Former Paraprofessional Discovers Calling as Special Education Teacher

“Becoming a special education teacher has given me a way to provide young people with something no one can take away from them, education.”

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What is money if you’re not happy
During college I joined the Army and served six years as a personnel specialist. My main objective for going to college was to work in business, make money and travel. After graduating, I worked for a couple of corporate brands, but the idea of making lots of money wasn’t fulfilling enough to keep me in those positions. At that point, I began searching for my calling. I quit my job, moved back to Atlanta and worked several odd jobs. My dad suggested I become a substitute teacher since I had a bachelor’s degree, so I volunteered at the elementary school and had so much fun - I accepted the job the next day and ended up winning paraprofessional of the year.

Becoming a teacher was a natural progression
Working as a paraprofessional for six years allowed me to see how the entire school operates and I realized you can’t marginalize any position. Since I’m a nerd, I felt like I could do more and wanted to validate my teaching by getting a master’s in education. Specifically special education because I didn’t like the way students with disabilities were viewed. A teacher recommended Georgia State’s Network for Enhancing Teacher Quality (NET-Q) teacher preparation program, which became part of my evolution to becoming a more organized and critically thinking individual.

No one can take away your education
To see a child change over the course of an academic year has been my greatest reward. I love children and being a teacher has given me a way to provide young people something no one can take from them, education. Having children confide in you about their personal issues, to be real with you about what they don’t know and what they really can’t do - that takes a lot out of a person. So, for me to be that point guy, that’s very rewarding, very honorable and I don’t play with it.