

ning teacher” (p. 224). Armed with this knowledge, along with adequate pre-service training in strategies for responding to challenges, our future young teachers will have an improved opportunity for success in the classroom.

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## **THE GOOD TEACHER MENTOR: SETTING THE STANDARD FOR SUPPORT AND SUCCESS**

SIDNEY TRUBOWITZ & MAUREEN PICARD ROBINS  
TEACHERS COLLEGE PRESS, 2003  
\$17.95, 133 pages

*Reviewed by Pat Bronsard*

*The Good Teacher Mentor: Setting the Standard for Support and Success* is a book written to examine how a first-year teacher, “a professional-in-training,” develops through his or her relationship with a seasoned mentor teacher. The book constructs a view of the year-long mentoring relationship between a novice seventh-grade teacher, Maureen Robins, and her mentor, Sidney Trubowitz, in an urban public middle school in New York. The book takes a personal look at the interactions of their partnership, how the process affected them, and the professional satisfaction both teachers felt at the end of the year.

In the introduction, Trubowitz and Robins provide their readers a general history of mentoring in the training and retaining of teachers and the motivation for writing this book, noting that the concept of mentoring has been part of educational training since the early 1980s. The authors see mentoring as a solution to the problems of many districts that struggle to locate and to retain qualified teachers. The topic is of importance because of “chronic teacher shortages and an attrition rate of almost 30 percent of all beginning teachers” (p. 2). These statistics have policymakers and educational leaders

“revisiting the important role mentoring plays in supporting first-year teachers” (p. 2).

Using alternating perspectives, Trubowitz and Robins trace their first meetings and concerns about each other. Robins shares her doubts of meeting the needs of her new students, of feeling inadequate as a novice teacher, and as a result, of searching for a mentor. Trubowitz – a professor emeritus from Queens College in New York and former teacher, assistant principal, principal, and professor for more than 40 years – is not sure he wants to take time away from writing and the leisure of retirement. After reflection, however, Trubowitz agrees to mentor Robins because, as he writes, he has spent his “professional life guiding new teachers” but doubts he has “systematically looked into what it is I do or don’t do that contributes to or inhibits teacher growth” (p. 15).

Robins begins by titling her first entry, “A Mentor is Chosen. What Can I Expect?” (p. 12). Successive entries cover her first-year teaching experience, ranging from the development of her daily lessons, the formation of a teaching style, the handling of student issues, and experiences with professional development to her growth in personal confidence in her own teaching abilities. Her beginning entries display her emotions at the start of the academic year and her feelings of insecurity about her professional training. Her writing style is filled with short, passionate sentences which encourage the reader to share the emotion of her first mentoring meeting as well as her successes at the end of the school year. Throughout her entries, she candidly reveals details of her classroom teaching experiences, interactions with students, successful and unsuccessful teaching lessons, formal observations, and experiences with standardized testing.

Interspersed among these entries, Trubowitz approaches each session with goals to aid Robins’s success. He writes,

I think about what I can do as mentor so that Maureen does not join the exodus of first-year teachers leaving the school system. I jot down ideas...listening, supporting, encouraging strengths, providing resource materials, asking questions, exchanging ideas, providing perspective on her struggle. We will be learning together, and yet there will be times I will clearly be the instructor. (p. 17)

Trubowitz counsels and channels his mentoring efforts throughout the year, helping Robins to develop her “teaching voice” (p. 103). At the start of the academic year, Trubowitz helped Robins deal with the emotions that accompany teaching. As the year progressed, their talk centered on learning styles and ways to evaluate students beyond numerical grading. They interacted, in Trubowitz’s words, “as two people dedicated to their professions and interested in the world around them” (p. 110). Trubowitz gained insight into “the

current problems of teachers and schools,” and found that he “could identify with a newcomer’s struggle to define herself as a teacher” (p. 114).

Through this collaborative professional partnership, Trubowitz and Robins demonstrate ways first-year teachers can interact with their colleagues, parents, and the community. As a part of the appendix of the book, both authors include useful checklists for mentoring and suggestions for improvement and future learning. Their successful mentorship experience can encourage veteran teachers to participate as mentors, passing on their valuable years of expertise and experience.

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## **ROOM FOR TALK: TEACHING AND LEARNING IN A MULTILINGUAL KINDERGARTEN**

REBEKAH FASSLER  
TEACHERS COLLEGE PRESS, 2003  
\$18.95, 117 pages

*Reviewed by Diana Hankins*

All across America, educators are becoming aware of a change in the mixture of linguistic backgrounds of students. As more and more children are coming to our schools with little or no English language development, educators must find a way to meet the challenges that this situation presents to American education. There are two prevalent models used today to address this challenge. One includes placing children with a home language other than English into a classroom with English-speaking students and teacher. The other is to group children with common home languages with a teacher who is bilingual and incorporates instruction in both English and the native language, to move the students toward English proficiency. In the book *Room for Talk: Teaching and Learning in a Multilingual Kindergarten*, Rebekah Fassler presents a third option for an English as a Second Language