

challenges asking for another go on a tube on a dry ski slope. These are life-enriching and life-changing opportunities that fantastic Outdoor centres (that are under threat) can deliver and I sincerely hope they will be able to continue to do so in future.

So, what about the future for me and for the school? As an advocate of Outdoor Learning I believe that almost any subject at any level can be taught outdoors, from pre-school to masters' level and beyond. After all, the concept of a school and a classroom is still a relatively new one, as a species we have been learning outdoors for thousands of years. Students respond well and retain learning delivered outdoors. Outdoor Learning can be the spark that lights the desire to learn in some students.

Essentially, I see Outdoor Learning as one of the keys that will help us all recover from this pandemic. For as long as I am in place in a school I will work hard to source funding and create outdoor and community learning experiences for all students, with the aim of leaving a long term legacy of Outdoor Learning and learning in the wider community in place. None of this would have happened without the COVID-19 crisis, for me. This journey has changed me. It has made me stronger and more resilient and although I thought I was adaptable before, I am even more so now. Before I had one final career aim, one objective; now I am not so sure where I will end up and unexpectedly I am fine with that. I always wanted to do good and feel I was making a contribution, but I always had a final target in mind. What I have realised now is that the final destination is not so important, I can pivot, I can make changes and use the experiences, skills and knowledge I have developed in the Outdoor sector in many ways.

Hopefully the Outdoor Sector will reopen in the near future and there will be future opportunities. Maybe one day I will end working in a centre again, maybe I won't, but Outdoor learning is part of me and I

will always find a way to share this with others. I may not be part of the AHOEC Executive anymore but I will always support AHOEC and UK Outdoors in any way I can.

I know so many in our sector have lost their jobs, faced life-changing challenges as a result of this pandemic. We are a tight-knit sector and we can support each other. So if you need to pivot, then pivot, it can lead to positive things ■



AUTHOR
Ivor Lewis

Ivor feels he is a product of our fantastic sector. (That school trip changed his life!) His career spans over 25 years and he has a strong belief in the power of young people to reach their potential if they are supported and have access to the right resources and education.



IMAGES

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WHAT NOW?

Life after leaving university

After a very strange year where plans have been changed for everyone, there is a generation of individuals leaving education to embark on adult life. University is said to be *“the best years of your life”* but for this group of people half of their university experience has been decimated by the pandemic.

As we are all aware, COVID-19 has put the Outdoor industry in an extremely vulnerable position; many outdoor centres and the jobs that these establishments provide are at risk. I am about to graduate from the University of Central Lancashire on the Outdoor Adventure Leadership course. My next step is to decide on my future career path and to find work following the completion of my degree.

Although leaving university and starting a working life is a very exciting time, it is also a very worrying period for many people who are heading into the working world for the first time. I left college and went straight to university; I have never experienced a full-time working environment. The current situation, and the position that the

Outdoor industry finds itself in, has made me reassess my career path and my future goals. Previously my aims, like the majority of those on my degree, was to become an Outdoor instructor and an international expedition leader. COVID-19 has made me reconsider my career path. I am now thinking of becoming a university lecturer on an Outdoor Leadership degree.

The idea of leaving university gives a sense of hopefulness alongside the sense of achievement. Many who have experienced this transition, state that this can change into a sense of helplessness and a feeling of being completely lost. Leaving university during a global pandemic adds extra stresses to university students; the rules are constantly changing, and no future plans can be guaranteed. As we enter spring, and the final semesters of university, light is visible at the end of the tunnel, for many. But with the Outdoor industry struggling, how many of those enrolled on Outdoor courses across the country will have to rethink their career plans? How many will fail to enter the industry where their passion lies? How many will end up seeing the last three years as a waste? ■



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Ethan is an Outdoor Adventure Leadership student at the University of Central Lancashire. He is an aspiring academic with passions for both photography and Scouting.