

OUTDOOR INSTRUCTOR DELIVERS ALL-ROUND LEARNING IN WAIKATO

BACKGROUND

Shanan Miles, 31, grew up between Wairoa and Napier. From an early age, he developed a passion for outdoor activities, starting with water-based sports.

"I grew up doing lots of surf lifesaving," he says. "Then I got into paddle sports; slalom kayaking, down river racing and paddling white water."

Throughout high school, Shanan took up a number of building jobs. But he wasn't keen on pursuing that as a career. "I thought I'd try to make something of myself in the outdoor industry," he says.

At 17, he started working at Salty Rock Adventure Centre (now The Kiwi Adventure Trust) in Napier, an indoor climbing facility and base for local school camps. While he was there, he completed a Certificate in Applied Outdoor Recreation. It was the first in a series of qualifications which, combined with his extensive and wide-ranging work, led him to where he is now: at the Waikato Institute of Technology, also known as Wintec, providing young people with the skills they need to successfully navigate the outdoors.

MOTIVATION

"Being outdoors has always appealed to me," Shanan says. "It's also rewarding passing on what you've learned about the outdoor sector to others."

"It's not always easy. Sometimes the weather is terrible and you have to really focus on performing the job safely and efficiently. Putting extra time into your own outdoor pursuits, improving your skills in your personal time means you'll be a better instructor and that you'll gain people's trust."

ACHIEVEMENTS

Starting with his Certificate in Applied Outdoor Recreation, Shanan went on to obtain an Advanced Certificate and a Diploma in Outdoor Education, as well as a Certificate in Adult Education, from Aoraki Polytechnic in Timaru.

Shanan's jobs have included working as a senior guide for Blackwater Rafting in Waitomo, as a contractor in the South Island "doing a bit of



everything" from tramping and mountaineering to kayaking and rock-climbing, and at the Sir Edmund Hillary Outdoor Pursuit Centre in Tongariro (now Hillary Outdoors).

Four years ago, he started his own company, Tohutohu Aotearoa Ltd, delivering contracting services for outdoor education programmes across the country. Shanan says he deliberately avoided specialisation into one or two instructional pursuits. "My study and work experience gave me a well rounded handle on all the disciplines," he says.

PRESENT DAY SITUATION

Shanan joined Wintec in May this year, as head tutor for outdoor education. He says he gets a lot from working with young people.

"Seeing the growth in students is rewarding. It's satisfying to see them start with minimal experience and progress to the point where they become proficient in areas like abseiling and rock-climbing."

"There is something for everyone in the outdoor sector, a huge range of pursuits are there to choose from," Shanan says. "The only requirement really is that you do have to be a people person." Shanan has been a member of NZOIA since 2006. He is an NZOIA Assessor and holds qualifications in; kayak, rock, bush, cave and alpine.

"NZOIA and its qualifications have helped me gain great work experiences around Aotearoa," he says. "They have allowed me the freedom to deliver top quality outdoor educational experiences in the most ultimate locations to those in the community who need those experiences the most."

