

THOMAS JONAH SHELSTAD

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EDUCATION

M.S. - Experiential Education, Minnesota State University; 2000

- Terminal Degree in Field

- Graduate Assistantship in Educational Leadership Department

B.S. - Speech Communications, St. Cloud State University, MN; 1998

- Interdisciplinary program with an emphasis on International Relations

- Studied in Alnwick, England 1996-1997

SPECIALIZED EDUCATION

The Learning Well, a La Clinica Program

Wellbeing Training

Medford, Oregon; 2023

Byron Katies 10-Day School for the Work: Ojai, CA; 2017

Peak Experience Trainings, Taught by Dr. Scott Banderhoff.

Clinical First Responder: Mental health training for wilderness professionals.

Ashland, Oregon; 2013

World Youth Service and Enterprise (WYSE) an NGO affiliated with the United Nations

International Leadership Development Program

Lucca, Italy; 2005

The Coaches Training Institute (CTI) Professional Life Coach Training

Certified Professional Co-Active Coach Program (CPCC)

San Rafael, CA; 2005

Tom Brown's Wilderness and Tracking School

Standard Course

Boulder Creek, CA; 2003

Projects Wet, Wild, and Learning Tree

Environmental Education Training

Mankato, MN; 1999

National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS)

Outdoor Educator's Course

Northern Cascade Mountains, WA; 1999

Stonehearth Open Learning Opportunities (SOLO)

Wilderness First Responder (WFR)

North Conway, NH; 1998 (Kept current through WMI)

Stonehearth Open Learning Opportunities (SOLO)
Advanced Leadership and Emergency Care (ALEC)
Conway, NH; 1998

TEACHING AND FACILITATION EXPERIENCE

Empower Coaching; Jackson and Josephine Counties, OR

Personal Coach; July, 2020-2022

As part of a larger coaching team, I work with individual clients in a series of 6 one-on-one coaching sessions provided for them through public funding. Together, we work to clarify, inspire, and hold them accountable to move into an empowered life of their own choosing.

Inner Guide Expeditions; Ashland, OR

Owner, Co-Founder, and Transformational Facilitator; 2012-Present

As the co-founder and lead facilitator, I design and lead transformational wilderness trips for teens, create custom family trips, and bring youth out on rites of passage that are tailored to their individual needs. Additionally, I provide ongoing mentoring experiences for teens through 2-hour sessions where I bring them out on a hike or other activity, which helps to increase trust and encourage sharing from a deeper level.

Inner Guide Coaching; Ashland, OR

Owner and Personal Coach; 2004-Present

While coaching individuals through business and personal transitions, I facilitate the exploration of options to reach a deeper understanding. Together, we design a map so they can leverage their efforts into skillful action while I hold them accountable and give direct feedback.

The Siskiyou School; Ashland OR

Director of the Fall Orientation Programs; 2012-present

As the director for the fall orientation programs, I work closely with the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade teachers to design and deliver week-long programs that are tailored to the individual needs of the students, the teacher and their current curriculum. Trips have been taken to: Lassen National Park, Redwoods/Gold Bluffs Beach, Marble Mountain Wilderness, and Trinity Alps Wilderness. Trips concentrate on building community through shared experience, challenging initiatives, pertinent assignments and meaningful conversations.

The Job Council; Medford, OR and Grants Pass, OR

Experiential Educator, The Leading Edge; 2010-2011

As the author of the Leading Edge program, I designed and delivered experiential, hands-on, "life skills" program to welfare recipients. Curriculum focused on developing communication, cooperation, creative thinking, problem solving, and motivation in the lives of clients. Classes were designed to be active, engaging, and thought provoking.

Southern Oregon University; Ashland, OR

Adjunct Faculty, HPEL Dept; 2009-2014

PE399: Challenge Course Facilitation

PE410: Experiential Leadership Development

OAL275: Adventure Based Facilitation

PE180: Skiing/Snowboarding/Telemarking

OAL370: Adventure based Therapy

OAL/PE430: Outdoor Survival

Wilderness Initiative for Leadership Development (WILD) Program; Ashland, OR

Program Director and Co-Owner; 2009-2011

I am a co-creator of the WILD Program, custom-designed for the Siskiyou School (in Ashland, OR) to provide weeklong wilderness experiences that empower self-confidence, trust and group cohesion through physical challenge and self-inquiry that highlight Waldorf Education.

Leadership Education Adventure Program (LEAP Camp); Ashland, OR

Program Director and Co-Owner; 2006-2010

LEAP Camp is a cutting-edge, dynamic and adventurous leadership development program for teens. As Program Director I was directly responsible for oversight and implementation of the curriculum in addition to staff training and supervision, gear maintenance and acquisition, and the strategic development of the organization.

Synergo; Portland, OR and Ashland, OR

Challenge Course Facilitator, Builder, Inspector, and Trainer; 2004-2021

As a facilitator for Synergo, I work with groups varying from 8-150 individuals in a wide range of age, purpose, and ability (including handicaps). I safely guide them through a progression of high-risk experiential activities and into rewarding culminating conversations. In order to maximize their investment of time, I select specific experiences to facilitate based on the goals of the group. I've progressed in the company to take on the additional roles of training new facilitators in these facilitation techniques, building challenge courses, and inspecting them for safety and industry standards.

Second Nature Wilderness Program; Duchesne, UT and Bend, OR

Wilderness Therapy Guide; 2006

As part of a team I created and provided direct therapeutic interventions for youth with behavioral anomalies. Working closely with therapists to diagnose and carry out prescriptive actions, I did so in wilderness settings in Utah and Oregon in 8-day shifts.

The Siskiyou School; Ashland, OR

Substitute Teacher; 2007-Present & Volunteer; 2004-Present

Movement Education Teacher; 2004-2007

Serving the Siskiyou School in several capacities since 2004, I have been consistently committed to providing the highest-level experience for the students of this Waldorf School by facilitating activities that encourage group cohesion and peer respect, leading many wilderness and camping trips, and substitute teaching.

St. Mary's School; Medford, OR

Substitute Teacher; 2005-2009

While contracted teachers were absent I facilitated classroom activities, carried out lesson plans, and maintained a positive classroom environment while furthering the educational progress in the public school system.

Wilderness Charter School; Ashland, OR

Assistant Teacher; 2003-2004

In a progressive alternative education program in the public school system, I designed and taught lessons in science, wilderness survival, and self-discovery while serving as a role model and a mentor for the 11th and 12th grade students. I led two fourteen-day backpacking trips that served as the bookends to the school year.

Heartlight International; Orange County, CA and Ashland, OR

Teacher/School and Program Developer; 2002-2003

As part of a team, I helped to initiate and develop three new Heartlight schools. My role was to find a facility while laying the administrative groundwork for the curriculum.

Bloomington School District 271; Bloomington, MN

Reserve Teacher; 2002

While contracted teachers were absent I facilitated classroom activities, carried out lesson plans, and maintained a positive classroom environment while furthering the educational progress in the public school system.

Hennepin County Home School; Minnetonka, MN

Consultant, Job Sampling Program; 2002

The goal of the program was to develop greater self-awareness, reliability, and employable skills to empower incarcerated youth to choose a different life path upon completion of their treatment program. By developing a curriculum and training the staff, I laid out a course for incarcerated youth to receive experience in one of three different career paths.

Heartlight School; Ashland, OR

Teacher/Staff; 2000-2001

As a founding staff member I facilitated activities while providing guidance, learning opportunities, and a role model for the students. This endeavor required creativity, dedication, and vision. In addition to my role as a teacher, I regularly performed administrative tasks associated with starting and running a new school.

Minnesota State University at Mankato, MN

University Teacher; 2000

Introduction to Experiential Education (EXED 202)

I instructed an "Introduction to Experiential Education" class that highlighted the theory and practice of experiential learning by engaging the students in hands-on learning experiences and classroom discussions.

Experiential Education Department; Minnesota State University at Mankato, MN
Ropes Course Instructor; 1999-2000

Duties included designing, facilitating and managing a safe and educational experience for groups of participants ranging from schools and sports teams to corporate initiatives.

Gunflint Wilderness Camp; Grand Marias, MN

Counselor/Trip Leader; 1998

While leading trips in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area for youth from 9-18 years of age I taught survival skills while being responsible for participants' safety was twenty-four hours a day. Activities included canoeing, kayaking, mountain biking, hiking, and rock climbing.

OTHER PERTINENT WORK EXPERIENCE

Alpine Lakes High Camp

Co-Owner; 2025-Present

As a co-owner of this backcountry lodge at 5000ft in the High Cascades in Washington State, we serve our clients in all seasons. Staff management, building maintenance, snow cat operation, advertising, and building the sense of community and stoke are all on my plate.

Ashland High School Alpine Ski Team

Assistant Coach; 2006-2008

As assistant coach for a high school ski team, I designed pre-season physical training protocol, ran on hill clinics, and provided direct feedback to a wide range of skier abilities. Consistently leading the division, the team won second place in the Oregon State in 2007.

Educational Leadership Department; Minnesota State University at Mankato

Graduate Assistantship; 2000

Responsibilities included conducting research for department professors, assisting with ropes course, and serving as student representative for MSU State Educational Conference.

Mammoth Mountain Ski Area, Mammoth Lakes, CA

Professional Ski Patrol; 1998-1999

Responsibilities included emergency medical treatment, avalanche control, area maintenance, customer relations, and guest assistance.

Hennepin County Home School; Minnetonka, MN

Juvenile Correctional Officer; 1997-1999

Supervise teenagers thirteen to eighteen years of age. Duties included leading activities, providing discipline, and participating in one-on-one discussions.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Boys to Men, A Mentoring Network; Ashland, OR

Mentor/Facilitator; 2004-2010

During weekend-long rites of passage for teenage boys, I help to facilitate processes that honor their coming-of-age. Boys leaving this training have a heightened sense of responsibility to community, family, and self. A six month follow-up group is part of the process.

Beyond the Machine (BTM); Ashland, OR and Boulder, CO

Facilitator; 2003

BTM is a dynamic 3-day experiential self-discovery program for ages 18-35. I was a participant in November of 2002 and then was invited back to facilitate and lead these weekends for others.

Big Brothers/Big Sisters; Minneapolis MN Chamber

Mentor; 1999-2000

Mentoring a 16 Year Old boy arrested for breaking and entering and possession of drugs, court-ordered into the program. We worked together to bring consciousness to his behavior and get his needs met through more healthy modalities.

Oak Grove Intermediate School; Bloomington, MN

Classroom Volunteer; 1999-2000

I facilitated experiential education opportunities for a class of sixth graders. Through monthly games and activities, students gained skills in cooperation and communication as well as increased self-esteem.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

American Alpine Club (AAC)
Association for Experiential
Education (AEE)
International Coaches Federation
(ICF)

ACHIEVEMENTS

Presented "Heartlight: An
Educational Model"
at the Possibilities in Education
Conference,
Southern Oregon University -
Ashland, OR 2001

REFERENCES

Aurilia McNamara
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