Special Education Teacher Wants to Research Students with Learning Disabilities and High IQ

"Doing quantitative research opened my eyes to legitimate vs. pop science information, and I was able to see that what I was doing affected my students."

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Teaching special education sparked in childhood
From the time I was about seven years old, I wanted to be a special education teacher because I thought students with special needs were overlooked. By becoming a teacher, I believed I could help bring out their potential. During my senior year in high school, I participated in a student teacher program and this experience confirmed my desire to pursue a career in teaching. The more I learned in my Early Childhood Education undergraduate program, the more I fell in love with the subject. Three weeks after graduating from college, I started the Special Education master's program. I knew I needed to learn more before going into the field and I wanted to eventually become a teacher leader.

Prepared to be a teacher leader
My yearlong residency consisted of long days that lasted from 6 a.m. – 10 p.m. I taught an elementary class during the day, attended classes in the evening and participated in a research project looking at students with learning disabilities and their fluency to perform math problems. These rich experiences that the graduate program provided led to me recently being named a leader teacher, where I'm responsible for helping all teachers and students and being a part of a school wide support system.

I want to research learning disabilities
Looking ahead, I’m planning to return to Georgia State to earn a Ph.D. in learning disabilities in two years. Specifically, I want to research students with learning disabilities with high IQs, but who also have a co-existing learning disability. Students falling into these categories are often underserved in schools, so its imperative that we conduct more research in this area in order to prevent these individuals from falling through the cracks.