

Ten years of research into gender and STEM: learning from the past and looking to the future

Professor Clem Herman

School of Computing and Communications, The Open University, Milton Keynes, UK

clem.herman@open.ac.uk

In 2009 a group of international scholars and practitioners working on gender issues in STEM decided to create a new online journal. At that time most of the journals that published work about gender and STEM were not being read by people outside of universities as the charges for accessing articles was very high, and the current practice of open access was not yet in place. We were given a start-up grant from the UK Resource Centre for Women in SET (UKRC), an independent organisation funded by the UK government. The Open University agreed to provide the website infrastructure and support for the journal and to resource the editorial team that would run the journal. We were intentionally an interdisciplinary group with a mixture of STEM, social science, education and humanities backgrounds.

Since then we have published more than 350 articles reporting on research from many countries and regions of the world. When we began, we were committed to inclusivity – namely to ensure that we could support new researchers and those from countries where access to publishing was difficult. We also wanted to publish authors whose first language was not English, so offered support with editing and proofreading articles. Our Editorial Board also reflected this wide range of disciplines and countries but shared a commitment to bring insights from research to new audiences and bridging the gap between research and practice.

In this talk I will present an overview of trends in the topics/themes covered in the journal, as well as other published work on Gender and STEM and reflect on the field has been developing over the past decade. Have our concerns and questions changed? What insights have translated from research into practice? Where are the gaps that are still needing to be explored? I will consider some of the challenges and difficulties faced by the growing community of scholars and researchers going forward including methodological questions. How useful is our interdisciplinary approach? What are the limitations of taking a comparative approach?