline, to the teaching of our discipline, to our relationships

with students; The development of teachers' own voices – expressive communication with ourselves and our colleagues; and The relationships among teachers' dual identities. Based on these findings, Fox suggests a new model for teacher renewal, one with implications far beyond the classroom.

This text's compelling blend of teacher profiles and practical, theoretically sound guidelines presents a strong argument for schools at all levels to provide opportunities for teachers to refresh themselves professionally and personally, renewing our classrooms and schools in the process.