



Leah Ross

National Board Certified in Career and Technical Education

Education

B.S. in Hotel and Restaurant Management
North Arizona University

M.S. Cross-Cultural Business Education
National University

Post-Master's and License in Educational Leadership
Wingate University

Lagniappe: A Little Something Extra

My first day teaching, I remember so clearly; I was handed a textbook and told to "teach what you know". What did I know? What I did know was that I was never going to teach from a textbook. I still never have. I also knew I was going to be the kind of teacher that I had never had; I would be one whose students KNEW cared about them as individuals and would teach them, not my curriculum, but THEM.

Work-Based Learning Specialist

Leah E Ross, Work-Based Learning Specialist with Fairfax County Public Schools National Board Certified in Career and Technical Education . Today, I work as 1 of only 2 WBL specialist for close to 190,000 students across 200 school sites building business, classroom, and student relationships benefitting all!

Uniqueness of Career Journey

I went into my career completing believing that I was going overseas to work in an Ecotourism resort in the rainforests of Costa Rica. Life had other plans.

I became a chef and restaurant manager in San Diego when the curveballs were thrown. Some years later, I was opening a new restaurant and was invited to a high school hospitality class to speak on finding your passions, making career choices, and defining success for oneself. At the end of the day, San Diego Unified offered me a position.

I spent three years teaching event planning, hospitality marketing, culinary arts management, and business/ IT at an alternative school in the inner city. Over 20 years later, I have taught both FCS and Business/Marketing in 3 school districts in three states.

I have taken students on cultural and education exchanges to Denmark and China and spent another summer teaching in China. I have been the advisor to FCCLA, FBLA, DECA, and SAVE (Students Against Violence Everywhere) for which I received Chapter and Advisor of the Year awards

Inspiration for Career Choice

The two responsibilities, before any others, are 1 – to keep students safe and feeling secure and 2 – helping prepare for the world beyond the classroom. My 3rd responsibility is facilitating students' definition of success for their own lives.

Skills Vital to Success in Career

Being open to the experiences and "left turns"; communicate, admit when you don't know something, be flexible, learning who to ask and what to ask. It doesn't matter what career you are in, these skills are a must.

Best Advice to Someone Considering This Career

Try it. Fail. Reflect. Try again. Fail better tomorrow. Don't be afraid of failure, it means you TRIED.

Recommended Educational Preparation

Ask to shadow other classrooms, other schools, other teachers. Ask to spend time with industry professionals. 'Lunch and Learn' gets you a long way to seeing where you fit and how you can get out of your silo.

How the Field Has Changed Over Time

In every way. The only thing that stays the same in education – is change.

Projected Changes in the Future

I wish I could say that education will evolve for the betterment of this country and it's future in my lifetime, but maybe I have become a realist – nothing will change, except everything.