Distance travelled: supporting women returning to STEM careers

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Between 2005 and 2011, the Open University ran an online course to support women returning to study in the fields of life and social sciences, health and life sciences, and humanities. The range of STEM women returning during this period led to the development of a course for women returning to STEM, known as "Innovative learning technologies to enhance social presence: Tutorial in Second Life". The course was designed to support women returning to STEM, providing them with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in their new careers.

We carried out 23 indepth interviews examining factors leading to reported outcomes which were analyzed using an employability framework (Rinaldi and Lindsey 2002). Visualizations of employment and unemployment focus solely on either supply-side or demand-side factors. This analysis uses a more holistic framework that includes individual factors, personal circumstances and external factors.

A postal survey was sent to 145 graduates who had taken the course in 2005/6. They were all graduates in STEM subjects who were looking to return after a career break and had given their permission to be contacted from time to time. There were 91 respondents (63% response rate) of these 63% were in employment or self-employed and only 8 unemployed.

After a 10 year career break to look after her two children Rajini has now returned to a lab-based science career.

The design of the course was one of the EU's initiatives to develop new career and educational opportunities for women. The 12 week course was developed to be an innovative learning technologies and web-based learning environment, allowing students to develop and improve their skills in innovative learning technologies. The course was designed to be an innovative learning technologies and web-based learning environment, allowing students to develop and improve their skills in innovative learning technologies.

Funding from the EU Equal programme enabled additional support activities in supplement the online programme. These included travel grants and networking events in Europe. The course was designed to be innovative learning technologies and web-based learning environment, allowing students to develop and improve their skills in innovative learning technologies. The course was designed to be an innovative learning technologies and web-based learning environment, allowing students to develop and improve their skills in innovative learning technologies.

The national partnership is the first of a series of Innovative Learning Technologies, creating an integrated approach capable of responding to the changing education and research landscape.

"The project has been innovative in many respects - delivery, scope and partnership".

"The course has been very large scale but with local presence. Participants have come from six countries and the UK. The initial 1 year courses were delivered by the partner institutions and 1 year courses in the UK. The course was designed to be an innovative learning technologies and web-based learning environment, allowing students to develop and improve their skills in innovative learning technologies.

The course has been very successful in delivering the aims and objectives of the project. The course was designed to be an innovative learning technologies and web-based learning environment, allowing students to develop and improve their skills in innovative learning technologies.

We have recently accepted a job working as a software engineer. The course was a very important part of my journey towards getting started in my current career.

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Acknowledgments: The project team have developed an animated model of the course to enhance social presence: Tutorial in Second Life.

Where next? The project team have developed an animated "return to work" tool to support students with employability. The team have been in discussion with the Centre for Inclusion and Curriculum and the Careers Advisory Service about possible ways to use this animated"return to work" tool to support university strategy plans and help meet targets for student engagement with employability issues.