Distance travelled: supporting women returning to STEM careers

Conference Item

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Distance travelled: supporting women returning to STEM careers
Clem Herman, Department of Communication and Systems, The Open University UK, c.herman@open.ac.uk

Between 2005 and 2015, taking the Open University as an online course to support women graduates, engineers, and technology professionals who had taken time out to raise a family and return to work in 2005-2006, graduates returned to STEM graduates and their professional networks. The course was aimed at those returning to work in fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) (8). The course is an online modular, flexible, and interactive learning experience. It is delivered through a blended learning model involving online self-paced learning modules, interactive group work, and face-to-face workshops. The course primarily supports graduates returning to work in STEM fields, who have spent time out of the workforce. Between 2011 and 2016, the STEM Futures Programme (UK STEM Futures) aimed to provide support and networking opportunities for women who had taken time out from work due to the birth of a child. The programme was designed to help returning women to STEM by providing a range of training and support services, including online courses, workshops, and a mentorship programme. The programme involved partnerships with universities, industries, and other organizations to provide a range of resources and support for returning women. It was expected to address the barriers faced by returning women, such as skills retention, network disruption, and lack of awareness of career opportunities.