

most useful analytical tools available for understanding the socialization process that goes on in the classroom” (p.60) contrasts radically with Hanna F. Pitkin’s view of it in a *Theory and Society* (1987) article which criticized it as confused, confusing, and a “bad tool” to be used only in contexts where its meaning can be specified. One notes that Bowers, having expressed enthusiasm over this concept, then omits it from the “simplified overview of concepts derived from the phenomenological tradition” (p. 79) given in Chapter IV, entitled “A Sociology of Knowledge approach to Curriculum Development.” This curious fact may be in response to educationists’ criticisms of Bowers’ earlier (1974) presentation of this ideology on grounds that it involved unfamiliar vocabulary and difficult concepts (to which he replies in Chapter V).

The bottom line, however, is that books of this type seem to please the more-or-less converted while they irritate and/or bore others. On a central notion like “modernity,” Bowers apologizes for ignoring thinkers like Marx, Weber, and Durkheim, while I could argue (and in the case of Weber have argued in print) that they are more misleading than illuminating on the subject anyway. On another central notion, that of “communicative competence,” the less said by this linguistic anthropologist on Bower’s speculative ideas, the better.

William C. McCormack  
The University of Calgary

Bolin, Frances S. & Falk, Judith McConnell. (Eds.). (1987) *Teacher renewal — professional issues, personal choices*. New York: Teachers College Press, Columbia University, 244 pp., \$16.96 (paper).

This book is about “sustaining the note,” recovering and repeating moments of excellence, striving to do one’s best without flopping “back into flatness,” stopping to become, to care, to reach out, and to make meaning, for others and ourselves. As such, the editors have selected an aspect of the human condition that is not unique to teaching. We all need to renew ourselves, to overcome inertia and lack of meaning, and to sustain the spark of life, continuously, until all efforts fail.

Renewal is connected to the ecology and the ethical character of teaching. Though the book does not offer clear guidelines, Bolin, borrowing from Casteel, suggests four notions for teacher renewal: imaginative reflection, affirming the goodness and rightness of being a teacher, focusing on the objective reality of the

workplace rather than on personal visions, and accepting the consequences of renewal, a recognition that it is our, not everybody's vision.

To what degree have the editors succeeded in giving teaching enough meaning to sustain renewal? Judged by the structure of the book and by the support given to the major dimensions of this structure, teaching is successfully portrayed as a profession with enough depth to renew and restore it.

The sixteen essays are divided into four parts. The first part deals with the vocation of teaching and attempts "to recollect, to remember, and to value" the career choice. Though a teacher's life is "lonely, private and isolated" and not held in high regard (in the United States), it is viewed by the authors in this section as a way of life that has value and can make meaning. The authors' case might have been strengthened had they treated teaching not as an isolated profession but as one career choice that compares favorably, if not monetarily, then intrinsically, with other jobs.

The second part looks at dilemmas of educational policy. Unfortunately, the three articles that comprise this part have little to do with teacher renewal. Instead of investigating whether teaching has progressed historically (Jackson), is related to external social forces (Apple), or links personal belief with public policy (Dunn), the editors could have solicited articles that dealt with issues of desirable change in educational policies and public attitudes, articles designed to restore respect for schooling and thus to stimulate renewal through external means.

Part Three, which contains six chapters, focuses on teacher renewal in more concrete terms by examining curriculum theory and practice. Bolin considers that changing the role of teacher from mere implementor to active participant in the curriculum decision-making process is one powerful means of teacher renewal. While Bolin, Rust, and Wiener stay with this theme (they all make the same point, albeit with some repetition, namely, that curriculum enriches the job of teachers) — some of the other topics have little relationship to teacher renewal. Neither development of reading and writing (Strickland), nor the use of computers (Falk), or the concept of multiculturalism (Williams) have been convincingly related to teacher renewal.

The last part, entitled *Teacher and Personal Choice*, is, to me, the strongest section of the book. In the introduction, Wiener, in terse and vibrant language, taps the essence of renewal: the symptoms (being battered, discouraged, out of love; losing interest in ideas and thirst for creativity and adventure; forgetting dreams, losing vitality and the capacity to disclose life in its many forms), the remedies (renewing commitment, reaffirming ideals, nurturing visions, assessing successes and failures, building new dreams). But he does not tap the causes (other than to blame reality). Green writes of divided consciousness, disillusionment, powerlessness, and connectedness. Westerhoff conceives of teaching as pilgrimage, as "a call to a way of life shared with others in a common search for meaning" as clues to renewal, he suggests contemplation of the meaning of soul and life. Bolin concludes the book by attesting that teaching can be a self-renewing

activity despite the realities of the workplace.

The shortcomings of this book result from its method of conceptualization which was to collect, as an afterthought, papers presented at one institute, over two summers, on a loosely defined theme, with a forced division of the material into parts. Each part is introduced by those seeking knowledge (Ph.D. students) rather than by sages. Had conceptualization preceded writing, the topic of teacher renewal could have been explored more comprehensively and creatively. Yet, the diversity of viewpoints presented compensates, in part, for these imperfections in conceptualization.

Robert Knoop  
Brock University