In 2004, Dateline NBC followed 22-year old Monica Groves during her first year as a middle school teacher in Atlanta for the award-winning documentary "The Education of Ms. Groves." Now, seven years later, NBC News pays another visit to Ms. Groves to see what she has learned about teaching.

Monica Groves, Teacher, Teaching, Public, Education, Middle, School, Teach for America, English, Atlanta, Intensive, Training, Masters, Curriculum, Development, Grades, KIPP, Thaddeus Dawsey, Charter, Classroom, Students, Learning, Instruction, Collaboration, Motivation, Education Nation
SAVANNAH GUTHRIE, anchor:
And as we finish Education Nation week, we have an update on a teacher we've gotten to know over the
years. NBC News was there during her first year on the front lines. And now, several years later, we
captured up with her again to see how she's changed and what she's learned. Here's NBC News education
correspondent Rehema Ellis.

MONICA GROVES: Welcome to sixth grade. My name is Ms. Groves.

REHEMA ELLIS reporting:
We first met Monica Groves in August of 2004. With a degree in English and Spanish from the University
of Virginia and five weeks of intensive training through Teach For America, she landed her first job
teaching sixth grade English in Atlanta.

GROVES: I want my kids to like me. I want this to be a supportive, loving environment.
Raise your hand if you don't have your homework today.

ELLIS: Despite her optimism, her first year in the classroom tested her skills and patience.

GROVES: D, D, D, F, D. This is in one class. It's not good.

ELLIS: But there were bright moments, too.

GROVES: Let me see! Oh, this is fabulous!

ELLIS: With her first year behind her, Groves changed course and went back to school, at Harvard.

GROVES: I feel like there needs to be a step before that.

ELLIS: Today, seven years after we met her, she's back in Atlanta, guiding more than 80 teachers at five
KIPP Charter Schools. Whole no longer in the classroom every day, Monica Groves' new job still has an
impact on the classroom helping to create the blueprint for what students are learning.

THADDEUS DAWSEY (KIPP Metro Atlanta Teacher): She's able to actually analyze your classroom, your students. She can analyze you as the teacher and tell you what works and what doesn't work.

ELLIS: It's the kind of feedback teachers say they want and need.

GROVES: Collaboration makes a difference when you're not just an island, when you're not just in the classroom figuring it out by yourself.

ELLIS: Though she's accomplishing a lot with teachers, Groves says her heart is still in the classroom with the kids.

GROVES: I definitely miss them. They tell it how it is. And I think they give just as much back as you give. I'll email you today.

ELLIS: Monica Groves, closing the gap between teachers and students, one lesson at a time. Rehema Ellis, NBC News, Atlanta.