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Summary: Successful beginning teachers are not created in isolation. The university training program, the school community and the beginning teacher all determine how one will come to survive or thrive. The authors tracked a prized university graduate into her first year of teaching, where support structures were sadly lacking and negative pressures prevailed. Our experience taught us there is room for improvement for all stakeholders and that even small adjustments have the potential to maintain the “make a difference” attitude. We are pleased to report that Monique (pseudonym), having survived a few bumps along the way, is continuing her journey as a teacher. Now in her third year, she is teaching a kindergarten class at the same school and recently was invited to give her first professional development workshop on the Common Core curriculum to both veteran and new teachers.